

Reliant Kitten Register

MEWSLETTER – TWENTY-FOUR

September/October 1998



The Register caters for all the under 1 litre Reliant 4-wheeled vehicles plus all of their derivatives – Rebels, Foxes, Tempests, Salamanders, Ciphers, Jimps, Asquiths and all other specials including the Liege.....

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This time, our front cover seems to have been contaminated by the presence of a human being and a non-Reliant vehicle! I have to say that this picture was selected for us by our front cover man John Pearce and that, had I realised the possibilities at the time, I would have dressed more appropriately, not to say had a haircut! The Bedford, which almost appears in the picture belongs to Michael Bentley, who just happens to own one of the best Rebel saloons in the land (in fact it is probably THE best Rebel saloon in the land but we don't want to embarrass Michael by saying so!) I believe the logic supporting the choice of picture was to show you the "Moss encrusted hut" before the clean-up which it's current custodian, Bruce Emery, undertook in 1998 and to offer a contrast to the beautifully restored Rebel chassis which adorned the front cover of the last edition. Normal service will be resumed as soon as possible, well, there is a picture of three men Three WISE (?) men for the cover of the Christmas edition, I wonder, wait and see.....

(Any bribes NOT to print this picture in a plain brown envelope to me!! – JP.)

Well, the nights will soon be drawing in now, and if you did not get all those wee jobs done on the car during the summer - I know, what summer? still, if like me, you do not enjoy a garage beside the house with a power supply, the time to do work on the car is fast passing for this year. It has been an issue or three since I asked the question - when last did you grease those front ball joints - trunnions, propshaft hardy spicers, or whatever else that should be getting a shot of something slippery and water repellent at least twice a year; so put this down, no really, put it down, and get out there and do it! Don't worry; I'll still be here when you get back.

Right, I've had a coffee and a shower while you were doing that.

Hands clean now? excellent, I shall continue. Harry Darby was on the 'phone like a shot, when he read in the last edition of my difficulty in getting float chamber needle valves, and tells me that Burlen Fuel Systems are the people, and that Andy is the man to talk to there, just mention Harry's name. I have mentioned Burlen in the past in connection with electric fuel pumps, they are indeed an excellent company, and thank you Harry for that information - What I must do now is to compare their prices with what I have been offered by our other suppliers - quite how I came to miss them off the list of those invited to tender, we shall not go into, but thanks again Harry for keeping me on the straight and narrow.

The John Bowcott story does bring to the front of my mind the fact that there will, I have no doubt, be others out there reading this who have equally interesting tales to tell - how do I coax you to put pen to paper, or finger to keyboard as the case may be? Seriously, think about it please, just a day, or if you are a quick writer / typist, an evening of your time might give us all an interesting magazine in the future. (Brian now thinks, ah, well now, perhaps a round Britain trip with a tape recorder might be on the cards sometime in the future!!).

While on the subject of others, and magazine content, it would seem that I owe Al Osborne a mention. He was good enough to prepare some hints and tips for us some time ago, "The Cats Whiskers" is the one to watch for. I think a review is planned, and if I have not got back to you about it by the time you read this Al, do give me a reminder.

David Myres has volunteered to collate the Rebel alternative parts list for us, so if you have any alternative parts information relating to Rebels, David is the man to contact.

Brian Millar and Bob Nash have both kindly offered to do the same for the Kittens and Foxes, which brings neatly to my notice Brian, that the new database really ought to have a slot for e-mail addresses, as more and more of us seem to have them these days - not me yet, but perhaps one day!

All of which will make for changes in the layout of future magazines as I guess I ought to include those contact details in the index page of the magazine, lucky you, less room for my ramblings in future!

Seriously though, thanks chaps, (what should we call them? - WANTED: - an adjective to describe alternative parts list registrars / compilers / custodians) it seems a moment or two since I have had a good sing to myself, but 'This may be the start of something big' does spring to mind.

Oh, on the song situation my less than musical rendering of the Esso song in the last edition prompted a number of responses, and I do not intend to get too sidetracked from cars, but my thanks to David Heywood for the words and music, for the Esso Golden version, and to Jeff Holmes, whose letter you may see elsewhere (oops, no room, next edition). If you really want the music, send me an s.a.e. though I have to say that the copy is less than perfect, though quite readable, just a couple of missing

notes, and I'm sure you could improvise, and yes you are of course right guys, it was call, not stop, or were there different endings to the different versions?

Rebel Round Up

This time my thanks go to John Bowcott of Droitwich Spa, who has been good enough to share the following fascinating story with us. The tale is self-explanatory, and will I hope jog some memories and perhaps pave the way for similar stories from anyone out there who has an interesting tale to tell.

Reliant & Me, by John Bowcott

A Loughborough graduate in Automobile Engineering, I was employed by Lucas Electrical Birmingham, and worked in their Proving Laboratory where all products and their applications were checked and tested to ensure that they would meet the vehicle applications, type of use and the environmental requirements of the specific markets in which they were to be sold.

Any product made in large quantities makes the manufacturer very vulnerable should warranty claims become too large in that they alienate the person who buys the car when it fails and causes the vehicle manufacturer to look for an alternative source of not just that product but also everything made by the errant supplier.

The Laboratory was "First Customer" to Lucas Electrical, and was given a substantial budget to perform that function adequately. Its facilities included a wide range of test rigs able to simulate climatic conditions ranging from the tropics to the North Pole and endurance testing in the laboratory. In addition a number of cars and motorcycles were used to establish the reliability of designs and on the road and the test track at the Motor Industry Research Association before Lucas sanctioned the huge investments in the tooling required for mass production. The low temperature facility was used to establish the battery and starter combination and ignition system requirements for satisfactory cold starting of prototype and pre-production engines, and complete vehicles as a service to the Lucas customers and the M.o.D. and research into the causes of and solutions to low temperature problems.

An outstanding example of this work was the preparation, setting up, and testing, of the Snow Cats, Weasels, and Ferguson Tractors used by the Trans. Antarctic Expedition. This was carried out, free of charge, by a small Lucas team (of which I am proud to have been a member) in the Lucas cold chambers at minus 50 degrees centigrade.

In the early 1960's Reliant designed and produced the 4-cylinder 600cc aluminium push rod OHV engine. The first production units had problems in that the delivery drivers were unable to start many of the vehicles on frosty mornings when they had been parked out of doors overnight. The engines would not rotate when the starter was engaged - however, the problem disappeared by the afternoon when the ambient temperature had increased and seemingly never appeared again after some 500 miles in service.

Reliant considered that the starter motor was not powerful enough and asked Lucas to provide a larger one.

I was, at that time, responsible for the Lucas Proving Laboratory and was asked by the Lucas Sales Department to carry out tests with a range of starters to establish the size / power required to solve the problem.

I knew that the starter on the Reliant 600cc engine was capable of starting the Ford Zephyr 6 and Consul 4 cylinder engines at overnight temperatures lower than those experienced in Tamworth in the dead of winter. I felt that there was some reason other than lack of starter power.

I invited the Chief Engineer of Reliant to visit me, and asked him to bring with him the detail drawings of the engine to study. I concluded that the design and materials used in the Reliant engine would cause the main bearing clearance to be reduced at low temperatures, and lock the crankshaft. We checked out my theory by putting a number of engines, in various stages of assembly, in one of the cold chambers overnight at minus 5 degrees C. The result was that some of the engines could not be rotated next morning and, in all such cases, they freed up when the main bearing caps were slackened off.

Reliant subsequently investigated the differences between the engines which exhibited this problem and those which did not. They discovered that their main bearing shells were sourced from 2 suppliers, and they differed slightly in bore size.

After 500 miles of running in the bearing clearances had increased to a degree that there was no further problem.

After being an expert in Low Temperatures, I was posted as Chief Engineer in the Lucas TVS joint venture factory in India - up to 40 degrees in the summer and falling like a stone to 25 degrees centigrade in the winter!! My Chemical and Metallurgical Laboratory also provided a technical service to the Brakes India (joint venture Girling and TVS) Design and Production facility next door.

After 4 years of tropical "heat treatment" I was posted back to Birmingham, where I took up the post of Chief Engineer of the Overseas Division.

We needed a small economic car for children's taxi use - shops, schools, dancing classes, football matches, judo and the rest. We bought a Reliant Rebel - BUE 447B - in 1970 from Mr. Cooper, the Reliant Factory Manager in Tamworth, (not realising at that time that it was the 3rd car made and that it had been used for development testing).

My next encounter with Reliant was when a small number of 3 wheelers caught fire and burnt out. Reliant and Lucas engineers jointly initiated an investigation into the problem. Fortunately there was one instance where a brand new car (which the purchaser drove back to the dealer to buy some optional extras the day after he had taken delivery of it) and it burst into flames when he tried to start it to go home. Prompt response by the dealer's staff extinguished the fire before any real damage had resulted, and the car was put on a transporter and returned to the factory for investigation. There were all sorts of theories including "Plastic Bodies and Static Electricity" but no satisfactory cause or solution was found.

I was then asked by the Lucas Sales Department if I would examine the car. I discovered two faults. The first was in the wiring harness connections to the ignition / starter switch. They were all SIMPLE BLADE CONNECTORS. On the car that had been on fire the Radio and Ignition feeds were reversed with the result that both radio and ignition were "ON" in the normal running position but when the starter was energised, the Radio was "ON", and the Ignition was "OFF". If a driver used the method of continuing to crank the engine until it fired, as there was no ignition, the whole of the intake system became flooded

with petrol. On eventually releasing the switch and allowing it to return to the normal Ignition position the ignition system was energised whilst the engine continued to free wheel to a standstill or, if hopefully not too flooded, it fired and started. Anyone who employed the "Flick Start" method of starting would probably never have had any real problems, as, after operating the starter for a few seconds, reverting to the ignition position of the switch would sooner or later produce a start. The "Crank until the engine starts" method was doomed to flooding and disaster.

All cars on the factory production line were found to have been incorrectly wired.

The second fault initiated the under-bonnet fire - the plug in cylinder no 4 had a cracked and distorted insulator which created a gap in the HT circuit which created the spark to ignite the petrol fumes. The spark in the insulator was also the cause of a mysterious clicking sound, which no one had been able to diagnose. I never heard whether the plug fault was an isolated instance or a production fault. Action was taken to correct the current production immediately, and to alert Service to check all cars, fortunately this action was effective, and there were no more fires.

I later discovered that BUE 447B was the 3rd. Reliant Rebel made, and it had been run as a development car before being sold to the Works Manager. This was the answer to my question as to why the chassis had been modified in many ways (3 wheeler type outrigger single pins had been used for the fitting of the rear springs and the chassis had been cut and welded in the course of other experiments).

We had become very attached to the little car and decided to restore it to as near as possible to its new condition after it had completed its family duties and was no longer needed for day-to-day use.

I spoke to Reliant, who agreed to make and sell us a new chassis.

The chassis was fitted by myself in the workshop of Mr. Hadley (ex Reliant Service Manager) with help from retired Reliant employees. Before fitting the body I welded up the open holes at the back of the chassis and completely sealed it by fitting threaded plugs in the jig holes in the rear wheel arch - they were directly in line with the water and dirt thrown up by the rear tyres. As an extra precaution the rear sections were wax oil injected.

An extra coat of paint was applied, a new petrol tank fitted, the front suspension re-bushed and set for camber and track.

To give quick starting and reduce starter and ring gear wear I later fitted an SU electric petrol pump, and this provided instant starting as one did not need to crank the engine to prime the carburettor.

The car has never been out in bad weather and has been garaged overnight since the fitting of the new chassis. Reliant engineers subsequently rebuilt the engine as a 750cc, reconditioned the gearbox, and checked the rear axle (new seals were fitted in the latter although the old ones showed no signs of wear or leaks - just to be safe). When the gearbox was rebuilt a new clutch plate was fitted.

The radiator (made of copper) was reconditioned by Serck.

Girling fitted their rust proof bundy tubing for the hydraulic brakes - an investment I would recommend, especially important at the rear end of the chassis.

An alternator is currently fitted, and I have a nearly new dynamo, which I intended to fit eventually to return it to its original specification. Note the instrumentation is not polarity conscious and is equally happy with the original positive earth dynamo or negative earth alternator fitment - all that is needed is to reverse the primary connections of the ignition coil to ensure the correct polarity HT is supplied to the spark plugs.

When I retired in 1989 the mechanical restoration had been completed and I was ready to start on the bodywork. By this time I had gathered together a strategic stock of useful second hand spares including doors, windscreen, an estate rear axle, clutch assemblies, front suspension assemblies with hubs and brake drums, bonnet top, heater assembly, a steering box and idler bearing. I finished the interior floor trim and submitted the car to an MOT test to double check that all was satisfactory. The car was driven the 2 miles back to its nice warm garage where it has remained since then.

New spares include front dampers and spring assemblies, door interior trim and seals, piloted headlamp assemblies, rear lamps and a set of brake seals.

The original DR3A wiper is still fitted and it has been checked over and new brushes fitted.

Rear tyres are radials in very good condition and the front cross ply with some wear. The car runs best with a full set of radials - they give a better ride and road holding than cross ply.

When the front suspension trunnions were replaced I fitted grease nipples instead of the threaded plugs and flushed them out with EP140 oil regularly to ensure that there was no moisture ingress to cause corrosion (to which they are prone) and they are in excellent condition.

I also made new bolts attaching the wishbones to the bottom of the trunion. The originals were such that the seals and the wishbone ends impinged on the threads instead of on a plain diameter. By lengthening the plain diameter and making and fitting a very thick washer under the nut made for an engineeringly acceptable solution. I also took the precaution of stripping and re-lubricating this assembly periodically, as, though nylon is claimed as happy to run with water as a lubricant, the resulting rusting of the other components is most undesirable.

Assembled with grease and with the nut at the back proved the best configuration to prevent water ingress.

The exhaust system is non standard as I did not get around to obtaining a replica of the original when undertaking the mechanical restoration on the basis that it is a short life item and sensibly would be the last thing to be done - and depending on cost I would have looked for stainless steel. The chassis cross member at the rear of the gearbox has the hole through which the original system passed - so the new chassis does not preclude its use.

A couple of good tips were given to me by one of the Girling Development Engineers.

To prevent ingress of moisture and seizure of the brake cylinder pistons - roll the dust covers back periodically and (get the wife to put her foot down on the brake pedal - but not too fast or too far) to pump each piston in and out a small distance and apply Girling pink rubber grease to the piston and inside the dust cover before refitting it. You need to use a lever to restrain one of the two leading shoes to work the other front wheel cylinder on its own and then reverse the process. Apply the same grease to the inside and outside of the boot of the brake master cylinder. Rub the same rubber grease onto the

flexible pipes to the front brakes and between the chassis and the rear axle and this keeps them soft and pliable thereby preventing deterioration and the initiation of dry cracks.

Returning to BUE 447B - it is sitting in the garage still, its body is sound but suffers from surface crazing which needs cutting back, filling, filler / primer application and then final painting. Unfortunately my shoulders, elbows and wrists are not up to the task and I regret that what was my dream of restoring the cosmetic side of the car is no longer possible and I am concentrating on less arduous hobbies and handicrafts and visiting children and grand-children in USA and Canada.

We also had an encounter with Reliant of the "Third Kind". No. 1 son, on graduating from University, found himself a job some 35 miles away from home and was faced with finding suitable transport or giving up his mother's cooking and home comforts. He had a full motorcycle driving licence, which enabled him to drive a Reliant Robin. An 18 month old Robin Estate was purchased and away he went - using it for home to work and also to transport his heavy metal pop group gear to their practice venue - a parish hall in the country with only one house near and the lady was the custodian of the hall and fortunately quite deaf. The Robin gave excellent service and he eventually took and passed his 4 wheel car test after some 35,000 miles in the Robin. The only problem in the test, suggested the driving school instructor (who gave him a couple of lessons to familiarise him with the test route and to negate all the bad habits he had acquired) was the possibility that he would appear too confident. The Robin continued to give excellent service without missing a beat and was only sold when he moved to live in USA - he now has a green card (permanent residence permit), is buying a house, married, presented us with a grandson and granddaughter, and drives one of the large American hunks of tin. We have fond memories of the Robin as I looked after it and painted / waxoiled it etc.

As an after thought - a tip to those who are maintaining Rebels, Kittens etc. which has come from my industrial experience. Never apply one of the rust killing paints to the coil springs on the front suspension units. These components are very highly stressed, and the application of the rust killing paint, as it contains phosphoric acid, causes the surface to embrittle and the springs are therefore more likely to crack and eventually collapse.

Reading your comments on the fitting of diesel power units in Rebels / Kittens - beware if the replacement unit plus larger battery weight is much greater than the original fitment. The rate of the springs and the characteristic of the dampers are matched to the vehicle weight. An increase in weight will alter the whole characteristic of the vehicle and the ride height of the suspension / body.

John Bowcott - Droitwich Spa - 1998

Foxes' Den

The good news for all you quiet Foxy types is that it looks like we may soon be able to offer you stainless steel window channels, complete with the "W" glass runners, for a reasonable price. Watch this space...

One of the aspects of running the Register which does frustrate me a bit at times, is the number of 'phone calls that I receive from owners, not subscribers, who want to sell their vehicles. Just once in a while such a call will tie in nicely with an enquiry from someone looking for one, both in timing and location, but mostly that is not the case.

Rightly or wrongly, my sympathies lie with those who have seen fit to subscribe to the Register, rather than those who only contact me when they need something, and do not want to subscribe. So as far as values are concerned, an outsider seeking such information will tend to get a low figure, simply on the basis that a subscriber buying the vehicle will get something of a bargain. The down side of such an attitude of course is that prices will tend to remain depressed.

I had a call last week from a Fox owner, who wanted me to advertise his vehicle, and to have a value of £400 confirmed. I said, based on experience in recent times, that to fetch as much as that, it would need to have a long M.O.T., and be in excellent condition.

It has long saddened me that our beloved vehicles command such absurdly low prices on the open market. The situation that you will read of elsewhere in this edition of someone being offered a Reliant with an M.O.T. and tax for well under £100, is not an uncommon experience, and, like the buyer in that case, not me dear, honest! You do wonder just why you bothered, after finding out what is actually needing done to bring the vehicle up to standard. The fact is that to collect a vehicle and take it home costs you about 20 to 25p a mile depending on circumstances, (two or three times that, if you believe the AA or RAC) so every 100 miles you have to drive adds £ 25 to the price, add to that trailer hire if required and it soon mounts up, and that is assuming that your time is free!

I used to feel guilty accepting free vehicles, but the fact is that there is no such thing!

For example, the beautiful Rebel chassis (complete with body) seen on the front cover of the last edition, would probably have ended up in the scrap yard, had it not been for the fact that the owner felt the £50 demanded by the local authority to remove it, was both unreasonable, and an insult to the time and money that her late husband had put into the car. Yes of course I could have found it a home, but they were not subscribers, and it was only thanks to one of our guys that we found out about it at all, and by then it was all over. The fact is that for me to have become involved would have meant over 900 miles of trailering, do the sums yourself, and add that to the value of a Rebel saloon, and the economics simply don't make sense. Try to reconcile that with the sums of money involved in a new chassis, reconditioned steering suspension, and engine and gearbox etc, and there really is no sense in it at all, unless you are going to get at least five or ten years use out of the vehicle yourself. I only write this depressing tale to try and convince myself that the way for me to get a Rebel estate on the road is not to rebuild mine, but to buy one that is in good order and on the road already! (What ever happened to the 'let's reduce Brian's fleet' plan?)

The other benefit of doing it that way might be that I could give up another lock up, and get rid of a lot of the spares with a clear conscience. There are probably less than 35 folk in the whole of Britain today who actually enjoy the benefits of running a Reliant Rebel, what wise fortunate and sensible people they are.

As to you Foxy lot, well say something or I'll drop the page!! Hopefully I will have details of the stainless window channels in time for Christmas. If you are interested drop me a cheque for £ 20 as a deposit, payable to the "Reliant Kitten Register Spares A/C" please.

Right, that's it for now, talk to you again nearer Christmas.

READERS LETTERS

Dear Brian, 29-7-98

Many thanks for your letter dated 15th July regarding the engine in my Kitten. Also many thanks for the back copies of the Mewsletter that arrived a couple of days later. Unfortunately I have overdosed on them and am now suffering acute withdrawal symptoms, so please send the next one as soon as possible to relieve my addiction.

To more serious matters (what's more serious than the Mewsletter?) His comment, not mine, Ed! With regards to my engine - O.K. a little bit of history here, when Malcolm first wrote to me back in April, he was telling me that his Kitten had only had 60,000 miles on the clock when he first acquired it, but it turned out not to be working, (the odometer) he has since then repaired it, and covered about a further 55,000 miles, all on the same engine, and he feels that it must soon be in need of an overhaul. Watch this space

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Dear Brian, 3rd August 1998

Like yourself I have been reducing my fleet of Reliants. The green Rebel saloon was sold to a chap from Rainham in Kent, the blue Rebel estate went to Milton Keynes for another enthusiast to restore, and my spare chassis has gone to Bruce Emery. That has now left me with my trusty white Rebel estate FOW 578L which is tax exempt, and which I use as my daily transport and R.O.C. club runs car. A blue V registered Robin van, which has cluttered up the garage for the past five years, and the Golf (sorry, wrong make). That was until the middle of July when I got a phone call from Bob Neal, you will remember his wife Barbara used to own a Jimp - saying he had heard of a Kitten van to be scrapped in leafy Surrey. Being a sucker for a bargain I contacted the lady owner who told me that the exhaust had fallen off on her way home from shopping, and the drivers door was loose! But it was driveable, and all she wanted was £20 for a recently purchased battery, and £40 for the three months road tax left to run. I got in contact with Keith Bush, a fellow member of Surrey R.O.C. and arranged with him to take me to Merstham where the van was kept. Armed with a bag of tools we arrived to find the lady polishing her recently acquired Escort. After dealing with the paperwork and handing over the £60, we proceeded to tie up the exhaust; it was broken at the manifold and also at the rear box. The hinges were broken on the driver's door. the rear door would not open, and the only electrics that worked were the ignition and the horn. The oil was as black as yer hat, and the van was full of rubbish, papers, cans wrappers etc. -

My first thought was - why do I bother to go for the bargains? You seem to build a mental picture of what you expect, only to be brought down to earth when confronted with it, deep down you know you won't get something for nothing, but you press on regardless.

Anyhow, after a few safety checks. Keith wedged me in so the driver's door would not open unless I opened it, the engine started after a few spins on the starter. It sounded like the old speedway bikes I used to watch as a boy. I then drove it home from Merstham, its near Reigate, to Wimbledon with Keith close behind. I was very impressed with the little van, being a Rebel man at heart, I'd never driven a Kitten before, and despite the noise it was a good run home. The brakes were good and the steering excellent. Since getting home we have fitted a new exhaust, sorted the electrics (except the hazards), and given it a service. I've also changed the driver's door for a Robin one. Any other parts will come

from my Robin van which I am now breaking for spares. I will do a thorough structural survey before the M.O.T. in October and do a rolling restoration from then on. I am rather smitten with this Kitten!

Best regards, Bob Dormer - London.

*Ah yes, what can I say Bob, the van is probably the least traumatic transitional vehicle from Rebel to Kitten, on account of its low gearing, not nearly as low as the Rebel's, but 20% closer to it than any other Kitten. I must confess that I have been running a Kitten rather than a Rebel for almost 5 years, well perhaps 7 years then, - wait a minute, there was the Moss encrusted hut! - I do still harbour delusions of getting a tax exempt Rebel estate car on the road again one day, but I am struggling to keep the one Kitten saloon roadworthy as well as the modern tow car, (£ 124 to supply and fit a water pump last month! - can't afford to re-tax the Kitten now thanks to that! So it will be having a wee rest, now that sounds like a good idea, a wee rest, how could I organise one of them I wonder?) which I have to say covers every bit as great a distance on a gallon of fuel as the Kitten does - slightly more in fact, but let me not digress. Rebels rule O.K.! (And if that does not extract some response I will want to know why not! Ed.)*

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Dear Brian, 16/8/98

Excuse me for writing, but I joined the Register in March of this year and was expecting a bi-monthly magazine from time to time. Is it that there has not been a publication since then or have you forgotten about me?

I have just renewed the four front brake cylinders on my Kitten, and various other brake pipes. The only trouble that I encountered was that the young lad who made up the replacement pipes fitted the wrong male end fitting (possibly metric and not imperial) and although it looked the same, definitely did not want to fit till he changed it for the proper one.

I trust that you are enjoying the warmer weather.

Yours sincerely,

David R. P. Sindall - Southampton

Well, you can just imagine how I felt to be on the receiving end of that one, this in the same week as someone else had written to advise me that someone he knew, had thought that the Register had been wound up in 1996! That was a very different scenario from this bungling error on my part, but an error none the less. Still, as I keep telling myself, we are all human, and I do seem to, well perhaps enjoy is not the best adjective, but whatever word you use, I seem to get it right in more than 98% of cases, so I am not as bad as all that. I was going to go on and apologise to those concerned, but I did say that I was going to stop apologising for a while, and they did get what I hope were appropriate personal letters when I was made aware of the situations, so, moving on as they say

Dear Brian, August 1998

It's about time that I wrote something for the Kitten Register, so I will take up on the Fred Heath letter and in particular the Anadol Story.

Yes, yes, before you all start writing to me, I realise that the Anadol does not fall into our under 1 litre category, but I thought the information to be of general interest - Ed.

The story begins in 1966 when Turkey first placed its order for a cheap car. Way back then there were only about 80,000 cars in the whole of Turkey. A joint venture by Ford (engine gearbox and running gear) and Reliant Otosan (Turkey) was to be the Anadol. The name was chosen from a competition, the prize was a new car!

The price was originally £1,000. Otosan were also producing a fibreglass-bodied version of the Transit minibus, they built 6,500 in 1966/67, and a pick up was introduced in 1974. Some 80,000 Anadols were produced by 1967. The total numbers built are not known.

It brought in £100 per car to the Exchequer of England, quite a lot in the 60's and 70's.

I have a 1964 video of the Anadol; it also shows the Ant, Rebel, Regal and Scimitar on the production line. Copies of this short video are available from Bob Neal,

All the best,

Bob Neal - Essex

Oh well, you all get off lightly this time, just over 7,200 words, thanks to the extra colour pictures me thinks. Thanks again John for all your help in organising the colour printing for us, it is appreciated.

Talk to you all again about Christmas.

SALES & WANTS

Nicola Roulston has a pair of Kitten saloons, one damaged by fire. both looking for a new home

July 1998

For Sale: - Rebel estate car, restoration project about 70% complete. Offers around the £250 mark. Birmingham area. Contact Steve Jenkins

For Sale: - 1976 Kitten saloon M.O.T. till January '99 Purple, but in need of respray. Taxed till August..

For Sale: S registered Kitten estate, complete with a new galvanised chassis, built up complete except for fitting a new back brake adjuster, fuel filler, choke and throttle cables. Offers.

For Sale: - Tow bar £10, new unused clutch cable £ 5, refurbished set of door hinges with new door internal strengthening plates £ 5, will post if required. The above all for a Kitten, contact Paul Humphries

For Sale: - Kitten estate 1978 taxed till December, you will need a trailer for the spares - It has 4 new tyres, £ 200, Northumberland. New spare handbrake cable, + too many bits to list.

For Sale: - 1976 Kitten estate no tax or m.o.t. spares or repair, some spares.

August 1998

For Sale: - R registered Kitten saloon, orange. M.O.T. till May 1998 £ 450, contact John Hindle

For Sale: - Al Osborn of Thetford has for sale an Ex Ford Escort front seat in grey cloth with a headrest, that fits a Kitten driver side. It can be yours for £25.00 plus carriage / delivery. Al also still has a copy of the 750 Racing book at £18.00 delivered.

September 1998

For Sale: - Rebel chassis number 100003, registration number BUE 447B, together with a host of good condition spares.

Steve MacDonald has decided to sell his beloved Reliant Kitten Pick-up, as seen on the front cover of edition 14. It has had more new parts than I have room to list here, from a new chassis up, and is M.O.T.'d and taxed, give the man a ring if you are interested in this excellent rare vehicle.

The Fiat 1600cc twin cam powered Kitten is on the market, give Jim Spence a ring if you are interested, it is on the road.

For Sale: - One of a pair of Kittens either a brown saloon or a turquoise estate, help the man choose which one to be parted from, contact Greg Savage

Joe has for sale a Kitten passengers side reclining seat with beige fabric trim

John Metcalfe, just made it John, has for Sale Jim No. 68, 2 owners from new, just 28,000 miles. £600 spent by current owner, Last M.O.T. May '98. £750 must be half its value for a quick sale.

Bob Neal tells me he knows where you can get a Fox back axle complete with springs for @ £30, don't get trampled in the rush!

Two Kittens for sale, spares or repair, a saloon and an estate. R & T registered, both can be yours for £180 o.n.o.

NOTES

Al Osborn has a large list of hints and tips for our cars, too large for me to include in here! If you would like to know more about a variety of aspects on tuning and generally improving your Kitten, send Al a large (A4) s.a.e. and a separate first class stamp to cover his copying costs, and he will send you several interesting A4 pages of information. A. O. Services, 35 Griston road, Watton, Thetford, IP25 6DN.

Just to clear up one bit of confusion relating to other makes of vehicle, Brian Millar was kindly pointing out to me on the 'phone the other day that he knew nothing at all about 18" wire wheels or 1933 Cadet's, and I began to doubt my sanity, not for the first time in recent months. Then I came across the proverbial bit of paper with the note about the wheels (6 stud ones mind) and the name Brian Millar, and the telephone number 01446 406845, so I rang it, and sure enough, we have more than one Brian Millar!! still no 18" wire wheels mind you! If you can help, give the man in South Wales a ring please.

It is now the end of August, and I have just taken the little red car off the road for the winter, well, that is the plan, to see if we can get by with one vehicle for a while. We failed to win the Doune Classic Challenge this year, knocked out by a trio of Morgans, only beaten by 2 seconds, my fault I think, too

much power, and hence wheel spin, and so time wasted - sorry chaps, I'll give John Box his engine back right away, I obviously can't handle all this power!

We have three particularly interesting vehicles for sale at the moment, and lest I run out of space in the adverts page I will briefly mention them here. The oldest first, Rebel chassis number three is looking for a new custodian, John Bowcott is the man to talk to. If you are after a bit more power and performance, Jim Spence is prepared to be parted from the 1600cc twin cam powered Kitten estate for somewhere in the region of £1,000 I believe, it is taxed and tested. Steve MacDonald is looking for a new custodian for his very nice Kitten Pick-up as featured on the cover of edition 14. All three are very interesting vehicles with a lot of history attached to them, and only two of them in Scotland!

Also possibly not present in the sales and wants page is the information that our friends in Portugal are in the market for a good Fox with an M.O.T. It must be in good condition, cash waiting.

Right, I have realised that thanks to John Bowcott's interesting article, and our friendly front cover man's generosity in providing a page of pictures for us inside the back cover of this edition, that I have less room than usual for readers letters, which is quite a different thing from less readers letters I assure you, but don't let that deter you from putting finger to keyboard, or pen to paper, my particular thanks go to Jeff Holmes and Daniel Lockton whose letters you will see in the Christmas edition due through your letter boxes in a couple of months time, or should I hold it back till the Christmas rush is over? O.K, O.K., I'll get it to you before Santa gets stuck in your chimney (come to think of it, houses with chimneys are about as common as pianos that still have their brass candle stick holders these days!).

I will admit that I have not been firing on all cylinders recently, but hopefully normal service will be resumed in the near future. Those of you who want a stainless steel exhaust system and who have not already done so, should send a £50 deposit. payable to the "Reliant Kitten Register spares A/C" soon, the next batch, which looks like being mainly 1½" bore systems, is scheduled to be made in early October, though late this month is a possibility. Don't miss the boat, as this will certainly be the last batch at those prices, (£125 delivered for the 1¼" and £135 for the 1½"), and also the last batch this year.

Right, the cut short letter from Malcolm of faulty odometer fame on page 7 excepted, that's this edition complete, drive carefully, bye for now.

With Brian's large and ever expanding selection of possible cover photographs, and only six issues per year, it is obvious that we cannot print all of them. Here are a few that didn't quite make it...



This Kitten belongs to Rienk L. Koopmans of the Netherlands, Register No. 209. Nice set of wheels Rienk. Rienk's wife has a Kitten estate

Joe's Bobcat Register No. 161. Designed & built by Robert Box, an exercise in how to make a Kitten do 100mph. Another nice set of wheels although not shown at their best in this picture.



The fabulous four, at John O'Groats, May 1998. They are, left to right, Kitten, Fox, Cipher and Rebel. The Kitten, belongs to Moira Marshall, No. 72, the Fox, to Thomas Touw, No. 420, the Cipher also to Thomas Touw and the Rebel to Fred Heath No. 240.

The terrific three, at a rally in England. Left to right they are a Rebel Estate, belonging to Bruce Emery No. 343, another Rebel Estate belonging to Bob Dormer No. 394 and a Rebel Saloon belonging to Fred Heath No. 240. I wonder why Fred seems to always be on the right-hand side of group line-ups??

