

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION?? – DON'T FORGET TO LUBRICATE THOSE SWIVELS!!

# Reliant Kitten Register

**NEWSLETTER – TWENTY-SIX**

*January / February 1999*



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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We are indebted to the following individuals who both give and receive information on the following subjects on our behalf.

Rebel alternative parts *contact Brian*

Kitten alternative parts *contact Brian*

Fox alternative parts *contact Brian*

Our Mutual Aid Spares scheme is run by *contact Brian*

The Register's Internet page is at: - <http://www.uk-classic-cars.com/kitten.htm>

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Our front cover this time is graced by a different view of the V8 powered Kitten belonging to John Beardmore, which, as you will have noticed from the brief glimpse you got of it on the inside of the back cover of the last edition, looks remarkably standard from some angles. As you can see from this angle however, it is just ever so slightly apparent, that this is no ordinary Kitten! See page 8 for an outline of the technical details.

I trust it is not too late to wish you a Happy New Year, and, before I forget, my thanks to Dick Goodall, who was the first, hopefully of many, to pass on information regarding Rebel alternative parts to David Myres.

As you may be aware, I do sometimes get a little confused, but it is as much life as me, honest! Remember David Heywood, our man in Norham? Well I do, and I was just slightly confused the other day when he rang me back from the factory at Tamworth! I had been trying to check with either Stewart Halstead (always start at the top!) but was quite happy to talk to his P. A., Doug Jeffries, but they were both at a meeting - still reeling from the number of enquiries generated from their presence at the Motor Show no doubt - and so Doug delegated to his assistant - boy they must be getting big, when the assistants have assistants! - Anyway, his name is David Heywood - and I wonder how it just sometimes comes about that I get confused!! Still, the question was did they know A. if the telephone number would be changing as a result of their move from Tamworth at Christmas? and B. if so, what would the new number be? For their advert on the back page you see. but they didn't know, well it was only the beginning of November. Still, I tried to be organised and do my forward planning in good time. (See back cover for new number)

Right, having got that off my chest, we'll continue, oh, I now have the new numbers, see back cover: -

An organisation who refer to themselves as "roadnet" wrote to us recently, that is the you and me us, by way of what they describe as "An open letter to all members." Well, it looks to me like an attempt at getting free advertising space. They claim to offer a product which will enable engines to run on unleaded fuel with no damage to valve seats. I must say that their prices seem to be good. However if you want to know more, just give me a ring or drop me an s.a.e. and I will send you a copy. To be honest now that the FBHVC have finally set up a test procedure for additives. An INDEPENDENT evaluation is to be undertaken at MIRA, they will be using a Rover "A" series engine, one which is known to be particularly susceptible to valve seat erosion, and I understand that the Rover group have made available a batch of A-series cylinder heads for test purposes. Additives which pass the MIRA test (which will hopefully be completed early in 1999) will receive an endorsement - watch this space.

One document, which I have in my possession, and sometimes think I should have a look at, even if only for a laugh, is the factory Repair Time Schedule book. The one I have covers the Robin, TW8A, the Kitten FW10, and the Scimitar SE6 - things like All Wishbone Bushes -: Renew, one side 2 hours 12 minutes, both sides 3 hours 45 (and this includes an allowance for checking and adjusting the steering geometry, and I have spent 10 years trying to remove the inner lower wishbone bush from one side of my original Kitten!!!

The 3 hours 30 minutes to renew the engine, which includes an allowance for torquing down the cylinder head after an initial run, seems reasonable. but the 45 minutes for one and 54 minutes for both engine mountings, well, O.K the driver's side one is fairly easy, but the one under the alternator, I am surprised they don't differentiate between the two! As for the 2 hours 57 minutes allowed to renew the rear crankshaft oil seal with the engine in situ, well Kenny Lamont, Ralph Erwin and Grant Coull can all testify to the lie there!! Perhaps we need to go on a course guys? And has anyone out there actually removed a Kitten propshaft in anything close to the recommended 33 minutes? (I know Alan Marshall will claim he has,) but has anyone else, without cutting a hole in the propshaft tunnel?

One interesting supplement in this book refers to Vehicle Identification Numbers, and tells us that the first four numbers make up the Model and Type, the next to numbers and letters tell the colour, year and month of manufacture, and the last six numbers are the actual chassis number i.e. the vehicle sequence number. This of course only relates to the SCD type chassis numbers.

Oh, wait a minute, Mike Cowie had the misfortune to fail a rear spring on his Kitten saloon the other day, and he came over to get a new one on Sunday morning 20/12/98, and, in spite of the cold weather, he rang later that afternoon to tell me he had successfully changed it in 1 hour 50 minutes, must dig out that book again and see how long he should have taken! - O.K., enough teasing....., the

right hand side, which is the one he was doing, should take 1 hour 54 minutes, but I know that Mike had the car jacked up before he started the clock, so I guess you were bang on Mike, well done (the other side is allowed just 1 hour 33 minutes, and both sides together 3 hours 27 min. so now you know. Mind you, how, when we are allowed 15 minutes to change a U bolt, can we possibly be expected to change the spring clamp plate in just 27 minutes (remember that that plate is held in place by two 'U' bolts!)?

*On a completely different front, perhaps you can help me out, or at least help this correspondent out, I will simply tell you that I am not sure what to do, so I will share the following with you, and invite you to write to the individual in question with any pictures you may have which you feel might be appropriate: -*

Dear Mr. Marshall,

Zwijnaarde, 25/11/1998

Because I have find your address in the "PRACTICAL CLASSICS" I am very happy to write you a letter, this in connection with my photo-collection of the Make RELIANT.

Of many years' standing I am a furious Photo-collector of **ALL** the RELIANT MODELS + the race and Rally cars.

I am sorry to inform you that it is very difficult to find this photos and owing to reasons of healthy it is for my not possible to go for take Photos. (Rally's, Club-meetings etc.)

On account of a permanent heart disease is my collections a very important part of my life, with this I can forget often many trouble.

I hope it is for you possible to send me a Photo of your and / or other RELIANT(s) for my collection; with this you make my a great pleasure and for sending I am you very hearty thankful.

**IMPORTANT:** please, if possible with mention of the MODEL / Type and YEAR of manufacture.

For decoration of my hobby / collectors room I am looking for PLATES and stickers of RALLY'S and CONCENTRATIONS + Plaquettes-souvenir.

Awaiting your reply for which I thank you in advance, I wish the "RELIANT KITTEN REG" in the U.K. good luck.

With kind regards from Belgium

JEAN - SPILEERS  
GROTE STWG. ZUID, 15  
8-9052. ZWIJNAARDE / Belgium

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*Well, I am sure you can imagine just how big a job I could make that into, so I have sent Jean a letter with copies of some recent magazines, and will try to compile something appropriate over Christmas. As I said earlier, feel free to help me out here, by sending him something yourself.*

*I should mention that I have received more technical information from John Bowcott, thank you John, but I am short of space in this edition, one of those days I'll surprise you and keep my mouth shut and let others do all the talking - well you can all live in hope!*

*George Sampford is having problems locating a source of spares for the distributor on his Kitten, the problem part is a perished diaphragm on the vacuum mechanism, spares used to be readily*

available for @ £12, but now it looks as though he will need to buy a new distributor for £90, can anyone help with advice regarding the supply of new spare parts for our distributors?

George also had a question about compression ratios, rocker cover colours, and distributors, all of which he, and I, believe to be related, though I think it is a red herring George in as much as that, to my knowledge, all the Kittens were the same in that respect, i.e. red rocker covers, 9.5 to 1 compression ratios, and the same distributor. I quite accept that after all this time, not all Kittens have their original mechanical components currently fitted, and so confusion may prevail in certain circumstances.

George also recommends the use of Super Flex Advanced Polyurethane suspension bushes, and we can get them for a reasonable price if the batch quantity is over 50, given that your Kitten or Fox has 8, now we need to be careful here, because the early Kittens had different front suspension from the later ones, was it just the anti roll bar that was altered, or were there other more dramatic changes as well? The bush at the front of the track control arm, the one that locates to the chassis just beside the front number plate, is the same, I think, as the lower (or is it the upper?) wishbone one(s). The Rebel guys are much simpler to deal with, because they are all Triumph ones and so presumably a standard, no pun intended, part. That is no reason why we can't get a batch of them done as well if enough of you want them, I will get prices organised. Oh, and yes, I think they can do an equivalent to our anti-roll bar ones too. Thanks George for the info.

Alan Critoph rang me on Christmas eve, to I am sure, help me out of my confusion, but in fact I am even more. Well, no not more, just differently confused, relating to Spitfire engined cars, and Kittens in particular. I thought in the last edition Page 4 I think it was, that I was referring to a Triumph Spitfire engined Kitten, not the Supermarine Spitfire (i.e. Rolls Royce Merlin 24 Litre) powered vehicle, which Alan thought I was talking about, and he might be right, I may have got confused between "The Beast" and a Triumph powered Kitten, but I am sure that we are both correct.

The following unsolicited letter arrived the other day, and I thought its content sufficiently unusual as to warrant a mention: -

Dear Brian,

1/1/99

I just thought a short note about P.F. Spare insurance might be welcome from someone who has used them for some time.

Lynne and I become more Reliant orientated every year, lets face it, life is never dull with a Reliant in your family, and P.F. Spare insure the lot. Yes we have more than one.

You're right, the premiums are no different, in some cases a pound or two more. It's the service we like, nothing is too much trouble. From that point of view I recommend them, a change to be treated as a valued customer, instead of just another problem to disturb your coffee break.

Over the years we have used them well, and found them friendly and helpful.

I hope that this letter helps those of us with a more old fashioned view of customer relations.

A Happy New Year to you.

P. Bennett - Grantham.

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*On quite a different topic, Joe was quick to point out to me the error of my ways in as much as the Bobcat was missing from the list of registered vehicles in the supplement to the last edition - and on the subject, my thanks to those who were good enough to point out errors and omissions. Joe, however, I did ask to give me a note of the correct information, promising to correct the records as soon as I had the right information to hand (I did not have access to the computer when Joe rang) and I am still waiting Joe!*

*I could go on about the number of folk who, in spite of my pleading, and polite requests, did not complete the reverse side of the renewal notice. But I ought to know human nature by now (I often struggle to know when the acceptance of things that are wrong is giving up, and when it is simply common sense) I won't do the former, and my daughter tells me that the latter is like whales, an endangered species!*

*So, where exactly does all this leave the Rebel technical page that the index suggested this would be? Well, it hardly seems worth it now! My thanks to John Bowcott for taking the time to send in more information which I will use in the future.*

*John Pearce and Brian Millar were both suggesting that I could put all the magazines onto a CD and offer the back numbers in that format, indeed put them on the Internet even, and certainly, with all the computer power these guys have, it could easily be done - watch this space.*

*On a similar front, there is the thought that we might venture into the realms of an A5 booklet type of format in the future. I personally prefer that sort of thing, but as things have stood in the past, and are here at present, it is easier to do it in A4, and ease suits me just fine.*

*At the time of writing, now early January '99, we have had 33% of subscribers renew their subscription for this year, and each day brings more. We have signed up 4 new people with 8 relevant cars between them. I can't get time to chase folk up for missing details, for dealing with new people - a wonderful complaint I know, but we are in the middle of trying to find a nursing home for Moira's Aunt at the moment, she has been in hospital for the past year, and we are keen to resolve that situation as best we can, soon, and it all takes time, bear with me please.*

*I now get an initial run of 330 copies of the magazine done, which means that if I need reprints, all I have to do, for the first 30 (and hopefully we won't need many more than that this year!) is get extra copies of the front covers arranged. It is a lot for John to do the 300 he now does, thanks again John, it is appreciated. Storage is a problem as well; have you any idea how much space almost 300 copies of the magazine takes up? (On average I keep about 10 copies of each edition in stock), plus a spare 50 or so of the current edition so that I can give all enquiries a complimentary copy. Never mind the space, they are so heavy that I can't pick them all up at once any more!*

### **The Liege Story**

*I am indebted to Peter Davis for being good enough to share this with us. As is often the case in life however, it arrived too late to go along with the front cover picture on the last edition! Just as I have been meaning to have a picture of a Liege on the front cover for a while now, so had Peter been meaning to send me some information on it - given that it has been on my 'To Do' list for over a year, and I suspect Peter's for the same sort of time, it really isn't too bad that we both made it at almost the same time! Oh, by the way, I assumed that that was Howard Blackwell's car on the cover last time, because he sent me the picture, thank you Howard for pointing out that that was in fact the factory demonstrator.*

The Liege has proved to be impressive both on and off road, the versatile suspension on the Liege comprises of double wishbones at the front, and a positive 'A' bracket and trailing arms locating the axle. There are new inexpensive all steel 16" wheels as an alternative to the wire wheels which have Liege alloy hubs with integral brake drums. The tyres used which compliment the lightweight Liege so well are the 5" wide Avon Mk2 Speedmasters. The Liege is purposeful in looks and ability, a real go anywhere car.

In competition the Liege has successfully competed in 80 hours of Classic Trials, and the 72 hour 'Le Jog' (winning the up to two litre GT class).

In October 1996 the Liege was driven to southern Morocco as a test, 6,500 miles without a problem (having been a bare chassis two weeks prior to leaving). The Pyrenees and Atlas mountain roads were impressive, as was the performance of the Liege through them. The 16" wire wheels and tyres were a great success. Strong and light, they made easy work of the 50 mile off road track to Erg Chebbi on the edge of the Sahara. A few days later the Liege was 7,000 feet up in the Pyrenees leaving Avon tread patterns in the snow. The Reliant engine's performance was amazing, it never missed a beat and returned over 50 M.P.G., even the radiator refused to be topped up.

The other purpose of the run was to do a route recce for an event organised by the Guild Of Motor Endurance. The Liege Agadir Liege. A 5,000 mile International Touring Trial which took place on the 4th - 16th October 1997 for specialist cars and specials. 33 specialist cars competed on this arduous endurance trial with gold awards to the most accomplished, the Liege sporting car was amongst them. When confronted by landslides blocking the Khenifra road at altitude in the Atlas Mountains, the Liege just drove over them and kept going. For all but two, the road to Marrakech meant returning down the mountain. Well done Gary and Nathan Jones / Liege.

On both trips to the Sahara the Liege was able to carry all the necessary soft luggage and equipment for the journey (on the first three week trip, a tent and two sleeping bags were also taken). There is a boot compartment over the 6-gallon fuel tank at the rear, space behind and under the seats, and useful space in the double skinned doors. The adjustable seats were amazingly comfortable, even on 12 hour plus driving stints.

The Liege has finished the '96, '97 & '98 Easter Lands End Trials. Each 20 hours without a problem, and really good tests under arduous conditions. The agility of the suspension and the light and responsive steering made the Liege always a joy to drive. The supercharger was fitted for the 1997 Trial; it sounded gorgeous and pulled like a train, all very enjoyable, just what owning a Liege is all about.

On the 21st of May 1998 Gari Jones, partnered by Leeza Rose of channel one television, took part in the Guild of Motor Endurance Six Hour at Mallory Park, the Liege completed the 6 hour endurance without a problem. Afterwards other competitors commented on the undiminished speed of the Liege through the corners, and its remarkable handling, especially flat out through Gerrards. Even more amazing is the fact that the suspension was still as set up for the Land's End trial. The Liege has a low centre of gravity, and its relationship to the roll centre axis means that no anti roll bars are required. From high speed to braking into the hairpin for 219 laps, the braking capability also received much praise. The Liege lightweight design together with the reliability of the Reliant engine and running gear, make a complimentary package.

*I happen to know that should you want to know more about this interesting little car, and perhaps even visit the works, and look at the Liege more closely, Peter Davis and or Geoffery Lindon, would be pleased to hear from you.*

## Foxes' Den

*I had a call the other day from Christine Hayton, that is the near Newcastle Christine, who took her trusty Fox on the Land's End to John O'Groats run last May. Anyway, the Fox has had an overhaul since then, and is running well, an Christine was wondering if anyone was interested in a camping weekend? So I said I'd ask. Talk to the girl if you are interested. Check that No. Brian!*

*There is, so far, a distinct lack of interest in stainless steel window frames for Fox doors which really does surprise me, perhaps more of you have them already than I had thought, in which case, would you be so good as to tell me where you got them so that we can compare price and availability please?*

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## READERS LETTERS

*You may remember that in the last edition I had written to a number of people who had enquired about the Register, but had not subscribed. I sent off 18 letters at that time, three of them have since subscribed, welcome, and three have returned the form to say that they no longer have a Reliant, and are not interested. The majority have not replied at all, (one letter was returned by the Royal Mail marked " Addressee has gone away") but I now do not feel at all guilty about taking their details off my records, and re-using these numbers for new subscribers. One individual however was good enough to tell me something of the history of his Kitten, as it was then, and I thought that his letter might be of some interest: -*

Dear Mr. Marshall,

1-11-98

Thank you for your letter with reference to the Kitten Register. I enclose two photographs of the Reliant Kitten De Luxe, which I purchased from a scrap yard for £100. The car needed - as you can see from the photos - a fair bit of work. It started and ran very well indeed in the condition it was in at the scrap yard. The problem, and presumably the reason it was scrapped, looked as though the windscreen wipers had been switched on perhaps when the wiper blades were frozen to the windscreen, and the wiring loom burnt out as a result. This was no problem for an auto electrician who was in my garage repairing a wiring problem on my Scimitar SE5A. I managed to get some work done on the Kitten, including a respray in Reliant blue, and a set of 4 Wolfrace alloy wheels, complete with new tyres and spacers. This made the wee car look very good indeed. My son learned to drive in this Kitten and then, because of "Street cred" would not, having passed his test, take it on the road! This is when we purchased an SS1. The car was then stored on axle stands in a lock-up garage I have for about three years. Recently in one of the Slice magazines, someone in Oxford was advertising for a Kitten. I rang the person, and explained how much had been done to the car, and its history, and he almost begged me to take it to Oxford and offered me £500 for it, unseen. I told him that I would give it a 12 Month M.O.T. and arranged for a date to take it down. This was duly arranged and we arrived in Oxford - he looked at the car, took it for a test drive, and gave me £500, and we departed.

This took place earlier this year (1998) and I am not sure whether I have done the right thing or not - the little Kitten did everything you need - a reliable little runabout.

Wishing you well with your Register

Yours sincerely      Donald Smith - Shipley (West Yorkshire)



Dear Brian,

28th Oct.'98

I have just replaced my Kitten's wiring loom. I have never owned a Kitten before or worked on one, so I can only assume that mine is as the others. I did not like the idea of the wiring running under the sill of the driver's door and being open to all weathers. Mine still follows the same route, but is now encased in 3/4" plastic plumbers piping. A very effective, yet cheap (at about £6.00) solution to the situation.

There is a local firm near me who will do exchange steering rack and pinions for £106 including vat. Something of a bargain compared to Reliant prices (*and makes my man's ones at just £65 exchange, look dirt cheap! Ed.*) The only real problem I have had is with the rear number plate lamp

I needed a replacement headlining, and a torn one was acquired for £40, it made an acceptable pattern. I don't think the project will be finished much before next summer!

Hope you and family are fit, and look forward to having a dram with you one day.

David Ball - Ipswich

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Dear Brian,

Oct.'98

Just a quick note to tell you about my Rebel's gearbox problems. After searching for weeks to no avail, still no box. My husband was ready to give up, telling me not to go into second gear! when someone gave him a Kitten box, which of course didn't fit, but he had the idea of adapting the mountings to fit. So he asked a friend of ours who is an engineer to adapt it (*this has all been done before, by a number of subscribers to the Register, we have the knowledge and experience, but it is a lot of work, Ed.*) He came up with the idea of taking all the parts out of the Kitten box, and fitting them into the Rebel box housing, which they did one Saturday afternoon! I might add that my husband was not convinced this would work. After a couple of hours both boxes were empty. The next step was to fill one up again. Looking at all the bits, I wasn't convinced either. Well, one hour and two more cans of beer later, with both men covered in oil, it was ready to fit back in the car, so in it went. With me praying, by now I was getting fed up with fetching tools from the garden, thrown there in a fit of temper and frustration. Well the end result was one new gearbox that works perfectly, and one man saying, "I knew it would work" and one very relieved and tired wife.

Yours - Sandra Talbot. – Hinckley

*Now, as we all know, there are two sides, at least, to every story, and I just happen to have another side to that one, right here!*

Dear Brian,

Oct.'98

I carefully rebuilt our Rebel from the ground up with new everything, at a probable cost, excluding labour, of £1200 plus!! but am very pleased with the result.

Simon Talbot - Hinckley

*Simon is a man of few words, but appreciates a good car when he owns one! However, he was in a hurry then, he has since had time, and seen a certain picture: -*

Dear Brian,

Nov.'98

As well as the Rebel, which was totally rebuilt, chassis, brakes, engine, clutch, gearbox, exhaust, we have a tax exempt Scimitar YKV 113K, and have just acquired a Kitten chassis, Reg SDP 68S. The V5 says the chassis number is 7D2/14802340 (any information gratefully received) and engine number 7D/85/103793, although I got two other engines with it - Nos. M/8/16019 and 6A/85/100855 *Can anyone provide any information on the non-Kitten engine? Ed.* Both engines need work, which I shall do one at a time, and I intend to fit a supercharger, running at 10 lb boost with a 1½" instead of 1¼" carb. That should increase the power by 40%.

My original intention was to fit an older type of kit body, but seeing the Cipher in Mewsletter 24, I would be grateful if you could send me Tony Stevens' address along with any other photos you may have of the Cipher. Perhaps I can get him to produce a set of panels in conjunction with your friend. *(Phil Hallam had expressed an interest in building one also, and I had written to the good professor Stevens on his behalf earlier in the year)*

Many thanks, Simon Talbot, P.S. Scimitar for sale £ 1850 o.n.o.

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Dear Brian,

9/10/1998

Thank you for the information on the Reliant Kitten Register. I do not wish to join the Register but I have included details of my car which I am sure you will find interesting.

I purchased my Kitten in January 1988 when I was 19 years old, with the intention of modifying it. I drove it as standard for a while, and found it great fun, except for the dodgy gearbox. I took many corners in opposite lock slides, great fun until I snapped the back of the drivers seat while doing a handbrake turn!

My original plans were for a 1600cc Fiat Twin Cam and 5-speed gearbox (I had already fitted a 2,000cc Fiat engine in my Morris Minor, which I sold to buy the Kitten) Ford axle, disc brakes on the front Kitten uprights, and a roll cage to create a fast road car. Then I got carried away and decided on a 2-litre Fiat engine, then a 3528cc Rover V8 engine. By this time I had decided that a new chassis would be required, and over 18 months and £ 4,000 I built "THE" Reliant Kitten.

For those who might be interested the Spec, is as follows: -

Car : Reliant Kitten bought for £450  
Engine : Rover V8 SD1 3528cc standard engine at a cost of £100  
Chassis : Home built TIG welded space frame 1½" 14SWG steel, square and round.  
Gearbox : BW type 66 Automatic  
Rear Axle : Volvo 245 narrowed 4.1:1 ratio  
Rear suspension : Rose Jointed S link, Reliant Scimitar Spax coil overs 110.16 inch springs  
Rear Wheels : 10" by 15" Revolution 5 spokes  
Rear tyres : N50 by 15 Kelly superchargers (12½" wide, 28" tall)  
Front suspension : Based on Capri strut 6° Castor -1° camber  
Front wheels : 3½" by 13" revolution  
Front tyres : 135.70 by 13" Goodyears  
Steering rack: Narrowed Kitten

Insurance is a very reasonable £130 TPF&T with Adrian Flux. I have a spare Kitten front body section in stock in case anything happens to mine. All the other standard Kitten parts have been sold.

I am currently building a Morris Minor convertible, 2,000cc Fiat 16V, space frame chassis and double wishbone suspension.

I would be interested in attending a National show with my car. If you require any further information, please contact me.

Yours sincerely, John W. Beard more - Leeds

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*Thanks John for the interesting write up on your Kitten, I am sure the story will create questions and stir up a bit of enthusiasm amongst those who are into such things. I will be in touch. Ed.*

Dear Brian,

21 November 1998

Thank you for registering our Kitten and for this year's back numbers of 'Mewsletter'. As a newcomer, it is a bit like walking into a room in the middle of different conversations as many articles refer to previous correspondence (*which is the reason why I still offer all the back issues to new subscribers! Ed.*) Although I'm sure that all will become clear with the passing of time. A few thrown away comments have whetted my appetite, what are the best replacement seats for the Kitten? Can 12" Mini wheels be used as a straight replacement for the 10"? Can a Robin gearbox be used as a direct replacement for the Kitten one (mine drops out of first)? Who is coordinating the alternate parts list? You mention a list of owners countrywide prepared to give emergency support, we would be happy to provide this for owners, how do we get a copy of the list? Is a workshop manual available? Just a few points.

My wife and I both drive GTE 6A's, hers in is a concours winner, they are both used daily and we are currently restoring a SE5A. The Kitten was planned as number 4 in the collection and will be used at least once a week since we believe that cars benefit from regular use. Our next purchase will be an SS1 or SE4, whichever comes first, and then the rest of the 4 wheelers and we will be showing the Kitten in the South East when we show the Scimitar, and, hopefully encourage more Scimitar drivers to have a second string for local use (or just for fun).

Yours sincerely, Brian Owen - Reading

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*The following letter was received, in an envelope with a black border, just the week before Christmas, I was not sure whether to refer to it, or publish it, see what you think -:*

Dear Brian,

11 Dec.'98

I write to advise you of the sad demise of an old friend, namely Tiddles, my Reliant Kitten No. 337 on your Register. On November 3rd, at a petrol station in Battle, the engine caught fire. Although the damage was confined to the engine compartment, having no place to store a damaged car, I had no alternative but to make an insurance claim, and have the insurance company take it away from the local garage where it caught fire, and where it was incurring daily storage charges. I'd had my Kitten for 9 years and it's been a faithful servant both through routine work and happy holidays to North Wales,

Devon and Cornwall and the North as far as the Lake District. I'd like to subscribe to the Mewsletter for at least one more year even though temporarily Kittenless. I've acquired an old Bedford Viva (HA) van to go to and from work. As I look around I see even fewer of these than there are Kittens, though I can't imagine anyone ever compiling a register of them. Its far too thirsty, so I might well replace it with another Kitten some time in the future, especially if I can't get to like driving it, which so far I can't.

I'd be interested to know what the likely cause of the engine fire was. I inspected it as best I could and I would say that the seat of the fire was around the distributor or H.T. leads. Before the fire I was noticing a click clicking noise from the ignition. I did nothing about it except wonder what it might be. It was a long time since it was serviced but I was reluctant to interfere with it as in the last seven months since its last M.O.T. it had been running better than it had ever run in all the time I'd had it; starting first time every time whatever the weather (well maybe 2nd or 3rd time on the odd occasion) and running smoothly and efficiently on very little fuel since I had the thermostat fixed in April. Have any other members experienced engine fires? I suspect it's not something you really like to write about or talk about too much.

I hear some people say that putting up the price of petrol does not reduce the number of cars on the road. I think they're wrong. I certainly think twice and again before I start up my Viva van, and I expect to make more use of my bicycle in future. I was much less reluctant to use the car when I was a Kitten owner.

Best wishes for Christmas and New Year to you and Kitten owners everywhere.

William - W. Davies - Battle, E. Sussex

*Thank you William for sharing that sad tale with us, it does bring to the front of my mind the need for agreed value comprehensive insurance, with - should we be able to benefit from it - the guarantee of retention rights over the salvage - all features offered by the policies offered by Richardson Hodgson, with whom I know more and more Kitten and Rebel owners are insuring their cars - do keep me informed of your experiences on the insurance front.*

*As far as the cause goes, the article of John Bowcott in edition 24 gives us the clue that your cracking noise was probably a faulty spark plug insulator, and if your Kitten was one of the ones which had the fuel pipe secured to the top of the rocker cover by a metal bracket, and the fuel pipe had never been replaced, then I suspect that is the answer, a fuel leak over the top of the engine, ignited by a spark from a faulty plug, but that is only an educated guess - anyone any other theories?*

*I do know of an instance in the past few months where a car (the dreaded four letter F word, and we are not talking Fiat here!) was driven into the back of a Kitten estate, the Kitten passed an M.O.T. the following week without any repairs having had to be made, yet the cost of repairing the car at dealer prices was over £1,000, yes you heard me over one thousand pounds. Needless to say the insurance company wrote the car off and paid out. Quite unreasonable the owner thought, as all he wanted was his car put back into the condition it was in before the accident, which was entirely the other drivers fault. Seems a fair request to me, but in that instance the best deal that could be struck was that the owner was able to do the repairs himself, using a back door which I was able to supply second-hand, and repairing the rear valence and bumper himself. The problem can arise then if the insurers have put your car on the "Total Loss Register" because you then have a problem getting it insured again. (His company cancelled the insurance on the car when they paid out). There is no right of appeal in such circumstances, and while we have been successful in the past in having a Kitten removed from the Total Loss Register, there is no guarantee that we will be successful in every case. As I said, let me know*

*your experiences, as it is only with a comprehensive picture that we can make informed decisions / recommendations.*

*I was, still on my insurance high horse, contacted in November, by an insurance loss adjuster, nothing to do with Kittens or the Register, but a Robin owner who had spent almost £2,000 renovating a 1970's Robin, and having completed the mechanical restoration, had entrusted his pride and joy to a garage to have it resprayed. The garage was damaged by fire and the Robin totally destroyed, and the loss adjuster had found my name in his efforts to come to a fair settlement, so while he does not know it, some poor Robin owner in deepest England has me to blame or thank as the case may be, for helping to resolve that claim (Ought I to charge a fee for such consultations on behalf of non-subscribers I wonder?) Moving on from insurance, to people who band my name about, I had an interesting call late in December, from a Scot with an American accent. (I must learn to make a note of those people's names in future!) He had been given my name and number by no less an individual than Lord Montague of Beaulieu. His (the American sounding gent's) parents came from Glasgow, and during his time in America, he ran, together with two assistants, the Rolls Royce Owners Club over there. As I am always saying, you get to meet some interesting people in this job, even if it is just on the telephone. Anyway he was looking to secure the best deal he could for the widow of a Kitten owner, but as the car in question had no engine or gearbox, I had to suggest that he would be unlikely to raise more than £50 for it. I am sure he was disappointed, but he was quite right to check with the relevant Club, they are rare, and is scarcity alone were the deciding factor, our little wonders would surely be fetching as many thousands as they do hundreds, but such is not the way of things - yet!*

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*Well, there's a thing, I had given the masters for this edition to Robert, my neighbour, to proof read, and realised as I did so, that I was a page short, funny thing the human mind, and how easily it can get confused - well, mine at any rate. I thought, dangerous I know, but we have to take risks to make progress, that as the last edition had an extra A4 sheet in it, so, the logic went, one less sheet, two less pages - right? WRONG!! We enjoyed a page of pictures inside the back cover last time, didn't we? And without that, I have an extra A4 side to cover. So one less sheet of paper means one page less in this instance, which belatedly gave me time, well space really, to voice my theory about William Davies's fire, tidy up a few corners, and to share the following with you, while at the same time thanking those of you who were kind enough to send a Christmas card, and did not receive one in return, my apologies, we are struggling to cope with life a bit these days, and with over a hundred cards on the old list already - your thoughts and good wishes are appreciated, thank you.*

*One such individual was Richard Plaxton, who penned the following literary gem in his card: -*

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The race is on, which will get finished first?

- a) The Millennium Dome
- b) The Jubilee line extension
- c) The Channel Tunnel high-speed rail link
- d) My Reliant Regal (now 7 years owned)

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*Now, I have to tell you that Richard did run the Regal at one time, so while he may be factually correct in saying that it has been in his keeping for 7 years, it has not been undergoing restoration for*

*quite that long! But what I really want to know is when either of your Rebels are going to get back into service Richard?? Ed. p.s I hope the move went O.K., good luck in the new place.*

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Now I am quite sure that I have said so somewhere else, but just in case not, or just in case you missed it, this will be the last of these you will get, unless I receive your 1999 subscription. Now I know that I am often preaching to the converted, but at the time of writing, 11/01/99, the majority of you have yet to do the dastardly deed - it really needn't be painful, I did simplify the form for this year, though one chap, one of a small number who prefer to send stamps, sent second class ones, now the form clearly states first class, and I have to say that in spite of my going on about it at what I felt were fairly lengthy extremes in the last edition, and on the form itself in block capitals, the number of folk who failed to mark the back of the form, the First Aid Scheme part, in any way at all, leaves me almost in despair - never mind Brian, just carry on with what you do well, there's a good lad..... Mutter. mutter...mutter, What, no sign of the men in white coats yet!

Oh, well, a little room in here yet, Brian Millar was on the telephone last night, his work has been keeping him out of mischief, well that's what he tells me Polly! He is one of those, probably numerous people, who is planning a Devon holiday this year to see this eclipse. Imagine wanting to be in the dark!

Right, that's me for now, talk to you again about Easter.

## SALES & WANTS

### **November 1998**

Wanted: - Reliant Fox chassis or whole vehicle for spares, please contact E. Wallis.

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Breaking for spares, most parts available 1976 Kitten Estate.

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A rare opportunity to purchase one of those 1 owner from new Kittens has arisen, Give Peter Beer a ring if you are interested in a 1976 saloon, just 133,000 miles from new, and as I said, 1 owner.

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Contact P. F. Spare for your insurance needs, ring Lyn on 01530 270574 for a quote.

### **January 1999**

Fox for sale: - Bob Hunt tells me that he is considering giving up motoring, and so his very nice Fox will shortly be available. This is, claims Bob, and having seen several, including his, I have to agree with him, the best Fox in the land. It has an unleaded head, fast road cam, sunroof, and has been maintained to the highest standards. The price reflects the care taken of the vehicle which has been owned by Bob from new, offers @ £3,000 to Bob Hunt

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Rebel estate for sale, Tax exempt, M.O.T., sun roof, 850 engine, sound chassis, some spares available, contact John Blagburn offers @ £500

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Reliant Rebel saloon for sale. No M.O.T., but engine runs, needs work on brakes, new parts with the car. Chassis welding done. This early example, chassis number R100339, with a tidy interior, yours for @ £200.

For sale: - Regal saloon (could be a donor engine for a Rebel!) contact John King in Carlisle

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Mr. Dennis Jackson of Hull tells me he will shortly be looking for a Kitten

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For Sale: - Reliant Fox Van

Cream with black upholstery. Removable hardtop with heated rear window. 1984 & 78,000 miles. Two owners from new, with last owner for 11 years. M.O.T. till 30/12/99. Full tow bar and electrics. Personalised number plate (B80 MAY). GRP body and mechanics in very good order, offers @ £450

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Wanted: - Kitten in good mechanical order, body condition immaterial. Northern England or Southern Scotland preferred.

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For Sale: - 1986 Reliant Fox Pick-up, good running order, rear seat fitted. M.O.T. Sep.'99 Tax Dec.'99 £1,000. Contact Rita Dilliway

Dave Smith has sent the following list to Phil Hallam for the Mutual Aid Spares list, but he is really keen to move the following: - Steering rack £30. Lower steering columns £15. Headlamps, and rear lamps, from £3. Steering column with wheel and indicator switch £10. Radiators in good condition £10. Windscreen (not laminated) £5. Wiper motors £5. Kitten rear axle complete £20. Front shocks, not perfect, but good for M.O.T. £15. Assorted switches and instruments from £1. Front end of bodywork complete £30, 4 Kitten alloy wheels in good condition £50, Bonnet £5, 2 drivers doors and 2 passengers doors £5 each, gearboxes £10, pair of black front seats £10, Plus lots more

## NOTES

Right, listen up people, I am cheating! It is the 9th of November, the masters of edition 25 having been proof read are sitting here waiting to go to my new copy man, and I am in desk tidying mode. I have just yesterday written to out alternative parts list holders / compilers, to check if their details in the index page are correct and I have come across a bit of paper which Moira wrote the following information on for me while I was away doing the Lands End to John O'Groats run back in May (1998). I had a bad oil leak which I thought was from the fuel pump to crankcase joint (in fact it was at the oil pressure switch, same part of the engine mind you!) and I thought it a good opportunity to remove the mechanical pump since I did not use it anyway having fitted an electric one. The point is, and this applies to Rebels as well as Kittens and Foxes, and so I can save three stamps by telling everyone that the part number for the B.M.C., now Rover, blanking plate which will I believe fit the Reliant crankcase is

2A265, they can be had from Mini Spares Centre Ltd., on 0181 3686292. The gasket is part No. GUJ705779. Just to check that I ordered a couple, well it was not worth buying just the 1 with the postage involved, so I have a couple here if you want one - for those fitting electric fuel pumps instead of the mechanical one.

I have heard it said in the past that the expression "It's a small world" takes on even more significance when you get into a specialised field, and that that theory would seem to be upheld if a recent telephone call is anything to go by. You will all know the name Tony Stevens, the good professor was the man responsible for the Cipher, but he also produced the Sienna, and has since gone onto larger engined vehicles, well his son Peter still runs the Sienna, and I had a call (20th December '98) from Mike Goodbourne who is embarking on a project to build a Liege, remember the front cover of the last edition? Well, one of them, they are available either fully built, or as a kit, and he is a good friend of Peter Stevens, see what I mean, it is a small world indeed!

Moving on, I have always to make decisions as to which letters to include, and which to omit, or extensively edit for use within these pages, and people like Dick Goodall leave me feeling guilty at times as they do write, regularly even, but never see their letters in print. I had even left a note in the document that has become this edition, to use one of Dick's letters, and have yet again failed to do so - one day Dick....

With winter now truly upon us I guess I will have to content myself with planning for the better weather. Edition 27 was started yesterday 1/1/98, and John Pearce was on the 'phone today to tell me of the front cover picture for this edition, so we are well ahead at the moment -I know that I am often looking for the musical connection, but Pavarotti? Really? - Guess I'll have to get back on the diet right enough -just wait till you see "the Royal picture", (a really good picture of the little red car's nearside front wing, but not so well focused on either your Registrar, or the Princess Royal!) - (Yes Geoff Eldridge, she does still have a Scimitar, one of the first of the Middle bridge ones) it is equally unflattering to that one of me in "The Three Wise Men", I guess the diet should be given a higher priority!

My thanks to those who have renewed their subscriptions, they rest of you please note that this will be the last magazine you receive if you do not renew your subscription for 1999. We are now well and truly into the awkward numbers game, that is to say that the collating, and mailing of 250 or so magazines is a big job, but the numbers would need to double that before it would be commercially viable to farm the work out - so I am simply making my life that bit easier, if I have not received your renewal by March, you will be taken off the mailing list. So please don't leave it till the last minute, do it now, using the blue form you got with the last edition, and if you have lost the form, just give me a ring, or drop me a line and we'll get a copy off to you right away.

Right, end of page approaching fast, do have a healthy and prosperous 1999, talk to you again in a couple of months or so, till then take care.

*Brian*