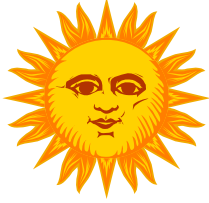


Reliant Kitten Register



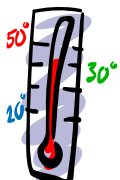
NEWSLETTER – TWENTY-EIGHT

May / June 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: *contact Brian*

Kitten Alternative Parts contact: *contact Brian*

Fox Alternative Parts contact: *contact Brian*

Mutual Aid Spares Scheme *contact Brian*

Mewsletter pictures *contact Brian*

◆ The Register has a page on the internet at <http://www.uk-classic-cars.com/kitten.htm> ◆

Our front cover for this edition is something different as usual! This is a Kitten van for those who may not have met one before. Unusually for us it is a black and white picture, the real car being green. Also unusual is that it is pictured with its original UK registration number as it has now been JF-TJ-81 for some time. The van in question belonged to Evert Alferink from Holland and was for sale last year. I must get in touch and find out where it went.

Oh well, that was exiting (a little bit – mostly it was just hassle, frustration and hard work!) Here I am on April, the masters of edition 27 have been at the printers for three weeks, the back and front covers here, (thank you John) for a fortnight and for the first time in several years I have not started the next edition – yet! There are a number of reasons for this, but mainly it is all down to trying to get to grips with Windows – come back DOS, all is forgiven!! Is it old dogs and new tricks? No, it really should not have been that difficult – there was a song, I suspect specially written for a pantomime that Moira was in some years, well lets be honest, some decades ago, and the opening line was, “Why does it have to be me?” It goes on “Somehow it seems so unfair”. Enough, Brian, enough – on with the task in hand. I hope this finds you well, and with the new format, if indeed we have adopted it, meets with your approval. Much debate has gone in to the font size, and as with most things in my life, a compromise has been reached. I hope it is a suitable compromise and in the absence of serious criticism it will be adopted as the standard for the next edition.

We seem to be entering a phase where almost half our new subscribers are joining as associate members who are looking to learn more about our fine wee cars, and very welcome you all are too, hopefully with a view to acquiring one of your own one day. This must bode well for the future. Also as you will see in our readers letters, some of us are moving on to other things. Quite what all this means I am not sure. Perhaps the research carried out by Duncan Bradford gives us a clue. Duncan has taken the time to actually do something that I have been meaning to do for ages, thank you Duncan,. The research, whilst not telling us much about vehicles that are off the road, does show clearly just how many Rebels, Kittens and Foxes were actually taxed or had their tax expire and so were in use during the period ending December 1997. The following years figures, when they become available, may tell us more as these will hopefully include vehicles which were then off the road and had been declared under the new SORN legislation.

One thing which does concern me is that we know of almost the same number of Rebels as were on the road that year, though not in most cases the same ones I have to say, but it does suggest that they are getting very rare indeed.

What Duncan’s research does tell us is that there were just 82 Rebels, 905 Kittens and 310 Foxes during the period in question. (though there were also a small number of “other Reliant” vehicles apart from Scimitars and Sabres) So we are further down the road of finding the ones I use than I thought we were. I suspect that there are at least as many Rebels again lying about off the road, indeed I know of four that are not on the register but still exist, must get the details and record them. That, together with the fact that two thirds of the Rebels known to the register are not on the road, must tell us something. Quite what that is and whether it would be realistic to try and apply the same rules to Kittens I doubt. I suspect that the majority of Kittens still in existence are still running but the same, sadly, cannot be said of Rebels. As to the Foxes, whilst their age must be in their favour, they are even less well known than the other two and I suspect that the number off the road might easily equal those on the road, what do you think?

Where does this get us? I was very excited to get the information, but as time went by, I found that (oh dear more song titles!) it raised more questions than answers. Still, at least it must help reduce the speculation about how many are left in working order, well in service at any rate.

It certainly brings home to me that there are not as many out there, in use and unknown to the Register as I had thought / hoped there might be. So what! This proves, if proof were needed that they are pretty thin on the ground these days – so that’s it Peter **No More Liege’s!** Only kidding, but it makes you think. We really ought to try and salvage the unique bits from more of the scrapped ones – Oh dear, does this mean more lists of hard to come by parts this time? Or do we just bury our heads in the tarmac and hope for the best? There will, I hope, be a compromise, though goodness knows how we find it.

The news is not all bad however, take Michael Bentley’s beautifully restored Rebel saloon for instance. It will not have been in the reported official figures because it has not been on the road for a number of years. Sadly however, I think it will be in the minority, I believe that the majority of Rebels not on the road will be in very poor condition. Yes, Bruce Emery, yours excepted and a few others as well I hope. (I deliberately omitted David Myers because I think that your one was on the road at least for part of the period in question). The fact remains that there are several Rebels lying about that could probably be had for less than £100, the problem being that you would have to trailer them home, probably several hundred miles and in some cases move other vehicles that have not turned a wheel in years simply to gain access. Would this be a good time to advertise the one near Bristol that is in danger of being scrapped if someone does not take it away soon? Problem is that I don’t know who or where he / it is as he is not a subscriber – nor can I remember the name of the gentleman driving the very nicely decorated yellow Robin on the Lands End to John O’ Groats run who telephoned me last week to tell me about it.

Well it is Easter Sunday, time for a confession I suppose – Did I ever tell you that I personally have broken up about 7 or 8 Rebels. No not recently, only the one recently. I still have most of the steering boxes to prove it. Just two Kittens and not a single Fox. More Jowett Javelins than I care to mention (ah the thoughtlessness of youth!) Older and I hope wiser now, and certainly less able! I still do not know what to do to solve the problem of finding appropriate custodians for these rare and interesting vehicles. I suppose that running the Register and producing this publication must go some way to making amends for past failings....

For the benefit of those who do not enjoy stainless steel exhausts on your Kittens and who may have had some difficulty in getting one in mild steel, the factory tell me that they will soon be able to supply them again. Just tell them I said so! If you have any problems please let me know.

By the way, congratulations Phil Riley on getting the Rebel through the MOT and on the road. It is good to have any Rebel (or Kitten or Fox come to that) which has been off the road for years, return to service. Especially such an early one, back from the brink. Well done Phil. See Phil's story in Rebel round up. Oh, thanks for the pictures Phil, do you need them back?

As to Foxes, I have had the odd telephone call about Fox exhausts and have been less than helpful, talk to me again if it is still a problem. We must be able to do something. I know that price is a consideration but we should be able to solve most parts problems without having to spend too many hundreds of pounds.

Right, on with the magazine. There is a winner, if that is the word, as regards the matter of fuel additives to enable our leaded engines to run with minimal disruption on unleaded fuel. Without going in to great detail my understanding is that of the 38 companies who were invited to invest the £5.500 to participate in the tests only 12 actually submitted their product for evaluation. Sadly only four of them passed the test (one product actually made things worse!!) My personal opinion is that the 70 hour test period was a tiny fraction of what I would have considered adequate but there we are, even that short time span was sufficient to fail most of the products. I am not impressed with the standard required either, a deterioration of 0.3mm on any one of the engine's valve seats was allowed over the test period. Now I am no engineer, but that sounds like an awful lot of wear in a short time to me. Just what was the problem with the tiny amount of lead that was added to petrol anyway? Given that all modern cars now use unleaded – some decisions I really do not understand!! Full marks must go to the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs who initiated the test programme and indeed to Rover for supplying the test engines. The Motor Industry Research Association also deserve a mention as that is where the tests were carried out earlier this year. The product which was first to boast of its success in the test was "Superblend Zero Lead 2000", there's a mouthful for you but they did return the best results in the tests. Neil Jeffery or Colin Cooper of Superblend Lubricants will be happy to tell you all about it on 0116 291 1700. I have spoken with Colin Cooper and all sounds fine.....

The other products which passed are:

Millers VSP Plus (manganese based) 01484 713201

Red Line substitute (Sodium based) 01723 866885

Valvemaster (Phosphorous based) on 01908 372611 or 01908 273606

So, I guess it is a case of you pays your money and takes your choice.

Now I am aware that just once in a while I have been known to publish an incorrect telephone number in these humble pages, so I rang them all for you just to check, which is why there is more than one number in some cases. I have to say that some answer their telephones much faster than others!

Then again you could wait for the LRP (Lead replacement petrol) for which, as I understand, there is as yet no British standard. I understand this is to be an alternative to any of the above in as much as you must never use any with LRP! I could suggest that we all move to New Zealand with our Reliants where I'm led to understand the government are considering the reintroduction of leaded petrol as the problems of older catalytic converters are proving astronomical!

They are all based, if you will excuse the pun, on a different chemical solution to the problem and it is therefore not a good idea to mix them. After making up your mind which road to go along, stick with it and do not mix products or change after a while to see which is better for you. In the meantime out an unleaded head in stock for the time if or when yours does finally wear out and whilst you're at it, match a spare set of manifolds to the ports and fit stainless stud – might as well improve things as we go along.

As it happens it's now the 16th May, great these computers, you don't have to add everything in order, you can insert bits anywhere you like and there was a bit of space available just here! I have just returned from an interesting day at Doune in Perthshire, where we had a team of three Kittens entered in the Doune Classic Challenge. This year the organisers decided to do things differently and told us that they would decide which vehicles went in which team, so no more Resin Rockets!! They numbered the 18 entrants into teams 1 to 6 and had us race against each other. The plan was that from the results we would have a run off between the first two teams, assuming there was a tie! Well, we managed to enlist the help of our man from Gilmerton in his Fox so that most of the teams had a small Reliant on their side – there were 3 Scimitars involved. I am sure that I don't have to tell you that the winning team, outright, undefeated having beaten all 5 other teams, had a Kitten in it. Strangely enough it was team No 1, which just happened to be the team that I was driving in the wee red car with our man from Boddam, Brian Millar as my passenger. This was Brian's first attempt at this sort of thing and I suspect that we may see him doing the driving himself in future.

In order to satisfy the regulations, the organisers had decided not to time the individuals or the teams – there are three cars to a team, but to simply record the difference in finishing times between the teams. This they did by starting the stopwatch when the passenger from the first car home ran to the starting cone in the middle of the arena and stopping it when the passenger from the opposing team reached the same point. They ran two teams consecutively on a matching pair of courses set up side by side in a field.

Inevitably there were differences between the two sides of the course so each team ran twice, once on each side – twice the fun!! What with 5 teams for each to run against we all got 10 trips round the cones which was great fun.

What puzzled me most, apart from the fact that one of the Scimitars managed to start 3 seconds after me but end up 4 seconds ahead – was how on earth Jim Spence managed to be at least as quick as me, remember that Jim has the 1600cc Fiat twin cam powered beast, he must have a very delicate right foot, because I was suffering all manner of wheel spin on the wet grass with only about 45bhp! How he managed to be as fast with over twice the power I really do not know – he told me that he was pulling away in second but even so I was very impressed!

But there we are, by spreading us around the organisers gave everyone a chance but still there I was, in Moira's Kitten, in the winning team – must prove something!

Rebel Round Up

Dear Brian

May '99

It was Christmas 1996, my wife and I were at the Reliant Owners Club local branch Christmas dinner. I was talking to other members and I was looking for a Regal van to restore

Member Les Cox from Buxton said that although he did not have a Regal van, he did have a Rebel in need of restoration – “you can have it if you restore it”! he said, “yes please” said !!

18 months later I finally made room for it at home, (I have a collection of Reliant and Bond 3-wheelers) and I brought it back.

I next wrote to the Kitten Register, spoke to Brian and it turned out that it was a very early model (chassis number 00027).

It sat there a further 5 months whilst I finished off restoring my Bond 875 van, and I could get the Rebel in to the garage.

First I took off the body shell, then rolled the chassis in to the garage and stripped off all the mechanical parts.

I then repaired and reinforced the chassis as necessary, and then had it galvanised.

I rebuilt the steering and suspension parts using almost all the original components. I checked and refitted the engine and gearbox, renewed all the brake parts and had a new exhaust system made to my drawings by a local company (complete system excluding downpipe, but including all clamps and fittings for £30 cash!)

I then refitted the shell (to which I had to do quite a lot of repairs) , doors and boot lid. The bonnet had been snapped in two and was very difficult to repair, being double skinned. *You should have said, I have four or five spare Rebel bonnets – well Phil Hallam keeps them for us these days – Ed.*

I scraped off all the old paint, back to bare gel coat then masked up and sprayed the whole car with polyester spray filler. Next came rubbing down, then spraying with etch primer and rubbing down again. For the top coat, my local paint shop mixed me 2 litres of synthetic Aztec Blue (the original colour I think) to match. After spraying, I refitted the lights, trim etc. Next the interior. The headlining was badly stained so I sprayed it with a can of Halfords Arum White touch up spray!

The seats were a bit tatty (*Early Rebel seats were trimmed to match the body colour, i.e. red in red cars, blue in blue etc. not the black as fitted to all later cars – Ed.*) My wife Dawn is an expert with a sewing machine and repaired them all beautifully.

I fitted a new set of carpets then the seats, trimmed the door interiors (unsure of how they should be done) refitted the seat belts and took it for an MOT test – no problems so taxed it (free!).

Phil Riley – Register No 478 – Stoke on Trent

Well Phil, you've manage to make what I know is a lot of hard work sound like a very simple task. This should not detract from the tremendous effort and commitment which you, and Dawn must have put in to the car. I realise that this is not the first restoration that you have carried out and I am very pleased to know how delighted I know from our recent conversation, that you are with the Rebel's handling and performance – yes they are a delight to drive – Ed.

READERS LETTERS

Dear Brian

25-03-99

After 15 years of Kitten motoring my dear lady wife has decided to swap for a VW Polo. So the beloved Kitten has passed on, we sold it to Prichard Garages at Spondon, Derby, so hope it will re-appear on the Register in the fullness of time. Thank you for your news letters, all the best.

Norman Owen – Belper

Well, as I said to Norman in my reply I wished him and his good lady good luck with their no doubt more refined Kitten replacement but pointed out that unless it is a diesel one it will not use much, if any less fuel than the Kitten and that she will no doubt miss the turning circle! So much for almost a quarter of a century of this thing they call progress!

Brian Millar, our Kitten alternative parts co-ordinator, writes as follows:-

Dear Brian

4th May '99

Just a note to let you see what is possible with the scanned image of the Logo you sent me...

The watermark on the page can be automatically placed whenever you start a page. The logo at the top can be placed anywhere and resized as appropriate.

I think the image would be better if you replaced the crown with the Tamworth Castle. I will investigate getting an image.

I have just finished reading Mewsletter twenty seven, the extra pages make it even more enjoyable reading.

I have had some recent experience on the carb vent pipe issue....

I had a float chamber lid fitted with a vent pipe on my original carb (engine from a Robin). I fitted a spill pipe that just led to the ground at the back of the engine using plastic fuel pipe. After replacing this pipe twice because it had got loose and melted on the exhaust pipe, I decided that this was not a good idea as the risk of setting fire to the pipe was greater than that of fire from the carb.

My second attempt at the vent pipe was to route it back to the fuel tank – *Do the job properly you mean! – Ed*, - after fitting a suitably manufactured t-piece in the fuel tank breather pipe I found that at times, the engine would not run properly and sometimes cut out altogether.

Investigating the matter I discovered two problems arising from this modification...

1. It appears that when driving, fuel slopping around the tank produces sufficient fumes to pressurise the tank slightly. The vent hole in the cap equalises this pressure slowly but at a given time there is the possibility of a positive pressure in the tank. The fuel tank was pressurising the vent line from the carb and this pressure was transferring to the float chamber and affecting the level of fuel in the chamber (I checked the breather hole in the fuel cap and it was clear). When testing the car whilst stationary there is no apparent problem.
2. After filling the fuel tank to the top, the vent pipe from the carb has the possibility of becoming air (or is it fluid?) locked. This prevents the float chamber from being effectively vented, creating either a pressure or vacuum in the float chamber. Pressure or vacuum was dependant on whether the car was going up or down hill (the fluid locked in the vent pipe acting as a piston) producing a similar effect to problem 1

After the above experiments, I drove around without a pipe connected to the vent, but always had in the back of my mind the worry of the float sticking and a full bore flow of fuel pouring on to the exhaust.

I have since removed the vent pipe lid and fitted one without the vent pipe (standard Kitten equipment) but in light of the article in issue 27 I think that I will be revisiting the vented lid. I did think that the next step might be to fit a copper pipe, passing through the bottom of the engine compartment, connected to the carb by a short piece of plastic pipe and bolted to the bell housing.

I will keep you informed of developments.

Brian Millar – Boddam

Graeme Shaw telephoned me this evening (7/5/99) just after I had typed up Brian's letter and offered more interesting history on this situation. It was back, he reckoned, in 1981 that he wrote to Reliant about this matter. Having noticed that the three-wheelers had sprouted a second pipe on top of the float chamber, he was curious. Reliant wrote back to him, one Barry D. Hughes, who was then Customer Service Executive on the 13th October 1981. The following extract from this reply offers the following explanation:-

BDH/MW/S

15th October 1981

Mr G Shaw,

Stalybridge, Cheshire.

Thank you for your letter received by this department on the 15th October 1981. I am pleased to learn of your enthusiasm with our produce and on your achievements with fuel consumption.

The extra pipes on the carburettor system are for the closed breather system and they are fitted as standard on all Robins. This is primarily a further step in the fuel regulations laid down by the Department of Environment and the Ministry of Transport but also aid better fuel economy. Any fuel which may be additional to the requirements at any stage when the engine is in use is "siphoned" into the fuel reservoir underneath the wing.

This is then drawn back into the system through the fuel filter giving a better metering of the fuel used. The bowl should be checked and cleaned every 6,000 miles. Petrol should be used for cleaning and thoroughly wiped after re-fitting. The inline filter should be renewed every 12,000 miles.

Providing the pipes are attached to the system with the approved clips they should obviously not fall off. I would recommend that if this continues then the vehicle be returned to a Reliant dealer for consideration of repair under our warranty policy....

The letter went on wishing Graeme "many miles of happy motoring with your vehicle" and was signed "Yours sincerely" by Barry D. Hughes.

Graeme and I were amused at the thought of cleaning out a petrol reservoir with petrol and being advised to thoroughly wipe it after re-fitting, something I would be inclined to do before re-fitting. Quite how drawing the overflow fuel back in to the engine gives "better metering of the fuel" I really do not understand but there we are!

We have had discussions with a well-known Reliant dealer who told us that in practice, the pipes used for this modification were of such quality that they perished after a couple of years and what they do is simply run a bit of good quality fuel pipe from the overflow pipe on the float chamber to take any excess fuel and dump it inside the chassis from where it apparently evaporates! Watch this space.....

I don't mind telling you that I was impressed Graeme, to remember the year and better yet to be able to produce the actual letter from your files in under a minute while I held the telephone, puts my own memory and record keeping to utter shame. My only saving grace is that by doing my best to keep the Register alive and well, such individuals will, from time to time be able to come to our rescue with such interesting pieces of information.

One point I made to Graeme on the 'phone was that everything I say in the Mewsletter, or indeed in personal correspondence with subscribers, is "to the best of my knowledge and belief" And so was born the Kitten Register's K&B department! Graeme suggested that this must be the equivalent of the business world's R&D department, not that we enjoy quite the same budget you understand!! But, we do have the benefit of many peoples' experiences over a decade or three of using these fine wee cars. This has, if correctly interpreted, to be at least as good as all the research and development in the world I am sure.

Speaking of which, I suddenly realised that much of the above will be pretty meaningless without either a sketch or some words of explanation. Given the situation I find myself in at the moment, while a sketch would save a lot of words, it would not be nearly as easy from a magazine production point of view so here I go.....

The Reliant solution to fuel spillage from the SU carburettor was resolved, rather than collecting it in an aluminium tray from where it evaporated (the Kitten System), which we well know can sadly cause a major fire risk from the vapour, to a system involving a different float chamber lid with two pipes, the inlet plus a breather. (as recommended in the last edition). In Reliant's case they take the excess fuel away through a pipe and an inline filter to a small reservoir mounted low down near the front of the vehicle. From here it can be returned, cooler than it might have been to the engine by way of another pipe. The reservoir has, like the float chamber, an inlet and an outlet and the outlet goes to the inlet manifold by way of a t-piece in the breather pipe that runs from the oil filler cap to the carburettor. The fuel is drawn in by vacuum and burnt. They seem to imply that this arrangement will help with hot starting problems. Come to think of it that, I hope, reasonably clear explanation, took up less space than a meaningful sketch would have done – it certainly took less time to create!

Dear Brian

29th April '99

I saw the reference to the WMC Bond Bug in your Mewsletter No. 21, so I had a dig through my old paperwork and came up with the enclosed adverts. It is because of this Bug that I first got in to Kittens. As a youth I drove an original Bug for a couple of weeks and always said that if they ever made a four-wheeled version I would have one, but they never did so. With an expanding family, I settled to running a collection of tin worm fodder until one day in the very early '90's I came across the WMC Bug advertised in the Portsmouth area where I was working. Despite its rather high price I decided it was for me. As luck would have it, my first trip home turned up a Rialto for sale in a local supermarket sale board and off I went to see it. This car was far too sound and tidy to break, but the owner told me about a guy who had what he thought was a Robin lying beside his garage, but he said with some doubt that it might have had an extra wheel grafted on!! Anyway it had been there for years. So off I went and eventually found this person and sure enough he had what I now know to be a Kitten lying beside his garage. It was a white estate but was so covered in moss that even the windows were green! It had been there for over seven years having been parked there when the MOT ran out. Thinking I had found a donor for my Bug, I asked how much to be told "If you can take this one plus the one in the shed over there and all the bits

away by the weekend you can have them!" The other one was a Kitten saloon that his son had had someone make up a tubular chassis for, then lost interest when he bought an early Mustang. All the running gear plus a spare gearbox was inside the shell – the seats & trim were long gone. Between both cars there was only one usable wheel so before I could move them I had to 'phone around my Mini friends and eventually came up with a set of 10" alloys. After a good thump with a lump hammer, I got the drums free. With a decent wash to remove the green and the alloys fitted the estate suddenly became interesting in its own right. Why, I thought, spend £3000+ on a 4-wheeled Bug when I already have something here which is original and probably far more practical. So, with a new full kit of brake cylinders, pipes & shoes, new battery & leads plugs, oil & filter, everything was ready and the estate was MOT'd & taxed. At that point I joined the Kitten Register. Since then between my trips away from home to work overseas etc. the saloon now has the radiator, 1300cc engine, 5-speed gearbox and (narrowed) diff from a Toyota Starlet installed and running in the chassis. Now all I have to do is get the body to fit over it! Priority now is to get my estate back on the road for the summer and then, provided I continue to find enough employment to keep me at home, get out and about and maybe catch up with the rest of the Register this summer. I've enclosed a photograph of my Kitten estate and my Scimitars. Who knows, if I pick up a Bug needing tlc one day I might attempt to convert it to 4 wheels on similar lines to WMC.

Gordon Keay - Dunfermline.

Dear Brian

26-4-99

Just a short letter to say that I hope everything is going OK at your end. I have not as yet received the March/April Mewsletter. Not a lot to report on the Kitten due to pressure of work. The engine rebuild has had to wait. I have found time to give the underneath a good clean and re waxoyl. This gave me a good chance to inspect the underneath which I found to be completely sound still, which must prove the benefit of the waxoyling I gave the Kitten back in '89 when I first bought it.

All the best – Malcolm Rush – Mem. No 190

Dear Brian

1st May 1999

Thank you for your introductory letter and application form. The latter returned herewith with my cheque for £10.

As you can see I have no vehicle at the moment, but I do belong to the Bug club, the Berkley Enthusiasts club and the Alfa Romeo Owners Club (my wife has an Alfa Spider). I am looking for something interesting and hopefully inexpensive to run for myself.

As a long-time motorcyclist I always had a Reliant of some sort in the garage for the cold days and I owned a Kitten in 1975, details of which have evaporated over the passing of time. Two Bugs, a Berkley and countless Robins and Rialtos. All very reliable and cheap to offset the cost of running Alfas and BMW motorcycles.

The Reliant Fox is a vehicle which has passed me by. If you have a picture of a typical beast I would appreciate it.

In the meantime, best wishes,

Bill Rowlands – Ledbury.

Now, Bills letter is the kind of one which often finds its way into my files without you ever seeing it, in that sense it is a typical example. However, the reason that it is in this edition was that John Johnstone was trying to help me tidy my desk – a formidable task I assure you – and I decided, quite incorrectly, that the reason it had not been filed was that I wanted to include it in the magazine, so John kindly dictated it to me. As he did so, it dawned on me that the reason it had not been filed was actually that I had not yet responded to Bills request for information on the Fox!! So I should actually be attending to that instead of telling you!!! – Brian goes off at a tangent again and stops the essential magazine work to do other essential correspondence work.....

OK, Enough – the following letter arrived yesterday along with a quite competitive price list, which also tells me that Kitten front dampers are in fact available ex-stock!

Dear Brian

15th May 1999

Here's H. Maslin's latest list, including his "May special offers". I think you'll agree that some of his prices are very reasonable. I ordered only 2 days ago, using a second class stamp, and the goods arrived today.

Kitten Fan Belt Use a slightly shorter one (700mm instead of 713) and it will help keep the alternator pulley away from the bottom radiator hose. It's a bit of a struggle to get on, it helps if you remove the alternator strap in order to do so. I used a Halfords HB700a intended for a VW Polo 1100cc.

Cheers – David Haywood – Norham.

Thank you David, I think some of us knew about the 700 belt but it does no harm to repeat these hints from time to time, especially given the Registrar's apparent inability to come up with a really useful index!

Sales and Wants

For Sale: Reliant Kitten DL saloon. Only 2 owners from new. 58,745 miles, alloy wheels. Contact Alex Russell – Runs but needs work.

For sale: Three Kittens, two saloons and an estate, choice of colours and age. Contact Tony Drayton of High Bickington, Umberleigh, North Devon if you are interested.

For Sale: Kitten estate, runs but needs MOT. Contact David Peel

For Sale: Rebel estate car, needs brake master cylinder but the car runs. Road tax exempt
Contact Eddie Hayens

For sale: 1971 Rebel estate, contact Eric for details.

Wanted: Rebel bumpers, front and back in good condition. Both Bruce Emery and Phil Riley are looking for these. I am sure they are the same as BMC 1100/1300 Mk 2 – well the back one is anyway. If you can help please give Bruce or Phil a ring

Wanted: Rebel gearbox, full synchromesh, complete with long gearlever contact Robert Fairfoull

Wanted: Fox tow bracket – contact Paul Stevenson

Wanted: Windscreen for a Fox. Please contact Jim Lugsden.

Wanted: Kitten drivers seat, condition not important as long as it's a reclining one, black preferred though not essential. Can swap for a reasonable passengers seat if required (black) contact Robert Macniealge

Wanted: Ron Dark from Devon does not want a Kitten estate body, nor a whole car. What he does need is a rear door complete with the panel below it and round the passengers side to the wheel arch. If you can help at all, please give Ron a ring – he asked me to help with this problem months ago and I have singularly failed to do so. Please help if you can.

Reliant Fuel System Overflow Mod Kit – Fitting to Kittens – by Graeme Shaw (01457 867991)

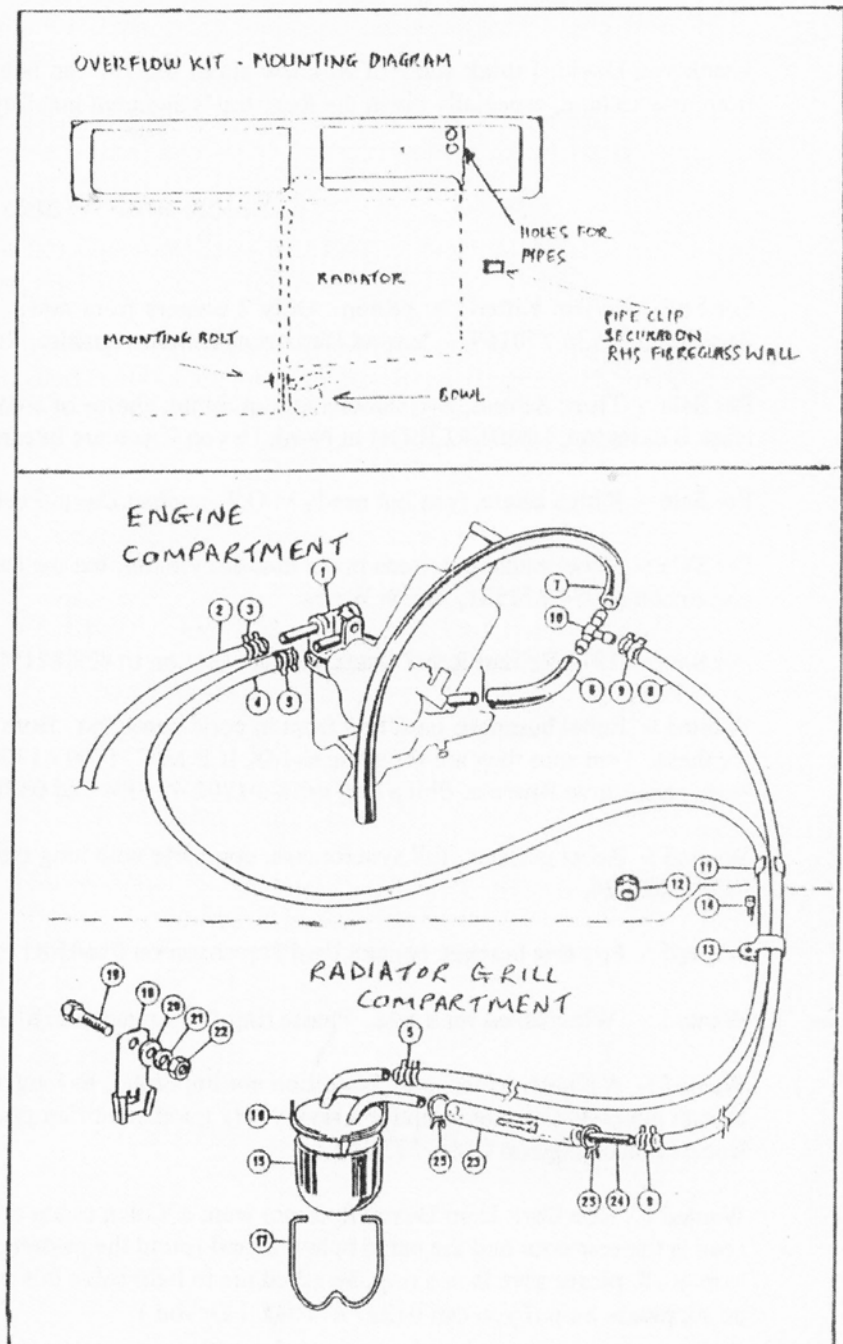
Cost of the kit is £20 plus £3.50 p+p plus vat = £27.61 from Michaels of Selby (01757 291699) Also required, a 2" length of nylon tubing (from a liquid soap dispenser or similar), a nut & bolt, Araldite, 2 x cable ties, flat blade screwdriver, phillips head screwdriver, hand drill, pliers. Total time for the modification is about 1 hour.

How it works: Any surplus petrol is fed via the overflow pipe in to the bowl. At times of high vacuum, filtered fuel is drawn back from the bowl to the carburettor and burnt.

Modification of the chamber lid. The float chamber lid is expensive and no longer available from Reliant. The existing lid can be modified in about ten minutes as follows: Remove lid. Remove steel baffle plate (hanging from brass stub pipe) to reveal overflow hole. Enlarge hole if required to fit 2" length of nylon tubing as an overflow tube. Araldite tube in place enduring it is not pushed too far in thus blocking cross-drilling.

Fitting the modification kit. Open the bonnet, Remove the metal radiator grille. Turn the steering wheel fully right. Drill 2 x holes for the new overflow and return pipes in the fibreglass panel behind the radiator grille hole as shown in the mounting diagram. From inside the driver's wheel arch, drill a hole for the mounting bracket low down on the back wall of the fibreglass "pocket". Working through the radiator grille hole, mount the bracket with a single nut and bolt. Assemble the rest of the kit as shown in the diagram replacing the old breather pipe with the new assembly. To allow both the new overflow pipe and the fuel pump / carburettor pipe to slot in to place it may be necessary to bend the new nylon pipe to one side slightly. Slot the bowl in to the new bracket. Secure the overflow and return pipes with the "p" clip on the opposite fibreglass wall to the new bracket, about halfway up from the bowl to the new pipe holes. Fasten these two pipes together between the radiator and the air filter at two points with cable ties.

Setting up: It may be necessary to enrich the mixture strength slightly – e.g. one flat – after modification.



NOTES

I just had a telephone call from George Sampford, who had the misfortune of having one of his Kittens track control arms fail under heavy braking earlier today. (11/05/99) This reminded me, yet again, to suggest that we all take good care of this normally totally neglected part of our Kittens. They do rust slowly away if you don't do something to halt the corrosion process and Reliant are unable to supply new ones at this time. Worse yet I only have my pattern set of new ones in stock. That, together with the fact that the factory were quoting over £20 each for them last year, must surely be sufficient to get us out there with a stiff brush and the paint tin. These are the arms which extend from either side of the front number plate to the outer part of the lower wishbone on each side. Now I am not suggesting that you take them off to clean them and do the job properly, because I am all too well aware just how bad some have become and you could get in to a lot of work and expense but it is not too big a task to clean and paint them. It is difficult to get in to every nook and cranny, they are tapered in two directions. The back facing inside surfaces are neither easy to see or clean but a small stick to clear out any mud and road dirt followed by a spray of Waxoyl can extend their lives by many years. YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED! And not for the first time.....

I have to say George (and I had an upper wishbone fail, on a Kitten, at high speed on the main Glasgow – Edinburgh motorway a few years back) that there are more enjoyable ways of getting one's heart to beat faster!!

Rebel brake master cylinders, OK, OK there was a bit of a problem. I have bought 4 of them, the ones with the horizontal mounting holes. One can be yours for £45 delivered, cheques payable to the Reliant Kitten Register Spares A/C please.

I must make an apology, as the very one who is quick to criticise others who get peoples names wrong. I have made the same mistake myself, Doug Jeffrey, I have credited you with a "s" on the end of your name on a number of occasions, my apologies for getting it wrong in the past.

Also, while I'm in an apologetic mode, it looks like this edition will be printed in A4 size after all. There are a number of reasons for this, and I am open to suggestions for the format of future editions. The advantages of going to an A5 format are, as I see it, as follows:

1. It would suit our front cover man (a very important reason)
2. It may enable me to publish as many words on less sheets of paper.
3. It would save me, and my friends from having to fold all those magazines.
4. It would mean that the cover picture would not have a crease down it.
5. I believe that it would help us to improve standards and quality.

The only disadvantages that I know of is that it is a change, the potential extra work involved, and the higher costs of reproduction, only slightly in each case and these should be offset by the saving in paper and printing. In short, it looks to be on, the sooner the better as far as John is concerned. Comments are invited and may be taken into consideration.

One thing I did mean to mention was the matter of what the supercharger that Peter Davis uses on the Liege, for those who seek such thrills. Well, in response to the question which John Whitfield asked, and I'm sure many of us thought, I asked the man what the supercharger does for the power output of the engine. He said " It increases it" – so now you know. One thing he did say, sounds like a chap who enjoys his motoring exploits, that the wonderful noise it makes is as much a reason for going down that road as the extra power!

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