

Reliant Kitten Register

MEWSLETTER Thirty-Six

September/October 2000



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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The Reliant Kitten Register

MEWSLETTER No. 36

The following individuals have kindly agreed to give and receive information on the following topics on our behalf:

Rebel alternative parts *contact Brian*

Kitten alternative parts *contact Brian*

Fox alternative parts *contact Brian*

Our Mutual Aid Spares scheme *contact Brian*

Mewsletter pictures *contact Brian*

This time we have graced our front cover with a Salamander – just about the only Kitten based vehicle not to have been featured on our covers over the years. But, no expense spared, John went and bought this one, just so we could get a decent photo – now that's what I call devotion to duty (sorry Susan, I won't tell him about any more, honest – well not this year at any rate!)

The Register has a, now fairly old, web page at: - <http://www.uk-classic-cars.com/kitten.htm>

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It should be noted that opinions and ideas printed in this publication are as recommended by our readers, and do not necessarily have the approval of the Reliant Kitten Register. Owners must satisfy themselves as to the suitability of any suggestions made within these pages as no responsibility can be accepted.

Hello, I thought that some details from the Register might not be a bad idea, as it is a long time since I published much information from the records within these pages, so I'll give you a summary in here.

We currently have details of 646 cars, and one question I will be adding to your renewal notice is confirmation of your car's status. I can record several categories, but that information only gets updated when I am talking to an individual, and in many cases there is no current recorded status, and yes I even record when a car is scrapped or exported.

So, quite what condition they are in will need to wait until after your renewal notices fall through my letterbox at the end of the year, or even the beginning of next year. Imagine that, the new millennium already! Let me lay this nonsense to rest once and for all, if you are asked to count to 100 (or 10 or 1,000) you start at one, and end at 100 (or whatever), you know, 99, 100, and so the second hundred starts at 101, right? Fine, so the third thousand starts at 2001 – and for those who are still not convinced, just believe me, after all, it is a great excuse for another party is it not?

Right, as I was saying, we have details, some incomplete, but details none the less on 95 Rebels, 398 Kittens, 68 Foxes, and a selection of Jimps, Tempests, Lieges and a few other specials. We also enjoy the support of 25 associate subscribers, and welcome you all are too. It never fails to fascinate me when I do, once in a while, check the records, imagine 10% of our readers are associate members – I was surprised, but there it is! Just for the record, that was the case at 21st September 2000. Mind you, the research did lead to a couple of telephone calls to check some things!

Three dozen, (no, not eggs, editions of the Mewsletter) and still going strong. Sobering to think that by next year I will have been doing this for a decade – even more surprising is that a number of you have been subscribing for almost that long – I think we deserve a long service medal, don't you? Well, there are a few things I need to decide before the next edition comes out, like what do I do to accommodate those of you who have asked if you can pay by standing order? Should the subscription be increased at the moment? (Especially relevant if I am about to print standing order forms) Do we issue membership cards again? All matters that need to be decided on before certain documents are produced. There are a number of considerations, like the production of the 'new' information document, I was going to call it a sheet, but in spite of my best efforts it is already 4 pages long, and that is without the pictures! So, will it be available in time to give you all a copy with the Christmas edition? and if so what will an 'extra' 300 copies cost, and what will it do to the postage? Well that depends on other things like just how many pages will be in that edition, how many other sheets of paper will be included in it as well – by the way, did you notice that I have changed fonts for this edition, I think it is more easily read, and darker, it also gives me 5% more words to a page, but I don't like the capital eyes (I) if you see what I mean. Compromise again, but do let me know what you think.

So, there you have it. What is a Registrar to do? No, don't get excited, I am not about to invite you to form a committee, but I will listen to constructive comments and ideas. So, over to you, would you like a membership card (I hesitate to say again, because only those of you who were with us last year, got one, and, as things stand at the moment, I am not prepared to offer them to new subscribers), it is a once a year run which Brian Millar kindly did for us last year, and it is only done for current subscribers – which neatly brings me to the matter of subscription renewal date, it does not matter when in the year you joined, you will have had all the back issues of the magazine for that year, and all subscriptions fall due on the first of January. Just this week, I was in discussion regarding when we would print the cards for 2001, assuming that we do so at all, and they will only be sent to those who have renewed their subscription – so please remember to do it promptly when the form arrives with the next magazine.

Speaking of the renewal form, I made it very simple last year, but now I am afraid that my records are getting out of date, and so I will be asking for some up to date information about your vehicle(s) this time, in an effort to keep my records reasonably accurate.

Prompt renewal also ensures that you are on the current subscribers list that I send to the factory, they are very keen to ensure that only current subscribers enjoy our special discounts. So, there you have it, some of my thoughts and ideas, let me know your views, and we'll move forward.

A Special Announcement

The European Commission has just announced an agreement whereby English will be adopted as the official language of the E.U rather than German which was the other possibility (*I am quite sure that the French will have something to say about this! ed.*)

As part of the negotiation, Her Majesty's Government conceded that 'English spelling had some room for improvements', and has accepted a five year phase-in plan for what would be known as Euro-English.

In the first year the soft "c" will be replaced with the letter "s". Certainly this will make the Sivil servants jump with joy. The hard "c" will be dropped in favour of the "k". This should klear up konfursion and keyboards can have one letter less.

There will be growing publik enthusiasm in the sekond year when the troublesome "ph" will be replaced by "f". This will make words like "fotograf" 20% shorter.

In the third year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling can be expekted to reach the stage where more komplikated changes are possible. Governments will enkourage the removal of double leters which have always ben a deterrent to akurate speling. Also al wil agre that the horrible mes of the silent "e" in the languag is disgracful and it should go away.

By the 4th yar peopl wil be reseptiv to steps such as replasing "th" wiz "z" and "w" viz "v".

During ze fifz yar ye vil hav a reli sensibl riten styl. Zer vil be no mor trubl or difikultis and evri vun vil find it ezi to ondersttand ech ozer. **Zen ze drem vil finaly kum tru !!**

(And I vil giv up riting ze Mag. – az zis is to bloody ard to typ !! Ed.)

oo.OO.~~~.OO.oo

That article was spotted by Graham Runcieman of the S.W.T.V.C, who noticed it in the Morris Register Newsletter. Bob Flockhart (Editor of the S.W.T.V.C's Bulletin) and Barry Rogers, (Editor of the Morris Register's magazine) are due my thanks for allowing us to use it here – and while I should obviously have waited till our March / April edition, I thought I'd just use it now lest I forget at the appropriate time!

Brian W. Marshall (April 1st 2001).

While I'm in that frame of mind, the following invaluable travel tips were sent to me recently: -

Parlaying Francay

Derek Arglye, one of our foreign travelling subscribers, offers the following advice to those of us intent on an excursion to France: -

“For those French people who insist on speaking French to you it is as well to know what they are telling you. Don't be caught out on your next visit to the land of the Gauls. To ensure ease of passage I append a list of the more popular French phrases and their English equivalents.” -

Crepe de Chine	A creep from China
Traite d'union	Trade Union
Tojours pret	Religious mania
Sans tache	Clean shaven
Vin ordinaire	Plain van
S'il vous plait	Silver plate
Procurer General	A Madam
Piece de resistance	Uncooperative young lady
Pas de deux	Father of twins
Femme sole	A mermaid
A bras overt	Plunging neckline
Fille de chambre	A crowded room
Escaaller derobe	Fish without dressing
En ami	In the army
En spectacle	Wearing glasses
Masion de ville	Veal a la mason
Homme du monde	Home on Monday
Front a front	A tour of seaside resorts
Chox de Bruxelles	Eat up your sprouts
Ancien regime	My old regiment
Aux absent les os	My horse came nowhere
Avocat consultant	An egg flip expert
Hors de combat	A fight between two ladies of easy virtue
Apres moi le deluge	I'm afraid I've brought bad weather with me
Chemin de fer	A fur petticoat
Chef de cuisine	My cousin's cook
Ouvres la porte	Open a bottle of port
Au gauche	Oh, gosh!

Have a good holiday! Derek Argyle

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Right, enough of such distractions, (Moira laughed a lot more often than usual when proof reading this edition) back to 'normal' immediately! -:

REBEL ROUND UP

I know that David Myers is no longer running the Rebel, and feels that if someone else would like to take over the position of Rebel Alternative parts co-ordinator, he would be happy to pass the torch on to another (be not breath holding in eager anticipation of dozens of volunteers David). If you feel that you could help here, please get in touch with David or myself. Bear in mind that with less than 100 Rebels on the road in Britain today, and a similar number known to the Register (of which less than half are on the road) this is not a huge task.

Talking of the number of Rebels, not just on the road, but still in existence. I typed up an information sheet, which still adorns the side window of Edna's Rebel (my new car), to educate the masses – I take the Rebel to the odd Classic Car Show, and it saves a lot of explanations! And I make reference to the fact that it is a rare vehicle, being one of only 1,750 or so ever registered in the U.K. Now it so happens that when I had the Citroen in for some pre M.O.T. work last week, the lad, yes I'll name names – Graham Harper BSc – made some scathing comment about the reason why they made so few. I was too slow at the time (he has, amongst other things, a DB2 Aston Martin – I wonder how many of them were made?) Anyway, to the point, with almost 10% of the Rebels ever built still with us 30 years or more on, they can't actually have been as bad as some doubtful individuals might like to think! Doesn't quite put them in the Jowett Jupiter class, (about 20% after 50 years), but way exceeds the percentage of Javelins built still in existence, (about 2 or 3 %) – granted they are almost twice the age, but you get the gist....

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Now to a series of articles from Mark Hayton of Deeside in Flintshire. As you had not a lot in the Rebel page last time, I've decided to treat you to a double edition from Mark and Maureen's stories of Bessie.

REBEL YELL !

Once upon a time... Maureen wanted a little car, a car with character, a classic car, a Morris Traveller. So what did she get? A REBEL! OK, we're dealing with womens' logic here, something most men have never been able to understand, but what does a Rebel have over a Moggie? For starters they're both estates, Style - mmm, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, sorry but in my eyes the Moggie wins hands down. Performance – the handling and comfort are probably similar. Image - AHA! Mention a Moggie Traveller and most people know what you're on about. Mention Rebel and they go "What?" You then say "Those wonderful little cars made by Reliant" and what happens? Your street cred vaporises faster than Chernobyl and they fall about laughing for the rest of the day.

I for one was never a Reliant fan. Seeing Del Boy on TV paid to that, churning out tons of smoke wherever he went. Then our Peter got us to go to a ROC rally or two. Maureen fell in love with the Rebel, bought one (with my money) and proclaimed it was hers, but hubby would look after it... And so he does, street cred in tatters, howls of laughter all around, but does he care anymore? No.

So why the change of heart? Well, I like a good challenge and it's female - she's called it Bessie. (So I can now go out, have fun lying down with a woman on top and not get beaten up by the wife when I get home!)

Of course, being female, she does have tantrums. Quite often. And she started from day one...

The run down the M6 did not go down too well with her, whether it was as a parting gesture to Gordon, or as a greeting to us. Under the bonnet it looked as if the Exxon Valdez had just gone aground. Oil sprayed everywhere from the crankshaft front oil seal. A copious amount of gunk sent the slick down the street to the nearest drain and left the engine compartment gleaming again. A quick call to Peter Ling in Lincoln got the required seal and gasket sent on their merry way, to somewhere but not me. Well done Postman Pat. Second attempt at no extra cost (thanks Peter) turned up the following day. Out came the radiator, off came the fan and pump and on went the new seal and gasket. So far so good, until I realised I needed a gasket for the water pump also. So one was made using the old one as a template. Easy peasy.

Then the moment came for Maureen to get behind the wheel and go for a spin. Off she went like a bat out of hell down the street towards the speed hump that puts Everest to shame. As she came in to land, I realised that only one wheel had locked up... I knew the brakes needed looking at, so the following week or two was spent cleaning and replacing anything that looked remotely suspect. Whilst doing this I found the mounting holes for the lower trunnion on the offside suspension wishbone had elongated and the bushes and bolt seized solid within the trunnion itself. After chatting to Brian Marshall up in Glasgow, and finding out that the front suspension was the same as a Triumph Spitfire, by chance I came across the web site of Rimmer Brothers. Not only can you get parts by mail, they also have nice exploded diagrams for all to see (I didn't have a workshop manual at this time). Armed with the knowledge of how this part of the car went together, the seized bolt was hacksawed off and the nylon bushes drilled out, fortunately without damaging the brass trunnion. The cost was high – at least six small drill bits were snapped in the process! Large heavy-duty washers, cut to shape, were used to cover the elongated holes and the whole thing put back together with new parts from Rimmers. The brakes underwent a major overhaul, the master cylinder was fitted with new seals, a new adjuster fitted on the rear and a seized piston was replaced on the front. With the whole system bled, she was ready again for the road. But for how long....?

Don't miss the next enthralling episode, titled "Casualty".

Mark Hayton

REBEL YELL !

Part II - "Casualty"

With the brakes now overhauled, we could dispose of the concrete block and rope used for stopping. (*Sure beats just pointing it at a tree to intimidate it into stopping – Ed*) A whole week went by with no problems until that fateful Sunday arrived, not that I knew it at the time...

With having the two kids, I decided to fit seatbelts in the back, something which to my then current knowledge had not been done. Also, as Maureen and I are of slightly differing sizes (leg-wise), I looked at fitting automatic retractable belts in the front. A hunt round the local scrappy recovered a decent set from an early Fiesta that had merely seen the end of its' days. First job was to remove the existing belts – easier said than done, especially when one nut decided there was nothing on earth would move it. It just happened to be in one of the most inaccessible places going – inside a u-shaped bracket on a chassis cross member. The welds that held it in place naturally gave way, a spanner could not get near it and neither would a nut splitter. An hour of sweat, a hacksaw and the odd drop of blood proved it wrong. All I now needed was a new nut and bolt. Tightening up the bolt behind the drivers' seat, the ratchet slipped. "Oh dear, I've just scratched my knuckles on the floor runner for the seat". Well not exactly, more like "\$£%*!@! car !" and the thought of "why do my fingers look like peeled bananas?". Three hours later I left hospital, after having the oil and rust scrubbed out and the skin put back into its

rightful place. Luckily, I got away without getting a Tetanus jab, otherwise that car would now be a burnt out wreck. After a short while in bandages for the skin to knit back together, I pressed on.

The belts originally fitted on the front seats were used for the back. By some strange quirk of fate, there's a chassis cross member just above the rear axle with two protruding pre-drilled lugs that a Rebel seems to have no use for. Until now. Even better, the holes are just the right size for seatbelt mounting bolts. The intention was to route the seatbelt stalks from these lugs, through the body and up between the rear seat cushion and its' back. With the holes in the body drilled and the stalks fitted, things looked pretty good - until I folded up the rear seats to find the stalks doing a vanishing act. Of course, the only way to get them out was to remove the rear seat. Back to the drawing board. All I needed was an extra couple of inches (don't we all) (*Actually, I'm trying to lose a few at the moment – up to 40" trousers now Ed!*) and a saviour came in the form of 3 inch door hinges, suitably butchered, drilled and bolted in place. One end of the belts were fastened to an existing chassis mounting location behind the seat whilst the other ends were bolted to an under floor metal backing plate to the sides of the seat. Enter one child as a crash dummy, select first gear and head for the nearest brick wall...

In part 1, I mentioned owning a Reliant severely damages your street cred rating. More so being a member of H.M. Forces. So came the day I ventured to work in the Rebel, head down, collar up. The security guard on the gate, the ever so alert chappies that they are, quizzed as to its make. He was obviously bowled over by its' presence and failed to notice the large banner in the windscreen – "Reliant Owners Club".

After parking the car, I waited for the onslaught of ridicule. And waited. And waited.....

Some time later I was swept off my feet by an out rush of air from the lungs of a man with a few more stripes than myself – "Hayton, my office NOW!" he bawled. Sheepishly, I wandered in, wondering what on earth I'd been caught doing wrong again this time. "Hayton, don't you ever bring that car here ever !" he screamed. "Erm, whhhhhy?" I replied. "Because I restore old classic cars and everyone thinks that's mine out there. They've all been taking the (*censored*) out of me all day." So after picking myself up off the floor from a fit of hysterics, I scurried off, pleased with the fact I got away with it!

Mark Hayton

Next time: "In out, in out, shake it all about"

Thanks for that Mark, Moira continued to have fits of the giggles when continuing her proof reading – oh well, on to the serious stuff this time ! By the way, perhaps you might care to mention to the stripey man that none other than Prince Philip at one time owned a Rebel estate car, Ed.

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FOXES' DEN

Dear Brian,

I have just replaced the front spring and damper units on my Fox. 97,000 miles, and some Polish potholes having taken their toll. I was able to buy some new Kitten units, they fitted straight on, and the spring rate seems to be about the same (and the price was right!)

Now to an ongoing problem with our Fox. I can't resolve it, but perhaps one of our expert readers can offer a solution.

On this car the rearmost of the two studs which secure the air filter to the carb is always giving trouble. Three have sheared off flush with the carb flange, including one made from some really high tensile material. When not breaking, the stud or bolt is forever coming loose despite locktite / locknuts and what have you.

Over to you readers?

Dave Richmond - Middlesex

Thanks for that Dave, over to you folks – Ed.

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READERS LETTERS

As you know, not all the letters that come through my letterbox make it into print. In fact I have been a bit saddened at the number of enquiries this year that have, as yet, come to nought! One such individual, though he has at least been good enough to tell me what is going on, is Ray Stubbing, whom I look forward to hearing from again at some time in the future, when he re-starts his project, Ray writes as follows :

Dear Brian,

1st August 2000

Thank you for the copy of the Reliant Kitten Register magazine. It was a good read and very helpful. I have put my project on hold for the present, but when I decide to move ahead again I will re-contact you.

All the best - Ray Stubbing - Alnwick

Then, every once in a while, I get one like this, which makes it all worthwhile :-

Dear Brian,

20th July 2000

Please find enclosed my application form and fee. I've been meaning to send it off for a few weeks now, but never got round to it, sorry for the delay.

I would just like to say that over the last month since I found out about the Kitten Register, I have met some of the friendliest, most helpful people. *(Take a bow people, Ed.)* The advice and support I have received has been invaluable. I would really appreciate it if you would pass on my thanks via the Mewsletter to two people in particular – Peter Hayton for his suggestions for the doors, and George in Cumbria, for giving me half of his Fox.

I'm looking forward to receiving the next instalment of the Mewsletter – keep up the good work.

Hannah Cave - Liverpool

Delighted that you have found the team so helpful Hannah. I hope your trusty Fox continues to give reliable service. Ed.

Dear Brian,

28th June 2000

Many thanks for the application form, enclosed with cheque for the registration fee. Much as I would like to take up the offer of all the back numbers of the Mewsletter, the twin enemies of 'lack of space' and 'disapproving spouse' mean that I will wait until you put them on CD-ROM.

The lack of space indoors is partly due to my membership of several car and motorbike clubs – all the publications they produce contain gems of information thus rendering them eminently collectable. What with collections of Car Mechanics, Practical Classics, Classic Bike, and Railway Magazine all going back 30 years or so, something has to give. It will probably be the floor joists of what was my daughter's bedroom!

I'm sure the back Mewsletters contain all the answers to the various questions I have been storing up. I am fortunate in having a largish garden (except for the fact that I am head gardener!) and enough garaging for about 4 cars. Lurking in the garden is my collection of Allegros (4) (plenty of Kitten related spares), the Saab 99 collection (3), and the Kittens (3). The more fragile beasts live in the dry and include a Volvo 164E, a Fiat 124 owned since new in 1968, and a Saab 900. I have a Mk II Golf for day to day transport and a Mazda MX-5 purchased on behalf of my son in Brussels and then imported. Apart from the last mentioned and the Fiat, all of them were bought from, or given to me by acquaintances, and none cost more than £1500, and most were less than £300.

You probably have the impression that I am quite mad, however in my travels I have met several poor souls who are even worse afflicted than me. I expect you have too. The problem is being interested in virtually everything, except soap operas which I leave to my wife.

In the Mewsletter (No. 34) you kindly sent me, you said that you thought Alan Osborn had got it wrong when he said the dashpot oil should be lighter in summer. I think he is right, as you want the damper to allow the piston to rise a bit quicker when it's warmer, thus returning the mixture more quickly to the normal ratio.

I said I **think** he's right, I could be wrong, I'd better reveal my occupation here. I have been an aircraft engineer for the Army (REME) since 1961. I was an instructor, although on the airframe side for 10 years. I occasionally stood in for the engine instructors. Nowadays of course all the Army aircraft are powered by gas turbines so we concentrated on those. All aircraft engineers share the same work ethics i.e. always own up when you've made a mistake, and be prepared to keep on learning – from anybody. One day one of my young students declared that the set-up procedure for a fuel control unit on a helicopter we were practising on was incorrect in the manual.

He was right too, yet the procedure had been in use for nearly 20 years!

Anyway, these days I am working for the DLO (Defence Logistics Organisation) in the Air Publications department. I edit the work of others, write some material myself, and with a small team of ladies despatch and maintain all the Army's aircraft manuals worldwide. The whole set for the Lynx for example would fill about three shopping trolleys! A lot of the manual is available on microfiche, is it possible to get hold of a Reliant Fiche? Needless to say the new (Apache) publications are all on CD-ROM – whether it will cut down on our workload or not remains to be seen. Computers seem to generate more work in my experience.

I must close now as she who allots the work has declared that I am required to attend to kitchen plumbing, thank you again for your letter

Yours sincerely D. Anon - Hants

Thanks for that insight Mr. A. I realise from what you were saying about dashpot oil that Al Osborn was correct, it is my understanding that was flawed. Ed. P.S. Does this willing admission of my mistake, qualify me for a post as aircraft engineer? Ed.

Dear Brian

01 September 2000

Greetings from the vet that gets to look after the welfare of Tricia Nash's Kitten saloon.

In the last Mewsletter (No. 35) I noticed a reference to an appeal for information about the nut and bolt supplier Namrick. I have been an occasional customer for many years, and am happy to say that the company is still in business and providing an excellent service. I enclose their latest catalogue, which you may wish to keep for future reference (note the very reasonable prices), or you may wish to pass it on to your enquirer. *(Done, thank you, at the Comrie Railway open day on the 10th of September, steam trains galore! – just seven and a quarter inch gauge mind you ! Ed)*

Incidentally, another of your correspondents might be interested in the Devcon products listed on page 14 – it should be quite easy to cast ones own anti-roll bar bushes to the exact size required. By building moulds around the bar in the appropriate positions the bushes would not even need to be fought into place. *(Not only that, but they would accommodate any wear on the anti-roll bar itself – Ed !)*. One observation about the “wrong” bushes – is it possible that they were supposed to have a smaller hole than the bar so that they are a tight fit?

Yours sincerely - Raymond Nash – St. Albans

To, as ever, digress completely. I was at the launch of the last type 23 Frigate built earlier this year, at B.A.E. Systems, formerly Yarrows, on the Clyde, and it is called St. Albans ! Ed.

Now a few words from my most frequent correspondent, from whom you seldom ever hear a word – sorry Dick. Ed.

Dear Brian,

Thursday 24th August 2000

What a beautifully warm day it has been! I spent most of the afternoon applying a second coat of gloss black cellulose brushing paint to as much of the Kitten's chassis as possible. The CIS man then turned up looking very bronzed after his holiday, but was too late to take part in the ceremony, his loss, not mine?

I had another look at the black surround to the headlights etc. It will have to come off before long in order to allow replacement of one headlamp which is starting to lose it's silvering. So I decided to have a go at removing the 6 screws revealed after the chrome grill is removed *(chrome Dick? – surely not ! Ed.)*. To cut a long story short, 4 screws eventually came out but 2 did not. By this time the midgies etc. were starting to bite so I chickened out. Now for the point of these ramblings. During my fumbblings I noticed that a bit of the surround was chipped, revealing glass fibre under the smooth surface. So the surround is not a plastic moulding after all, and I can paint it as needed.

Campbell, my helpful friend, turned up part way through the afternoon, proudly bearing an old cardboard box containing four tins of Holts Chassis Black Paint, in suitably ageing tins (10 fluid ounce

size) with rust coming through the paper labels. They must, I think, be about 30 years old, though the contents appear to be good. The label claims 'quick drying'. Hmm. Of course I had been into Inverness this morning and bought paint – typical. I did try the old chassis black on a bit of old metal. It dries in about 4 hours, so it's not cellulose, and this is reinforced by the fact that white spirit cleaned the brush I used. Not to worry, it is good stock. Thinks, might be just the stuff for the headlight surround ? And my pushbike could do with a re-paint, the SAAB blue is now rather chipped. And the house doorknobs need a coat of black paint, etc. etc.

Friday 25th of August now. Woke this morning and could hardly bend my back or neck ! Must be chassis painter's twinges, I think. By afternoon I had loosened up enough to recommence work, and have now applied two topcoats to all that I can access at present.

Saturday 26th August. A dull grey morning, what a disappointment after yesterday's hot weather. Then, Glory Be, a large envelope dropped through the letterbox, full of back numbers of the Mewsletter ! What a lucky and welcome occurrence! A few fascinating evenings reading are in prospect. A thousand times thank you my friend. Now I can recommence my self-imposed task of extracting all the useful information and enjoy gaining more useful info for myself.

Best regards, Dick Goodall - Muir of Ord (Invernesshire)

What you don't know is that Dick is one of those willing souls who is working away behind the scenes trying to help build an index of sorts to all that blurb that I have been circulating for almost a decade now – I must put you guys in touch with each other to try and avoid duplication – Ed.

Oh, and Dick, do feel free to remind me at some point that you still do not have a full set – yes I know that I made mention of the missing editions in my letter, and that the letter is on file, that does not mean that I will remember when I do get them in stock again !

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GETTING TECHNICAL

Bob Sayers, who you might remember contacted us earlier in the year regarding the Liege Owners Club, has been in touch again and tells me that his Liege chassis is now virtually completed. He also tells me that another solution to the speedo calibration story could be found through a company called CAI, who apparently now holds the rights to the former Smiths Instruments. They sell mainly through a company called Gower-Oaks, and produce several different instrument ranges, including reproductions of the original Smiths supplementary instruments (happy memories) however, one of their speedometers is apparently programmable! This via miniature switches on the back, to a very wide range of input signals (*–sounds expensive to me, Ed -*). The sensor for it can apparently be a transducer, which fits on the end of a conventional speedo cable, a magnetic pick-up from the propshaft, or even a wheel transducer. So if you are having problems, and would like to know more, just let me know, and I'll put you in touch.

Shaun Watkiss of Wakefield was saying in a letter from early in July, that "Whilst reading the Mewsletter, an article by Alan Osborn caught my eye, with regard to understeer / oversteer. Two factors he forgot to mention were tyre compound and tyre construction. Obviously if the compound is soft, it will grip better than a hard compound. The tyre construction is a slightly more complex matter. A tyre with a soft sidewall will slide or creep, earlier than one with a stiff sidewall. But the slide will be more easily controlled, as the stiff walled tyre will break away more suddenly and at a higher loading. It would

appear that Alan's 165 tyres grip less than his 145's. If he were to try lowering the pressures of the front tyres this should cure the chronic oversteer."

Thanks for that Shaun

Alan Osborn was writing about Kitten and Fox rear spring poundage's – nice to know that some things never seem to go metric! Anyway, one question he asked was are Fox and Kitten springs interchangeable. Now it would be easy for me to say yes, and I know of one Reliant main dealer who used to regularly fit Kitten rear springs to Robins, and Fox ones to Kittens – BUT, I also seem to remember a Fox owner who, unable to get Fox springs, (was it for a Tempest perhaps ?) tried to fit Kitten ones, only to find that his Fox chassis used a larger diameter of bolt to retain the front of the spring, and he had to turn the bolts down to fit the Kitten / Robin spring bush– do you remember that too? I am sure it was reported within these pages at the time. I do not know if he ever found the correct bushes for his chassis, nor indeed can I remember who it was – Brian's memory strikes again !! So the answer is, maybe, but check carefully first.

More Techs.

Whose law is it that states that the information you need turns up after the job is done? I had just got the bottom half of the engine snuggled into place and the head was being fitted, when up pops the Mewsletter with Dave Richmond telling us how to centralise the crank! I'd just paid specific attention to main bearing fitting as I've had so many loose / broken studs in the past, so a check of end float would have been in order. Ho hum. Two little points in this area while we are talking cranks, the thrust bearings that Dave talks about do come in a variety of over sizes, though I've never seemed to need them, in fact of all the engines I've checked, I have never seen any need for the over size thrust bearings. i.e. everything has been in spec. So I've even stopped measuring the end float! This new engine of mine is now up and running with the first couple of hundred miles done, and it doesn't seem to load up at all when the clutch is depressed, so the crank can't be too far out.

What else to say about this new engine? It is just about the highest state of tune I have had with my Reliant. Which is, manifolds optimised, and taken a step further, 1 ¼" SU flowed out to about 1/3 more (i.e. equal to 1 ½) Standard exhaust pipe but a noisy S.S. silencer. 10:1 Compression Ratio with a modest gas flowed head, and some tuning on the rear of the valves (penny on a stick) . Balanced bottom end and HR270 Piper cam. (With Mini cam followers and push rods) Lightened and centralised rockers complete this dept. Ignition is a Lucas Rita with some reasonable output as even with 35 thou plug gaps, it is the best starter I've ever had. The winter will tell more, and petrol consumption figures will tell more. Performance? well, it will be some time before it is properly run in, but one characteristic that really appeals is the stomp at tick over, it pulls away with no throttle! The last engine was good at this , but I thought that was the standard cam and a tidy cylinder head, but this engine has the 'go faster' cam and yet another tidy head (different mods). I've still to tune the drive away performance as I've been playing with advance curves, at present 2,000 r.p.m. is a bit dull, while 3,000 (when the cam starts its business) the bonnet starts to rise, but then again that could be the knackered rear suspension! Must fit those new springs. (Thanks Keith) While on about others in the Club who've 'phoned at some time, (keep them calls coming, if I can I will try to help) a chap called me a couple of months ago wanting a copy of the "50 tweaks" only he didn't send his name and address, or the stamps, and I found some more information for him. He was the chap who'd had a Rover V8 fitted in a Robin! What can one say. Give me a call again whoever you are. And how is George doing in the Orkneys with his go faster cam? Also thanks to Simon Chisholm for his long fax re the Rialto HT-E 37 ½ bhp. engine. Now I know.

Al Osborn

Sales and Wants

For Sale :- 1981 Blue Kitten estate, X registered, also spare engine and gearbox, and many other spares.

For Sale :- 1969 Rebel Estate car. Has been standing a few years now. Had a body off rebuild 10 years ago. Yours for £150,

For Sale :- A really rare opportunity to obtain a yellow Kitten estate car. Illness forces the sale of this 99% rebuilt R registered example. All the front suspension has been renewed, new radiator, carb, alloy wheels, recent respray, stainless steel exhaust. Too many new bits to mention. All this and some spares. The car has had just two owners from new and wait for it – just 15,000 miles. Offers in the region of £700 considered.

For Sale :- Two Kittens, a Saloon and an Estate. Both cars are off the road.

For Sale :- Something different ! A Volvo 144 1969 H plate, mot & (free) tax till June 2001. Very original, body and mechanically good very reliable 143.000 genuine miles. Period Radiomobile radio, original floor coverings trim etc. £1,200 for cash or will take small 4-wheeled Reliant in part exchange prefer Rebel but anything considered.

For Sale :- Well, free to a good home in fact. A Kitten chassis. Buyer collects. Contact Graham Barnes

Wanted :- Kitten passenger door – contact Dick Goodall

Wanted :- Bruce Harding is in need of two Kitten items, a seatbelt part, the short bit in the middle of the car that the buckle plugs into, for an inertia reel belt. Also a set of new side window rubbers, apparently the factory can only supply one side, for an estate car – must check that out!

NOTES

For those observant souls who worry about such things, yes thank you, I am well aware that the senders address label on the envelope that this came to you in was incorrect. They did supply another thousand to replace the faulty batch - their mistake, not mine, and I thought, why throw them out? The street name, number, and postcode are correct, and that is really all that matters, so I will just use them up, and save us a few pounds.

To those, too many to mention, who were good enough to come to Dick Goodall's aid with information about Namrick, even to the extent of sending me a copy of their current catalogue, my thanks (and Dick's too). It is in circumstances like those that I realise that you really do read the drivel that I print in these magazines. It is really good, not to say reassuring, to know, not only that there is someone out there, but that you care, and that you are so well informed and obliging, thank you.

Right, the nights really are drawing in, I must investigate the wobbly clutch pedal on the Rebel, which is running splendidly, thank you Edna and Den, though I must put a thermostat back in the cooling system, and get it warm for the winter. (Now done, and new anti-freeze put in – 23/09/00)

I have decided to try and use up some old address labels while sending out this edition, and so some of you might have your old membership number on the top corner of the label, I will try and delete the incorrect ones, but – sorry, won't take the time to write on the new one on. – Oh yes I will.... How else could I record its despatch to you? There are a number of reasons for this – mostly because I had

become over confident with the printer at times, and left it to print labels unattended, and, just sometimes, it has had a paper feed problem, and ruined part of a sheet, (there are 21 address labels to an A4 sheet). In those circumstances I re-printed the sheet(s) involved, but in fact, sometimes, most of the labels on the damaged sheets were quite readable, and it is in an effort to use them up, that I have taken this executive decision – yes Brian (Millar) it does mean setting and re-setting the ‘Current Member’ flag for about 70 people – I can handle it – anything to get some of these bits of paper off my desk ! (not to mention saving a few sheets of labels !).

O.K. time to do some Jowett work – how can I get off that Committee? (It’s not actually so bad now that the Rally 2000 is part of history) Talk to you again nearer Christmas, till then take care. Oh blast, I’ve just realised that I have not left room for John Calthorpe’s advert, you know, Rossefield Motors, great chap, give him a ring for Kitten and Fox spares on 01274 544009. Emm Lane, Bradford (Near where they used to make Jowetts!). Sorry John.

Brian