

Reliant Kitten Register

MEWSLETTER Thirty-Seven

November/December 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.....

Edited and distributed by Brian W Marshall, 16 Glendee Gardens, Renfrew, PA4 0AL

☎ 0141 886 6117 Fax 0141 561 5430

The Reliant Kitten Register

MEWSLETTER No. 37

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 is not the first time we have featured a Vantique on our front cover, however this time it is number 10, the last one built, the same one I drove for 400 miles or so back in June. It is pictured here outside the Wensleydale Railway's old shop in Leyburn with its new owner the shop's magnificent marketing manager Michael Bentley majestically making magic motions marvelling with magnanimity at my motionless motoring machinations!

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, and welcome to our festive edition. While I remember, there are a number of differences and options which I will be putting to you on the renewal notices which should be enclosed with this edition. Whatever your views, we must soon be in the new millennium, and I need to both secure our future, and make everyone's lives simpler, so, you faithful followers will be able to renew for 2001, at the old rate of a tenner, and no I do not expect the Royal Mail to try and squeeze Pavarotti through my letter box. Anyone else joining on or after January 2001 will be invited to do so at the new subscription rate of £12. Also, taking the long term view I know, but I have I believe proved over the last decade that I am not going to vanish off the face of the earth tomorrow, so I am offering for this year, initially, a five year subscription, which will protect you from any rises in subscription which may occur in the next five years, so, if you want to save a few quid and can take the longer term view, you can have a five year subscription for £50. This is a once only offer.

Right, when last did you grease those ball joints. Oil those trunnions, grease the prop-shaft etc? Rebel steering idlers do have a grease nipple you know!

There was talk of a document being produced, initially for new subscribers, showing a picture of each model the Register represents, with a brief history, and, all being well, we may treat you all to a copy. RKR-the-cars is the document name, and until I think of something more appropriate (or you come up with a better title) that's what it is called.

I often have difficult decisions to make, and this was brought home to me recently in connection with Salamanders – as shown on the front cover of edition 36 – (Oh, by the way, what I forgot to mention in that connection was that the one important thing about a Salamander is that they were all built with automatic gearboxes). I know of 6 of these vehicles, yet until recently there were none on the Register, and even now there are only two. Confused? Let me share my frustrations.

It all began with Dave Wardman. When I first met Dave at his home in Croft near Leeds, back in about 1994, he had a Red Salamander, to which he was busy fitting a Ford 1600 cc engine. Dave has for a long time been keen on fitting larger than standard engines to his cars. It was he who began the Fiat 1600cc Kitten conversion which Jim Spence later finished. Anyway, that was my first meeting with a Salamander. At that time I owned a cam-corder, and I took some film of the car. I still have that cam-corder, but it has not worked for a number of years now, and while the 'film' is secure on one of my tapes, they are not well indexed, and I can't view them till I get the machine repaired – a task which has not been high on the priority list, I guess I ought to make that a New Year's resolution. Anyway, Dave was not one for filling in forms, and so the car never made it onto the Register (I was still predominantly interested in Kittens in those days, and he had three of them at that time). Then he sold the Salamander, and I lost track of it without ever recording it on the Register – fire the man I say! Then Alan Melmoth got one, and then John Pearce bought the one we saw last time, and in between all this I read an article by a chap who had two of them, written in response to a question asked in a publication which I have forgotten the name of – more research! I did put John Pearce in touch with the chap at the time (e-mail address only, so I couldn't write to him) and John duly made contact, provided me with his address, and I wrote to him. That is where my system falls down. I write anything from 20 to 60 letters a month, and if the letter is an initial contact, I leave it up to the individual to respond – and, where appropriate, to subscribe to the Register. If they don't, then they have effectively slipped through the net, as I have not the time, energy or motivation to pursue people who are not willing to reply to my initial letter. I really have quite enough on my plate dealing with those who do reply, and to the other demands on my time – life's too short to spend much of it chasing the unwilling. This of course can lead to the very situation that I find so frustrating, and indeed which sometimes leaves me with a feeling that I have failed. What am I to do in such situations? When I know that an interesting vehicle is out there, know, or at any rate knew, and no doubt have a relevant letter on file somewhere to who has or had it, and they have not responded? I guess I ought to keep a file on un-answered correspondence, but that would

mean keeping a file on all new correspondence, and up-dating it every time I received a response to the initial letters, and I really believe that that would be a chore. (It would certainly require more discipline than I seem to have).

The reason that I do this in the first place is because I enjoy it and I find it satisfying, it fills my time, and I can do it when I feel like it with little or no pressure. And I have to say that I have made a lot of friends and interesting contacts, and had a lot of fascinating conversations with many people as a direct result of my efforts, and, lets be fair here, your response to those efforts.

Still though, I have this feeling that I am not quite getting it right in those situations where I 'miss' a car. I know that people are more important than cars – but not to the Register, it is, after all, primarily a Register of cars, the people, interesting and wonderful as you all are, come and go, but my self imposed task is to try and keep track of the cars. And I clearly do not always get that aspect right. Just 2 out of 6 Salamanders that I know about are actually on the Register, not a very good hit rate! Oh no! I've just missed an opportunity to get details of a Cipher kit, is it number 7 or number 8? I hope he calls back. He needed a windscreen, but I was just loading the car to go on holiday when he rang, so I asked him to write, but nothing from him on my return from holiday!! It's previous owner did not even know what it was ! He had advertised it as something else altogether!

Right, enough of this dwelling on my failures – it's enough to get a chap down! Looking at the positive side, as ever, when things come under scrutiny, they tend to get a bit of work done, and the Register is no exception. In the last edition I quoted the figures of Rebels, Kittens and Foxes on the Register, and, prompted by Simon Chisholm, actually ran off some of the tree limb consuming reports that Brian Millar's software allows me to produce. Well, that highlighted some situations, both good and bad, and led to a bit of work. As a result of that work the total number of vehicles has not increased terribly greatly, but many of the gaps in the information have been filled up. In other words I have been forced into some long overdue 'housekeeping' thank you chaps for helping motivate me into some action.

The planned information document has taken up more of my time than I had imagined / intended it should. My enquiries have unearthed some interesting anomalies – Oh how I love (not) those grey areas in life. Still it would be dull if everything were in black and white! The matter at the forefront of my mind in this instance is a copy letter which Bob Neal kindly provided me with, written by Reliant, on company headed paper, quoting numbers of Rebels produced. The thing is that I have a letter, in answer to the same question, again on company paper, written by a (different) company employee some 8 years earlier – but still long after Rebel production ceased – and the numbers differ by over 1,000! So, who do you believe, (I actually suspect that the individual who answered Bob's letter was so new to the company, and by then Kittens were in the, to him, distant past, that he got confused between his Rebels and his Kittens, and gave the Kitten numbers out as Rebel numbers!) and more to the point what should I say on my information sheet? and before you jump in and tell me that all I have to do is mention both, and leave people to draw their own conclusions, I am trying to make this document as short and concise as possible. I had originally hoped to keep it down to 4 A4 sides, and already the text alone takes up almost that, - never mind the pictures. Jings, it'll end up being a book at this rate!

One problem with a magazine being as big as this one, and taking as long to compile, is, Brian's wonderful memory strikes again, so that I can't remember if I mentioned a particular item already. It is now December, I had intended that this would all be away with the printers last week, but still hope to get it to you before Christmas. Anyway, the point is did I tell you that Reliant have found a number of copies of the Kitten Workshop manual? They are not bound, nor particularly cheap at £25 a time, and you'd be best to buy something else at the same time as you will get our discount, which brings it below the free postage minimum order of £25.

So out came the engine, and all the bits and pieces were fitted to another block that happened to be lying around. Provenance unknown, but fortunately this time it was a good one.

Oh yes, somewhere along the line the distributor drive shaft was inserted 180 degrees out of phase with that recommended. This just results in non-standard arrangement of the spark plug leads. I'll sort that out if and when the beast has to come out again!

The exhaust was an interesting saga. The down-pipe and short curved tail pipe were obtained from Reliant Services at Stirchley. The down pipe was not suitable as it had too small an outside diameter, and would not, without serious persuasion, go anywhere near the hole in the chassis designed for it (*Yes, I have heard of this problem before, Ed. I believe that the down pipes that he has, are for the Rebel 600, which was both smaller in diameter, and took a different route, i.e inside the main chassis members rather than outside as the 700 & 750 Rebels have*). On asking around I found a supplier that holds a pattern for the exhaust, cost is £112 plus v.a.t. (April 2000). It's obtainable from Stainless exhaust specialists at unit 1., Prospect court, Nunn Close, Huthwait, Sutton in Ashfield, Notts., NG17 2HW. Tel / Fax 01623 552262. They also have a web site at www.stainless-exhaust.com and provide a free fitting service. I haven't ordered yet, at present I am using the exhaust system taken from a donor Rebel Saloon that was given to me. The silencer has seen better days but is O.K. at the moment.

On the stainless exhaust situation I got one from London Stainless recently, but it was very difficult to fit, only the silencer being just right, so the benefit of a company that provide a fitting service – especially a free fitting service – cannot be underestimated, Ed.

New brake shoes were fitted all round. The snail cams for the adjusters were badly worn & seized. A new set were obtained from an autojumble and fitted. Cost £3.00. From the local Auto /store the same items would have cost £13.25. For information they are Motaproducts MPK3. The clutch and brake master cylinders seem to be in good order and new fluid was flushed through both systems.

O.K., just a couple of points here, John has both been lucky, and done his homework well. With regard to the MPK3 brake adjuster repair kits, they are in fact now pretty difficult to come by, so much so, that when I did find some last year I bought 10 sets, and even in that quantity they cost £12 plus postage, so I have them for sale for £15 a set delivered. (two lots of postage to be paid for you see). As to the matter of Rebel clutches, all you Rebel people, listen up – those of you with 750 Rebels will not be surprised at all, but those of you with 600 and 700 Rebels will be thinking that we have made a mistake – well not so, the 750 Rebel did indeed have a hydraulic clutch as standard, so there! Ed. And if you ever need a master cylinder John, I have them in stock as well.

With a different carburettor (SU rather than Zenith the throttle and choke operation had to be modified. This turned out to be quite simple. A shortened bicycle brake cable was used for the throttle, and a local auto store provided a choke cable. (*Just in passing, what's his name at Reliant Services Stirchley has brand new Rebel choke cables in stock – at a price, Ed.*) This was the type that is turned through 90 degrees to lock, and works extremely well. To ensure smooth operation they were left longer than normal, and routed in a smooth arc through the bulkhead to the carburettor via a pair of P-clips attached to the bracket holding the wiper motor.

The fuel system overflow modification, as described in the Mewsletter, was obtained from Dave King at Slough. A small digression here, he's a very knowledgeable and friendly chap and a mine of information. The bowl was mounted beside the radiator on the vertical fibreglass panel.

The air cleaner fitted to the 850cc engine fouled the bonnet. A modified air cleaner was fashioned using the base of the original and the filter bowl of the 850cc filter. It looks odd, as the air intake points upwards, but it works!

The original heater was beyond repair. Dave King supplied a 2-speed heater from a Robin, complete with control cable. The heater pipes are of a larger internal diameter than the early type. I used the later pipes and turned up collars from plastic material to make transition pieces for the distribution vents. I now have a Rebel with a heater that really works!!!

The hole in the bulkhead had to be considerably enlarged to provide sufficient air and to prevent fouling of the fan. An extra wire was run to a two-way switch that was originally the light switch on the donor Rebel car.

The front suspension dampers were badly corroded and started leaking. Spares were difficult to get hold of and very expensive. Dave Myers, I think, said that Spax 893/AS could be fitted. These were £70 each and had to be specially ordered! The donor car was useful again. However, the lower ring diameter was different and differed in free length by 15mm. To cut an already too long story short, I swapped the whole lot. Fortunately the trunnions etc were in very good condition and a good greasing was all that was necessary. The ride height remained the same.

One item missing from the Rebel is a reversing light. This was easily fitted onto a piece of bent and painted mild steel located under the middle of the rear bumper. The later Reliant gearboxes have a reversing switch fitted to them which is operated by the reverse shaft. On Rebel boxes the reverse shaft is on the opposite side where there is not as much material. Remove the plastic plug, and tap to the same thread as that of the switch, I can't remember the size, but the existing hole is fortuitously the right core diameter. As the switch is too long, a spacer 3 – 4 mm thick was necessary. The reverse shaft itself has to be removed and a smooth curve ground into it to act as a cam to operate the switch. It's all a bit suck it and see, but it does work!

Another item missing is an intermittent wiper delay and wash / wipe control. If anyone is interested in this I can let them have the details.

Yet another item missing was a hazard switch. This was obtained from a Robin and fitted, together with a small tell-tale indicator.

One slightly annoying thing still to be rectified is the gear lever and the shelf. Originally there was no shelf. On fitting the one from the donor, the gear lever clobbers it when engaging first and third!

Inertia reel seat belts have been fitted to the front seats. They were obtained from a MK 1 Ford Fiesta. This only entailed turning the inboard brackets through 90 degrees and fitting the left hand inboard clip to the right hand bracket and vice versa. The inertia reels were fitted to the correct sides. A pair of 90-degree brackets were made to mount these firmly to the existing outboard floor anchorage points.

The front seats had collapsed as the Dunlop bases had perished. *That reminds me, if memory serves correctly, Bill Dick has a number of them! Am I right Bill? And more to the point, can you find them? Ed.*

They were rebuilt using springs and clips used on Robin seats. The springs are tight but haven't imploded the seats yet!

Two trivial items that had to be renewed were the rear bumper brackets as they were paper-thin.

A clock from a Scimitar (there's class!) was fitted where a defunct vacuum gauge was originally fitted, and a battery voltmeter replaced the ammeter, although that did work! A third hole was filled with another worry dial in the form of an oil pressure gauge.

Wing mirrors were fitted, then removed to tighten the springs as at over 10 mph they folded back! Drilling holes in the mirrors to reduce wind resistance as suggested by a friend did not seem a particularly good idea!

Finally, and at long last you may say, the battery support tray and clamp were modified and horn relocated to accommodate a decent sized battery.

That's the lot as far as I recall. It's taken about 8 months and a fair bit of the folding stuff to achieve the above. It's been worth it, needless to say there's still more to do, but that's what Winters are for!

I empathise with Mark Hayton. I have also suffered ridicule for daring to park in the company's car park without displaying a disabled badge, and they meant mentally disabled!!

Yours sincerely - John Unwin - Berkshire

Thanks for bringing us up to date John. John included a number of pictures, and one day – probably in the very distant future, I might be able to include such things for you to see – but not this year!. Ed. Still on Rebels, John Parker wrote the following, and while I really ought to have answered you directly John, I am a bit pressed at the moment, so thought I'd just use the mag. as a reminder – can anyone help?

Dear Brian,

14th October 2000

I much enjoyed the latest Mewsletter (36) including the two articles from Mark Hayton. However the bit about fitting retractable (inertia reel) seatbelts was thin on detail. Perhaps you could get him to write something for the next Mewsletter that would answer the following questions:-

1. What years of early Fiesta have suitable belts?
2. How did he manage to fit the pivot (assuming that they have one) to the door pillar i.e. was the fibreglass strengthened in any way?
3. Anything else that would help anyone tackling the same job?

Alternatively Brian you may know the answers yourself as I recollect that I met the owner (sorry I can't remember his name) of a beige Rebel Estate (which had retractable seat belts fitted) at the R.O.C. National Rally this year, and I believe he said it was the " Moss Covered Hut" referred to by yourself in previous Mewsletters.

Hope you can help, yours – John Parker - Bristol

Briefly John, the man would have been Bruce Emery, Hi Bruce, how are things? I did briefly own the Moss Encrusted Hut, but Bruce has cleaned all the moss off it! I did not fit the inertia reel belts to it, they were already there when I bought the car, but it did have a lot of Austin / Morris, well, early 70's

B.M.C. (Austin / Morris 1100 / 1300 I believe) at any rate, bits fitted, radiator, air cleaner and the likes. So I guess the belts could have come from there. I know that the Rebel's 'shoulder' belt mounting trapped nut is in a metal plate, over a foot long, about three inches deep, moulded into the fibreglass inner side of the body. I say 'shoulder' mounting, because as Rebel owners will well know, it is well below shoulder height! I used to like that when I did a bit of rallying, as it held you down on take off, but in my old age I think I would prefer a higher mounting, which would require some surgery to mount a suitable steel plate on which to mount the belt. There is, I should imagine, no reason why you should not use the original Rebel mounting. As to the Ford option, and which years, I have no idea, can anyone help? Ed.

Now I know that you have had quite a bit about Rebels in this extended Christmas edition, but I did promise Edna that I would do a piece on her Green Estate car's journey North by Northwest, so before I forget, here it is:-

North by Northwest by Rebel

Once upon a time, well the 25th of June 2000 to be precise, Edna Houchin of Framlingham, one of our Kitten Register subscribers who had owned her 1968 Rebel estate car from new, wrote to me, "Dear Brian", she said, "Thank you for your letter back in April." *Edna had written previously, asking me what to do, as her family had been trying to pressure her into replacing the Rebel, I told her to keep it, after all it had just had a new galvanised chassis fitted a few years previously, and so should be good for another 31 years, at least, why on earth would you want to change it? No one in the village would ever wave to her again! After three decades of seeing her in the Rebel, how would they recognise her? – but what woman ever listened to me ? Ed.* "The awful deed is done & I'm now the owner of a Suzuki Alto, Naples Yellow, 9 months old, 1,600 miles same gears as the Rebel, costs the same to fill up, and does about 60 mpg, or is that a litre? I feel very guilty about throwing off the old and on with the new, but just lately I've felt that a lot more needed to be done than Den was prepared to do. She still goes pretty well, always starts, and hasn't been a problem, but a bit spluttery drawing away from junctions & always when you chance your luck – so glares from other drivers.

Now, can I ask you to either find it – no name, ever – a good home, or make use of it yourself – either way I'm giving it to you, several spares and bits and pieces to go with it – plus a lot of good will.

The car has never cost much to maintain, I hate having to part with it, but as I have to, then you are the one.

I hope Moira doesn't think " Oh, God, here we go again", so perhaps you will talk it over with her, look at your lock-up situation, or think of someone else who would take it on. If you can make a bob or two, then good luck to you – perhaps you could go on holiday the next time the girls go.

Den thinks it would be a bit risky driving it back to Scotland – danger of overheating etc. it hasn't done a long journey in years, so how it would react I'm not sure. It has a year's M.O.T., tax disc till next June (Historic Vehicle) The engine is not the original – Den overheated that years ago. Have a think and give me a ring

Edna Houchin."

Well really, you'd think that after 31 years, Den would know that the Rebel always gets you where you are going!

Now as it happens I was in the South of England, at my uncle's funeral, when that letter arrived, and so it was the 28th before I read it. Now I know that I am often heard to boast these days that I have

finally mastered the “No” word – but come on, a Rebel estate, with a galvanised chassis (that I had supplied three years ago) running, M.O.T.’d and on the road, of an age that makes it road tax exempt, even with a suspect cooling system. I ask you? Well, Simon Chisholm just happened to be going to London via Cambridge about then, and had a spare seat for the trip south – It had to be a sign.....

My telephone bill for those few days of planning the trip was horrendous, you would not believe how difficult, time consuming not to say expensive it is to get from Cambridge to Framlingham by public transport. It is only a distance of about 60 miles, but was going to take at least 6 hours, and cost in excess of £40, come to think of it, it might have been cheaper by taxi!

Anyway, eventually I managed to organise B & B in Newmarket, near the railway station, and only a few miles east of Cambridge. Simon very kindly collected me late on the Monday afternoon, and we headed off down the A74. We had a good if slow run down, and Simon was good enough, in spite of some fog, and us being an hour or so behind schedule, to run me to Newmarket station, where Miss Rozanne had kindly agreed to collect me.

That was interesting, as we had recently had the big Jowett rally at Pitlochry, complete with Jowetts from as far afield as America and Australia, and Miss Rozanne had a friend staying with her who lives in Australia, not only that but she used to be very much into car rallying throughout Europe in the 1950’s and 60’s, so we had a good blether – all this from a B & B recommended by the Newmarket Tourist Information Office!

Tuesday morning saw her drop me at Newmarket station where I was going to catch a train to Stowmarket, I had meant to write to Railtrack to complain that the un-manned station screen which displays information was positioned such that the reflected sunlight made it almost impossible to read, and they assume that you have a watch, using phrases like “On Time” – how much more difficult would it be for the screen to display what they believed the time to be? Anyway, Den had kindly agreed to pick me up from Stowmarket station and take me the last 20 miles to Framlingham. To have taken the train to Ipswich and transferred to another train to Saxmunden, (the station nearest to Framlingham) would have meant an hours delay between trains, and taken far longer.

So, I arrived in good time to load the spares into the Rebel before an early lunch, and head off on my journey home, well as far as North Yorkshire that night at any rate. It just so happened that that evening was the monthly get together of the Wensleydale branch of the W.R.A., (Wensleydale Railway Association) and I was keen to join them in Leyburn for the evening.

The Log of the journey home went like this :-

Leave Framlingham 11:52 91560 - Proceed to get lost in the back lanes of Suffolk !

Stop for pictures at windmill 12:15 (You’ll know when I finally get the hang of these computers, because when I do, and make mention of a picture, you’ll actually be able to see it!)

Stop, hot, on A14 13:08 594, removed radiator cap, restarted 13:23

The temperature gauge tells lies! When the needle is at “N” it is in fact hot, and the radiator boils over when the needle is just past the “N”, long before it reaches “H”! So, armed with this knowledge, I proceeded more sedately – till....

Stop A14 lay by, rang for help (The Police relay a message to the R.A.C. who rang back – the down side of that arrangement is that you have to stand in the rain by the telephone till they do ring back – 9 minutes later – (well O.K., I exaggerate, it was not actually raining – but it could have been!) 13:23 601

R.A.C. arrived, very helpful and interested, (Patrol man Elliot – No. 4344 if you really want to know) 14:21, removed the thermostat at my request, and I took advantage of it being cool, to turn the heater tap on. He then followed me to a garage, about 9 miles away. 14:41 Drove at a steady 50 M.P.H., the fastest yet, to check if putting the heater on, and removing the thermostat helped the temperature. It did a bit, I think!

Re-joined the A14 after fuel 20 litres at 91610 and oil, at 15:15

Stop A14, hot 15:31 626 go again 15:36

Stop on A1, hot 17:14 692 add water, remove rad cap, and go 17:22

Stop, steaming 17:26 694, that was obviously a bad idea – removing the radiator cap - add last of H2O and replace rad cap & go 17:29

Was passed by Simon C. on his way North!

Stop, A1 services 17:33 698 leave 17:50

Passed Simon C. having a food stop at a greasy spoon on the A1!

Stop A1(M), heater cold 18:56 739, cool, refill, and go again 19:02

Stop A1 Doncaster 19:25 753 add water and refill bottle, go again 19:30

Was again passed by Simon C. still on his way North!

Arrived, finally! in Leyburn 21:35, changed, and arrived for the W.R.A meeting at 21:40, just 1 hour 40 minutes late ! Mileage now 91819. I don't suppose that car's heater motor has ever been run continuously for so long in its entire 31 year history! (in an effort to take away some of the heat from the engine, I had it on all the time).

Took Michael Bentley home in the Rebel to Preston under Scar. Mileage now 91825

Left Michael & Janet's 10:00 (Moirra used to joke that I ought to take adoption papers with me the next time I went to Michael & Janet's, now she suspects that Janet and I are having an affair – honest, we're not!) the following morning, mileage still 91825

Reached the Moorcock 10:37 845, turned right – North, onto the B 6259, My goodness, I just looked up the map to check that road number, and do you know – the Moorcock Inn is actually on the map ! Junction with the A 684, go on have a look and see if it is on yours too. Stopped a couple of minutes later to briefly talk to Helen Birbeck at Shaw Paddock, Lundsem. Helen and Alan had looked after us some years ago when I ran the Citroen into a railway viaduct just at their farm in a blizzard with mother and Arleen in the car, and I always stop and say hello when passing. Helen always seems to be crossing the road when I pass, well, she has been the last twice! Update on that, it was Alan coming out the gate last week!! 23/11/00.

I stopped in Kirkby Stephen for fuel, but it was expensive, so I just bought 10 litres 91856, stopped at 11:01, on the road again for 11:08.

A66 at 11:15, mileage now 860

Stop A66, roadworks, 11:30 873, oh well, it was fun while it lasted 13 miles in 15 minutes! Go again 11:34

M6 11:56 883

Stop Tesco Carlisle, A69 12:18 15 Litres at 91901 Good place to stop this, café, toilets, fuel at supermarket prices, and all this within quarter of a mile of the M6, remember, it's the A69 for Carlisle that you want, Tesco is first right at the first set of traffic lights, opposite the Landrover Dealer - Leave again 12:38

Stop A74 Hot 14:06 962 go again 14:24

Stop Hamilton, just to check the water before Glasgow, 15:07 989 go again 15:10

Home Renfrew at 15:45 92002

So, there we are, the green Rebel estate car had covered more miles in two days than it usually covers in a couple of months! Overheating was the only problem really, the seat does dig into your back a bit, those early Rebels had different seats from the later ones, better looking, but not so comfortable!

In fact the exhaust broke a week or so later, (during a high speed run to the printers in Glasgow with the Mewsletter masters! It is just not safe to drive at less than traffic speed on an urban motorway, I'll use the back roads with the Rebel in future) just where the pipe goes into the silencer, and London stainless took a lot longer than originally quoted to make and deliver one, and when they did it didn't fit! Thanks Mike, Phil and John for your help with it. I have still to have the stainless tail pipe modified to fit, in the meantime using the modified down pipe, and the perfect silencer, we used the tail pipe that was on the car, and just exits in front of the rear wheel instead of under the back bumper.

I had a misunderstanding with Serck the radiator specialists, and what I thought was going to be a £45 – £50 re-core turned out to be an £85 re-core, the lower price had been just for a clean out and repaint job which was not at all what was needed. The wee car now runs nice and cool – too cool for this winter weather!

The problem - there's always a catch – is that I am enjoying driving it so much that it will be a problem keeping it down to the insurance regulated 5,000 miles a year –oh well, I'll just need to start using the Kitten a bit more again.

Things to do to the car, well, Den did not put all the body securing bolts back, so I'll get some stainless ones, and put them in. Also the back door hinges could do with new hinge pins – where on earth will I get them? Guess it's just a case of getting a pair made up.

Oh, and while fitting the exhaust down-pipe, I removed the windscreen washer bottle, and when putting it back didn't tie the string correctly, and it fell and leant on the exhaust pipe – so I need a new bottle!

About 20 years ago (well probably more like quarter of a century in fact – but I don't like to admit that I'm getting that old!) I used to have something of a reputation for liberating Rebels from England, and I had stopped, indeed even went as far as selling one to a chap in France some years back – yes, it too had a galvanised chassis come to think of it. That was the first time I almost had dealings with Kevin Leech, but that is another story! I am trying to give the habit up – honest - the “Bring all the Rebels and Kittens to Scotland” campaign (the pair of Kittens that I was involved in bringing to Scotland earlier in the year were Jim Spence's – really they were!). Though it has to be said that four of the five Reliants I currently own were originally registered in England!

So, want to hear what we did in August? O.K., I'll lay off for now, have a great time over the festive season, talk to you again in the New Year,

Brian

FOXES' DEN

As one or two people know, I recently found a folder of correspondence from late 1999 which had not been actioned, and amongst it was the following note from Bob Hunt, Belated thanks Bob.

Brian,

Thanks for the A5 mag. Your page format is just right for not wasting paper space, and it looks good.

The Fox, although the tyre pressure is meant to be 19 psi, in my experience it runs better on 22.

The Fox windscreen may be Fiat 127 which we have all heard before, but who cares? It has also been claimed to be BMC Imp which is far more likely. Matching cars to windscreens is only of academic interest. *(hang on Bob, do you mean something from BMC, or the Rootes Group's Hillman Imp – or Sunbeam Stiletto come to that ? Anyway, I believe the answer to the who cares question, was that for a while Reliant could not supply them, though I believe that they are in stock now, and some owners were wondering what else would fit – yes I realise that the windscreen supply world never had a problem, but some owners were looking for a second hand solution, Ed.)*

If people have fully comprehensive insurance it costs £40 to renew a screen. *(Sorry to interrupt again Bob, but that may well vary from one insurance company to another, Ed)* To a firm, a car's windscreen is only known as a number. They probably don't know about other matching screens unless it is punched into their database, which is a pity because the relationship of one car to another has now been lost.

Reliant say my Fox is Champagne, Swansea won't have that, they call it beige. To answer a readers question Ford may have a similar colour to the Kitten Beige, try car Plan A/R Pale Ivory CC XAB 055 spray can.

Once again the Kenlow fan fitted as an extra to my Fox proved its worth in July 99's heat wave. Tweaked up to go a bit faster as the Fox is, cruising at 65 all day, no temperature gauge rise, none of those won't restart when hot problems, it is perfect.

Would a Kenlow up your way turn the midges to dust?

Kindest regards - Bob Hunt - London

No Bob, the little blighters would simply dodge in and out of the fan blades!

Now I will digress, yes again! Railways are as you will be aware, another interest of mine, and the following tale was related recently upon the return to these shores of my friend Duncan Laing, thank you Duncan, I did know that our railway gauge was based on Roman Chariots, but the following I thought was worthy of inclusion:-

What is the standard gauge of Railways the world over?

Well I'm sure that many folk will remember that it is 4' 8 ½". But why? asked an American gentleman when Duncan Laing from Croftamie was 'over there' recently. Well, because that's the way we built them in Britain, and the British expatriates who built the American railroads built them like they did in other parts of the world.

And just why did the British build them like that?

Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railway tramways, and that's the gauge that they used.

Why did "They" use that gauge then?

Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they used for building wagons, which had that wheel spacing.

Okay, why did the wagons have that particular, odd, wheel spacing?

Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon's wheels would break on many of the old long distance roads in Britain, because of the spacing of the ruts.

So, who built these old rutted roads?

The first long distance roads in Europe and Britain were built by Imperial Rome for their Legions. The roads have been used ever since Roman times. Roman War chariots first made the initial ruts, which every one else had to match for fear of breaking their wagon wheels and wagons. Since the chariots were made for, or by, Imperial Rome they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing. Thus we have the answer to the original question, the U.S. standard gauge of 4' 8 ½" derives from the original specifications of an Imperial Roman War Chariot.

Now we all know that specifications and bureaucracies live forever. So next time you are handed a specification, and you wonder which horse's rear came up with it, you may be exactly right ! Because the Imperial Roman War Chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the back ends of two warhorses.

There is a twist to this story – an interesting extension to the Railway gauges and horses behinds story. When you see a space shuttle sitting on the launch pad, you will see two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank. These are Solid Rocket Boosters, or SRB's for short. They are made by a company, Thiokol, in their factory in Utah. The engineers who designed the SRBs would have preferred to have made them a bit fatter, but they had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site. The railway from the factory runs through a tunnel in the mountains, and the SRB's had to fit that tunnel which is slightly wider than the railway tracks. And the railway track is about as wide as two horses behinds!

So, the major design feature of what is arguably the worlds most advanced transportation system, is determined by the width of a horses Ar!

Now you know !

READERS LETTERS

Dear Brian,

28th September 2000

The good news is that the Kitten passed its annual test, and is now taxed as well. Recent removal of its battery revealed horrid green slime under it. When this was removed a blocked drain hole appeared. Now the holes on both the O.S. & N. S. are cleared to let bonnet groove water away.

The driver's seat was repaired using foam rubber with tongued and grooved boards across the seat frame tubes to hold that up. It's a lot better, but rather hard! Can anyone recommend an alternative seat which is both cheap, and easy to fit to a Kitten with the hard moulded door pockets?

The tattered and dangling driver's door seal has been replaced by a new one from PartsWorld. This is quite good, but a bittie thicker than the old one and the catch-plate needed moved. Perhaps it will compress in time. If not I will have to try a different section of seal for the passenger side. Maybe Woolies as you suggested.

I phoned Simon Chisholm at Gilmerton, and he has a passenger door for me. I now need to collect it – luckily my sister stays in Perth, and might be dragged in to help.

Cheers for now, and best wishes to all.

Dick Goodall - Tore, Muir of Ord

Thanks for that update Dick, as I may have mentioned before, Dick is one of my most frequent correspondents, and just to prove that, here are a couple more letters – just making up for all the ones I have not used in the past Dick!

Dear Brian,

7th October 2000

A dull wet morning, but never mind Mewsletter 36 has arrived to give me plenty of reading, and hopefully things to learn and think about.

What's this? I'm mentioned as a frequent correspondent. Vivian read this issue, found parts amusing, and at one point could not stop laughing. Have you made a convert? *I shouldn't think so Dick, well not till you get the Kitten's heater working better! Ed.* Lots of good stuff in this issue, though a little more detail from certain correspondents might enlighten my ancient brain.

Rebel population – So, around 1750 Rebels were registered in the U.K. Which would mean that over 700 were exported, I wonder where they went? When I owned a Rebel (over 25 years ago) I never realised that I was one of the privileged few to have one.

Sorry to interrupt again so soon, but you will just have to wait and see as far as Rebel export markets are concerned, till the new information document I am working on, with a lot of help, thanks guys, comes out next year. Suffice to say that my information is that they were sold in no less than 16 countries, which probably makes them the most widely exported of all of Reliant's vehicles! Ed.

As far as the DB2 population is concerned, perusal of the A – Z of Classic Cars 1945 – 70 reveals these production figures DB2 1950 – 53 411, DB2/4 1950 – 5 565, DB2/4 MkII 1955 – 7 199, so if my arithmetic is correct, there were only 1175 in all, which makes them only slightly rarer than the

Rebel, though I daresay more sought after. Hmmmm. The MkII ironed out the bugs I suppose, but created less demand? Oh well, you can't win them all!

Rebel Yell "...The front suspension is Triumph Spitfire" Now if this is true, just how much is from the Spitfire ? And what is Rimmer's 'phone number for the probable 75% of us KitReg folk who are not on the internet? Answers please Mr. Hayton!

O.K., I'll interrupt again, the Rebel front suspension is Spitfire / Vitesse based, the upper and lower wishbones, vertical link, top and bottom ball joints / trunnions and stub axle are all from said vehicles. For the record, the difference between that and the oft – wrongly – quoted Herald, is the diameter of the stub axle, and hence the hole for it in the vertical link to accommodate same. The brakes and dampers are of course not the same, though a conversion to Triumph discs is just a bolt on conversion from standard (well Triumph actually – even if some of the bits are marked "Stanpart"! - I guess that many of our younger readers may not remember Standard as a car manufacturer, though the Vanguard and Ensign are surely still remembered by many?) stock parts, though you will need different wheels, or just wheel spacers, to give clearance for the disc calipers, Ed.

Now on page 21, Sales & Wants, Bruce Harding is wanting a bit for inertia reel belts in a Kitten. Were they fitted as standard, or as a one off I wonder? it is difficult to tell now.

Right, me again, sorry, but if I don't answer now, I'll probably forget. All the MK II (later) Kittens were fitted with inertia reel belts as standard, no I can't remember the chassis number, but it was one of a number of changes they made fairly early on in Kitten production, like the anti roll bar diameter and front dampers for example.

Readers Letters. D. Anon says "... my collection of 4 Allegros (plenty of Kitten spares)" At this my ancient, rheumy eyes lit up in Scrooge like fashion. What CAN he mean? I have seen it suggested that Allegro headlamps will fit a Kitten, but they have no side lamp bulb, and so a separate side lamp needs to be fitted. Apart from that I imagine the interior door and window handles are similar. Or am I missing some more good spares? Please enlighten us Mr. Anon! *I'm saying nothing – Ed.*

Getting Technical, The tyre info from Shaun Watkiss. An interesting amount of info of which I was totally unaware. Now here's a thought from my antique brain. Remember cross ply tyres? (Don't the trikes still use them?) *No, Dick, I think they went up to 12" wheels and radial tyres about a decade ago, can anyone confirm? Ed.* Their construction caused them to 'let go' of the road gently, and so forgive minor driving excesses. Lucky feature, as I found out long ago. Conversely a friend with a Marina thought that the grip of radials was wonderful, until one day they very suddenly 'let go' on a corner. Head for the fields boys ! Another thought, (two in the one day? Steady there!) I believe that cross ply tyres give a softer ride than radials. Might be worth a try with the Kitten, if I can afford it. Can anyone comment on this idea?

Yes, yes, I know that radials last longer than cross plies. But I seem to remember that cross plies on the Rebel lasted around 20,000 miles, aided no doubt by the light weight of that car.

Cheers for now – Dick Goodall

Dear Brian,

22nd October 2000

I am getting the files for the "Compendium" (Index of all Mewsletters) into a form which can be imported to most PC word processors from a single floppy disc. So, when (if?) one is ordered, a floppy disc alone could be sent, and the recipient could print the thing out for themselves as required. This

would save on both postage and the need to stock a pile of paper copies for despatch. Of course, the document has yet to be completed! Not that it will ever be absolutely complete, as each new Mewsletter issue will make it grow.

It is now three weeks since the Kitten became my everyday car. The first week's fun was mainly chasing runaway wheel trims, which declared UDI at any opportunity. One got whacked by another car but is now straightened out enough to go back on. The reaction of other drivers ranges from complete indifference to almost running off the tarmac with surprise. Those who do notice come up behind, hesitate, see it's a Reliant, then while overtaking show great surprise that it has FOUR wheels.

The engine soon loosened up nicely, it must have been that full throttle blast at 50 MPH from Dingwall up to the top of the Black Isle, a 600 foot climb in about two miles. A good cobweb remover! After having just owned a car with a five speed gearbox the engine does seem to rev hard, exaggerated by a bit of engine noise. It definitely ain't brand new!

Kittens don't really rev hard, certainly not compared to a Rebel. 6,000 rpm in a Rebel has you doing just 68 mph in top, while 6000 rpm in a Kitten, and I have to say that I have only ever driven two that can manage that in top gear, is 102mph, Ed.

Having said that, so far it has always started first turn of the key when cold, and usually when hot. It was a bit gutless when three up, but Campbell has reset the carburettor (was running far too rich) and things have improved. The economy will be checked when a few more miles have been done. Being a coward, I'm using LRP petrol.

Mud and snow tyres came fitted to the rear wheels. As they have plenty of tread, and Winter approaches, they are staying on. By 50 MPH the car did start shaking, which has been greatly lessened by correcting the tyre pressures to 20 psi front and 22 psi rear as you suggested. Would balancing the wheels cure it completely? Anyway, it's only 8 miles into town, so how much time would I save by going faster?

The fixed seat belts are a pain, always getting tangled up or requiring adjustment. Perhaps I can find a good secondhand pair of the inertia reel type.

The wiper blade rubbers were shot. Couldn't get new blades with the correct wiper arm fitting locally, but managed to fit new rubber inserts, which work much better. It only took an hour for each blade ..

The charge warning light comes on intermittently. Fan belt tension and condition are O.K. and the warning lamp bulb is secure, as is the earth wire which fits on one of the instrument clamp securing screws. It could be the alternator brushes which will mean the fiddly job of removing the alternator. So today (23/10/00) Campbell and I removed it, he fitted new brushes, then Hi ho! off to Lucas Service where a 10 minute test on load showed it was working fine. After refitting, the alternator now seems to be O.K. Wait and see – again.

Two thoughts, well one thought and one comment actually, Firstly, why did you not have the alternator tested before fitting the brushes? Anyway, it does no harm to replace them every 80,000 miles or so. And secondly – I used to have that problem, I think Phil solved it, it was an intermittently bad connection at the solenoid. Ed.

The heater blows warm only. I hope that the fitting of a new thermostat and radiator cap yesterday will improve matters. So far Murphy has ensured that A) the air to the windscreen is

considerably cooler than that to my feet and B) the air to my side of the windscreen is cooler than that to the passenger's!!

Listen Dick, and anyone else interested, there are a number of possible potential faults with the heater – short of a blocked matrix, talk to Graeme Shaw for advice on 01457 868944, sorry to land you with that Graeme, but I know that you know the answers, and I've run out of space! Ed.

My repair to the driver's seat cushion with foam rubber and wood seems to be lasting though it is a bit firm to say the least. It also means that I have to recline the seat to get enough head room and it's still a cosy space (!) fit.

Two unsolved snags are the lack of concealed storage for a tool-box, and no lid to the glove box. The first I might be able to overcome by fitting a shelf behind the back seat. *(I thought that we had covered that situation with a converted bonnet in a past edition, Ed)* The second I may just live with.

Further routine work is continuing slowly. Get the passenger seat to slide (drill the heads off the fixing bolts, remove it, then lightly grease the runners) ; take the tyres off two spare 10~" Mini wheels that I have acquired (swapped for an old CB radio – who got he best bargain?) and paint them, change the engine oil and filter, (strange that the drain plug is 15mm A/F when the rest of the car is Imperial. (A/F.) Cut off the dangling rubber at the bottom of the passenger's door seal to avoid passengers exiting the car headfirst. (Must get a new door seal before winter). On Friday night, one of howling gales, there was an unusual 'tinging' noise for a time while coming home. I lifted the bonnet next day to find that the radiator overflow pipe had disappeared! It must have come loose from its clip, kept hitting the fan blades, and then dropped off. A piece of clear plastic pipe has replaced it. Oh, and I must replace that frayed check strap on the driver's door. And so it goes on, never a dull moment.

In conclusion the Kitten does well the job for which it was intended. A small, non rust, light to drive car, easy to park in small spaces, nippy within its limits, and hopefully easy on fuel. Well done Reliant. All I need to do now is win the Big One on the lottery, and organise the restarting of production!

Best wishes - Dick Goodall – Tore, Muir of Ord

Thanks for that Dick (I told you he was my most prolific correspondent, and I have not published all of his letters by any means, indeed I have edited bits out of most of the ones that you see in here Dick Goodall for Editor? Ed)

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Now a few words from a gentleman who has too many cars, too many cars, is that possible ? No matter, because his advert does not fall into our normal category (I often have one that does not, if you have noticed!) Anyway, after reading the following, I am sure you will appreciate that I just had to run the ad – Ed.

Dear Brian,

4th November 2000

Just a short note to say that the worm has turned, nastily and with venom, yes I bought another Reliant, an SS1 Scimitar 1600 early model, quite rare, and at a ridiculous price *(You may think that now, but wait till you have a look at that chassis - Ed!)* I just couldn't say no. But my wife Debra finally has! The threats have finally come to fruition. One or more of the cars has to go Brian, I have only got five, a GTE Scimitar, a Rialto, a Kitten a Jimp and the SS1 Scimitar. Do you think this is excessive? I don't, but we are talking here of spare bedrooms, a chip butty ban, a cutback in my pocket money, a total ban on all motoring magazines (I hope and pray this does not include the Mewsletter) and no marital favours.

Hot Rebel

It all started on the LEJOG run in '98. The weather at the start was very hot and the temperature indicator was showing much higher than was normal. When stopped and having switched off the ignition, the coolant boiled over into the expansion bottle (fitted a few days earlier). On restarting, fuel vaporisation was immediately apparent and also, if running at some speed, on long hills.

I put these symptoms down to the excessively hot weather. Certainly, when the temperature fell the symptoms disappeared.

I lived with this ever-worsening problem for another year and decided the problem was mainly fuel vaporisation.

In an attempt to remedy the fuel vaporisation I lagged the fuel pipe (this metal pipe passes over the front of the engine) between fuel pump and carburettor, no improvement. Next, a rubber fuel pipe was run from the pump to the carburettor via the front chassis and nearside wing to avoid as much heat as possible, no improvement. It was not until I actually touched the fuel pump after a run that I realised that the problem was the pump itself. As the pump has no thermal barrier pump to block (this arrangement is normal for a 1968 Rebel), engine heat is passed directly to the pump and then to the petrol. A fresh flow of petrol, when in motion, is usually enough to cool the pump satisfactorily. Any reduction in flow and/or excessive heat build-up in the block will, of course, cause symptoms of fuel vaporisation.

Why this problem now after so many years? I contacted the first owner, he had the car for over 24 years, he was adamant that fuel vaporisation had not been a persistent problem. Could it be the modern petrol? I used 4-star until it was restricted for sale, lead-free petrol has a reputation for burning hotter, but this problem occurred before this time.

During this period I noticed that oil was being used at an ever-increasing rate, no leaks were present so it must be being burnt. I've always used the same oil so, if the oil is burning off, it must be getting too hot now. Otherwise the engine performs better than ever and is therefore unlikely to be so worn out as to consume oil in normal running.

Out came the radiator, flushed through via the lower hose outlet, no blockages and a free flow of water. Next, with the system all back together, the system was flushed twice using radiator flush following the manufacturers instructions to the letter, no improvement. Using de-ionised water and anti-freeze I added 'Water Wetter'. This product aids heat transfer from engine to water, water to outside air via the radiator (at least 15% more efficient). (Incidentally, the temperature gauge reads higher with 'Water Wetter' in the coolant since the transfer of heat, water to sensor, is also more efficient.) This appeared to work initially, the temperature staying cooler for some miles. I've cracked this I thought, then the gauge moved up rapidly to the normal overheat position and, upon switching off, boiled.

I started making my journeys at lower speeds to reduce the potential for heating (45-50 mph rather than 55-60 mph). Not only did journey times increase; it made climbing hills more troublesome, at 55 mph the car will soar up most hills. Since I was using the gearbox more my fuel consumption also rose. I tried travelling at night, taking advantage of the generally lower temperatures and lower traffic volume to travel at a higher speed. This was only partially successful, as there is no guarantee of either.

What else to do? Check ignition timing; points were a little wider than specified, this was corrected. Static timing; set retarded (about 68 I estimate), would this make a difference. The timing

was corrected and checked twice to be sure. Spark plugs; these could have been an advert for perfect running but were changed anyway (been in for 6 years gapped at 30 thou for the electronic ignition).

Went for a run; more power? maybe; overheating? Yes; back to the drawing board.

Time to stop messing about, out came the radiator, off came the water pump, heater control valve and block drain plug.

Taking a 12 inch hacksaw blade (it's too narrow, liner to block, for anything thicker); it was inserted into the water pump aperture. Inside the block there was a thick crust of lime scale surrounding the wet liners. This was scraped at until it fell away and the blade was then pushed past No.4 liner to No.3. Working the blade in/out/up/down I chipped at the scale until the blade moved freely. At the first attempt to push the blade through to No. 2 liner there was very firm resistance. A gentle tap with a pound hammer persuaded the lime scale to give way. More working in/out/up/down until I could reach No. 1 liner. Again I used the hammer to penetrate the scale and worked to chip it away. Taking a piece of wire, (coat hanger) I pushed it through the heater valve aperture to loosen the scale behind No. 1 liner. An attempt to push the wire into the block drain proved impossible. A thin drift and the hammer cracked the scale seal so that the wire could be inserted and moved around so as to disturb as much scale as possible.

A few words of caution; neither the saw blade or the wire should be allowed to penetrate far enough to reach or loosen the core plugs, measure the depth to which the saw/wire can be allowed to go and do not exceed. Also, the threads in the block drain are very fine and, being aluminium, are likely to suffer if the wire is not inserted squarely.

A pressure sprayer was applied to the heater valve aperture and the in/out/up/down movements with wire and saw blade repeated. At first the flow from the drain was sluggish, thick and milky with pieces of scale blocking the hole. Later, the flow of milky water was sustained. The flush continued until the water was clear even with the wire and saw blade being used. The water jet was transferred to the drain hole; more scale came out of the water pump aperture, this continued until the water ran clear.

I took this opportunity to renew all the hose clips and the fibre washers at the heater valve and drain plug. The water pump was fine but was changed for a new one anyway. The current Reliant water pump and gasket fits although the fan boss has only three holes (not four) so a later fan is required to fit. The boss is also about half as deep as the original so the fan is mounted about one inch further from the radiator, maybe there is room for an electric fan at the rear of the radiator now.

The radiator was reinstalled (mounted on rubber exhaust pipe supports) and refilled with 50/50 de-ionised water to antifreeze.

Upon starting every hose joint leaked, twisting and loosening/re-tightening allowed the seals to reform until all the leaks ceased.

At this point I realised that the screw ferrule for retaining the heater cable was missing, presumed lost. A replacement was made from a three-pin plug live terminal; it was made to fit after sawing and filing.

So far all appears well, but since there has been little hot weather, this is not absolute proof.

Of course, only one side of the cylinder liners has been cleared of scale; will this be enough? There is no access to any other area short of a complete strip-down.

The amount of lime scale build up suggests that hard-water had been used extensively throughout the engine's life. When I first acquired the car, I used to top up the radiator with previously boiled water (anti-freeze was already in the radiator although being diluted at each top-up). After fitting an expansion bottle I used de-ionised water and anti-freeze. It's surprising how the effect of the scale build-up occurred in the last few years when previously it appeared to have caused little concern.

Using radiator flush is obviously no remedy, what's needed is something to abrade or scour the full cooling system of scale without damage to the engine components.

All suggestions gratefully received.

Fred Heath - Rebel WPC 92G

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Does Your Kitten have Wet Feet ?

(Or more accurately, do you have wet feet from wet carpets?)

Dear Brian,

1st October 2000

After rain the other night, I noticed that there was water on top of the new drivers door seal and running down onto the carpet. After a bit of thought this put me in mind of Phil Hallam's article in a past Mewsletter. Issue 14, page 5 – Keep the rain out of your Kitten ~! Where he urged everyone to make sure that a plastic rain guide sheet is installed behind the interior panel on their Kittens driver's and passenger's doors. This guides drips from the window down into the bottom of the door and then it can escape through the drain holes provided for the purpose, and NOT onto the floor inside the car. So I removed the interior panel from the driver's door, and – no plastic sheet! What would make one? On rooting around in the garden shed I came upon a Lidl foodstore bag which is made of good quality, tough, plastic. By cutting off the handles and then slitting the bag down one side and along the bottom, it opens out into a plastic sheet of just the right size. What luck ! Now I cut out a rectangular hole for the door handle and surround, and a hole for the window winding handle spindle. Finally tape the plastic sheet in place, making sure that the bottom of it is tucked well inside the bottom of the door panel opening. Now I've replaced the interior panel. Of course the proper panel securing devices are long gone, and it is held in place by an assortment of self-tapping screws of various sizes, some of which were loose in their holes. The biggest screws had made ¼” holes in the door and this seemed silly. So I took Rawlplugs for plasterboard, cut them to about half length, and they nicely fitted the holes. Then a No. 8 screw together with a recessed washer went in nicely and secured the panel much better. I daresay there are proper inserts available, but I've seen none locally, and this solution seems to work well enough.

This morning I was at Muir of Ord station for 8:45am. The reason was to see a steam train go through on its way to Kyle of Lochalsh. A few locals were about, including a dear old lady with her brother in a rather nice Morris Minor traveller. She looked at the Kitten. “I like your Reliant. Have you had it long ? “ she asked – You could have knocked me down with a feather....

Cheers for now – Dick Goodall - Tore, Muir of Ord.

Sales and Wants

For Sale:- Fox parts as one lot (space needed). Used condition. Back axle + propshaft + dampers, towbar, tailgate, bonnet, left & right doors, load space divider, wiring loom, right rear bumper, wheel & tyre. Buyer collects. £100 no offers

For Sale:- Rebel spares, New stainless van exhaust, chassis plates, the one with the list of lubricants. Contact Michael Bentley

For Sale:- A very tidy Fox camper van. Genuine 49,500 miles from new Excellent running order, £1,100. Contact Reg Morgan for more details,

For Sale: - Fox Hard top 'B' registered 80,000 miles champagne m.o.t £500.

For Sale:- 1984 Fox Hard top with side windows and rear seat, New front tyres and rear shocks, 80,000 miles M.O.T. July 01, taxes Nov 2000.

For Sale:- Kitten Estate, long M.O.T.

For Sale:- One of the very late Kittens first registered in September 1983! A711 FBC. Is registered as a Kitten Van Estate! One owner from new. M.O.T. till August 2001, Taxed till end of March. Engine needs a little work, but is a runner. Yours for just £350, don't get trampled in the rush. Contact Alan McKay

For Sale:- Kitten van – contact Steve Sheppard

For Sale:- A very tidy Kitten saloon, M.O.T. till July 2001. 48,000 miles from new. New clutch, hoses & brakes. £300 o.n.o. Contact R. Mason

For Sale:- Reliant Scimitar Se6a, 1977 manual with overdrive, a really outstanding example of this great classic car. New Vinyl roof, new sun roof, Wolfrace wheels, radio cassette and towbar. You must see this car. Tax and M.O.T. to be arranged.

For Sale:- A late (1983) Kitten estate. Mot Aug. 2001, tax till March 2001, contact Alan McKay– Portsmouth. £350.

For sale:- pair of doors, two bonnets, and a complete Kitten front end free to a good home, buyer collects

For Sale:- A Lada estate. Pretty rusty body, but it has a good 1600cc engine, a five speed gearbox, a stainless exhaust, a brand new fast road camshaft, and a host of other features.

Wanted:- An early Rebel gearbox in good working order – remote control – to get my 1967 Rebel 700cc Saloon back on the road. Please contact Mike Hine No, hang on, I sold him mine, so ring the Registrar if you have one (or call Mike to see if all is well)

Wanted:- Kitten bonnet, Brian Millar

Wanted:- A Kitten saloon back widow hinge, or a back window complete with hinges, Jim Spence

Wanted: Late Rebel gear lever, the long one, Mark Hayton

Wanted:- Early Rebel gearbox dip stick, contact the Registrar please.

NOTES

It is now the first of November. I spent all of this morning drafting a letter to three of our keen and helpful folk about Mewsletter back numbers, and am busy putting the final touches on the plans for my trip south, just as the fuel crisis is about to rear its head again, and water levels are still rising in much of England. Moira thinks it is not just my legs that don't work properly!

I see place names that I recognise from our mailing list mentioned in the television news reports, and I do think about you. For once, Scotland seems to be getting off lightly, though we are not without our problems.

I hope that long before you read this, electricity supplies will have been restored, and homes dried out. Such tests of our ability to cope with adversity I am quite sure we could all live perfectly happily without.

I think it was Bob Neal who gave me the following information about Jimps, and that was in fact more of a question, in so much as he believes that 30 of them were bought by Solihull County Council in 1983, and that they were auctioned for just £250 each in 1987. The question is, does anyone know what happened to them after that? I await your answers with interest.

On the subject of finding out things, I did write to the Tandy Group at Pell Lane in Hyde, Isle of Wight, to have my letter enquiring about Camper vans returned by the Royal Mail, marked gone away. Does anyone know if the company still exists at all? and if so where? Failing that what facts do we know about the camper van? I believe there were two types / models, a Firecrest and something else (was it Wavecrest?). If you have any information, please get in touch, Ed.

This next piece of information could arguably have gone into the Rebel pages, or even the Technical bit, but I am here just now, clearing my desk, and came across the bit of paper that tells me that Rebel Tie Rod ends are, oh dear, can't read my own writing, it looks like either QR, or QH, or even QP 1120 (Lht) or Lockheed TA 1195 or 1353, Reliant parts 7148 & 9. So, if those who want or need to be knowing these things care to make a note, I can destroy that bit of paper, and get still nearer the top of my desk with a clearer conscience! What the note did not tell me, and I can't remember, is who gave me that information, but there it is anyway.

Still in desk clearing mode, can you help me please? There is this piece of paper, just about 5" by 3" which has neatly printed on it in block capitals, the following " Other Reliants owned One other Fox :- A reg Two Rebel estates :- G & L reg One Kitten saloon :- V reg one Kitten Van :- S reg. Kitten van for sale! " The problem is that I allowed this piece of paper to become separated from whatever other documents arrived with it, and so I don't know who it is from, nor indeed when, though I believe that it is relatively recent, i.e. in the last few months. So, if you recognise yourself, will you please make yourself known so that I can both run the advert, and pick your brains for more details of the other vehicles – thank you.

Oh listen, season of goodwill and all that, I have been meaning for a long time to invite you to help a friend of mine out – he has this peculiar hobby – he collects expired tax discs, you know, the road fund licence we have on the windscreen of the car, well he collects them like some folk collect stamps,

he has thousands of them, going back to the 1930's. I have to say that I recently beat my own record in his collection, my old Jowett Javelin XS 7831, had pride of place in his collection in as much as it was the vehicle for which he had the largest number of tax discs, that was until I gave him the ones from Den and Edna's Rebel, there were even more of them, than from the Javelin – Rebel outlasts Javelin, there must be a story there somewhere! Anyway, if you could be bothered, and don't collect them yourself of course, I know he would appreciate it if you could take the time to send him your old one(s). He is George Mitchell of Shirramair House, Sheriffmuir, by Dunblane, Perthshire FK15 0LN He will I am sure be quite happy to refund the postage (said he, picturing huge bundles of them!).

It seems a long time ago now that I began this page, the first of November I see, it is now the 24th, just over three weeks and I have made not one, but two trips to England this month. My thanks to those of you who I was able to see on those occasions, and my apologies to those I had intended to visit, but failed – the Citroen came back from the first adventure with a different driver's door and window from the one it had when I left – not my fault, honest, I was not even in the car when the damage occurred, but the incident cost me 40 hours, and dramatically altered my plans. So you can relax now, I am back home and going into hibernation for a while to recover, so I won't be turning up on your doorstep this year!

Sadly the second trip was just a few days after the first, one of my old friends, whom I had visited during my first trip, died just two days after I had called in to see him, and I took my mother down to York to attend his funeral.

The up side of all my gallivanting has to be the fact that Moira was forced into using the Kitten (she can't live with the Rebel's lack of oomph! – and I am not prepared to fit a bigger engine for fear of damaging the gearbox!), and poor demisting apart, I think she might be – again – converted to the Kitten cause!

I am advised that a comprehensive index of all the Mewsletters will shortly be available, thanks to a tremendous effort by Dick Goodall, ably assisted in the technical department by Brian Millar, thank you Dick and Brian. Details will be advised in the next edition, but if you are really desperate, give me a ring. When I last spoke about this Brian Millar was in the process of converting the file format to one we can print easily from Dick's 5 ¼" floppy discs. I believe that the document is in the region of 25 pages long, so I guess I'd better shut up lest this gets into it in the future!

O.K., I have just completed the Renewal Notice Information sheet for printing on the back of the renewal notices. My ramblings there do not cover every aspect of the form, but are quite long winded enough, just please take the time to read the back of the form first, and then complete it as best you can. Obviously with the additional information I am seeking this time, I will have a bit of work to do when your form comes back, so please, I know it is not perfect, but I firmly believe it is an excellent compromise, especially given the chaotic way my mind sometimes works, thanks again Brian Millar for all your work on this for us. Right, enough of my ramblings, have a wonderful time over the festive period and may the new millennium bring you all you hope for.

Brian

NEWSLETTER 37 SUPPLEMENT

Right, listen up – a number of people have been asking what the subscription is, and when am I going to put it up to a more realistic figure? well, the fact is that while we enjoy the support of people like John Pearce and Brian Millar, the Register covers its running costs as things stand. I've always said that it is

a non profit making organisation, and I feel that that is quite right and proper – however, were certain circumstances to alter, I could not afford for example, our colour front covers – so perhaps I should be putting something by to prepare for such eventualities.

There is also the matter of a spares fund – I do operate a spares account, but it owes me money at the moment (a part I had reconditioned, still to be paid for) – again perhaps I should be looking to the future, and being prudent by putting something by for that proverbial rainy day. Especially in view of the company's altered status. (No longer a manufacturer of vehicles).

I ought to publish the spares stock list, but while we have paying advertisers, I do not want to be seen to be in competition with them – I will address that situation at some point, in the meantime if you would like a list of what is in stock, just drop me an s.a.e., with a note asking for a copy, and I'll get it off by return. I know that some of you have asked in the past, and I can't remember who, but I do now have such a list available.

So, where was I again, oh yes, subscription rates, and the need / wisdom / requirement for an official spares fund. Well, I'll put the ball in your court for now, at the risk of giving myself even more work! (In the sense that if I accept money from you towards spares, you will obviously qualify for priority over someone who does not contribute, should I ever be in the position of having two people looking for the same bit at the same time, and only one of them a contributor to the spares fund, so I'll need to record who does so! - I'll cope!)

So, what I am saying (and I know from a number of telephone calls, that others are thinking) is that I will invite a nominal voluntary donation to the spares fund of, say a fiver. Don't feel obliged, and if you think a couple of quid more appropriate I won't be offended, conversely if you really feel that a tenner is nearer the mark, feel free – I'll cope somehow! Don't go sending two cheques, I'll sort it out here.

On the subscription front, as I may have mentioned in the magazine, it is now, for new subscribers £12, but I am allowing existing subscribers to renew at £10 this year. Call it a special Millennium treat! (here was almost £250 left in the bank last week, though I've still to pay for the enclosed Magazine, you know, the stamps alone cost £ 99 this time!).

Right, that really is the end, sorry that the renewal notice is so complex looking this year, the notes on the back of it should help explain things – I hope! I did let you off very lightly last time, and it really is time that I tried to up-date my information about the cars, so please bear with me.

It only remains for me to once again wish you and yours all the best for the New Year, and to thank you once again for your continued support – I really couldn't do it without you.

Take care

Brian