Reliant Kitten Register

MEWSLETTER Forty

May/June 2001

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. 40

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 our front cover shows a fox Pick-up which was advertised in the last edition. This one has an interesting history having lived in Holland for a while, and then being returned to the land of it's creation. It now sports a roof mounted spare wheel and spot lights, and has a tow bar, and is I believe still on the market, it can be yours for £500 I am told – see the adverts page for details.

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 again, I must try harder, Moira was complaining that she only laughed once while proof reading the last edition – she has for a while been threatening to write a piece on the 'joys' of living with the Registrar, and If I wind her up enough, who knows!

Anyway, here we are, edition 40 already – who said it wouldn't last? You have got off lightly recently as far as input from me is concerned, so I will bore you all with a tale of ancient history, and a plan for the future. I have written the 7,000 odd word story in two parts, after our adventure last weekend (middle of March) we'll see how much of this edition your contributions fill, before deciding whether to include the whole story in this edition, or serialise it!

When I mailed you your copy of edition 39, about 40 people instead got a letter asking them if their subscription had lapsed because of an oversight, or if they really had had enough of this waffle. I have to say that that is the largest number of non-renewals I have ever had in a year. Offset I am happy to say by a record number of new subscribers since Christmas. I hope that this is neither a trend, nor an indication of a serious decline in Kitten numbers. I know that each year a few are scrapped for a variety of reasons, which, while sad, does seem to be a fact of life. I am also aware that subscribers to this Register represent only about a third of Kitten owners in the land, a considerably higher percentage than many other organisations enjoy, but none the less there is considerable room for expansion.

At the time of writing only eight of them have renewed, and a few have let me know that they no longer own a Kitten.

Phil Hallam in the last edition was giving us an early warning about spares, which I thought was a bit pessimistic, but it is a fact that if we are ever to be in the position of having to get bits made, we do have something of a mountain to climb as far as reaching minimum quantities is concerned.

I know that it is important to do all we can to secure the future for these wee cars, but certain parts, which would be relatively expensive to manufacture, are available in numbers which, based on my experience, represent a supply that would last a hundred years and more, and I am concerned that to draw attention to certain situations, might leave me / us faced with a situation where we have to buy the lot, or risk seeing them scrapped. Given that we have neither the money or space to purchase or store such things, there are decisions to be made, and situations to address. I am grateful to a number of people for their help and advice on such matters. Watch this space.

As I have said in the past, do let me, or Phil or the relevant alternative parts person, know if you are having any spares problems that threaten to keep your car off the road.

On the Kitten front, in response to my comments last time regarding front side lamps, I had a call from Graeme Shaw, our man in Glossop, well, one of our men in Glossop, anyway, Graeme was able to confirm my belief that all Kittens were made with the sidelights incorporated in the headlamps. Even the kits sold after production ceased. In fact he tells me that those kits were the result of a cancelled export order, possibly for Israel, anyway, they were all left hand drive, though some were converted to right hand drive at the time for sale here. They were offered to dealers at the time, without any Reliant warranty. But even they had the sidelights in the headlamps. There is of course no problem getting the right thing, the factory have them in stock, the only problem is the price at about £ 50 each by the time you include the V.A.T. I believe.

In fact I am happy to say that the general belief is that there is no serious spares supply problem for the Kitten at this time, as I've said before, if you think differently, please let me know.

On the spares front, I, with a lot of help from a number of friends, have re-located most of my smaller spare parts over the last few weeks, and most of them are now catalogued and sorted, which means that I can actually find them! So, if you are looking for any of the unusual bits, mainly Rebel I have to say – how many Rebel heaters would you like? I have 8 or 9 spare ones! There are odd things like a brand new glove box door for example! There is a list, and while it is now on the computer I have yet to add the part numbers, doing that will let me see where I have the same part in more than one box, and then I will be able to rectify those duplications. One up-side of this organisation has been that the two folk who were needing late Rebel gear levers now have them, mind you I have only the one left now!

Finally, as you will see from the back cover, Reliant have moved again, and I would just like to take the opportunity of wishing them well in their new premises. I understand that they needed larger premises to incorporate the "Metrocab" spares business that Stewart Halstead has recently acquired.

REBEL ROUND UP

Mark Hayton was going to send me the most recent edition of "**Rebel Yell"** to go in here, but I didn't press him as I am tight for space this time, hear from you soon Mark.

FOXES' DEN

Right, I was asked the other day, March as it happens, "what disc brakes fit a Fox, at the front?" now I assume that the various solutions used on the Kitten will be suitable, but whether the Fox's 12" wheels would clear the calipers, the Kitten's 10 inch ones certainly do not! or if spacers, or wider wheels are required, I have no idea. Can anyone help please?

Also, Fox rear springs, good second -hand ones, cleaned and painted, may still be available from S. Campbell, c/o Hatchback Ltd., write to him at Unit 4, Millbrook Road, Birkenhead, CH41 1FL

Duncan Bradford – you remember Duncan, he is the chap who organised the production of Fox stainless window frames – well, I don't know whither this is bad or good – but Duncan and I have something in common – we have been known to write information gleaned from a telephone call, on a bit of paper – then lose the bit of paper! So, would the individual who contacted Duncan about the stainless Fox frames, please do so again. Also anyone else who is interested, as a batch is being planned imminently. There is no plan to manufacture these for stock, so if you want a set, now is the time to act.

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AA

I have registered the Register with the Automobile Association, and in future anyone who wishes to, can take advantage of a discounted scheme that we can now offer. They tell me that this could save you up to £21 on your annual premium, and the Register will get a commission as well! Anyway, I have a supply of forms here, and if you would like one, just send me an s.a.e. and I'll get yours in the post. This scheme applies to both current members, as well as new ones. So if you are with the A. A. already, and are not already getting a discount, get in touch, and we'll arrange one for you.

Oddly enough their head office is at Erskine, on the south bank of the River Clyde, about six miles from here !

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Competition Corner

I know that there were no less than 4 Liege's in the group of enthusiasts including Gari & Do Jones, Mike Oakins, Howard Blackwell David & Mathew Bates and the tempestuous Dave Smith (though Dave was neither in a Liege, nor his Tempest!) who have been over the Alps since last we spoke, but that tale will have to wait a while I 'm afraid! Watch this space

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A word from our insurance advertiser on Theft cover news

All motor insurance policy wordings exclude cover for theft if the keys have been left in or on the vehicle.

There can be no misunderstanding on this clause, and you will be personally responsible for loss or damage to the vehicle unless you strictly adhere to this warranty.

You must therefore check your policy wording carefully and if there is any query whatsoever, please contact your insurers.

Robert Spare - P.F. Spare Insurance Brokers - Tel 01530 270574

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READERS LETTERS

Dear Brian, 12th March 2001

Following on from our recent telephone conversation, I would like to subscribe to your magazine, and enclose a subscription cheque for £12.

As you may remember I currently have my Kitten stripped right down to it's constituent parts, in order to repair the chassis and rebuild it.

I have decided my car is going to go back on the road this summer (I remember saying the same thing last year though). I have been taking photographs and video of the process, so perhaps I might be able to contribute an article or something later on in the year. In particular I am having to repair severe rot in the front N/S suspension mountings, it may be that others might be interested in how I am accomplishing this (I used to work as a welder / fabricator many years ago).

I am quite a fan of Reliant motors, this is my eighth vehicle built by the company. I started with a Regal Supervan MK III in 1982, including several scrappers that were given to me and subsequently returned to productive life. The current Kitten I bought for £75 five years ago. It had had the engine removed owing to a seizure, and a variety of other problems. I put a second hand engine in, and other

bits. M.O.T.'d it and ran it for 18 months on the daily commute to work. Further engine problems and chassis rot did for it a second time, leading me to take it off the road and dismantle it.

Look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely, Bill Callaghan - Liverpool

*Well thanks for that Bill, and **yes please**, an article would be most welcome, it is a while since we have had a body off rebuild story in the mag. Ed.*

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More musings form Dickey Dawes, our man in Andover :-

Sodd's laws of Motoring

1. If you are in the habit of carrying spare parts in your car, everything else will go wrong, and the spares will never be needed.

2. If you collect filling station points / tokens etc, the further you are from civilisation and the closer your fuel gauge gets to empty, the faster the chance diminishes of finding your brand of fuel.

3. The next filling station you come across after you have just filled up in desperation with Wizzogas, has your favourite brand, and it's cheaper!

4. If you are desperate for a 'call of nature' and pull off onto a deserted road, as soon as you undo / remove the necessary article of clothing, cars will appear form all directions.

5 You will be unable to miss the pothole which you try to avoid every day, because the only other vehicle you have seen coming the other way in the last two miles is always large and passes you at exactly this point.

6 When you take your car for the MOT, the faults you know about are never found, and the faults you didn't know about are always worse.

7 Silencers only fall off and drag along under the car when it's wet and dark.

8 People you ask for directions nearly always turn out to be foreigners, newcomers to the area, or complete lunatics.

9 If you park in a deserted car park, a car will soon arrive and park so close to you that it will be very difficult for you to get out.

10 If you give up your priority and allow a car to turn in front of you, this car will drive along 30 mph slower than the speed you want to go at.

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Dear Brian, 01/05/01

Please belatedly renew my subscription to the Register, and could you do me a great favour and enclose the following letter in the Mewsletter, I knew I should have bought a good second hand Fox!

Now I have to say that I do not want this magazine to become a platform for such things, but just this once, seeing it's you Steve:- Ed.

Looking for Aixam Drivers

I am looking for other Aixam owners to find out about their cars.

The Aixam 500 is regularly advertised in my local paper. The advertisment states that it is corrosion proof. When I bought a convertible version I asked about corrosion, and was informed "Longevity was one of the most important qualities designed into all Aixams." Unfortunately, after three months I found my chassis was covered in rust – Aixam replied that chipping was inevitable on an exposed chassis. Additionally I have had repeated electrical faults, apparently due to the ingress of water into electrical connections. Hence I would be pleased to hear from other owners to find out about their experiences with their Aixam.

Please contact Steve Barker

What I would say in passing is that my understanding is that the convertible is potentially a problem, not only because it has no roof or windows, but also because to give it the stiffness it needs, it is the only vehicle Aixam build which does not have their alloy chassis. That said the obvious comment that I should be making is to say, yes Steve, you should have bought a good Fox! Mind you, good Foxes are about as rare as good Rebels these days! Ed.

Dear Brian, 20th February 2001

Passenger Door Lock Problems

The passenger's door catch on PYB 262P has always been erratic in fastening properly, often it just catches on the first (safety?) position. Leaving the door ajar with consequent draughts. So I moved the catch plate (again!) but soon the door would again not shut properly. Curses! look more closely, and try yet another adjustment… and the bottom catch plate screw won't tighten up properly! The threads had gone, so replace it, and all now seems well.

The outside button on the passenger's door ceased working. So I removed the inner door panel, and manage to unfasten the operating rods from the inner handle (no, you do not need to remove the inner handle), then the removal of the 4 screws permits the door catch to be wangled out. The bit of tin that the screw from the outer handle presses onto was bent, and a bit of careful bending back with pliers cured that. Then I saw that the wire rod and tongue to lock the door were floating about. It took a while to work out where they went, but eventually they went into place. Now to re- assemble. After retrieving the inner tapped plate from the bottom of the door, it was tricky to hold both lock and plate in position to insert the screws. A thin screwdriver pushed from outside through one of the screw holes and just inside the door, helped to locate the plate while getting the first screw started. Once all was back in place, the door lock functioned as intended.

Now secured the plastic sheet in place with a bit of tape to keep water away from the car interior, replaced the inner panel, and that's one more job crossed off the TTD list… There are more….

Best wishes, Dick Goodall - Tore

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Operation Phoenix – Part 1

The background to the story

In the beginning there was a plan, and the plan was good, or so I thought!

It all began back in 1975, remember 1975? Margaret Thatcher was a virtual unknown, Dutch Elm disease killed 6.5 million Elm trees in Britain, Tiger Woods was born, VHS and Betamax videos were first introduced. Reliant brought out the 850 engine in the Robin, and more importantly from our point of view, introduced the Kitten. Well O.K. some of you probably don't remember that far back, but I do, I got married that year, to my first wife, Moira. I told her at the time (she wasn't sure about a long term relationship) that it was only a 50 year trial period, and we had our silver anniversary last June, only 24 more to go!

The old Austin A35 van had a bit of rust at the back of the chassis, in truth that bit only held the back bumper on, it was behind the back rear spring mounting, but in those days I did not have ready access to welding facilities, and what with the wedding and everything else going on that year, my father had died a few months previously, there were other matters to be attended to. In the event my grandfather saved the day, by loaning us his Hillman Avenger to go our touring honeymoon in, and I convinced Moira that the thing to do was to buy a Reliant.

Foolishly I did not think of the Rebel at that time, the last few would probably still have been available, but instead we bought one of the last of the 750cc Robins. If I had known that the 850 was coming out, I would have waited, isn't hindsight wonderful!

I transferred the registration number from my old Jowett Javelin (which really was suffering from terminal corrosion) onto the Robin, and so it was first registered as EGS 105, in August '75, I thought EGS (we pronounced it Eggs) was not inappropriate for a Robin. Life went on, and two years and 44,000 miles later, Willie Hood, an old colleague of my late father's, rang me to ask if I knew anyone who might like to buy his Jowett Javelin. Willie had owned the car from new in 1952, and it only had 81,000 miles on the clock. Not bad for a 23 year old I thought!

Willie used to cycle to work if it was raining, just to keep his pride and joy dry. He was an electrician to trade, helped wire up the Queen Mary in his younger days – I guess that dates him a bit.

So, we hastily sold the Robin, which had proved to be a bit light for the miles and tasks asked of it, I had bent one leaf spring, just out of warranty, and broken the other one a few months later. I gave the car away, complete with the registration number, for just £600, less than half what we had paid for it two years previously. Willie's Javelin was XS 7831, (XS was the Paisley registration mark in those days) Blanes being the local agent, the one feature I really hated was that in those days, the early 50's, the dealer used to screw an enamel badge to the dashboard with their name on it, a bit like they do on the bottom of number plates today. Totally ruined a beautiful wood veneer dashboard in my opinion, but there we are. As you might expect, it did not take kindly to being asked to suddenly do 22,000 miles a

year having been used to doing not a lot more than a 10th of that. To be fair to the car, it was my lack of expertise, combined with insufficient funding that prevented it from doing the job.

So by 1978 we were needing a vehicle that would provide reliable daily transport, we went through a succession of tin bodied devices from a Morris Marina through a Hillman Avenger (wonderful car that, almost as good handling as the Javelin, and that's saying something) a Volvo 244, and a Beetle 1302S, funny numbering system they used, the 1302S had a 1600cc engine! There followed a Talbot Horizon, driving the wrong end I know, but you should not knock things till you have tried them, so I have, but in spite of current beliefs, and the fact that we do run a Citroen BX these days, (couldn't afford a Peugeot, but got their wonderful diesel engine just the same!). The one thing that BMW, Mercedes and Reliant, not to mention Rolls Royce do have right, is the wheels they drive!

In between all these diversions I managed to sneak in another Reliant, a Kitten this time. I remember the week, if not the day we bought it. I had booked tickets to see Stephan Grapelli in the Theatre Royal in Glasgow, Moira was not at all impressed, (nae culture!) but I had a wonderful evening grappelling with Stephan.

The Kitten had been used for towing, and unfortunately had two broken back springs. NNS 191P stayed with us for a couple of years, by which time I had started collecting Rebels. My search for my first one took me to junction 8 on the M1. This memory of mine, while no use for many things, does retain some unbelievably useless bits of information. Victoria was the then 3 year old daughter of the woman from whom the Rebel was purchased. PJJ 697L had been given to her husband, a Scimitar man, to repair, and he had removed its gearbox and taken it to a specialist to be fixed. Then, tragically, he had an accident in a private aircraft, and the Rebel's owner told his widow just to sell it. So she advertised it in Exchange and Mart, and it came about that I took a trailer 400 miles to buy an unseen white Rebel estate car, with the gearbox in the boot, for £150. This in 1981 or thereabouts.

When I fitted the gearbox, and started the engine, the big ends were away, and so began the foundation of an intimate knowledge of these wee cars.

It was just about that time that I had discovered that my legs didn't work properly, and I had secured a place on a training course at Q.E.T.C. in Leatherhead in Surrey. I was hastily trying to complete the Rebel to make it reliable enough to use to commute between Renfrew and Leatherhead every other weekend for three months. I almost succeeded, but lack of funds stopped me short of getting the radiator reconditioned, and the one failure it had during the 6,000 miles it covered in the following three months was the 'new' voltage regulator that I had fitted along with a new starter motor and new generator. It turned out that none of these items were new at all, they were all reconditioned, and in the case of the voltage regulator, not very well reconditioned! That apart, engine overheating was the only problem encountered. Cruising at more than 48 to 50 M.P.H. for any distance was not sustainable, and so it became a 12-hour journey from Renfrew to Leatherhead every other weekend. I had a Kingston bridge to cross at both ends, the one in Glasgow over the River Clyde, and the one at Kingston on Thames near the south end of the trip.

The one thing those three months did teach me about the Reliant was that it could be depended on, and was a very useful cargo carrier which did not use a terrible amount of fuel. As an added bonus it was fun to chuck around, you could drift it round corners in the wet, the only thing it needed was a bit more power, and there was by then a certain 848cc engine available….

So there I was, a fibre glass bodied estate car, with by this time a stainless steel exhaust, and radial tyres, yes I always tell insurance companies about these digressions from standard spec. I even removed the dashboard, fitted an extra fuse box to feed the reversing lights, rear fog lamps, rear wiper,

and electric washers. Painted the dash brown, fitted a row of three extra warning lights along the top, between the two instruments, fitted an additional 300 degree sweep oil pressure gauge, and generally had it just the way I wanted it to be.

The training at Leatherhead however failed to produce the job I had been hoping for, being trained is one thing, having experience is quite another, and so circumstances forced me to choose between the Rebel, the Kitten and Moira's Beetle. Well we had buyers clamouring up to buy the Beetle and the Rebel, so we let them go and ran the Kitten for a while.

The Rebel did come back into my hands the following year after it had been involved in an accident, and I had to graft the front of another one onto it to make it useable again, yes body and chassis grafts were involved.

Tragically, well exceedingly frustratingly at any rate, vandals burnt down the lock-up where I had been working on the Rebel just before I got it back on the road. I was so close to having it ready, that I had even transferred the insurance to it, but the company I worked for sent me to London on a course for a couple of days, and I did not have time to get it M.O.T.'d first. Unknown to me as I was flying out of Glasgow, the lock-up was being burnt to the ground with the Rebel in it.

Anyway, there I was, expecting to be on an intensive course which in fact turned out to be the proverbial walk in the park, so I took the evening off and went east to the west end, the Prince Edward Theatre it was, "Anything Goes" was the show, (you know the one, - "In olden days a glimpse of stocking….") wonderful evening, only to return home the following day to find my pride and joy destroyed by vandals.

At this point the Kitten was having a number of problems, and a succession of Rebels followed. Chassis corrosion was the biggest problem that they suffered from. We devised solutions to them all, but I was getting less and less able to do the work myself.

By this time our daughter Arleen had come on the scene, and the wee Rebel saloon FYS 32L served us well for a few years, however in spite of lots of waxoil, chassis corrosion got the better of it too in the end. Its body lives on to this day having just changed hands from John Johnstone to Ian Johnston this year!

The Kitten chassis is both younger and less prone to corrosion, and so we bought another one of them. By this time my walking was so bad that I qualified for a "motability" car, and so we opted for the diesel Citroen BX, and I have to say that after 7 and a bit years, and 125,000 miles or so (it has done 159,000, but had done almost 34,000 when we bought it) it still manages to go further on a gallon of fuel than either my current Rebel or Moira's Kitten, though they are both more fun to drive than the Citroen, it does have to be said that its comfy ride and good heating and ventilation system are beginning to win me over on these cold winter days!

Arleen will soon be learning to drive, and I need to decide if I can afford to insure the Kitten for her, or if she will be 'stuck' with the Rebel, which for some reason is a lot cheaper to insure than the Kitten – Classic car polices excluded! (such specialist policies do not cover drivers under the age of 25).

So there you have it, a Rebel estate car is what I need, and so when the chassis rotted away under HYS 418L, which had a particularly good body, I opted to find a good chassis for it, and do a full restoration, including the installation of a good 850cc engine, and, if done properly, that would last for decades rather than years, and give trouble free, economical enjoyable motoring, that was the Plan! Yes yes, and a good plan too!

John Johnstone had found himself a new Rebel estate galvanised chassis in England in 1986, and had it brought up here. Eventually I swapped him my last Jowett Javelin project for the new Rebel chassis, with the intention of fitting it to the Rebel. By this time I had been given a Rebel estate chassis by Adrian Hanwell, and I had had the necessary welding done to it, and had it blasted and primed and given three coats of chassis paint. So when Den Houchin approached me to see if I could help him with a Rebel estate chassis, I sold him the new galvanised one, it being worth more cash than the refurbished one.

That plan backfired in the nicest possible way however, as a couple of years later, his wife Edna gave me the estate car, with the galvanised chassis fitted. She was moving on to things more refined, having run the Rebel for 31 years, she felt like a change, and very generously gave me the Rebel which had served her and her family for over three decades.

So, suddenly and unexpectedly, I had my Rebel estate car, complete with a chassis that is going to last longer than I will be driving for.

This left me with the 'project car' which in reality I was never going to do anything more with. So when I was approached late in 2000 by Ian Johnston, who was looking for a Rebel estate car, a deal was struck, a deal which included the merging of the good Rebel estate body with the refurbished chassis as part of the delivery operation. Why I can't ever just sell a car I don't know, but it seemed like a good way to both move the project to a new custodian, and at the same time get it well ahead, and so we did. - What about the plan, well, as I said in the beginning, it was a good plan, at the time, but as the years went by and circumstances changed, it was still a good plan, just needed someone else to carry it out, that's all. And after all, the best of plans have to be flexible, don't they ?

Oy! fallen asleep yet ? Well you can wake up now. Part Two – can be seen in the next edition!

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From the In Tray

As you will be all too well aware, ever more events have been cancelled due to the Foot & Mouth epidemic, so do please check before you head anywhere, that the event is still on.

Also services are offered by Spares HQ who are, as are many others, looking for a free advert, they claim to be able to supply new parts at excellent prices, I don't know if they can help us, they can be contacted at SparesHQ.com or for the rest of us mere mortals at 4, Aztec Row, Berners Road, Islington, London N1 0PW Good, that's another bit of paper off my desk!

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More Readers Letters

Dear Brian, 29th April 2001

Thank you for your letter dated 3 April 2001, concerning my Reliant Kitten. Thank you also for the magazine and other information that you sent me, all of which I found most interesting. I wish I had known about your organisation 10 years ago when I acquired the Kitten. It is nice to know that this interesting little car, and others like it, will live on.

Thank you for offering to advertise my Kitten in the magazine. I was going to take you up on your offer when I found a suitable new owner locally. I have given the car to the lady from whom I bought it 10 years ago. She is still fond of the car and has taken it back with a view to it being restored to its former glory by her husband who has previously done a marvellous restoration job on a Scimitar. I passed your magazine on to them.

Wishing every success to you and the Register.

Roger Stockwell - Ilfracombe

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I just included that one to let you see that I do work on behalf of Kittens out with the Mewsletter. That letter in fact involved me in no less than 4 different tasks, replying to Roger, typing it here, writing to the car's new (old) owner, and dropping Geoff Eldridge a note as Roger's letter reminded me that it was a while since I had written to Geoff & Sue. No wonder I think I'm busy sometimes! It is almost a year since I had asked Geoff for some back issues of Slice for an ex-Kitten, currently Rebel owner, who had had a serious motorcycle accident, and was wanting some reading material while in the spinal injuries unit in Glasgow's Southern General. Thankfully he has recovered well, and now drives a Scimitar SS1 I'll keep you posted about the Rebel.

Ed.

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A Colourful Piece

Dear Brian, 27/3/01

After reading Clive Angel's letter in Mewsletter 39, I thought I might be able to help on the paint colours. Enclosed are two lists, one of all 1976 Kitten colours, and a full list of all colours for all years for the Rebel and Kitten. Both lists include years, models and reference numbers. I hope these are of use to you and other readers.

Yours sincerely Daniel Rodd - Worcester, Member 511

List of all known Rebel and Kitten colours

Colour	I.P. Cat. No.	I.P. Ref	Year	Model
Artic White	D018	X0130	68-78	Kitten
Sunburst Yellow	D032	D0530	65-71	Rebel
April Yellow	D128	W3130	72-73	Rebel
Yellow Ochre	D352		77-78	Kitten
Sahara Red	D033	W5230	71-74	Rebel
Rebel Red	D033	X5930	65-67	Rebel
London Red	D181	XS084	73-77	Kitten
Festival Red	D353		77-78	Kitten
Pacific Shetland Blue	D003	X1123	71-74	Rebel
Aztec Blue	D023	Z1060	65-71	Rebel
Capricorn Blue	D026	X1325	72-75	Rebel
Venitian Blue	D184	X1353	73-77	Kitten

Turquoise	D306	X1132	71-78	Both
Olympic Blue	D350		77-78	Kitten
Highland Purple	D035	X7210	71-74	Rebel
Golden Brown	D004	X4370	65-71	Rebel
Havana Brown	D006	Y4340	71-74	Rebel
Honey Beige	D027	X4380	65-71	Rebel
Caramel	D182	X4690	73-74	Rebel
Virginia Brown	D303		74-77	Kitten
Desert Tan	D305		75-77	Kitten
Sierra Tan	D309		75-78	Kitten
Riviera Brown	D354		77-78	Kitten
Citrus Green	D011	W2630	71-74	Rebel
Greenstone	D029	D0590	65-71	Rebel
Tropic Green	D183	X2081	73-77	Kitten
Parrot Green	D351		77-78	Kitten

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Uses for Dehumidifier Water

Our registrar is not the only one to have purchased a dehumidifier in the past year. They do a good job, and surely that pure water they produce must have a use? Oh yes, more than one….

1) Use it for topping up the car battery.
2) Ideal for steam irons, especially if you happen to live in a hard water area.
3) If you save up enough of the water, then use it mixed with antifreeze to fill the car's cooling system. Then there is no danger of lime scale settling out in the cooling passages, it may even start slowly reducing the amount of scale which has already been deposited.
4) Fill the windscreen water bottle with it.

Any more ideas? Don't think that because you live in a soft water area that the tap water is soft. They often now add soda ash for artificial hardness so that there is no danger of lead from old pipes dissolving into the water!

Dick Goodall - Tore

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GETTING TECHNICAL

Dear Brian, 14th March 2001

Thank you for your letter but I will not be subscribing for the time being. It has been decided that I have enough to do with the bigger 6A brother. (a Scimitar) I would however, as a leaving gesture, put some comments on two previous subjects.

Stainless Steel Fixings

Stainless is not necessarily the answer to all your problems. The first hurdle to overcome is what grade they are. This can be A2, A3 or A4 with subdivisions in each grade. - *Strange how the passage of time affects our thoughts, 60 years ago descriptions like A2, A3 and A4 would have me thinking of*

Gresley Pacifics, come on, own up, who else besides me remembers the L.N.E.R., and their Chief Engineer Sir Nigel? – we do still hold the world record for speed with a steam locomotive you know, set just before the outbreak of WWII – NO I DON'T remember, my dad told me !

More recently Auto Union, well Audi at any rate, use that series of letters and numbers to denote the type of motor car you are buying from them, and several of them will exceed Mallard's 126 MPH! Not bad that, over two miles a minute by steam over 60 years ago, (even if it did run its big ends doing it!) progress – what progress? strange old world we live in – anyway, enough of my digressing, Ed. - It does sound as if it is another can of worms you have opened, the best guide is to ask the person you are buying from, what grade are they ?. If they say they don't know, or it doesn't matter, go elsewhere, the best answer is it is as listed above or 'I will find out'. As a general guide I would say that using s/steel nuts and bolts **together** to secure body parts and trim, fine no problem at all. Putting s/steel nuts onto plain steel studs or bolts be careful, you could be making things worse. Remember s/steel is a mixture of steel and exotic metals which under the right conditions (especially wet) will react with the steel stud/bolt to give you rapid corrosion by electrolysis, that is in simple terms the metals form a crude battery. The second often forgotten point is that the plain steel and the s/steel will have different rates of expansion with heat and will either jam solid or more likely work loose. The other trick people forget is that the torque settings given for the normal steel joints will be either too high or low. What is the best grade ?, A2 would be best and I have used this on very high loading joints, after this the bigger the number the lower the grade.

P.S. The old chestnut about s/steel not being magnetic is not really true, any s/steel will magnetise if the ratio between the piece and magnet is big enough.

Braking without a servo

On some of the earlier Scimmies it has been a problem that the servo cannot be repaired or exchanged and one answer was to fit a different master cylinder. The main criteria was to fit a larger bore, this increases the piston surface area and the pressure of the hydraulic oil acting on the brakes, I believe in the above they used MGB parts. It is weird at first to drive but after a short period you do not notice the difference, unless of course you go back to a modern car.

Assuming your cylinder bore is 1" you can with your right foot exert 100lbs (at least) push on your pedal creating 78.5 psi on your hydraulic system which is boosted by the servo. Using your school maths for the area of a piston (3.142 x r x r), *yea, I remember, "See I have a rhyme…", how many blackbirds was it again ? Oh yes, Kitten wheels on the road plus the first or second part of perfect vision. Oh just eat the blooming thing! Ed.* multiplied by the 100 gives the psi. If you can find a piston of say 2" you will create 314 psi. If you can push harder you will get more but I am just trying to give an example as the pressure created is not as simple as you first expect. The downside would be that as you now have a larger piston you are moving more oil for the same amount of travel of your foot, the 'feel' of the brakes will be totally different.

I hope these points are of interest to you.

David Asselbrough - Fleet.

Thanks for that David, I look forward to the day when you 'finish' the 6A, and we might hear from you again – sorry for the interruptions, it is currently the 18th of March, 02:15, and I am still coming to terms with the shock of having sold, yes, you heard me, I have sold the Rebel project – good luck with it Ian (Johnston). Don't worry about me, I will recover, and might even write the book, be not breath

holding in anticipation, it is now almost three years since Moira's wee red car took me from Lands End to John O'Groats, and I have not finished writing that story up yet!

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While we are in the technical part of the magazine, a spares issue really, this. After the fairly negative nature of Phil's letter in the last edition, whether by coincidence or not I have no way of knowing, but there are two people now looking for Fox back springs, and I believe that Fox brake back plates are difficult also. There are a couple of situations that need to be understood. Firstly if we are to use the Register to try and get discounts from suppliers of parts that Reliant Partsworld or other specialist suppliers cannot supply, then we have to appreciate that a small batch to a manufacturer is a lot more than we are likely to be talking about. They tend to talk in hundreds if not thousands. Secondly we need to understand something of current costs and prices.

It is easy to get things like Fox back springs produced, fortunately thanks to a helpful benefactor, we have access to a new one, which we can use as a template. But, with the cost of postage and or carriers, the cost of new ones is likely to be over £ 100 a pair range, and I know that some of those who would like such things are not prepared to pay that much for them. So, we have the second-hand option. Now it so happens that Foxes are in demand as donor cars for Tempest sports cars, and the Tempest needs a lighter spring, so second-hand Fox springs are available. Sadly not all of the Tempest donor Foxes have springs that are in first class condition, and so not all of them are suitable for re-use, but some are.

So, unless and until you are prepared to pay the going rate, I am very much afraid that the production of Fox rear road springs will be done on a one off basis, i.e. a batch of two, as required, and that unfortunately will make them even more expensive ! That is of course unless a few of you Foxy folk get in touch and we can organise a larger batch. I am afraid that as things stand it would be foolish of me to suggest that the Register would carry more than 1 pair in stock if a batch were to be produced, but even that 1 pair could make the difference as far as price and or viability is concerned. Talk to me if you are interested.

Brian

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Reliant 'Kitten' steering gear

Ref. Reliant Workshop Manual, P.3 fig.2 P.4 fig.3

Supposing recommended maintenance to have been carried out, the parts most subject to wear are the components of the upper ball race, item 5. There are two reasons for this.

1) The dust cover, item 3, is not a good umbrella, a lot of water gets splashed on top of the rack housing and is sucked in by the pumping action of the gaiters.
2) To describe the 'O' ring, item 4, as an oil seal is not very accurate. No oil ever gets to it. It is hard to see how any could without turning the car over. The water gets in though. The remainder of the mechanism, including the bottom race, seems to survive quite well in the mixture of oil and water.

   Always keep a tin of old engine or gear oil handy, and apply it liberally and regularly over the dust cover, using a small paintbrush. Anoint the lower universal joints of the lower column at the same time, and it will not be amiss to treat the rear spider of the transmission shaft as well, even if it does have a grease nipple.

No oil seal lasts forever. The choice for these bearings is, dirty oil or water, the latter being more destructive. These precautions have kept my car out of trouble with the above bearings for 21 years and 80 K miles.

Recent strip down and successful reconditioning of the steering gear of a 26 year old air-and-water lubricated Kitten have prompted the following notes.

1) Look at the top setscrew (5/16" UNF) of the clamp LH, item 41, and think how you are going to remove and replace it. Options are :-
   a) Lifting the radiator and support by about ¾". (the bottom hose should accommodate this.) and working front of the vehicle.
   b) Removing the fan blades and battery.
2) Detach the lower universal joint before raising the vehicle.
3) Tie rod assembly, items 26 to 31. The lock nut, item 27, was about the same length as the boss, quite unlike Reliant's picture, and didn't have any flats – could have done with them, was very tight. Would consider filing two on if I did another. The 1/8" drill-out pin is not a good idea. Better tapped for a 2BA or M4 grub screw. The tie rod end, button and spring turned out to be in mint condition, and the boss and locknut were returned to their original positions.
4) The upper race balls were superficially rusty. The ball track was cleaned up, and the slight Brinelling removed using a carborundum stone and fine emery cloth in the lathe, and the original balls replaced (5/32", could have got new ones at local bike shop, but it was raining!)
5) On reassembly, the original top race was put at the bottom, as it has less to do. It proved necessary to grind about 0.020" off the bottom face of the pinion journal and the inner ball track, so that they were clear of the end plate 10.
6) The detailed shimming procedure of the workshop manual was deemed unreliable. Careful use of spanner and shims, pinion assembly first, pinion adjuster button next, until the rack can be pushed to and fro by hand is safer.

A. Shaw - Glossop

Thanks for that Alan, I'm tempted to come running to your door with my old seized one to see if you can do anything for it ! Seriously, not all of us have such skills nor access to the necessary equipment, but I am sure that the article will be of use to several of our readers.

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Technical Tweeks - 29th March 01

Not too much to offer this time round, my last efforts re 'easy' tappets etc seemed to drop into a mill pond but no matter. *Come on Al, I thought that you had explained it pretty well, and that being the case, why would you expect to hear anything? Ed.* Some points from the last issue. Fox window slide 'W' channels; something very similar was available from a shop in Edgware, Middx. Who had several items of this ilk. They are Edgware Motor Accessories on 0208 952 4752, are they in your list Dick? *Hang on a moment Al, as a Fox alternative part is it not more appropriate that they be on Peter's list? Ed.*

Heater or lack of it in a Rebel, now I wonder if they have the same system as the Kitten which draws its heater water from the rear of the cylinder head which is in turn fed from the rear of the block, now if the waterways around the No. 4 liner are clagged up as they have a wont to do, you will get very little heat to warm your tootsies, or the windscreen come to that. I have possibly the best heater so far in a Reliant, and I know the block is clear around No. 4, as I fitted the liners.

Kitten colours:- Why go standard, I find them mostly quite boring, what medal do you get for all this 'standard' condition ? Do your own thing! But if you must stay standard I have a 1977 colour 'tag' with 9 Reliant colours! They are: Yellow Ochre (yuk) Turquoise (ok) Festival Red (yea yea) April Yellow (another yuk) sierra tan (dull) Parrot Green (yet another yuk) Artic White (ok) Olympic Blue (no comment, mine is this!) Rivieria Brown (tiring). Later on there was a 'sock you In the eye' yellow that was slightly exciting, as was the orange.

Off on a different tack, a Reliant engine used in a marine situation! I know some details of the Reliant engine used as a fire pump, I'm not sure how many wheels the trolley has, could it qualify as a 4-wheeler?

What else is happening? I'm looking forward (not!) to my pre MOT session which will involve replacement rear springs (but I wish I had van ones instead of car ones to fit) replace the rear dampers and rebuild the rear brakes with some fresh drums as well. That should keep me busy till summer (whatever / whenever that is).

Before I disappear this time I've not had any 'phone calls for help lately, so have you all given up with this winter, or is everything tickety boo? Last cover was rocket powered! The date was also April! Ho hum?

Alan Osborn - Thetford

Thanks Alan, oh, by the way, no, the fire pump engine does not qualify as a 4-wheeler, I don't care how many castors it has! That said, the more recent ones had to put out more power than the standard 850cc unit did, but they are likely to have a heavier flywheel, to stop them stalling when they are put on-load. Also they have a completely different water pump, they do not have a radiator, using instead the water the engine is pumping as the coolant.

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<u>Kitten drivers door outer weatherstrip</u>

This is the rubber strip which is supposed to stop water from running down the outside of the door glass from getting inside the door.

On the drivers side of PYB this weather strip has always been tatty, and I resorted to patching it up with tape as a 'temporary' measure over 2 years ago. But even I got fed up seeing it. Somehow I had the idea that it was not available, but on looking at a 'C' registered Rialto, I realised that the strips looked the same. So I rang Partsworld, Diane found that they are in stock, and sent one.

Today I decided to try fitting it, and removed the window winder handle, door handle surround, interior door trim, and the plastic sheet which diverts water into the bottom of the door, and hence through the drain holes to the street below. By refitting the window handle I found that the glass would just go low enough to let me get at the strip without removing the door glass and winding mechanism.

On close inspection, the new weather strip was indeed the correct type. The old one was held onto the door with 4 pop rivets of 1/8" diameter. They were soon drilled out, and the old strip removed. Before fitting the new strip, using the old one as a pattern, it was necessary to cut one end at an angle with strong tin snips, and make slits at the bend in the strip. It would have been possible to make new holes for the pop rivets in both the new strip and the door, but I transferred the hole positions carefully

from the door, and drilled the new strip to suit the existing holes. The new strip was then fitted to the door, starting at the front, and working towards the rear. It is sensibly supplied over length, and was cut to suit. The rivets were then inserted and fitted. Winding the glass up and down proved that all was well. It was then a matter of refitting the plastic sheet, door trim, window handle and door handle surround, and all was well.

Snags? Well the only real one was the price, but if you have a car, you have to keep it going!

Dick Goodall - No. 157

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Sales and Wants

For Sale:- Well free to a good home in fact – Reliant Rebel estate car E94/1180, SRF 235L is complete apart from an engine. The vehicle together with some spares has to go, and if you don't collect it by the end of June it will be dumped. Can someone save this one please? Contact Alan Peck

Also free to a good home, a Kitten van with an interesting competition history can be yours for the asking

For Sale:- A 1976 yellow Kitten , new clutch, new exhaust, new tyres, good engine, needs an M.O.T., but it is believed that should not be a problem. Contact Lucie Mann

For Sale:- Reliant Rebel saloon S94/1633, contact Colin Sharkey

For Sale:- Fox van / estate, B209 AMT was first registered in January 1985, currently taxed and M.O.T.'d. Contact Mr. Marriot

For Sale:- Reliant Fox pick-up, good runner, as featured on the front cover of this edition. M.O.T. till July, £500

For Sale:- 1984 B reg Fox hard top. 80,000 miles, just out of M.O.T, needs a headlamp & engine mountings Carwyn Jones

For Sale:- Reliant Kitten estate. One owner from new. 'R' registration – registered 1/8/76. In excellent condition. 67,000 miles. M.O.T.'d and taxed - £300 ono.

For Sale:- 1984 Reliant Scimitar SS1 sports car. Good mechanicals requires general tidy up and some corrosion repairs to chassis. £250 o.n.o.

For Sale:- Two, will sell separately ! Kitten exhaust systems. Second hand but in good condition. Contact Dave Smith

Free to a good home, a Rebel body shell which has been repaired in places, and a chassis which is rusty but repairable

For Sale:- a set of 4 Dunlop alloy wheels, complete with serviceable tyres, and a steel spare with a new tyre £50 the lot

For sale:- Jimp, chassis No 68. Just out of test and tax, used daily for past year. Best offer over £500 for quick sale – drive away. John Metcalfe

For Sale:- Reliant spares, Kitten and Robin. Approx. 6 cars all on shelf. Consider selling in 1 lot or bits. P/Ex W.M.Y

For Sale:- 1976 Kitten saloon, off the road for a while, lots of work done, no tax or test. Free to a good home, also loads of spares, too many to mention.

For Sale:- A wide variety of mainly Rebel, but also Kitten spares. Some new. Send an s.a.e. for the basic list, (very basic at the moment as it has yet to be completed ! - there are 'only' 400 odd different parts on the list so far) or ring and ask for any particular bits that you might be needing. Brian 0141 8866117

For Sale:- Reliant Fox Custom Van – no tax or M.O.T. Make me an offer @ £ 100 and drive it away. Unleaded head, new clutch,

For Sale:- Fox door window frames, second hand but in good condition, one on a door, the other separate but just the big top part, not the bottom, and no 'W' channel, contact Brian on 0141 8866117 in the first instance.

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Wanted:- Petrol tank to fit 1970 Rebel Saloon 700cc, or information of anyone who can repair petrol tanks.

Wanted:- Early Rebel gearbox remote linkage, complete with gear lever.
Who for Brian?!? The chap who used to have a yellow Tempest and is building a Liege.

Wanted:- Rebel road wheel, with or without tyre (will consider a full set) Also can anyone help with a supply of Rebel track rod ends and drag link ends?

Wanted:- Kitten / Fox steering rack, either serviceable or suitable for reconditioning. Contact Eddie Kemp

Wanted:- Reliant Kitten / Regal rolling chassis or complete car to build Austin 7 Ulster type special.

Wanted:- Kitten front stub axles, a pair of them, contact Julian Fack

Wanted:- Kitten driver's door glass, yes, just the window. Brian Millar has two spare drivers doors, and not a window between them! Can you help him out? Yes, the Robin one is the same

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N O T E S

Oh well, here I am again already! As you will have read there are concerns about spare parts, and I have to say that we are in the fortunate position of having the vast majority of bits that we require to keep our cars on the road and in fine working order, readily available off the shelf from a variety of sources, not least Reliant Partsworld and Graham Walker, who between them can provide over 99% of

the parts that I know to be available for our little 4 wheeled wonders. Please don't forget to tell them where you heard about them when you are ordering your bits.
Brian Millar, our Kitten alternative parts man, had the misfortune of having his Kitten's chassis fall apart beneath the car last month. I did feel a bit guilty, as I had sold him that car a few years ago, we were both aware that it had been welded in the past, but neither of us realised what a poor job had been done. My consolation was that I had also more recently sold him a refurbished Kitten chassis which is in excellent condition. (Mind you, it was intended as a spare chassis!) Brian took just 3 weeks to replace the chassis, renewing all the suspension bushes and blasting and painting all the suspension components in the process – well done Brian.

This does bring home to me, as I seem to remember saying in the early days when Phil Hallam and Les Cruickshank were both involved in carrying out body off restorations, almost a decade ago now, the need to remember that they do not last forever, a good chassis is probably worth almost half the current market value of the whole car! And that when the worst happens, there are always options.

Oddly enough Phil just fitted his new, as in never used, Rebel galvanised chassis to his Rebel saloon over the Easter break – any chance of the story Phil?

I know that the reason we have eyes in the front of our heads is so that we can look forward, but just for a moment I must take you back to the last edition. It has been drawn to my attention that I, not once, but twice, referred to the interesting vehicle on the front cover as being rocket powered, those reading the text closely will have realised of course that it is jet powered, jet propelled even, I can only say that it was a momentary lapse on my part.

On a different front completely, John (Pearce) pointed out to me the other day, that each time that Reliant have moved in the last couple of years, they have got nearer to Glasgow, not a lot, and there is no plan to have them here that I know of, but they are getting closer to me all the time! I just thought I'd share that with you! Still with John Pearce in mind, the front covers for this edition which John had sent in good time, fell foul of the recent Royal Mail dispute, they have yet to arrive three weeks after posting! Thanks for re-printing them so promptly John.

Summer is now out there, so make the most of it, and I'll talk to you again in August.

Brian