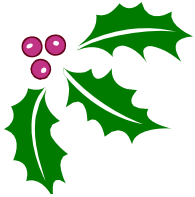
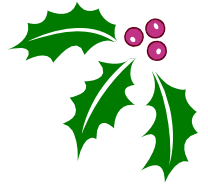


Reliant Kitten Register



MEWSLETTER Forty-Three

November/December 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.....

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

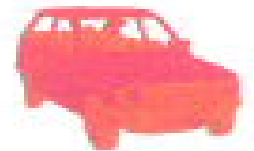
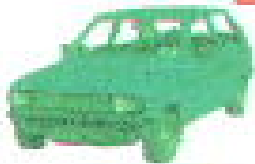
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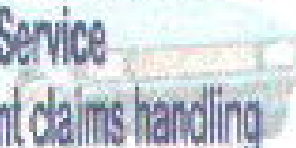
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The Reliant Kitten Register

MEWSLETTER No. 43

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

Rebel alternative parts

Kitten alternative parts

Fox alternative parts

Our Mutual Aid Spares scheme

Mewsletter pictures

This time our front cover has gone Dutch. The picture was sent to me a while ago by Thomas Touw, the car is his mother's Kitten saloon after its extensive rebuild. As with many things I have, the picture was put somewhere safe – it was an 8" x 5" photograph, and so could not be fitted into any of my standard photo albums, and I did not want to damage it. It did eventually turn up, and I sent it in a tube to John our cover man who, as I am sure you will agree, has put it to good use.

The Register has a, now fairly old, web page at :- <http://www.uk-classic-cars.com/kitten.htm>
www.reliantkitten.co.uk is well worth a look too.

INDEX

Page 3	Contact details and cover story
Page 4	Index
Page 5	Details of a generous free draw !
Page 6	The Registrar speaks
Page 7	and speaks some more
Page 8	Rebel Round Up – exhaust bargain
Page 9	Foxes Den
Page 10	Liege Page
Page 11	Competition Corner
Page 12	at last!
Page 13	thank you
Page 14	Simon Robson
Page 15	The
Page 16	Reliant
Page 17	Kitten
Page 18	Register
Page 19	and
Page 20	the
Page 21	cars it
Page 22	caters for
Page 23	Anagram answers – a winner !
Page 24	Spare parts
Page 25	Mutual Aid Spares update
Page 26	Readers
Page 27	letters
Page 28	and
Page 29	some
Page 30	more
Page 31	from
Page 32	our readers
Page 33	From the
Page 34	In Tray
Page 35	On Line Page
Page 36	Getting
Page 37	Technical
Page 38	with Al Osborn
Page 39	Sales & 40 Wants
Page 41	Notes & 42 Let's relax with Desiderata

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.

Ha, fooled you there! I have decided to give this page up to our Insurance advertiser P. F. Spare, as they have come up, in conjunction with the Cherished Car agency, with a free prize draw for any of our subscribers who either hold a motor policy through P.F. Spare, or takes out such a policy during the year, read on :-

P. F. SPARE INSURANCE BROKERS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

THE RELIANT KITTEN REGISTER

FREE DRAW

Period of promotion : 1st November 2001 – 31st October 2002

Prize : Free annual cherished car policy issued by Cherished Car Agency. Contact Lyn for eligibility / conditions

Draw : To take place under the supervision of the Kitten Register
Eligibility:

1. Holder of CURRENT FULLY PAID motor policy issued through P.F. Spare
2. Current paid up member of the Reliant Kitten Register

No cash alternative

No correspondence entered into

Decision of P. F. Spare and the Kitten Register will be final

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For Motor/ Home/ Travel/Business Insurance

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Email kittenregister@pfspare.co.uk

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Member of the general Insurance Standards Council

Welcome, and compliments of the season to you and yours. It is now a decade since our first edition 'went to print' though way back then it was a different matter altogether.

The first three editions did not have a front cover as such, just an A4 sheet claiming to be a temporary front cover, as lack of resources / ability, drive and initiative made me decide not to hold things up any longer than I already had! Full credit must go to Sandy Riddoch, sadly no longer a Kitten owner, but he does still have a Reliant, for giving me the push needed.

Here we are a decade on, if I remember correctly at the end of the first year, well, it turned out to be almost two years before subscription renewals were sent out, to about 40 folk. Now, along with this edition, renewal notices will be going to about 280 people. Not anything to be complacent about mind you, as I believe that there are at least as many Kittens, Rebels and Foxes out there again, as there are on the Register. So we still have some way to go as far as locating them all is concerned.

That said I am becoming slightly concerned about the number of Kittens and Foxes which are being converted into something else these days. Last year, for the first time ever, the number of people renewing their subscriptions to the Register fell below 80%. We did sign up a record number of new folk during the past year, and very welcome you all are, but what happened to the cars those who did not renew, owned? Well, some people were good enough to tell me, indeed in some cases they belong to new subscribers, but others did not, and so once again I am asking for up-to-date information about your cars on the renewal notice. It is after all, the cars, that the Register aims to keep track of, and I am keen to learn how many are actually still out there. If we are indeed losing say 40 a year, whether to scrap yards, accidents, or conversions, then they will become pretty scarce before too long.

All of this makes me realise the limitations and shortcomings of my record keeping. We have details on almost 750 cars just now. But some of that information is almost 10 years old, it is only since last year that I have been recording a 'last updated' date on the vehicle records, and so the need to annually up-date the information, complicated and time consuming as it will make the renewal notices, is, I believe, essential. Certainly if I am to maintain an accurate register of the cars, and I am definitely keen to do that.

So, please bear with me, believe me, it takes me as long to print / collate, and mail the forms as it will take you to complete and return them.

As you will see I am still trying to encourage donations to the spares fund, almost a third of you were good enough to make a contribution last year, and, thanks to that, we have been able to help keep a number of cars on the road.

Those of you who have joined us this year will know that the subscription is £12, and I am inviting a further £3 on top of that as a spares donation – feel free to make it a fiver.

That said I am not trying to detract from the splendid service that Reliant PartsWorld and Graham Walker, or indeed the many other Reliant specialists out there who help serve the needs that many of us have, the intention of the Register's spares fund is to try and be able to secure parts that are not available from the normal sources. Things like steering rack bearings, indeed reconditioned steering racks for example. If you would like a copy of the list of parts the spares fund has available, just drop me a s.a.e. with a brief note – I did get two s.a.e.'s this year, without

details of what was being requested! (I am still involved with a number of other organisations, and sometimes the incoming mail can be confusing!). Hence the request for a brief note.

I am in danger of getting into the habit of making the Christmas edition a few pages larger than most of the other ones, that is because the chances are that, what with the renewal notice, and the desire to clear my desk, we are into the next postage band anyway, so there is plenty of room from that point of view. So, because I have failed to complete the document which has been in the proverbial pipeline for a year now, I decided to treat you to the text, both to prove that I have been doing something, and also to invite comment / criticism, and any corrections that you might be aware of before we actually include the pictures and can offer it generally. RKR-the-Cars is the one to watch for.

I did receive a fax from John Blagburn the other day, motivated I guess by the front cover picture on the last edition, it read as follows :-

Cipher for sale in Practical Classics December '01 :- An '82 car it's blue and has covered just 50k miles "95 MPH and 60 MPG" says the ad. Now, if you release the handbrake.....

That said, I had a telephone call early in November (but after said advert was placed) to tell me that one of our readers had in fact bought said Cipher, so if you were thinking about it – too late!

November began for me with a rush of enquiries and new subscribers. You really can't predict these things. This year we have had about one new subscriber a week, but looking back over the past few months, and ignoring the late renewals from last year, we had 3 in July, 4 in August and the same in September, just the 3 in October, then 6 in the first 10 days of November. I actually ran out of stamps and envelopes at one point! I buy them in bulk, and had thought that I had enough to last till the end of the year – how pleasant it was to be mistaken in the circumstances.

Right, enough of my woes, take care, have a really great time over the holiday period, and may 2002 be everything you wish for.

~~~~~

## **REBEL ROUND UP**

*Right, listen up all you Rebel owners – It's Christmas! - the factory have uncovered a rack full of Rebel silencers – part No: 18401 I have managed to convince them that since they have enough there to supply one for every Rebel in the land that is on the road, and does not have a stainless exhaust fitted, that they are likely to be a slow moving item – and they recognise that fact – so. They have agreed that any Kitten Register subscriber who would like one, can have one for just £10.00 – now there will be v.a.t. to add to that, and carriage as well – unless you order three or more, (or another £15 worth of bits along with it) in which case they will be carriage free. Please don't upset them by asking for our usual discount on this particular deal!*

*Still on the Rebel front :-*

Dear Brian,

20th October 2001

Just a quick line in response to your query re “knave plates”. All the 1968 / 69 publicity material I have shows plain knave plates. Also from the look of the photographs they are chrome. My 1973 750 Estate also has plain knave plates, but they are made of aluminium. Perhaps the recessed centre knave plates were fitted to the same wheels on another car (Regal?). Confusingly the 1973 parts list illustration shows the recessed type, but does quote two different part numbers!

My Rebel is off the road at present due to it's Ford Escort engine having pumped oil out of the front crankshaft oil seal. I am part way through replacing it, so should be back on the road before Christmas.

Keep up the good work – Yours, John Parker – Bristol.

*Thanks for that John, it wouldn't be the Regal, they had 13" wheels – narrower too! (Mind you that does not mean that they could not have used the same knave plate come to think of it!) I have had a look at a number of them since, and it would seem that the 750 ones had the recessed centre, i.e. basically the ones that are not road tax exempt! Also in my experience they were all chrome plated.*

~~~~~

FOXES' DEN

I had a call from “our Graham” yesterday, 27th November, well if Cilla can have one why can't I? Anyway, our Graham was asking me if I knew in relation to Fox engine removal, if you take it out the top, or drop it out the bottom? Never having owned A Fox I was not sure, I seem to remember that they have smaller bonnets than the Kitten, but perhaps not, it looks smaller, but I know that the Fox is wider than the Kitten (body, not chassis) anyway, that is the question, for answer within these pages next time, if someone will be good enough to let me know please. Our Graham was also asking if anyone else had had problems with the ceramic part of the sparkplugs, this is the electrode end, inside the engine – he has had two of them crack recently, and wondered if it could be anything to do with fuel – I said I thought not, but am open to ideas.

I should say that if you want a Fox, you had better be quick about it, because Tempest production is devouring them almost as fast as they become available, which could be a bad thing if any of the really good ones are used in that manner. There are two for sale in this edition which really ought to be saved. You have been warned. Ed.

~~~~~

## **Liege Page**

Peter Davis tells me that he has now sold no less than 44 Lieges, and has now taken delivery of a batch of 10 twin carb manifolds. They are all spoken for I'm afraid, but another batch is planned, if you are interested, contact Peter via the Editor.



Also, any Kitten or Tempest owner who would like to have the benefit of self adjusting front brakes should ask the Registrar to speak to Peter. Dave Smith has fitted them to his Tempest I believe – how do you find them Dave?

Kitten front uprights (stub axles) and steering arms are always in demand, so if you have any spare ones lying about that you don't need, let me know and I will put you in touch.

Peter goes on to say that 6 cars (2 teams) are entered in the Exeter trial, 4th & 5th of January 2002, the "Liege Levitators" driven by the man himself with Roger Collins, Gari & Do Jones, and Keith Nicolls & Sandy Bull (Sandy has built one Liege, and is doing another one for an American customer!) and the "Liege Landau" consisting of Simon Robson & son Matt, Howard Blackwell & John, and John Jones and daughter Tina. Good luck everyone, oh, and will someone please get me some pictures? The proverbial group shot even perhaps??

Tell you what, let's stay with the mood of the event and make it competitive, £20 for the best group shot, people as well as cars if you like.

(I'll find out how many colours these Lieges are available in somehow! Ed.)

Thanks for the update Peter, keep 'em coming.

~~~~~

Competition Corner - A Very Testing Trial.

Simon and Matt Robson's experiences on the MCC's July 2000 Testing Trial.

After our disappointment at not being able to use our new Liege on the Lands End Trial, (but bless her, our trusty old Czech Wonder Climber, (Skoda) carried us around for a Silver medal), Matt and I were determined to début our Liege on the MCC's Testing Trial, even if it wasn't quite finished. We felt that most of the mechanical stuff was sorted, having done about 800 miles "running-in" over various weekend forays including the "Gaydon Gallop" (MCC summer social run) with daughter Zoe in the navigator's seat. However there was still some detail finishing to do and the hood wasn't made yet, so the new car was still at Peter Hall's over in Evesham. On the positive side, it was at least painted now, in a really vivid shade of Yellow (Norfolk Mustard), same as is used on the Lotus Elise, and looked stunning.

We left Hitchin for Evesham in my work Vauxhall on Saturday afternoon (as Matt had to work in the morning), complete with tent and sleeping bags. The plan was to pick up the Liege and drive down to camp at the venue near Wincanton, (as well as the camping gear we had cooking equipment and all the ingredients for breakfast!!).

We got to Evesham and transferred the gear to the Liege. Not an easy job as it's a tiny bit smaller than an Omega Estate!! We started off OK, but as we were driving through Cheltenham the engine temperature suddenly started to rise accompanied by steam issuing forth from under the bonnet. We stopped to find we had lost a lot of water because the temperature switch for the electric fan had popped out of it's side branch in the top hose. We had stopped outside a house and a chap popped out to enquire about the little car and what the problem was and he kindly brought us some water. We re-inserted the sender, re-tightened the clamp, filled her up and

crossed our fingers while we slowly warmed up the engine. It was to no avail, as the sender popped out again right before our eyes.

What had happened was that when the car was put back together after being partially stripped for painting, Peter had shortened the hose extension where the sender fits, to try to ensure that it was always in the main flow, but had trimmed a bit too much off and the clamp wouldn't hold it in properly any more when at full pressure. Our rescuer kindly offered to drive us in his car to try to find a new hose, but we gave up after trying three or four filling stations because none of them had hoses, it was getting late and all the motor factors were now closed. The chap took us back to his house and we rummaged about in his shed for some form of solution, finally finding a piece of half inch copper pipe with one of those water On/Off valves on the end, left over from when he installed his washing machine. This did the trick and we drove off with a wave and a bit of pipe hanging from the top hose!

Like true MCC trialists we followed the route of "The Exeter" down to Warminster and on towards Salisbury. By now it was dark, late, and raining so we stopped at a Little Chef for a bite to eat, luckily just before they closed. A quick enquiry showed they had rooms free at the adjoining Travel Lodge, so we stayed there rather than "enjoy" the experience of setting-up camp in the dark and wet. What sensible people – Ed!

We were up bright and early on the Sunday morning for the Testing Trial. It was the first time we had done this event, which is a bit like a cross between an Autotest and a PCT, (Production Car trial) but we enjoyed the experience despite the weather, which turned from light showers to torrential rain over lunch time, and problems with the fuel pump which kept packing up in the morning. This cost us a good time on the early rounds as we kept having to jump out and give it a clout to re-start it, often in the middle of a "section". We managed to borrow and fit a new one (which Sprite driver Frank Perrot was carrying with him - thanks Frank), during the lunch break and thought our problems were solved. However, no sooner had we started the round after lunch when the throttle cable pulled out of it's retainer. We soon fixed that and had a good last round, but overall didn't put up the sort of performance that would trouble the scorer!

With a long way to go we left the trial at 5.30, dropped the Liege off in Evesham, and finally got back to Hitchin in the Vauxhall just before midnight. It was a good weekend and we found out a lot about our new car and what we still had to do.

Roll on the "Edinburgh Trial", our next big event.

We also needed to get some photographs and other Trade Stand material together as we were going to be supporting Peter Davis on the Liege stand at the Kit Car show at Donnington with our car.

More in due course, Simon Robson

Thank you for that Simon, and, since it will soon be Christmas, how about this :-

Reliant's Regal in PCT's, or The Plastic Pig Bite's Back ! The Falcon Motor Club ran their "Gill Morrell Memorial" production car trial on Sunday 14th October at their excellent Great Brickhill venue which presents quite a number of different surfaces and hence a really varied challenge.

The entry was good, even though there was a date clash with what should have been the BTRDA final, as it was a dual permit meeting, there being both a "National B" event which attracted twelve cars, and a "Clubsport" event which attracted sixteen.

Reliant were very well represented, with Jack Williams and Dave Smith both competing in their Tempest's in a class of nine cars in the National B event, together with Falcon Magazine editor Andrea Lane, who was co-driving Dave's car. (Whilst on the subject of "Tempest's", there was another one in the paddock with a "For Sale" notice on it and it is believed that Ian Lawson may well be seen out in this Maroon example instead of his normal Dutton Phaeton at the next event).

The rest of the Reliant representation came in the form of Simon and Matt Robson in "Tweetie-Pie", their bright yellow Liege, which was campaigned in a class of ten cars in the Clubsport event in it's normal, un-ballasted, Classic Trials build.

Great Brickhill sections offer everything from pure grassy slopes to woodland climbs over tree roots, from bracken banks to disused sandpit heights to scale, and is this writer's favourite PCT venue, there's even an old lane which Falcon have used on their MiniClassic Trial, what more could you ask for?

Each round consisted of eight hills with two rounds before lunch and two after, the hills being in prime condition due to the amount of rain that had fallen the week preceeding the event, followed by a day or so's dry weather. After the first round Robin Howard was leading Class D in his Marlin in the National B event, with Peter Manning one point behind in second and Jack and Dave tying for third place a further point back. Andrea was still getting used to 850cc's of rear wheel drive instead of the more familiar 1275cc front wheel drive Mini normally shared with husband Arnold.

Over in the Clubsport event Class 4 was being led by Mike Pearson in his Dellow Replica, followed by Simon and Dave Nash tying for second, and Matt just one point behind.

Clerk of the Course Cliff Morrell made some "improvements" to the hills for the second round, and at the lunch break Peter Manning was leading Class D in his Midget, two points ahead of Robin, who was one ahead of Jack, who was two ahead of Dave, whilst in Class 4 Mike Pearson was continuing to build his lead with Simon and Matt now tying for second place, and Nashy one behind them.

Now maybe some of us "old boys" shouldn't take lunch breaks, because the score sheet shows both Jack and Simon dropping points on hills where they really should not have had a problem!

So after round 3 Peter was still heading Class D with Robin one behind, Dave two down on him, and Jack now six adrift on Dave. Class 4 had Mike still romping away with Matt now in a clear second, Nashy four behind in third and Simon a further point down, (perhaps it was the "Siesta" effect)!

All to play for during round four then. Peter kept it all together dropping only five, this elevating him to "Best Performance on Index", the premier award in the National B event.

The Reliant Kitten Register and the cars it caters for

Thanks are due to the following individuals and companies who have helped provide this information :--

John Box, Steve Campbell - Tempest Cars, Simon Chisholm, Peter Davis - Liege Car Company, Adrian Hanwell, Daniel Lockton, Bob Neal. And of course John Pearce for his help in producing the document, not to mention his suggestion of the idea in the first place!

The Register was very poorly named by Brian Marshall back in 1991. At that time Terry Scott was still running the Rebel Register, (The Rebel Register was first begun by Barry Jones of East Sussex, who passed it on to Tim Howie of Surrey, before Terry Scott took it over when Tim emigrated. It is believed that Tim had managed to acquire the factory records from Reliant, relating to Rebels, but sadly they disappeared before Terry took over as Rebel Registrar. Terry passed the Register on to Eric Skingley from Bookham also in Surrey, but he did not advertise the fact, and has not replied to recent correspondence. So it came about that the Kitten Register widened its field of interest.)

By 1993 The Reliant Kitten Register having been talked about in 1990, formed in 1991, had a number of Rebel owners as subscribers, and an invitation was sent to other Rebel owners, with the promise of a regular page in the magazine.

By this time a number of Fox enthusiasts had also expressed an interest, and when it became apparent that the specials were welcome too, it was too late to change the name!

Today, 2002, the Register has information on over 800 vehicles, (just 783 in fact at this time, September 2001, but I am in no doubt that we will pass the 800 mark early in 2002!) and enjoys the support of over 250 subscribers worldwide. (Renewal notices went out to 277 people with this magazine) The RELIANT KITTEN REGISTER exists to promote the running and restoration of all the under 1 litre 4 wheeled Reliant built and Reliant based vehicles. This includes Tempests, Tandy Campervans, Vantiques and Asquiths, Salamanders, Ciphers Jimps Lieges & the Bobcat & Sienna, (do you happen to know Tony Steven's or his son's addresses?) as well as all the specials and of course Reliant's own Rebels, Kittens and Foxes, without which none of these other interesting derivatives could have existed in the first place!

By 1998 it had become apparent that there was a need to have a document which gave a brief history of all the wee four wheelers, - I was having to relate the story over the telephone so often, and without pictures it is very difficult to describe things like the Bobcat for example, indeed almost any of the sports specials. Even Rebels and Foxes to those who have never seen one, are very difficult to describe in words alone - and as no one else was likely to compile such a document, I decided to have an attempt - so this is it, my first attempt, I know that it will possibly be incomplete, and, while as accurate as I can make it, not necessarily the whole story - but here is the first edition, an effort to get something down on paper. I hope it is better than nothing - even though the odd figure quoted may be open to a certain amount of debate - I mean, who believes that they really built exactly 4,000 Kittens ? Oh, update on that, we now think the number was 4,074, that sounds much more believable than exactly 4,000 to me!

Brian W. Marshall - 2001

In the beginning of small Reliant 4-wheelers, there was the Rebel, Reliant's first venture into 4 wheeled economy motoring. Built initially as a saloon from 1964 till 1967 – The production prototypes were, we are told, driven overland from the Anadol factory in Turkey for the 1964 Motor show! The estate car was introduced in 1967. It (the saloon) started life with a humble 600cc engine, which was quickly superceded by the 700cc unit producing 24 BHP. – higher compression on Rebel engines than used on the Regal, gave more power, just what was it ? - In 1972 the 750cc unit was introduced, now producing just 27 B.H.P., but more torque! and while production was really getting off the ground in December 1973, the model was discontinued, (last chassis number 94/1762) to be replaced the following year by the Kitten. Although the Rebel was made for a decade, almost a quarter of them were built in the last year of production. A total build quantity of 2,600 cars was claimed, and about 850 of them were exported to a number of countries including Angola, Austria, Belgium, Bermuda, Cyprus, Israel & Portugal, 16 countries in all. The Rebel was road-tested no less than 3 times during its decade of production. I have copies of two letters from Reliant on file, dated about a decade apart, and both long after Rebel production ceased. Both written in answer to the question "How many Rebels were built ?" One mentions the 2,600 number, the other (the more recent, but also the longest since Rebel production ceased) a figure of 4,000! (I believe that the individual who gave that answer, was getting his Kittens confused with the Rebel) I have yet to find a Rebel in Britain with a chassis number as high as 1,800, and hence my comments about 2,600 produced including the 850 or so exported. By December 1997 there were just 82 Rebels licensed on the roads of Britain.

Picture - Rebel / Saloon / estate / van ?

The Kitten, the first Reliant with rectangular headlamps, (unless you count the Bond Bug !) was launched in 1975, making its first appearance in fact at the 1974 Motor Show. A new saloon would have cost you £1,449.35, and an estate car £1,574.82. (A new Mini cost just about £ 999 at that time!) We are told that 4,074 were built during the following 7 years or so, the situation is confused, as, towards the end, a number of 'kits' were offered to dealers and others to complete themselves. It is believed that those kits were the result of a cancelled export order from Israel (At least one of them we know was first registered as late as 1984!) The Kitten shared a lot of bodywork with the famous Robin three wheeler, and was available in saloon, estate or van form, the latter having round headlights and a lower ratio back axle. All three Kitten body styles used the same chassis! (Though it should be noted that there were ultimately three different Kitten chassis types, as they modified the design during its production life, the same rule applies, saloon estate and van are the same, but early and late ones differ) The Sipani Dolphin prototype first appeared in 1982, identical appearance to the Kitten estate, though later Dolphins had a different grill – there was even a 5 door version eventually. It is believed that the Sipani brothers who did a deal with Reliant were involved in a legal case in the mid 90's. By the end of 1997 there were 905 Kittens left in use in Britain, not a bad survival rate for a 22 year old vehicle! though it is believed that as many again lurk awaiting re-discovery! Like the Rebel, the Kitten was built in L.H.D for export, mainly to Holland, Austria and Greece. Production ceased in 1982, when the rights were sold to Sunrise Auto Industries in India, where they retained the Dolphin name.

Picture(s) – Kitten Saloon / estate / van ?

The Fox utility was introduced in 1984, based on the Kitten chassis, but galvanised, and with a couple of improvements. Originally designed by John Crosswaite almost a decade earlier, It came in Pick-up, Utility and Hardtop versions, and could have either a fibreglass top or a canvas cover, rear seats were also an option. Also designed for assembly in Greece as a RagTop with

10" wheels, the "Cub" (a Kitten based Moke type vehicle, also designed by John Crosthwaite, then Chief Engineer at Reliant.) It was during the Fox production run, from 1984 till 1990, that Reliant introduced a number of changes affecting starter motors, clutches, and a number of other components including carburetors and distributors, and so not all components are interchangeable, though complete units are. Total build quantity is variously quoted as 400 or over 1,000 depending on the source. One fact seems to be clear, they were also built under licence overseas, which may account for the conflicting numbers. Reliant went into receivership during 1990, and Bean engineering took them over in mid 1991. Bean only ever built 4 Fox chassis, and in fact they were all used to make Vantiques – see below. There were 310 Foxes licensed in the U.K at the end of 1997, which would clearly indicate that the total number built was nearer the higher figure mentioned.

Picture - Fox

Tandy Industries, an Isle of Wight based firm, did a good quality two berth motor caravan conversion on the Fox chassis, and a number of them are still in use. They were built from 1984 Till when can anyone tell me please? (The firm went into receivership in 1996) - Tandy Industries basic model the Firecrest was £ 6,650, and the higher spec Goldcrest was £ 7,350 Colin Dover was the man behind it, he went on to do interesting things with Citroen conversions – The last batch of Foxes left the Reliant factory without power units, and were fitted with electric motors for use by the Swedish Electricity Company. The last Fox chassis, believed to be 170199LA000616 was used to build a Vantique (see below, after Tempest).

Picture - Tandy Campervan

While all this was going on, the Kitten chassis had been recognised as a particularly suitable platform on which to mount a number of body types, and John Box and Ian Foster (of Teal Bugatti fame), set about designing the Tempest sports two seater, The prototype was launched in 1987. The Tempest has earned an impressive pedigree of competition successes including a class win in the 2000 Association of Central Southern Motor Clubs Trials Championship, and a third in the RACMSA National Championship the same year by Jack Williams of Rougham. The last Tempest registered as a new car was built in 1984. Some kits were also sold so that prospective owners could assemble their own, both during, and after this time. The most recently completed one of them at the time of writing being Dave Smith's in December 2000. The rights to this fine vehicle were acquired in 2000 by Stephen Campbell, who intends to re-launch it in 2001.

Picture - Tempest

John Box had other strings to his bow, and during the Tempest's time in production he was developing and building the 1930's looking Vantique. As the name implies, it is a van. The prototype was first on the road on 1st Nov.1989, and the last of just 10 built was completed a decade later. In fact the first 9 were complete by 1993, the last one taking a little longer to finish! Vantiques incorporated the only 4 Fox chassis built by Beans.

Picture - Vantique

On the van front, the Asquith Motor Carriage Company of Great Yeldham in Essex produced the Asquith, another pre-war looking van on the Fox / Kitten chassis. Powered by Reliant trusty 850cc engine. Asquith had approximately 40 chassis from Reliant. The body was very heavy, and the cast aluminum artillery like wheels were hard on the suspension. Some firms bought these as mobile advertising e.g. Jacobs (as in cream crackers) and 'Hold Em Cars' of Essex who own no less than 5 of them, and use one as an advert for their car 'Superstore' ! I believe that Asquith also built vans on a Ford platform.

Picture - Asquith

In the 80's both the Jimp, a kind of mini Land Rover look alike, another of John Crosswaite's designs, and the Salamander, intended as a replacement for the AC invalid car were built, the former by Peter Kukla of Sandbatch, from 1981 to 1984,. The remains of the Jimp stock was last seen in a warehouse in Manchester in 1988. One chassis, 8 body shells, (aluminum) and loads of parts, but the asking price of £ 4,000 was considered too high. It is understood that eventually some of them were turned into trailers. If you have any other information, please contact the Registrar.

Picture - Jimp

The latter was commissioned by the Salford and Manchester Social Services (hence the name SALaMANder). Though based on a, somewhat modified, Kitten chassis, it used a Ford 1,100cc engine and C3 automatic gearbox, and with its flat floor, and doors opening right town to the bottom of the sill, made it easy to get in and out, ideal for the disabled, and easy to load a wheelchair into. They were built from about 1981 till 1984, by which time the Motability scheme had rendered a specialist disabled persons vehicle virtually obsolete. The GRP body was flimsy compared to the Reliant technique, but quite adequate.

Picture - Salamander

Even earlier, about 1976, the need for a small British hand built sports car had been recognised, and Tony Stevens, now Professor Tony Stevens, came up with the very sleek Cipher which made its first appearance at the Birmingham Motor Show in 1980. Sadly only 6 of them were built, two in the Reliant factory at Tamworth, and 4 by Tony himself. The Cipher uses a lot of additional steel work to locate separate fibreglass un-stressed panels. One of these was eventually acquired by TVR for evaluation by John Box in 1983. It was eventually sold on through Harrogate Horseless Carriages. Two 'kits' were also sold over and above the 6 complete vehicles made, but their whereabouts is unknown. (worse than that, one of the kit owners rang the Registrar late in 2000 looking for a windscreen, - the kit never having been completed - and the contact was then lost!) It is not thought either of them was completed. Tony also built as a one off prototype before the Cipher in 1976, the Sienna. Like the Cipher which followed, it was based on the Reliant Kitten chassis and running gear. His son still drives the Sienna today. Three of the Ciphers now reside in Holland, property of Thomas Touw.

Picture - Cipher

In the background, one of John Box's sons, Robert, had a year out from studying, and designed and built the one and only Bobcat in 1980 – well, that's when he started the project whose design began in 1979, but a family house move got in the way, and the car was not in fact completed till 1984 ! It was a design exercise to make a Kitten do 100 MPH. Built on a 1976 one owner Kitten estate chassis its very distinctive looks are striking. The aluminium body is probably quite light, but the steel frame it mounts on is not, the car is none the less very brisk. This vehicle was owned by Joe Boulderstone-Salthouse of Stockport from 1995 till 2000 when it was acquired by Steven Campbell of Tempest cars. It was subsequently acquired by John Pearce of Leighton Buzzard. Joe, the man from Stockport, also happens to own a Tempest, and is the Tempest Registrar.

Picture - Bobcat

A number of other specials have been built on both new and secondhand Kitten running gear, perhaps the more notable being the "Black Prince", built in 1984, designed by William Towns, one time designer for Aston Martin, who went on to style the Reliant Scimitar SST and Scimitar Sabre. While the Black Prince's wings are made of fibreglass, most of the rest of the body and doors are made from plywood, covered in Vinyl leather. It was on the market in the 90's with under 100 miles on the clock ! The name Black Prince was also used by Jowett in 1929 and Invicta in 1947.

Black Prince Picture - do we know Who owns it now ?

Then in the nineties, 18th March 1995 to be precise, Peter Davis formed the Liege Car Company, and began producing a lightweight 1950's looking lightweight two seater sporting car which has a fibreglass body with integral floor, and utilises the Reliant 850 engine and gearbox. Like many good ideas, the initial thoughts and first drawings were in fact a decade earlier. The Liege 'A' frame chassis has double wishbone front suspension and an 'A' bracket and trailing arms at the rear. Kitten stub axles and hub assemblies are used along with a modified Kitten steering rack. This very light weight sports special has had numerous competition successes, and while the total number of orders taken by the end of 2000 was for 38, just nine of them had been completed and passed their SVA test by August 2001.

Also developed by the Liege Motor Company :- 16" by 3.5" die cast alloy wheels, supercharger Kit, twin SU inlet manifold, and under development a 4 into 1 exhaust manifold and emission multi-point fuel injection. Give the Registrar a ring if you want to know more.

Picture - Liege

So, if it's a different looking, good handling, economic and competitive fun vehicle you are after, with the potential to compete successfully. All you have to decide really is if you want it to have a fibreglass, aluminum or wooden body, and you're half way do deciding which one is for you!

A number of individuals have fitted non-Reliant engines into Kittens and Rebels, ranging from electric power through a Talbot Sunbeam 1 litre unit, through 1200cc Nissan, 1600cc Fiat, 1800cc Vauxhauil and 2 litre Ford, to even a Rover V8 ! Not forgetting a couple of motorcycle engines, a Peugeot 1.9 diesel, and even a gas turbine! In many cases more than double or triple the horsepower from even less weight than the Reliant unit! A few racing specials have also been

built, but sadly their owners are too busy enjoying themselves to have much time to write about them!

Pictures – special engined ones.

That's it really, apart from some blurb about the Register, the Mewsletter, and an invitation so send an s.a.e. for more details. So, there it is, the whole idea is to have a document available with colour pictures of the cars so that anyone who is interested can have all – well at least some – of their questions answered, without me having to write a long letter, and then struggle to find and copy pictures. It is well in hand, and will, I hope, be available either on CD, or in the same format as this magazine, during 2002.

Brian

RKR-the-Cars.doc

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Now for the answers to Dick Goodall's anograms, no, I'll be generous here, to save you going and looking up the questions again, I'll give you both in here :-

|                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| Dion Vacchi      | Honda Civic    |
| BMW Aukherm      | Humber Hawk*   |
| Cave Liar` `     | Cavalier       |
| Tadbuk Seer      | Studebaker     |
| Lil Dacca        | Cadillac       |
| Rai Valda        | Lada Riva      |
| Baracco          | AC cobra       |
| Dr. Avelorn      | Land Rover     |
| Dorset FIFA      | Ford Fiesta    |
| Jettas crow      | Jowett Cars    |
| Shock Vim        | Moskvich       |
| Lura Net         | Renault        |
| Bum hit, Isis !  | Mitisubishi    |
| Prove weird      | Powerdrive     |
| Rons Total Mire  | Reliant Motors |
| Cleo Lorrys      | Rolls Royce*   |
| Mire Lad         | Daimler        |
| GB bound         | Bond Bug       |
| But Sam bet loan | Sunbeam Talbot |
| Ada Long         | Lagonda        |
| Dad';s tarn      | Standard       |
| AFC velega       | Facel Vega     |

And the odd one - Werm Settle – why, it spells Mewsletter of course!

The asterisks denote mistakes I made in the thing, I can only apologise, but those of you who took the time were quick to realise the problem, thanks for your calls and letters. I have to say that the prize almost went to a chap who, like the man who set the questions, lives in Scotland, but John Stork from that well known palindrome Glenelg (on the mainland just opposite the Isle of Skye in case you were wondering) had not heard I suspect of the Facel Vega. I think

one of the Beatles used to own one of them if memory serves. Anyway, our man in Camberley Derek Argyle was the first correct one in, well done Derek.

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Spare parts

Yes, this old chestnut again! I am surprised by how few people tell me that they are having difficulty with spares. Now that must mean one of two things – either your car is trouble free, or you have no difficulty in obtaining parts. Both situations are wonderful, and I really ought to leave my head in the sand and do nothing at all. But, you see, I know how difficult some parts are becoming; well I think I do, but so few of you ask me about them that I really begin to wonder sometimes. The reconditioned steering rack that I have in stock has been here for what will soon be a year now, and the lower steering columns even longer. I only have the 1 accelerator cable left, I know that they are not available from any of the usual sources, oh, update on that I believe that Graham Walker is planning having a batch made which will save me using mine as sample to have more made, but I've only sold three in 6 years, so is it worth it? I put two pairs of front dampers, complete with springs, into stock two years ago, and still have one pair left – should I keep the stock up? Or let it dwindle? The price of such parts makes it quite impossible to keep many of anything big in stock, unless of course I made the spares donation compulsory, as some car clubs do, but, as I keep saying, I am not running a business. Perhaps we should look at a separate Kitten Spares organisation, and delegate a bit, but how would the new person get to know any more than I do? One continuing problem, at least as far as getting parts made goes, is economic batch quantities. Take the front dampers for example, a batch of 50 could be done, and they would 'only' cost around £70 each, quick sum and I get that to come to an investment of £3,500, well the balance in the spares account last week was £242, which would not pay for a tenth of that bill, and, lets be honest, it would be more than a little foolish to spend all the money on one item would it not?

I am deeply indebted to Graham Walker's organisation, who were prepared to make such an investment, but he is running a business, and so they cost us £85 plus v.a.t. and carriage at the moment. At least they are still available (they had, Matthew tells me, 41 in stock 23/10/01 when I was writing this).

I've said it before, and I'll say it again, if you are having difficulty obtaining spares, talk to me, Ed.

Mutual Aid Spares update – November 2001

Recently I had a few request for spares and even some telephone calls - I hope you gentlemen got sorted out. Recently I have been thinking of better and easier ways to operate the system, and if we could get a Register web page going, we could use that having a secure part for people to offer not only parts but cars. .Now I realise that all of you are not on the internet and sometimes I wish I wasn't, however for those who aren't, I would be willing to put their items on the web, and also provide a print-out. One of the advantages is that as parts are sold they can be removed from the page which is not the case at the moment, and I am sure I have given peoples' names, addresses, and telephone numbers to people, only to find that the parts available have been sold! Comments please.

Phil

Thanks for the update Phil. I am somewhat saddened, though I have to admit not really surprised, human nature being what it is, that folk are failing to be responsible and let you know when bits offered through the scheme, are sold, and hence no longer available. It does state quite clearly on the Mutual Aid Spares form that, under OPERATION, "Please inform the co-ordinator when the parts are sold. This will save all parties unnecessary bother later." Clearly that is not happening in all cases, and I fail to see how running the service on the net would help alleviate that problem. But, as you say Phil, Comments please. Ed.

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## **READERS LETTERS**

Dear Sir,

October 2001

I have found myself in a terrible dilemma as regards to the future of my much loved but very abused Kitten WAA 325R.

The reason for this is that we now have a surplus of vehicles, having just purchased a replacement car for my wife's Nova 1.0, I know that the decision should be easy, however there are a number of factors which are probably unique to me to take into consideration.

- 1). Alison my wife, will not get into or drive the Kitten
- 2). As it is, only journeys of up to approximately 12 miles can be undertaken, due to a worn engine.
- 3). I have spent about 5 years trying to find an intermittent fault with the Nova, which I think I have just solved, and I would hate for anybody to have years of trouble free motoring as a result of my 5 years frustration.

I know that probably the neatest thing to do would be to keep the Kitten, and find a lady who would drive it, however this would be a very expensive option, so I believe that the only choice I can make is to find another custodian for the Kitten.

I look forward to hearing any comments that you may have, and any possible leads to find my Kitten a new home.

Best regards - David Sheen - West Sussex

*Well David, I have absolutely no intention of taking up marriage guidance on top of all my other commitments! That said you would clearly seem to have a way out should you be seeking one. Seriously though, I have met a number of ideally suited couples over the past decade of running the Register, and clearly yours is not one of them, not at least on the motoring front. I wish I could have you and Alison spend a few hours in this neck of the woods, and let you meet Donald and Davina Jack, remember the near divorce he caused recently when his beloved passed favourable comment on the Lotus Elan, and he thought that meant he could part with the Kitten – not a chance, she wanted it as well! (and Donald has a Bentley and a Rolls Royce in the fleet). Some of the finer things in life have to be experienced to be appreciated is all I can say,*



*and if she won't even try it, there really is little help I can offer, short of running an advert for you, which I will do.*

Dear Brian,

October 2001

Thanks very much for the complimentary edition of the Mewsletter, it was very interesting. I am currently working on a project on the 850cc Reliant engine for Formula 750 racing. Dad gave me a book for Christmas by Dick Harvey all about building your own car. Dick's techniques on lightening the components of the Reliant engine can, I believe, be improved upon and I am taking the opportunity to research better designs using the stuff I learnt on my degree course. However I require drawings of the engine. I have tried to measure the block, but don't think I'm going to be accurate enough. I wondered if any of your readers might know where I can obtain any detailed drawings. I hope you can help.

Yours sincerely Ellen Parrott

*Ellen, I'm sorry, I know we spoke about drawings at the time, and I have let you down, I'll get on it again soon, meantime if anyone can help, please get in touch – Ed.*

Dear Brian,

15<sup>th</sup> October 2001

Thanks for the recent magazine which is excellent as usual (flattery will get you everywhere Martin!) You were going to hunt out and send me some contacts about engine tuning which I would still appreciate.

I recently replaced the clutch cable on the car without any supply problems. However throttle cables seem to be no longer available, certainly from Reliant PartsWorld at any rate.

Martin Seymour - Colchester

*Thanks for keeping us up to date Martin, I should have dealt with the tuning contacts long before you read this! On the throttle cable front, I rang Dianne to check, and she did not know, in spite of me telling Paul last year, that the Robin 750 cable does fine, the only differences being the colour of the outer cable, and the absence of the grommet. That said, it now looks as though 750 Robin cables are becoming scarce. I do have one in stock, and will use it as a template to have more made if we need to go down that road, I'll make a few telephone calls first. Watch this space.*

Dear Brian,

Summer / Autumn 2001

I was looking around the web for electric car info and turned up a Kitten on :- [www.eca-uk.fsnet.co.uk/cars.html](http://www.eca-uk.fsnet.co.uk/cars.html)

There was quite a lot of technical info. I too would be interested in hearing about anyone's experiences with electric conversions. I spoke to a man in Hampshire several years ago who was converting a fox back to petrol! Apparently it had been used in some experimental work.

Also there were rumours of electric Foxes in Sweden.

Keep up the good work.

Best regards Keith Dumont - Gurnsey

*Yes Keith, Reliant did as I understand it, sell 40 Foxes without engines to the Swedish Electric company, Ed.*

Dear Brian,

12th October 2001

Just a line to let you and fellow Reliant owners know that a chap called John Copestake has started trading in Reliant spares. The business goes by the name of Carwise, of 25 Sheffield road, Penistone, Barnsley South Yorks S36 6HH. He is also on the web at [carwisereliantspares.moonfruit.com](http://carwisereliantspares.moonfruit.com) and on email at [reliantspares@copestake.worldonline.co.uk](mailto:reliantspares@copestake.worldonline.co.uk) Tel 01226 766039 Mobile 07890156327.

Monday to Friday opening times are by appointment only, but he is open on Saturdays from 9am till 12:00 noon.

I have used his services a few times and found his prices are fair and turnaround quite good.

Yours, Dave Eyre - Barnsley No. 133

Dear Brian,

21st October 2001

I am writing to you with a complaint and an apology.

First the apology, after reading through the last copy of the Mewsletter (Sept/Oct 2001) I realise just how we subscribers do not always make your job any easier! I saw the letter from Mrs. Tina Cooper from Arundel, about replacing her Kitten with a Smart car, and I should have informed you a lot sooner, that I had purchased her Kitten within three days of receiving the Mewsletter. Records duly updated thanks Andrew – Ed.

I 'phoned on the Thursday evening and travelled down from West Sussex to the furthest reaches of East Kent on the Sunday, with my mate John as chauffeur. We travelled a considerable amount of miles, including five different motorways, in absolutely atrocious weather conditions, terrible rain, and flooded roads, but, with just a few miles to go, the sun came out and the weather improved dramatically.

We found their house, and were given a warm welcome by Mr. & Mrs. Cooper, and an even more welcome cup of tea. I had a quick look round the car, it has very obviously been well looked after and loved, and I purchased it then and there. But I can honestly say Brian, that I have never seen anyone quite so emotional and sad about selling a car, and after the taking of photographs and a last look round, Mrs Cooper disappeared indoors unable to watch me and said car depart.

The Journey home, in much improved weather, took just on 2 ½ hours at a steady 50mph. With the little car never missing a beat.

I would like to tell Mrs. Cooper that the little car has indeed gone to a good home where it will be well used and cared for, and I would like to take this opportunity via the Mewsletter, to thank Mr. & Mrs. Cooper for their hospitality.

Now for the complaint Brian, and it is of course from my wife Debbie, as yet another Reliant joins the Hudson stable, she has ordered me to ask you to refrain from placing further adverts for Reliants in the Mewsletter within my catchment area, this she would like to be above the England / Scotland border, but she would accept a line through Wales and the Midlands as being more realistic, anything beneath this line Brian, she now considers dodgy territory, and with much skill and clever manipulation, I have convinced her that the problem is not mine, but YOURS, by placing temptation in my way. I know that you have told me in the past about the NO word Brian, but really I only have six cars now, I don't think that is excessive, but the problem is that although my Deb is very laid back and understanding, she appears to be becoming very unstable every time the words Reliant or Kitten are mentioned, I can't think why Brian, can you? So please be careful where you place the future adverts Brian, you might just be treading on dangerous ground.

Yours grovellingly - Andrew Hudson - Kent

*Well Andrew, see what wonderful self control I am developing in my old age, I managed not to interrupt you once! Debbie and Moira will probably start a Viewsletter of their own, if we don't keep them tightly under wraps. When Moira saw your letter, her reaction was "What he doesn't realise is that Debbie is not joking"*

*I do have to say that 6 cars is not even one for each day of the week, though I suppose that we are meant to rest on the 7th day, so perhaps you are getting close to the limit, are you listening Bill (Dick) – I am sure that Brenda will agree that you can have too much of a good thing!*

*I must also say, with my Editor's hat on, that if any of the ladies would like a right to reply page, I will not be adverse to permitting such a thing – subject to any Editor's right to Edit of course!*

*As to the advertising thing, I have been known to miss the occasional one out by mistake in the past, and really, I am sure that you will realise that one of the main functions of an organisation – doesn't that sound grand – me organised, oh well, one can dream! What was I saying, oh yes, one of the main functions of the Register is to find new custodians for our much loved cars.*

*As to your 240 mile round trip to collect it, I reckon that that is about average. Bear in mind that some folk make round trips of almost 1,000 miles, O.K., more in some cases, but it makes you realise how sought after they can be.*

*I am guilty of keeping prices down in as much as I usually ask sellers if they want to sell the car, or hold out for the best price. I know that one gentleman bought a Kitten from a dealer last year for £1,500, and sadly, it proved not to be a particularly good example, but I think that we should think about that sort of value in future. I have considerable difficulty with insurance companies, agreeing a value when so many of them change hands so cheaply. So we have a*

*new benchmark of a Kitten, probably in condition 6 or thereabouts, fetching fifteen hundred pounds. Lets move on from there shall we please.*

*Oh, and Tina (Cooper), I know just how you felt, I know that I would be just the same. I remember the feeling when we finally had to part with my dad's Jowett Javelin, it was only 21 years old, (so was I then!) and we had owned it for just 17 of them - I had tears in my eyes.*

*Ed.*

*Then the following day, a lovely colour postcard of the Griffin Inn near Brecon in the upper Wye valley arrived, it read as follows :-*

Dear Brian,

22nd October 2001

In a long overdue attempt to simplify my life I have sold my Kitten PDY and sadly buried the old Rebel in the garden! Andrew Norman from Nutley, one of your subscribers, now has the Kitten, and loads of Rebel spares.

Would you please delete my details from your mailing list.

I wish you and the Register continued success in keeping these "fine wee cars" on the tarmac.

Yours very sincerely - Alan Peck

*I am grateful to Alan for keeping me up to date, though obviously very sad to learn the Rebel's fate, we did advertise it in these pages, indeed Simon Chisholm was considering it, but the costs involved in trailering it over 500 miles were just too great. I am grateful also to Andrew for saving the bits that he could, but Andrew did tell me at the time that he could not store the Rebel parts for ever. Andrew, if I have not been in touch by the time you read this, can you possibly give me a list of the Rebel bits, and we will see if we can find them new homes.*

Dear Brian,

3rd November 2001

Could you please send me any back issues that have info about the Jimp, especially ones with pictures.

P.S., does anyone want to sell me their Jimp?

Yours Ed Kippax -

Dear Brian,

November 2001

Belated thanks for the latest Mewsletter. I was very interested to read of the problem with wheel centre diameter queries. From the outset I cannot explain the wheel centre of any reliant, but you may be interested in the problem I encountered when trying to fit "Peter Davies" wheels to my Kitten front hubs.

Peter had obviously designed his cast alloy wheels around some perfectly round cast hubs. But when I mounted my front wheels they did not go fully down the wheel mounting studs and finally clamping the brake drum tightly!

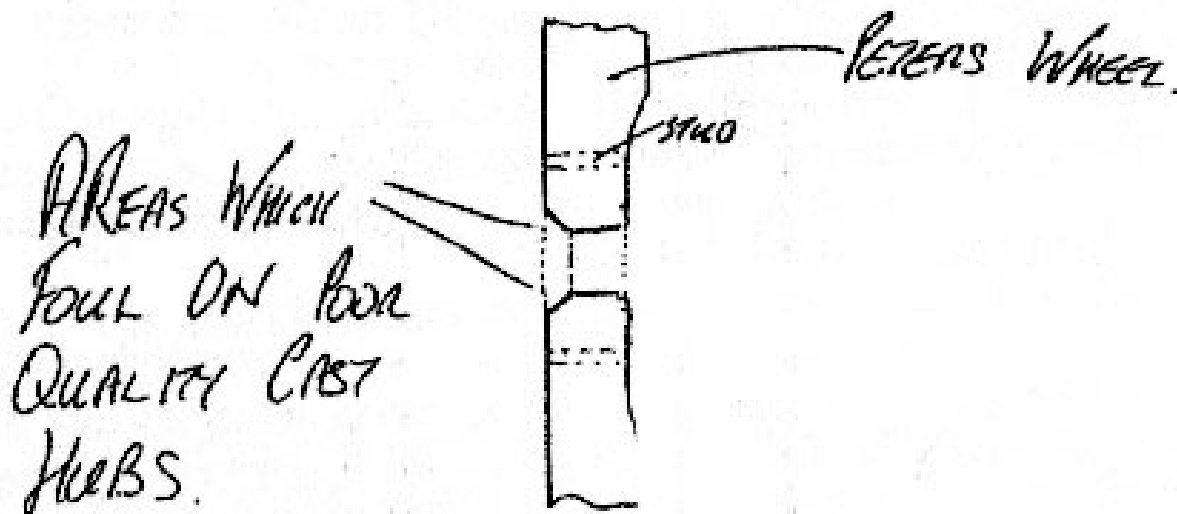
On carefully examining my hubs I found that both castings were of poor Quality in so much that the casting was actually concentric to the machined wheel flange and grease cap aperture. The remedy in the case of both my hubs was to hand file the rough casting marks and buckled appearance as I will try to illustrate

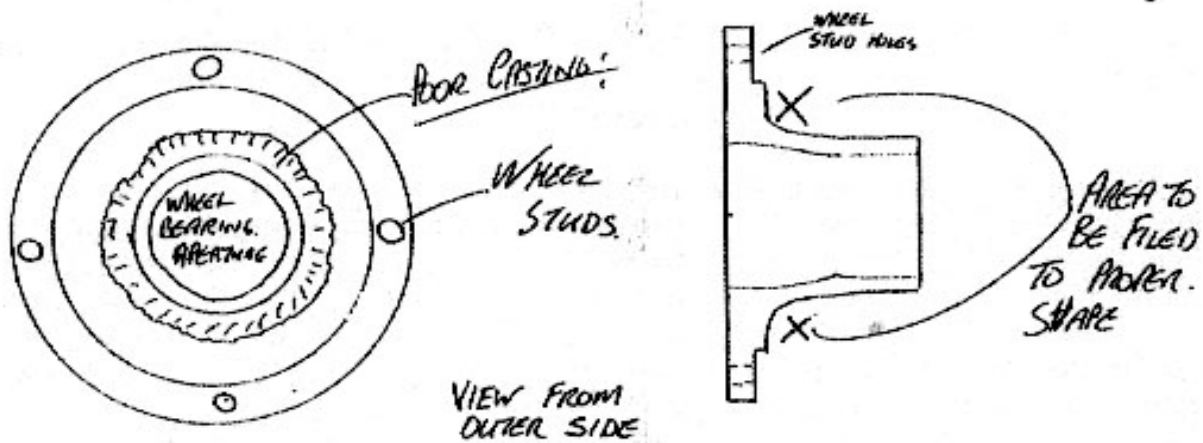
This all took about two hours work after I had pushed out the wheel mounting studs. The wheels of course now push and tighten fully home, and run true.

I hope this experience may be of help. I have discussed the matter with Peter. It may just be of help to your other member who was having a problem.

Once again thanks for all you do. Best wishes, Pat Collins (449)

*Thanks Pat, the difficulty encountered was with a Tempest not a Liege, and I think it was of a more fundamental nature, but thank you for your comments, and I will try and get the sketches included here, Ed*





## From the In Tray

Events we are invited to and services we are advised of this time include :-

Haynes Publishing wrote on the 2nd of November to thank us for our continued support of the Haynes Club Membership Scheme, so I guess some of you are taking up their offer which gives us a 12.5% discount on their normal prices, which is good. I may even include their current flyer if they can get them to me in time!

You can contact them on 01963 442080 or on the net at e-mail address [sales@haynes-manuals.co.uk](mailto:sales@haynes-manuals.co.uk)

Continental Car Tours have found my address this year, and their recent letter tells us they are celebrating 10 years of Continental Car Tours next year, and gives an impressive list of events and deals from March to December 2002. The list is too big to include all the details here, but includes various Car Club events to Holland, Belgium, Ireland, France, Germany, Spain and Switzerland, as well as the Eden Project in Cornwall. Even takes in events such as Le Mans from June 13th to 17th for example.

Prices vary from £79 per person to £599 depending on location and duration.

I quite fancy the Nurburgring Track day and Old Timer Grand Prix from August 8th to 12th myself, but at £129 per person I think Moira would send me on my own... ah well, one can dream.

If you have internet access they can be found at [www.continentalcartours.co.uk](http://www.continentalcartours.co.uk) or for the rest of us mere mortals you can ring them on 01304 380244 or fax them on 01304 375581.



QX Components Ltd, one of the largest manufacturers of Alternators, dynamos and starter motors in the country – so they tell me – would like to introduce themselves to us, (12th November 2001) and Rick Snape and Dave Pilgrim, their Sales Directors tell me they will happily supply the club with their latest catalogue and current price list. They claim to have a mature workforce who have extensive knowledge of older vehicles. They can, they tell me, even arrange chromed brackets if the customer wishes them. So now you know. They can be contacted on 0161 746 7676.

*This is not a recommendation, that will be up to you to let me know should you use them. Just me clearing another bit of paper from my desk.*

Gari ! Gari Jones, and Do, indeed all the family, I just single you out because you instantly sprang to mind for some reason when I received details of the Trans-Cymru Classic Events in March 30th (Easter) sounds good, starting from The Forresters Oaks, on the A48 between Chepstow and Newport, near the Severn Bridge. Takes in lunch at the Forresters Arms in the heart of the black mountains – a hostelry renowned for its good food, this sounds like fun to me! Then their Lakes and mountains tour on May 19th next year (2002), indeed they are planning an Irish tour in June, 2nd to 9th, a Snowdonia Tour 6th & 7th of July, and Forest of Dean and Wye valley tour 11th of August, not to mention their classic weekend 31st Aug / 1st Sep, never mind their Welsh Challenge the 1st to the 4th of November. They even offer a Christmas Tour on the 8th of December. I have an application form, but I am sure they will happily provide details to anyone interested. Ring them (Trans-Cymru Classic Events) on 01443 815559, or write to them at 25 The Crescent, Maesywmmmer, Caerphilly C.B. CF82 7QF or even e-mail them at :- [info@transcymruclassic.co.uk](mailto:info@transcymruclassic.co.uk)

Their November 2001 Newsletter runs to 4 A4 sides in a font a lot smaller than this, and all sounds great fun, but I have only so much space available. Oh dear, the front covers arrived yesterday, thanks John, and I am waiting for the artwork from our new advertiser – promised for tomorrow.....

### **On line page**

I know that I said that I would say less about the internet as the vast majority of our readers are not “on-line”, as time goes by, oh dear, more song titles, never mind, more and more of us are finding access to the internet available, if you don’t believe me just visit your local library and ask for some time on-line. The point? Well, from time to time I am advised of “recommended” sites to visit, reliantrobinBN1.com being one, and more recently, for those who may be into microcars [coinworld.demon.co.uk/microcar](http://coinworld.demon.co.uk/microcar) is well worth a look, I only had time to glance through 10 pages of their 35 page guestbook the other day, but if you are interested in microcars it is well worth a look. Thanks Gordon Key for that recommendation.

I was clearing out my old e-mails the other day and came across one from Kerry Croxton, are you there Kerry? I realised that while I had tried to answer your question about the history of your Rebel, that I had perhaps not covered things in sufficient detail. Does anyone know what happened to the Rebel that Prince Philip used to have? And, can I remember who Ashley Dunn bought Kerry’s Rebel from? I should know that, because it was advertised in these very pages, and I spoke to the man a couple of times, this memory is a real pain at times.

Kerry was also asking if we knew exactly how many Tandy camper vans were produced, and I know, or at least think I remember Bob Neal giving me some info on this, but again this

memory of mine is letting the side down. Oh, thanks Bob for the details you have sent recently, I'll need a bigger house soon!

Then, and even though it was only the other day, I can't remember just how it came about, but I became aware of a new – to me – web site [reliantkitten.co.uk](http://reliantkitten.co.uk) which is run by Brian Radford from Redruth in Cornwall, and through it found out about another electric Kitten, not 50 miles from here! Watch this space.

I did receive an anonymous invitation early in November, to subscribe to a web e-mail group come 850 enthusiasts group, but the advertising letter said that this group was being formed to replace a group called Reliant 850 lovers group, whose members had had things deleted by person or persons unknown, and I hesitated and did nothing, but it is out there if you are into that sort of thing the reliant 850 fans group. There is a "Moderator", but he or she does not see fit to put their name to it, and I really don't have the time to play detective.

## **GETTING TECHNICAL**

Tech Tweaks 10th July 2001

Yes, yes, I know it will be December by the time you read this, there is an explanation, and if you are that interested, drop me a line and I'll explain why Al's June story is only appearing now! Ed.

Well, we got there! Now those of you who are not following the plot will have puzzled frowns. We got the mechanics at the back sorted out, and some bits at the front too! Even an MOT!! All he muttered about was head lamps too low, new bits at the back, you see, and mixture, soon twiddled.

The rear end rebuild-fresh car springs (wish they were van ones) soon fitted, for those who've never done this, it will either be a 20 min job, or two days! The bolt that often sticks is the 7" high tensile one through front spring bush to chassis, it rusts in. Now what? Lots of heat with a gas flame? Don't think so, plastic body, petrol pipe. No, the only answer is to hack off the spring bush, and drill it out. Don't think of trying to knock it through, it will only mushroom. You will need several longish drills AND a hole in the body! Yes it's easy to repair it after, or, like me, you could 'wear your scars with pride'. You will need a straight hand with the drilling as well. Might be a job for two of you. Fitting the 'new' springs also needs a second body, to sit on the ground at the rear of the vehicle and push the spring forward with their feet, so that the front bolt can be fitted. Lots of grease so you can get it out next time.

Next – new rear dampers, we only have the two way one available these days, no problem, cuts down on body roll a bit. I have had the bottom bracket broken off the axle for many years, so I've used a large 'U' clamp with a specially made bar piece. The MK II version of this seems to work ok. Saves having to have brackets welded to the rear axle tube.

Rear brakes – rebuild brake plates with NEW (old stock) cylinders, the old cylinders still worked as such, but the groove for the silly clip that holds them onto the back plate had corroded away and the cylinders FLOATED hence rear braking was less than efficient and the shoes were lop sided. Some new pipes while we are under here as well.

Now the front – I had some tired dampers here, but when I came to change them I found the ears at the top of the suspension turrets, that take the top of the wishbone, were starting to crack, and as soon as I remove the brackets that take the top wishbones, loads more cracks are revealed! Oh deary me! These cracks emanate from the bolt holes, where the shims are, aggravated by the shim and the high mileage. The shim in effect reduces the contact area by  $\frac{1}{4}$  as the shim is dropped in. As it happens I have a pet welder who soon sorted it by welding on some strong ‘penny’ washers on both sides. In fact we got lucky here, as the washers then took up the space originally filled by the shims, so now no shims and a stronger job. Such is the fate of these high mileage chassis (only done 230,000 mile this one).

I then fitted some new / old front dampers, but with old van springs, from my mates car. This gives a very firm ride on the rough Norfolk roads, but the cornering forces are quite exciting.

Having changed so much in the suspension department and sorted out a veer to the left due to tracking being out, and fitted a pair of 6” wheels to the back to use up some tyres, I was amazed that the front / rear balance was still within reason. It has turned out though that the stronger front springs along with the double anti-roll bar is perhaps too much for these rough roads, a bump tends to chuck both wheels sideways at the front if you’re really lucky. As the second anti roll bar is adjustable, we are still experimenting. The irony of all this is that this van came from the factory with van rear springs, and car front ones. It now has car rear springs and van front ones! (perhaps one day we’ll get it right!)

With all that work done there has been no excuse not to patch up all the fi-glass nicks, and then even think of painting it, but only thinking about it! As after all I’ve got used to the spotty blue thing after all these years, (most definitely not a candidate for the front cover, but there again?!)

Al Osborn - Thetford

P.S. After the July saga to rebuild the suspension fore and aft, we ended up with van springs on the front and car springs on the rear, the exact reverse that the machine had for its first 230,000 miles. What happened? Well, cornering on a smooth surface was wonderful, real go-cart stuff, loads of sideways forces where we are thankful for the seatbelt. The 6” wide rear wheels and double anti-roll bar adding to the fun. BUT, on the normal Norfolk back roads (which I have to use a lot) any reasonable bump would chuck the front sideways quite a bit, you wouldn’t lose direction, but just a bit too firm. Then in the wet, hitting standing water, it felt decidedly twitchy. No, this can’t be right, we’ll change those front springs back to the car ones. Ahh... that’s much better. Back to normal, and a feeling of confidence in the wet.

While we are doing the job, (changing the springs) I note there is uneven wear on the front tyres. (Dunlop super sports 165\*10) The outside of the tyre had worn quite a bit more than the inside, I don’t mean the outside corner scrubbed off due to fast cornering, this wear was all the way across but far worse on the outside than on the inside. The only way to explain this that I can see is that the tyre / wheel was not sitting square on the road, the car was sitting up with a greater camber angle than it should have. Any way, all better now.

*A moments thought after all this muses that the pal I got the van front springs from didn’t have any trouble with his in his 200,000 miles, but there again he did have the van rear springs, and did NOT have the double anti-roll bar that I have. Perhaps I should have tried the experiment of removing the anti-roll bar, but even though it would have been an easy enough, I didn’t get to it. Just changed the springs back, that was enough of a job. Those spring clamps will always twist*

*every other way than the one you want them to go in! Which is the main reason that I always recommend fitting dampers with adjustable spring seats – Ed!*

Has anyone found an off side rear saloon window rubber yet, Please?

P.P.S. I see in the last mag the subject of refitting the radiator, but have you noticed that you can see the bolts heads through the wheel arch with the appropriate turn of the wheel? And of course with a very long 3/8" socket and extension(s) and a knuckle drive you can screw and unscrew most of the bolts VERY easily. Clean all the bolts and threads before re-inserting... what's the problem?

P.P.P.S. I have several bumper end caps, new and seconds, they are all different, so what do you want?

That's all for this time, assuming that this makes it into print! Alan.

## **Sales and Wants**

For Sale :- Kitten saloon, contact David Sheen

For Sale :- 1976 Kitten Estate. MOT just expired. Tatty interior but good mechanicals, many new parts fitted, and several spares including new clutch, two cylinderheads, gearbox, gaskets, new rings and big end and main bearing shells. £ 220 the lot. Contact Jim Day

For Sale :- Rebel estate, with 850 gearbox fitted, contact George or Phil

For Sale :- Christine Peckham's W registered estate car

For Sale :- not very much money, an exhaust manifold in as new condition but for the Zenith – early Robin 750. Contact Alan

For Sale :- Salamander in running order, contact John Pearce

For Sale :- Fox Pick-up E registered 1989 Sept, believed to be one of the last ones, only 25,000 miles from new. chassis 575 New fuel tank, suspension wishbones, bushes, radiator, heater matrix, new tyres, too many new bits to mention – comes with new spare clutch. M.O.T. & Tax till June 2002, Tel :-

For Sale :- E36 BTO, a 1988 Fox, just 2 owners from new, with a factory supplied rear seat & side windows & tow bar no tax or test, last used May 2000 but in good condition, spare (original) engine included in the deal. Yours for £300 o.n.o Contact Eddie Morley

For Sale :- Fox pick-up. A854 GSS no tax or test. Contact Alan Tait

For Sale :- rare Kitten van, tidy body. Rear seat and side windows fitted. Good winter project. Ring Brian on 0141 8866117

For Sale :- Well free to a good home in fact. A Rebel estate with 850 engine. Sliding side windows. Contact Kerry Croxton

Wanted :- Kitten saloon side window seal off side window – contact Al Osborn

Wanted :- Reliant Kitten estate, any colour, needs to be in good condition and a runner. Contact Brian Radford, yes he did get one as a result of the ad in here last time, but his wife was so impressed that she now wants one too!

Wanted :- Kitten saloon, in running order, will go to a good home, MOT & tax an advantage, contact Michael

Wanted :- Reliant Kitten or a good Rebel, estate car preferred, but will consider a good saloon. Must have long M.O.T. Contact Martin

Wanted :- Kitten front stub axles and steering arms, complete with hubs if you like. Contact the Registrar in the first instance.

Wanted :- A Jimp. If you can help contact Ed Kippax

## **NOTES**

Right, I'll try to keep this brief – easily said in October! Renewal notices are enclosed. It would save a lot of time and effort if everyone filled them in and returned them – even people who are not intending to renew, a brief note with the form to that effect, will save you from receiving future communications, not to mention saving me from having to send them! But please, if you are leaving us, and no longer have the car(s) shown on the form, could you let me know what happened to it / them?

To everyone else, please check the details, and correct any omissions, and also confirm the status of your car, only 1 option per car please, last year several folk said that the car was both running and off the road, now that may well have been true, but I can only select one box per car, so if it is running, but not taxed / tested, and insured, then it is off the road!

Prompt renewal will ensure that your 2002 membership card will be enclosed with the next magazine, - will they be in colour this time, wait and see!

So, that's it for another year, who said it wouldn't last? I'll apologise now for any spelling or other typographical errors this edition, I am out of time, the printer, my faithful Hewlett Packard DeskJet 420, jammed this morning, and I got my hands covered in ink trying to retrieve the chewed up paper from it. Now it ejects the paper at an angle, and as a result can't stack more than one sheet, and the usual proof reading will not happen because I am out of time– now you'll see how bad things are getting. Have a really great time over the festive period, talk to you again in the New Year. I don't actually need to mention grease guns and ball joints, do I?

**Brian**

### **Effective Preservation Makes Good Economic Sense**

For detailed information on our up-to-date range of easy-to-use and effective engine and workshop protection products visit our web site or write or telephone for free catalogues.

Enginewise Dehydration Kits. Plugs for 10,12,14 + 18 mm threads in 2, 4 + 6 plug kits

V2K Corrosion Inhibiting Oil. Turns any mineral oil into a preserving oil – top up every oil change.

Wokshop Dehydration Kit. Keeps components + instruments corrosion free even in damp workshops.

Enginewise Closure Kits. An invaluable multi-purpose aid to restore and store engines safely.

Hygrometers. Do you know how much humidity you suffer in your garage and workshop?

Well, that's done it! All my efforts to try and keep page headings at the top of pages, all the rushing about – and I can't even count to 40! A blank page... Oh well, I discovered a friend recently who hadn't heard of Desitrata, and I am sure that we could all do with calming down a bit :-

## **Desiderata**

*Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence.*

*As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons.*

*Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even to the dull and ignorant; they too have their story.*

*Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexations to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.*

*Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble, it's a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.*

*Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism.*

*Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment, it is as perennial as the grass.*

*Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth.*

*Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.*

*Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive him to be. And whatever your labours and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul.*

*With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.*