

# *Reliant Kitten* *Register*

**NEWSLETTER 50**

January / February 2003



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 50

*I am eternally grateful to the following individuals:*

**Rebel alternative parts list**

**Kitten alternative parts list**

**Fox alternative parts list**

**Our Mutual Aid Spares scheme**

**Mewsletter pictures**

Our Electric Kitten man is Peter Lingard

The Register is now a member of the FBHVC, which monitors UK & EU legislation and lobbies on our behalf to protect our freedom to use vehicles of all ages on the roads, and we are delighted to be doing our bit in support of so worthy a cause.

Our front cover is graced on this occasion by an active Liege, This one belongs to Simon Robson, the passenger, so desperate to escape from the vehicle, is his son Matt, and I did think that we could run another caption competition, I mean, I just know that he is screaming "LET ME OUT OF HERE !" Isn't he?

web page :- <http://www.uk-classic-cars.com/kitten.htm>

or have a look at <http://www.reliantkitten.co.uk>

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It should be noted that opinions and ideas, information and advice printed in this publication are as recommended by our readers and others, and, while believed to be accurate and correct, such information is given in good faith, and it does not necessarily have the approval of the Reliant Kitten Register, and cannot be guaranteed by either the Editor, or 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.

Well, 50 editions, who would have thought it possible? I am told the first hundred are the worst, so things may get better in about 8 years time – there's a thought! When I started all this back in 1991, the year 2000 seemed as long way off, it still does, and getting further off all the time!

Back then Kittens were plentiful - you even saw them on the road sometimes, though Rebels and Foxes were a bit thin on the ground. A number of Foxes were used more as light commercial vehicles, on farms, caravan sites and the likes, so you were not so likely to bump into one on the road.

Rebels, yes, haven't they enjoyed a high profile on our front covers in the past year? Nothing to do with me I hasten to add, John chooses the cover pictures for us, a bit of delegation that I am sure you will agree works very well, thank you John. Back in the early 90's they were already rare. Their numbers have stabilised thankfully, and while I'd love to see 100 of them on the road, I doubt that will happen soon.

Finding good custodians is a problem, at this point in time, the supply of vehicles exceeds the known number of willing and able custodians, well for Rebels at any rate. A public awareness campaign might be the thing. A number of you have been telling me for some time past, that I ought to interest the motoring press in doing an article on our wee cars, and we did see the Kitten rebuild story in "Practical Classics" last year, well done Bruce Harding. I will write to them.

One problem with making large numbers of folk aware of our marvelous wee cars is that you can attract the wrong people, that said it is surely better to attract people, and accept that a percentage of them will not be ideal custodians, than to attract no new folk at all, and see the cars numbers decline still further.

Besides, more and new interest can only help increase values. If someone is considering spending a few thousand on a rebuild, they will presumably not be adverse to spending a few bob to purchase the vehicle in the first place.

Right, enough daydreaming, my desk is again covered in paperwork, thank you for sending in those renewals. I have failed to reply individually to several people, and I hope that their letters will be found further on in this edition. Your continued support is much appreciated. That said, those reading this who have not yet renewed your subscription should be aware that this is the last magazine you will receive till you do so – you have been warned!

That's enough for now, talk to you again soon. Brian.

## **REBEL ROUND UP**

In the absence of much from you guys I am going to put Paul Wheatley's interesting story in here. Well, it mentions the word Rebel!

Hello Brian

January 2003

Have you ever heard of the "Rebel Racers"? I hadn't until last Thursday when I was told that Hans, who owns and runs the factory, made 4 branch exhaust manifolds to suit the Reliant 850

engine. I had a day off on Friday so I rang him up and drove down to see him the same day. I bought one of his manifolds for £100 and will be fitting it to the Liege soon.

Hans was a mine of info, he told me he was brought in by Bean Engineering to try and sort out some of the manufacturing problems they were having at Reliant. He said he was unsuccessful because they didn't actually take his advice to scrap all the old machines and buy CNC stuff! I stayed well over an hour, chatting to him and drinking his coffee (I would have stayed longer but I had an appointment elsewhere). He showed me an unused BRM OHC Reliant engine, I didn't know there was such a thing but he told me 5 prototypes were made. Have you heard of this before?

Rebel Racers are mini stock cars using Reliant 850 engines, they are all built, tuned and sealed at the factory so they should all produce the same power (63 bhp). His engines use a single downdraught weber carbs on the original inlet manifold. He discovered that cylinders 1 & 3 were running quite a bit weaker, which showed up as bluing of the exhaust pipes. They investigated and found that by modifying the manifold internally the mixture strength evened out. With this simple mod they gained 23% more power, over and above the other engine mods! (new cam but standard head, no port work allowed). By the way I understand all his engines go on a dyno to ensure they are the same.

This might be of interest to Kitten and other Reliant owners, as it's a very simple mod. I can't say it will produce such a large improvement with the standard SU because the airflow in the manifold might be different, bearing in mind that a downdraught Weber is fitted without the heated plenum but I think it's got to be worth giving it a go. It's no good to me with my twin carbs but I thought I might pass it on. I have attached a picture of the mod, it just involves milling away the wall inside the ports for about an inch. The picture is courtesy of Bob Morrison of Daventry, who modded a spare manifold on Sunday, and might fit it to his Bond Bug soon.

The other item of possible interest is that Hans has recently designed a simple retrofit disc brake conversion at the request of one of his customers. His race cars use a Kitten hub and brakes. He looked at my Liege and said it would bolt straight on as a replacement for the Kitten drum setup. He makes a new backplate and uses Ford Escort calipers. I know what I might be buying as soon as I can afford it!

Must go now, all the best for 2003! Paul Wheatley

*Paul, many thanks for that update. Yes I have corresponded with Rebel Racing in the past, and mentioned them within these hallowed pages I believe. Also the BRM engines, I thought they made 10, and that they had been ordered destroyed, but two had escaped. I believe that the Kitten that took part in the Monte Carlo Rally had one of those engines fitted for that event.*

*On the 4 branch manifold, like several others, we must remember that while it has been made for the 850 engine, it has not been made for a Rebel, Kitten or Fox, and would probably not fit any of these vehicles due to the body getting in the way, so don't all start getting too excited. As to the excellent pictures, well you will read elsewhere of my difficulty with pictures in the magazine, but I'll see what can be done, if you are reading this and are interested, drop me a line and I'll send you a personal copy. Will Al Osborn's note get here before John Blagburn's or Richard Plaxton's I wonder, he said sitting behind the letterbox – not !*

~.~.~.~.~.~.



## Foxes Den

All you Foxy folk seem to have been quiet recently, unless of course your letters are hiding under this pile of papers on my desk! Duncan Bradford deserves special mention though, not just because he owns more Foxes than most people, but also because not only did he recently invest in a stock of new Reliant spares, many for three wheelers, but he also took the time to catalogue them and produce a list. Now I do have a copy of the list, but with 500 separate items on it I am not about to publish it in here. That said, if you have internet access you can see it on [alternatively](#) a large s.a.e. and 4 first class stamps will get you a copy. Ed.

## Membership Matters

The intention is to publish a membership list during this year. If you do not wish your details to appear on such a list, and have not already done so, please get in touch with the Registrar and advise him accordingly – NOW!

Membership cards:- These may be delayed this year, I have been too clever by far, and have messed Brian Millar about to the extent that he cannot read the files I sent him, sorry Brian. I was then going to print the cards myself, albeit in black and white, but, for some reason, the logo, while I could see it on the screen, did not print off at all – see these computers! One day I'll learn how to use one properly. Your 2003 membership card will follow later.

Still on membership matters, this time our membership of the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs, or FBHVC as they are known. Well, there are a number of benefits that you can enjoy as a result of the Register being a member, and those include discounted ferry and travel and rescue services. These services are for any private vehicle, ancient or modern. Telephone MST on 01295 278748 for details of the travel services and Britannia Rescue on 0800 591563 for the rescue service. Quote the Reliant Kitten Register, and your membership number when talking to them please.

Not quite sure where to put this, yes I know, the bin isn't quite full! Anyway, it comes from a fellow Registrar – hang on a minute, do I really want to be associated with such frivolity, well, that's one word for it, I'll let you judge for yourself !

We received a Christmas card, well, actually we received a few, but this one came “ From, The Rebel without a cause, whose got you Foxed, with Ants in his pants, and prose you can de-Cypher my Liege. I am not Robin you of your fun, but I may Bug you into a bad Tempest (temper.sic) , I am Kitten you not, so don't Ogle

Best wishes from your very Reliant friend J.B.S.

P.S the answer to the quiz is 42!!

*Oh, and for those observant souls, yes, we do indeed have both a J.S.B. and a J.B.S., it's not a typing error! Ed.*

## Brian's Diary – 21/12/02

Well, the shortest day of the year, and what had I agreed to do? Only drive to England to liberate another Rebel and bring it north to Scotland – a task I used to perform regularly, but have only done once previously this year, (2002) and not at all for a few years before that !

Jim Spence was the man responsible, well actually we can blame Sarah his daughter, she wanted one. So, Jim had collected the trailer and modified the light mounting to make for easier loading and un-loading. I felt that we needed help with the loading operation, (the trailer winch does not work) you may remember me publicly stating in the last edition that John Blagburn's invitation to Richard Plaxton would not involve Richard in getting his hands dirty, well, we almost went back on that, but Richard was 12 hours too late arriving at John's to help us load the trailer, better luck next time Richard! (or should that be congratulations Richard?) My old friend John Johnstone was approached, but he, like Jim, had a works night out on the Friday, and was not sure how he would cope with a 6:00am start! The answer was that I woke much of the Johnstone household up when I arrived to pick him up, sorry Judith.

Anyway, we headed off, and arrived at Jim's place less than 10 minutes behind schedule, hitched up the trailer, and headed for the A1 by way of the Edinburgh by-pass.

We had allowed 3 hours for the 150 miles, and in the event there was very light traffic, no fog or rain, and I had my sunglasses, so as the sun came up we kept going, and arrived at John's within a few minutes of the 10:00am E.T.A.

While things had gone very well so far, and I was keen to get the loading done, both because I knew how long it had taken John B, myself and Robert Fairfoull to load a Rebel on this very trailer a few months previously, and because the weather looked like breaking, however the office parties of the night before were taking their toll, and a tea and coffee were deemed the order of the day before loading commenced.

I needn't have worried, Jim's mods to the trailer enabled us to complete the loading operation in about 12 minutes, and so we had time for another T break before heading off. Sorry it was all such a rush John, but I was keen to get back and unload in daylight, and Arleen needed the car that night too.

By the time we left it was beginning to rain, and we had the wipers on most of the way back to Jim's place at Uphall where the unloading operation went even more quickly than the loading one had done, and John and I were soon on our way to return the trailer to Killearn, thank you once again Mike Cowie. I had been saying to John since we had left, that I really ought to clean the headlights, and by the time we were on the final leg of the journey back to Neilston to drop John off I could hardly see where I was going!

I did get back to Renfrew in time to fill the car with fuel, and get it washed before passing it on to Arleen. 438 miles and a full tank of fuel in just under 12 hours, nothing spectacular I know, but about my limit these days.

That was 8 days ago, and Jim was over here yesterday to dig some bits out from the lock-up, and I know that he plans to have the Rebel M.O.T.'s in the next few days, well done Jim.

Has anyone rescued Andy's blue one yet?



## Liege Page(s)!

*Early in January I received the following communication from the man himself, thank you Peter :-*

Hello Brian, Hope you are well. Right, to answer your questions, there are presently 52 Liege customers. 18 Liege are on the road and there are another 16 built up and just being finished off but not SVA'd yet, as at January 2003.

I now have the price for a pair of Liege 1.1/4" SU alloy inlet manifolds, it worked out to £95.00 +vat & p&p (£116.00). This just covers what they cost to have them cast and machined. The first 10 pairs have been supplied for 8 Liege, 1 kitten and 1 Tempest. I need to order another 10 pairs to be cast up. The twin carb inlet manifold will not fit an engine which uses the standard Reliant exhaust manifold without considerable modification, on the Liege the exhaust is not the same as the Kitten. The front brake self adjusting kit comes to £13.50 +vat & p&p (£18.00), I attach details. I haven't priced the 4-1 manifold yet but I have all the parts to make up 10, just need the time to get on with them. I may if there is a demand, be able to adapt it to fit the Kitten.

John Sawle and Melanie Brown [M.M.E.Brown@csm.ex.ac.uk](mailto:M.M.E.Brown@csm.ex.ac.uk) have advanced the Liege Car Club from just an internet chat group (which I could never get into) into a quarterly mag like the Kitten Register. I received the first issue just before Christmas. Well done John & Melanie, but 'we' are bi-monthly don't you know ? Ed.

I am pleased to say six Liege started the 75th Exeter Trial January 3rd - 4th 2003 and six Liege finished.

The Edinburgh Trial takes place on the 5th October.

All the very best, Peter. (Davis)

### **MCC Edinburgh Trial 6th/7th October 2000** - Gari and Do Jones - Liege

At 2.45 am we were off, because I'd managed to tick the wrong box on the entry form, our start time was next to last. The rules state that if the last car (a traveling marshal) overtakes a competitor then that competitor is deemed to have retired. As it was we got off ahead of the last car by about 30 seconds.

After about twenty minutes, and with all the rush low on fuel, we did a couple of confused laps around some very simple roundabouts and eventually found a petrol station. But

then, switching the engine off and undoing our seat belts, we just sat and watched that "last car" go sailing on past us with absolute disbelief! We could only hope he hadn't noticed us when we caught up with him later around Coventry and "sneaked" the Liege in front of him again.

At around 4.15am we found we'd got comfortably ahead of schedule and had nearly half an hour to kill to avoid arriving early at the first time control on the A5. During this time I had a look around the engine to see if I could spot why the temp gauge was on h-o-t but nothing seemed out of place and the car was running very sweetly although the temperature had been giving cause for concern for about an hour. At 4.56am. we clocked into the control on time and the car went through the second part of scrutineering without problem. The scrutineer seemed

a very decent sort and turned out in fact to be a very nice man indeed because he told me the MCC was discussing reclassifying the Liege into Class 7 next year. And agreed, it's not really a Class 8 car with the standard engine's 39 (40 on good days) b.h.p. against those demon trials specials pumping out 120-130 b.h.p. and more.

All this time driving around before the first observed section was having the required effect and somewhere around Rugeley I was struck by an irresistible wave of sleepiness. Fortunately my eyes opened again with the road still passing beneath the car but I literally couldn't keep them open any more. At that stage I need 10 minutes sleep and then I know I'm OK till the next night. We'd stopped for almost exactly that amount of time when I heard quite a loud "You all right then?" from a car pulled up alongside. This wasn't just any car. It wasn't the last car either. It was the course closure car. Sudden palpitations of the heart are wonderfully stimulating. We were off like a scud, not really knowing where to, but trying to bring a sense of meaning to it all and desperate to move fast to get back ahead of that "last car" again.

Our due time at the first observed section Agnes Meadow was 6.56am and we were there just before time to find the marshals already packing up to go home. Not surprisingly really we were met with a "Good Grief! Where on earth have you been?" They couldn't believe their bad luck and I hadn't the heart to tell these poor guys who'd been up all night that we'd stopped for a sleep down the road. Anyway, they very kindly told us the section was fairly rocky so we dropped the tyres to 12psi and they waved us on. Although wet (there was no shortage of rain in Derbyshire that weekend) and fairly rough there seemed plenty of grip and the Liege sailed up no problem. We'd bottomed a couple of times on the rougher bits so when we stopped at the top to blow the tyres up again a couple of clicks went on the rear dampers. This was the only mechanical adjustment the Liege needed throughout the event. Being amazingly cack-handed anyway I find the Liege's reliability quite a bonus. Funnily enough, the temp gauge fell back to normal after this first section and behaved all weekend afterwards.

Soon after we were at Wigber Low. I think it was here that Howard (Blackwell) was the start marshal and it was good to see a fellow Liegiste. Somehow I think my Liege wanted to prove its worth in front of Howard (who has quite a demon machine I believe) and once again it just sailed up the section. Feeling quite chuffed at this (I don't think we've ever cleaned the first two hills on a trial before) but suspecting that the first couple of hills were deliberately easy to let everyone play themselves in, we pushed on to Bentley Brook time control where we arrived at 8.40 something, nearly ten minutes late. This was a compulsory one hour breakfast stop and the compulsory egg bacon fried bread and cholesterol went down a treat. It was still raining when we restarted and I don't think it stopped all day after that. Thankfully we had the hood up for the whole event and the heater when needed.

About an hour later we tackled Clough Wood and the Liege just didn't mess around, going straight on up. Stopping at the top we received a rebuke from the marshal in the "last car" who had very kindly stopped to wait for us to blow our tyres back up. We were using an electric pump which pleased him not at all. Hardy types these trials types, some still even using the old stirrup pumps! Anyway after that we left the tyres at 12 psi all day whether on a section or on the public roads hoping that the time saved would help to make him forget whether or not he might have passed us at some point earlier. In fact it was so wet everywhere that a bit more oversteer just added to all the wonderful frolics. Next up it was Litton Slack. Not such a wonderful frolic. We'd heard the name but knew nothing at all about it. The first surprise here was being met by our very own Rhodesy, my trials tutor, host, friend and LCC correspondent to all.

Jolly as ever and bedecked in his waterproofs he patiently waited with us while we queued for about an hour or so to get to the start. Rhodesy brought us up to date on the cars

ahead and warned us that many of them were failing to get even as far as the start! Rhodesy had of course carried out a thorough recce of the area on behalf of the Liege Car Club and following his instructions we did at least make the start line.

As we moved up the queue waiting to start we could see the reason for the delay. Not only were many of the cars taking up a lot of time in failing to get to the start, but those who failed on the hill had to use an escape road coming back down which crossed the route to the start. And those using the escape road were having some really hairy moments. The ground was absolutely sodden and fairly steep. This combination meant that cars returning down were sliding broadside, spinning or backing (or all at once) in a generally sideways / roundways manner downhill. Although their speed was not that great, it could certainly cause some damage to anyone hitting the telegraph pole. Those fortunate ones missing this then had to pray that their car slid around the old oak tree rather than into it. Then the final hurdle - a gap had to be negotiated in a fairly substantial dry stone wall and I believe this claimed a car or two as well. We watched around five or six cars ahead having their go but none of them made it, including a Troll and an Allard, these last two sliding back down the escape road almost totally out of control.

Watching all these antics our courage totally deserted us. Following Rhodesy's instructions we got to the start line and then we cringed and whinged. We should be home in bed. We pleaded with our little Liege - no way did we want to come back down that escape road. And oh boy, what a machine! It just went on and on up, cutting through the mud, bouncing over boulders and taking us straight on over the top for another clean! Four cleans in a row was unbelievable. And the relief at not having to go down the escape road was so overwhelming we were shouting and cheering to each other like bloody big kids at the top.

Next, Jacob's Ladder where a few local people had organised a sponsored walk to coincide with the trial as some form of protest - at what I'm not sure. But very easy peasy. Ah the arrogance! Our first restart (these are the bane of my life) came at the next section, Great Hucklow. Unfortunately I can't for the life of me remember anything about this other than we obviously must have done the restart and cleaned the section. Maybe we had started to feel a little blasé by now but we knew Bamford Clough was next and we felt this would pull us up for sure. Just before the bottom of the hill it was great to see daughter Louise who'd come out to

wave the flag. After bouncing on the Lands End she is now very sadly a very very committed trials addict. Somehow Rhodesy had beaten us here from Litton Slack and someone else among the fairly large crowd was quite voluble in their support about half way up the hill. This was wonderful stuff, particularly with the Liege going so well. The bottom end of Bamford Clough gave the Liege no problem. In fact none of Bamford Clough gave it a problem.

It was I who had a problem. I'd heard about the big steps towards the top and as they came into view they looked fairly big although they were still some way off. Then, when we were almost up to one of them, it seemed to quite suddenly assumed the proportions of a vertical wall. Naturally for me I chickened and backed off (quite involuntarily) but then realising what I'd done I jumped back on the pedal thinking I'd stuffed this one. But no problem, the Liege just shot straight up "the wall" and over the top and then on up to the next and so on, scraping the silencer once or twice but never seeming in any danger of not making it. Clean again!

I'm just a bit mindful now of the length this short report is getting to and I could go on and on. A bit worrying that so its time my memory failed me - which it does too often. To make short of it all, the Liege was just unbelievable, climbing everything without effort right through to

the end. We finished the event around quarter to seven Saturday night, a quick bath, out for a nosh and then back home on Sunday.

Simon's Liege had one or two little teething problems I believe, but he got a Bronze Medal despite them and for his first major classic trial in what is virtually a brand new car that's some achievement to me. I hope that's not patronising Simon but you're quite accustomed to getting Gold Awards whilst for me simply relying on the Liege to get me a Finishers Certificate has always been the ultimate!

So when the results (provisional) came out Do and I felt we could let our breath out at last. Had we been deemed to have retired? Well, thankfully the "last car" itself retired half way through the event so, unknown to us, we had become the last car. Had we over run on one of the restarts No. Had we run foul of the timing at one of the controls? No. we got a Gold!

It's getting well past my bedtime now but still thinking of where I've already driven the Liege. The Spa-Francorchamps GP circuit (Eau Rouge and all), Bamford Clough, the Targa Florio circuit, Blue Hills, the Mallory Park Six Hour, the odd PCT, Donnington Park circuit, Simms, Villa Real circuit, Litton Slack, Tor Cross circuit in Anglesey, the Sahara desert, the old rally roads over the Alps (as used in the Alpine and Liege Rallies of the 50's & 60's), the Pergusa GP circuit and so on - I'm off to bed. Gari Jones

*Gari, what can I say, as ever, reading your recounting on paper of the exploits you and Do get up to in the Liege are almost as good as being there. Thanks for your note and continued support, perhaps I'll get to meet you at the first Liege car Club get together in the spring, Brian.*

Dear Brian,

Dec. 2002

I thought I'd put a few words together about the Kitten Online web site which you may wish to publish.

After purchasing my two Kitten Estates some two years ago and after researching the Internet, we found that there were a number of Reliant 3 wheeler web sites but nothing devoted to the Reliant Kitten. We put our minds to the task to create a web site for Kitten and Kitten based vehicles. Hence Kitten Online was born. Since coming online the site has had over 30,000 visitors. I am still very surprised about this. Here are brief details of what the site has to offer.

Video Files of various Reliant rallies.

Photo Gallery of Members Cars.

Photos of all the different Kitten based vehicles.

Lists of rallies around the UK.

For Sale & Wanted section.

The Workshop.

Links to other Reliant related web sites.

Message Board where people can leave messages for other visitors on various topics.

Guest Book for leaving messages about your visit to the site.

24 / 7 Chat Room so you can chat with other visitors to the site in real time.

Lists of Reliant Dealers all over the UK.

Reliant Specification section.

Reliant Services including Spare Parts, Dealers and Insurance companies.

Reliant Clubs

Contact Information for The Kitten Register

All back issues of the Mewsletter

This web site is updated weekly to keep it current and as up to date as possible.

Web Site Address: [www.reliantkitten.co.uk](http://www.reliantkitten.co.uk)

Email: [info@reliantkitten.co.uk](mailto:info@reliantkitten.co.uk)

Regards Brian Radford Cornwall.

*Thanks for that Brian. As you will be aware Brian is planning an informal Lands End to John O'Groats run in the summer of this year, and I was pointing out to him that more than half of our readers have no internet access, hence his 'on-line' approach could potentially exclude many interested people, so here follows the plan, together with a telephone number for those of us without internet access, which as I said, at this time is still the majority of Register subscribers – that said, if we were all to visit our local library, we might find a surprise there !*

Kitten Run 2003 - Lands End To John O'Groats

The Kitten online run 2003 is open to all Reliant cars, and is completely informal, you can come and go as you wish, either camping or B & B. So if you fancy a few

days away with other Reliant fans, then please e-mail me and let me know, or ring me on 01209 313103. - Brian Radford

Times And Dates 16 - 30 June 2003

**Day 1** 8 am Start Lands End To Northwich (1 Night)

**Day 2** Northwich To Kendal (Lake District) (2 Nights)

**Day 4** Kendal To Gretna Green (1 Night)

**Day 5** Gretna Green To Oban (1 Night)

**Day 6** Oban To Fort William (2 Nights)

**Day 8** Fort William To Kyle Of Lochalsh (2 Nights)

**Day 10** Kyle Of Lochalsh To Lochness (2 Nights)

**Day 12** Lochness To Thurso (2 Nights Or More)

**Day 13** John O'Groats.

**Day 14** Say our goodbyes And return home.

This itinerary is subject to change depending on the requirements of the participants. Merry Christmas and a very happy 2003 And I hope the Mewsletter will live forever.

Brian Radford, Cornwall.

Dear Brian,

7th Dec.'02

I recently read an article in the November edition of the 750 Bulletin. The gist of it is that the 750 Formula chaps have finally decided to ditch the Reliant engine in favour of the Fiat FIRE engine in its 1108cc form. This 'new' power unit apparently weighs just 15 Kg more than the Reliant unit. The reasons given for the change were too many blow ups, too few parts available, especially blocks and cranks, and too much skilled machining work needed to build a good engine for racing. All a bit sad in many ways, but there it is.

The good news is that they will continue to use the Reliant gearbox, fitted as usual with close ratio gears. An adaptor plate will soon be available to mate the Fiat engine to the Reliant Gearbox – food for thought here perhaps?

Which leads me to the point, how about putting a FIRE engine in a Rebel or Kitten? Scrap yards are full of rusty / crashed Fiats with good engines. All you would need is the adaptor plate! Low cost, not a lot of extra weight, you could move the battery to the back if the weight distribution worried you that much. Do you think anyone would be tempted Brian?

The change will also mean that in the fullness of time, the 750 chaps will be clearing out their modified Reliant parts, manifolds, racing camshafts ported heads etc, there's a thought as well.

I hope all this is not too unsettling for you Brian.

Seasons greetings to all, David Heywood - Norham

*Now before you all jump down my throat, David is no longer a subscriber to the Register, (So I can clearly distance myself from any close involvement with such sacriligious ideas) his Kitten sadly died in a ball of fire a couple of years ago on a garage fourcourt (he had meant to change the float chamber lid to the later type) . He does however keep in touch, indeed I enjoyed a meal with his family just last year. Just Imagine, a Fiat powered Reliant, and not as desperate a change as the 1600cc twin cam powered one, which incidentally I see is for sale again, see For Sale sectio.... See Notes for more info. On the 750 Motor Club situation, Ed.*

### **That Quiz, at last !**

Here's what you have to do, fill in the answers to each clue and add the make of the vehicle :-

Number	Clue	Letters
1	A Caribbean Bay	7
2	Rural Dance	6
3	Bus name (anagram)	7
4	Looted (anagram)	6
5	007	4
6	South African seaman	4



7	Sprightly movement	7
8	Spanish rugged heights	6
9	Continental Carnival	6
10	Boat park	6
11	Expensive spectre	6 & 5
12	Fairway drive	4
13	Ladies companion	6
14	Wandering one	5
15	Senior pupil	7
16	Eskimo dog	5
17	Building Society	6
18	Lean differently	4
19	Channel	7
20	Old mother of drag	5
21	Resign upset (anagram)	6
22	Men only party	4
23	Small person	6
24	Barrel maker	6
25	Graces Island	5
26	Eminent conductor	7
27	In a gondola	7
28	Agreement	6
29	Pilgrim vessel	9
30	Fencing weapon	6

And I'm going to be fair here, not the first correct answer received, but the first correct one out of the hat on the 1st of April, no joke intended.

## Readers Letters

Dear Brian,

15th December 2002

Can you please answer a few queries ? My Kitten was registered in 1983, however on the log book it states that it is a kit made from new parts. What exactly does this mean?

I am also after a new back seat for the Kitten, is the rear seat from the Rialto compatible? Also do you have any idea where I can get a tow bar for the Kitten? I want to use the Kitten as a tow vehicle for my Bond Bug when I take them both to rallies.

Also I would like to know if anyone out there has a 'B' series diff that is serviceable and surplus to his or her requirements?

On the magazine front, why is it that there are no pictures inside, as several times members have sent you pictures of their cars, and they have not been reproduced so that others can see.

On the front cover of Magazine 49 imagine my surprise when I saw a Bond Bug and a prototype Reliant you called the FW7. I know the owner of said vehicles. The reason for the Bug being pictured with the FW7 is that he is a keen collector of Reliant and micro-car type vehicles. Which his Bug is a very good example of this type and very well looked after, and is seen at many rallies up and down the country, and has also been a feature car in Practical Classics a few years ago.

The FW7 type vehicle was taken to the Reliant Owners Club National Rally held on the May bank holiday weekend on the Saturday, which caused a lot of interest. I have recently spoken to the owner and he is not keen to join the club, as the vehicle has nothing to do with either the Kitten or the Rebel. But I can assure you that when it is on the road you will be one of the first to see or hear about it because it is very interesting.

Interestingly enough the front steering unit I have been reliably informed are two Regal units welded together and not Rebel as stated. The vehicle has more in common with the 3 wheeler Reliant, as the spares are either Bug or Rialto/Robin parts

I often attend rallies around the country in my motorhome towing my bug, the downside to this is that there are 3 of us, and as you know, the Bug has 2 seats, so either my wife or son has to miss out on the various road runs.

I got to hear of a Kitten without MOT or tax and quite local, and very cheap. If it was going to be too costly to repair I could always use some of the bits from the Kitten for my Bug. Also it would be an ideal vehicle to be towed on an 'A' frame behind my motorhome.

I paid £20 for the Kitten and took it for an MOT. It failed mainly on steering and a few other bits. After a hunt around and contacting the club the bits were sourced. It also helps to have a local Reliant Garage that is keen on Reliant and any classic car work. The parts cost me £90 and I had an MOT'd Kitten. I was well chuffed with it. My first outing was to the Newark autojumble where we tootled along at the national speed limit without missing a beat.

I use it everyday for work and it hasn't let me down yet after 5 months of daily use. I am well chuffed with it. I am used to being stared at when I am in the Bug, but people really take a

second look when they see what they think is a Rialto / Robin, then realise it has in fact got 4 wheels not 3.

*Right, I've done it again, allowed myself to get interrupted part of the way through something, and now I can't find the letter, so I don't know who it is from, if you recognise yourself, please don't be shy about educating me. And I must also apologise to everyone, after doing a similar thing in the last edition, when I promised I'd find the missing letter and complete it in this edition, I have failed miserably so to do – fire the man, that's what I'd do!*

Ed.

Dear Brian,

January 2003

Please find my membership renewal. I enclose a CD with some pictures of my daughter's Kitten. It has taken me 4 years to rebuild, the only deadline being her 17th birthday which I missed by 2 days. One of those 2 days was taken up putting the windscreen in! It is not an easy job and not all windscreens are the same, some are smaller than others. The car passed its MOT first time, the only things needing done were the raising of one headlamp, and very slight leaning off of the carburettor mixture. Next came the painful bit, arranging insurance. Anita had spent a lot of time on the internet trying to get cheap quotes (if anybody has tried to insure a 17 year old you will know what I mean). Tesco provided the best quote, even that being more than the car is worth! The car was then taxed. It has now been on the road for about 6 weeks and it is going very well. Great engine, and the car doesn't jump about like others I have known in the past. It is going so well in fact that I often use it instead of my car, a Quantum (kit car). So one more Kitten hits the road, unfortunately there is a down side to all of this, the other Kitten I bought for spares will never see the road again.

In the last two magazines there has been a bit about electric cooling fans, and the switching off of same. This is one thing I built into Anita's car. The easiest way to do the switching is to get hold of a sensor from a car that has one in the bottom of its radiator, this can then be held with the use of a copper 'T' piece and be mounted into the bottom hose, (see photo) of our cars.

Yours truly, Steve Brabazon - Northumberland

*Well Steve, I think congratulations are in order. Completing a rebuild is always a cause for celebration. The fate of the spares car I think comes under the heading of 'justifiable homicide'. I am well aware of the joys of insuring 17 year olds, the one blessing that you and I share with the likes of Jim Spence is that we have daughters and not sons, I understand that the male of the species can look forward to paying twice as much for the same cover, no, I am reliably informed that it is nothing to do with accident rates, they are the same between the sexes the thing about girls is, I am told, they tend to be doing about one third of the speed on impact that boys achieve, with a resultant reduction in the damage caused, and hence the risk attached, so now you know! That said Jim had a good deal with I think it was Norwich Union, but when Sarah elected to swap her Kitten for a Rebel, traditionally a lower insurance group vehicle, disaster! Norwich Union won't insure vehicles over 30 years old! The only saving grace was that the Rebel is of an age which is road tax exempt, but even that did not make up for the increase in premium, well not just the one year's tax saving at any rate – strange world we live in indeed.*

*I shan't say too much about the Quantum, we have lost a subscriber in the past because they replaced their Kitten with a diesel one, yes really! Though the ones I have seen are very well finished in the fibreglass body department.*

Dear Brian,

1-1-03

Just a short note with the subs for 2003. As I said on the phone, the Kitten has been tucked up in bed since the end of November. The back window still leaks, so it is important that I get it inside.

Regards Douglas (Philip) - Longside, Aberdeen

*Thanks for keeping us up to date Douglas. Douglas is the current custodian of "The Wee Red Car" which Moira and I used to own, which was rebuilt by Keith Parrot a decade ago now. Ed.*

Dear Brian

I must first apologise , I have been going through some paperwork for last year and have found my renewal cheque for the register (I must confess to not checking it had gone out) so I am enclosing a cheque in the hope that you will accept it.(I don't expect the newsletters I just wish to keep supporting the club ) If you could also send me the information for next years renewal.

My van is still off the road with a frustrating and elusive brake problem which has prevented me from getting it m.o.t.'d, (pedal perfect all times when stationary when moving / trying to move the pedal is occasionally sinking to the floor with total loss of brakes , next push there back to being right, all pipes are recent, new cylinders front and back and two master cylinders tried , both have had new seals fitted , no loss of fluid , I am now suspecting one of the recent flexi's as possibly being damaged internally) but due to other commitments and projects the poor van is just sitting there all insured but nowhere to go , I did have time however to almost complete it's re spray and change the seats for a set of the black velour reclining variety with back seat from a scrap saloon , just the back door to change and the damaged wing ( brake fluid eats fresh paint in seconds) to paint.

Other cars in our household now are : 1978 MGBGT XMG 735 T 1978 Morris Marina 1.8 super ( 2 owners from new low mileage never been welded and solid . 1972 Triumph Herald convertible almost finished total rebuild . 1954 Sunbeam Talbot 90 mkl 1 A (new project drives and not too bad undergoing rebuild) 1987 series 1 xr4\*4 (Ford Sierra) again 2nd owner. Plus minibus for local organisation and various motorbikes (British mostly but 2 recent japs have joined the fleet). (Oh and a Sabre Sprint Kit Car)  
Membership 001 Kitten Van , Black , unmodified shell, not original engine , modified interior (slightly, customised dash ,front and rear seats ,better door panels , electric windows) looks standard even down to the reliant spot light covers (except for mud flaps on all 4 wheels with 'kitten ' logo ) registration number : XVY 440 R

Yours sincerely, Paul Adgar

*Thank you Paul, welcome back, Ed.*

Dear Brian,

07.01.03

Happy New Year! Well I suspect I owe you a letter from about 6 months ago so here it is, along with my membership subscription. Sorry for the miserly spares donation but I'm still managing student finances!

I see you've got three Kittens listed with my details but unfortunately I only have one of them now. CNW 565T was sold several years ago and sadly I don't know its current whereabouts (it

was off the road when sold). SRA 620X is the estate that got written off in a crash earlier this year. I passed the 'remains' to another Kitten Register member in Bakewell,

Philip (sorry can't remember his surname). I thought he might be able to get some useful parts from it, but to my surprise he's trying to get it going again (that counts as 'undergoing rebuild', I guess). When I called round before Christmas, he'd pieced the bits of the front end loosely back together but without wanting to sound pessimistic, I think the chassis may be more corroded than he thinks and I doubt he'll get an MOT for it.

WOB 173T is still providing fun, economic everyday transport but hasn't been without its problems. Most exciting was when one of the metal fan blades sheared off and split the bottom hose as I was driving down the M42. The other major headache has been (and still is) water leaking in. It's particularly bad round the rear window and with the way it's parked on our drive, the water runs through the boot and under the back seat. We're not talking a few drips either, I've scooped out whole lakes! I suspect the rear window has been changed at some point as the boot key is not the same as the ignition key. The glass itself also doesn't sit centrally in the aperture and looking along the bottom edge of the glass, it actually seems to bend up at the bottom comers. All this means that the water pours in at both corners, despite the fact that I've tried various different types of rubber seal. The conclusion I've come to is that I was much better off with an estate...

I'm enclosing a picture of WOB 173T, feel free to hang on to it or use it for the Mewsletter cover. It was taken on a lovely summer evening on the moors above Sheffield, on the edge of Longshaw Estate.

Best wishes, Oliver Lewis, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

P.S. Are the 'R' stickers for the centre of the alloy wheels still available?

*Thanks for that Oliver, well, can anyone answer Oliver's question about the alloy Wheel centres? I believe that a variety may be available from some Mini specialists, but original Reliant ones with the "R" I don't know of a source, if you can help. Please get in touch, Ed.*

## **Festival Histonque de Laon**

With Christmas well behind us it is time to start thinking about holidays, and, as a result of two previous visits I want to recommend the above. The event is organised by the Association de la Montee Histonque who, to be fair, being Classic car enthusiasts are also seeking to improve tourism. They do not need to try hard for the Festival is, in my opinion, and many others, not to be missed.

The event is best booked through Continental Car Tours. A Schedule of the years' outings is available by telephoning Dover (01304 -380244). I have used this firm many times over the years and can vouch for most enjoyable and reasonably priced excursions. The Laon Festival consists of a Saturday all day tour of the region with food and drink provided and a drive around the closed streets of Laon lined with spectators on the Sunday after a drivers' briefing. There are in the order of 400 cars participating that range from current sports cars going back to elegant cars of the 20's with a very strong British element in their traditional sports or kit cars. The basic cost of this event with Continental Car Tours is £139 per person based on two sharing but I prefer to extend the visit.

I find the best way to approach this outing is to book the Friday lunchtime Dover- Calais crossing which allows for a pleasant drive of 135 miles down to Laon and leaves ample time to book into the hotel provided, wash, change and visit one of the good restaurants in the High Town or eat in the hotel. Saturday morning we drive into town 2kms away and register. Rally plaques are issued together with food, personalised car photograph, route card and participants drive the 80 or so mile route taking in interesting features such as a chateau, a park or a flying display at the local aerodrome where, at each venue champagne and refreshments with food, is offered, I would recommend the Gala dinner on the Saturday evening held in town which is a five course meal with wine and costs £.22 a head. Some 300 participants turn up for this noisy but pleasant chance to enjoy a relaxed four hour eating session. Transportation is provided both ways and one is certainly ready for bed at 01.30 a.m. Sunday we all park in allotted places in town and this gives everyone a further chance to see cars and make fresh acquaintances. By 11 a.m. crews are called to the town Hall square and the High Town is easily reached by using the Monorail and leaving our cars in the lower streets.

We may well be entertained, as in 2002, by the local children's brass band after which we are called into the town hall for the drivers briefing followed by more champagne. We then go our separate ways seeking lunch in one of the many restaurants. By 2.00 o'clock we return to our cars and, in groups, drive the street circuit to great cheering by the locals lining the route especially for the older cars.

One may return on the Monday to Calais or, while on the Continent, take advantage of extending the holiday to a full five days at no extra charge for the ferry and only be charged near standard prices for the additional nights' hotels. C.C.Tours can offer and book suitable hotels to tie in with your chosen route.

The dates for the 2003 Festival are the suggested Friday 30 May (noon ferry) until Monday 2 June or extended up to 4 June (noon boat) return. I'll be taking the blue E type Special this year, Hope to see you there. Come and say hello on the dockside.

Derek Argyle - Camberley

Dear Brian,

7 January 2003

I enclose my cheque for £15 as the renewal subscription for 2003, & a contribution toward the Spares Fund.

Please note that ownership of the DL Kitten, Reg. No OMH 146R has been transferred to Dave Vosper from Plymouth.

Dave is proceeding apace with the restoration, which events have prevented me from completing. It is to be hoped that it will soon be back on the road. I have passed back copies of 'The Kitten Register' on to him, & encouraged him to join the register. He already has two other Kittens both on the road, & is a member of the Plymouth Motor Cycle Club.

Many thanks for your sterling work in keeping us informed of Kitten & Fox matters.

With Best Wishes for 2003

Yours Sincerely, Bob Bridger - Battsborough Cross, Plymouth



*Thanks Bob for keeping us up to date, I will write to Dave, hopefully before you read this ! Ed*  
Dear Brian,

Please find enclosed a cheque for £15 i.e. £12 for subs £3 for unowot.

As regards the yellow Kitten Van, it was sold two or three years ago to a Mr. K. Ridley of north London for use as an advertising medium for his car repair business. I shall try and get in touch with him in the New Year and send on any relevant info.

Thanks for a well informed mag and all the best for 2003.

Yours faithfully John Higham - Hornchurch

*Thanks for that John. The Kitten van John refers to is the one I still had against him on his renewal notice. At this time, 20th January, while I have filed the renewal notices in numerical order, I have yet to update the database, so I have a pretty big job in front of me, but getting this edition of the mag ready before the end of January was the priority. Ed.*

Dear Brian

Thank you for the Kitten Register info. Please find enclosed completed application form and cheque for £20, £15 to join and £5 to spares fund.

I bought a Kitten estate new in 1976 to do the work run this car went to 205/000 miles on two engines and one gearbox and was scrapped with chassis rot. My wife had a kitten estate and my daughter a kitten saloon. The kitten saloon was scrapped with a collapsed front suspension tower. My wife gave our daughter her estate but the engine put a rod through the crankcase due I think to a suspect batch of gudgeon pins. My daughter then sold the none runner to a colonel in the tank regiment, not a suitably robust vehicle I should have thought.

When my kitten failed I was surprised by seeing an ad. for a fox its owner was well in his 70s and used it to carry his pop group instruments/ the car was very badly set up and needed a lot of sorting.

When I bought the kitten new I found it an excellent car built with appalling quality control. Rain poured in and after three returns to the dealer he sent me to Woodall Nicholson the Rolls Royce coach builder in Halifax. They had two tries at weather sealing but at the end of the second try the foreman said dont bring that bloody car back here again.

The Fox always causes a lot of interest at the Citroen garage when my wife takes her Xsara in for service/ the trade sees them as Character cars. Thanks once more.

Yours sincerely, Ian Evans - Mirfiels, West Yorkshire

*Thanks Ian for keeping us in the picture, sorry to hear of all the chassis problems, Ed.*

Hello Brian,

Please find enclosed a cheque towards the Kitten Register. I regret that I am not able to continue the rebuild at the moment as at present my time is taken up with (4) B.P. petrol stations as a forecourt person plus handyman for same. Also I've been doing lots of work on

my own house (built a 4 by 2.5 Mtr conservatory at the back – heavy work believe me). Anyway I'll be 70 in June and retiring then, so I hope to get re-started on my Kitten rebuild then. Keep up the good work with the Register,

Seasons greetings to you and your family.

Cheers for now, Jimmy Thyne - Bathgate

*Jimmy, what can I say, your energy just makes me jealous, roll on June – Ahh, another bit of paper off my desk! Ed.*

Dear Brian,

Please find enclosed membership renewal for 2003, I'm usually late with mine, so this time I thought I'd try and be first Well that's a difficult one, I am constantly amused / surprised /delighted and frustrated all at the same time, by the few of you so keen to continue being involved, that you send in your renewals before I have sent out the renewal notices – it does actually cause problems, because I rely on the forms, and when there isn't one, I have to create a new one, and I can't answer the questions about the current state of your car, or whether or not I am to be allowed to include your details in the planned membership list – mind you, you wouldn't believe the number of people who didn't answer that question, in spite of me printing it in bold text on the form – enough moaning, as you were saying Eric

Having read the latest issue, one item that caught my eye was the one about ignition timing, having been experimenting with my own vehicles ignition timing recently I also found better running with the ignition set before TDC.

However one must realise that altering the idle advance also alters the total advance and the distributor will need altering to limit the total advance.

An excellent source of information on this subject is the seed pro series book by Des Hammill on ignition systems, also available is one on SU carbs, well worth a read, available from good book shops or visit [www.veloce.co.uk](http://www.veloce.co.uk)

Eric Walls - Ipswich

*Thanks for that Eric, though I guess I should go and dig out the ISBN numbers for those books, but just now I am too busy, if I don't get it done in time before going to the printer with this, feel free to chip in if you know the relevant details. Ed.*

Dear Brian,

22-10-02

I would appreciate it if you could enquire for me through the Mewsletter for a Perspex draught excluder which clips onto the drivers door of a Kitten, and allows you to have the window open without getting a stiff neck.

Mewsletter No. 46 Page 16:- Gear lever gaiter – had the same problem with my thick rubber dunces cap type gator in my Kitten Van. Solution:- Threw the offending article in the rear of the garage and fitted a Robin one.

No more problems as Arnie would say. When the van is put into reverse, the gator does not “pop out”, nor do I have a handful of gearlever to refit. Mewsletter No. 42 Page 24.

Rear springs. I have found that Rialto springs fit my Kitten van. The Kitten spring assistors are, after all, a bolt on part, unless you are a purist of course.

Len Gardner - West Wickham, Kent

Dear Brian,

16-11-02

I am writing to you in the hope that you or another member of the Kitten Register can put their finger on the pulse of the problem.

Having only had the vehicle some three months and have had rubbish brakes to the point where I am having to use the engine as a brake. The brake pedal travels almost to the axminster before they activate.

When bled on a pressure bleeder the brake pedal is solid. When the bleeder is removed the pedal heads towards the carpet.

The near side rear wheel cylinder was found to be part seized and was replaced with a new one. Offside rear was found to be O.K.

Nearside front wheel cylinders were both leaking, both replaced for new.

None of this changed the performance one iota. The master cylinder was said to be faulty as it was alleged to be letting fluid by, and the brakes were only working in a percentage of the fluid in the pipes. The master cylinder was changed, but no benefit achieved. Mastercylinder tested and found to be O.K. Put into stock.

Next clamping took place. Clamped rear rubber hose, and jumped on the brake pedal – rubbish. Clamped near side front – solid. Clamped offside front, still solid. Removed clamp from rear, pedal moved slightly. Nearside clamp removed, just the same, offside clamp removed and pedal went to the carpet. A result, now we are cooking by gas. When in doubt chuck it out.

Offside front cylinders were changed for new. Not being happy with the small copper pipes they were changed also. Brakes were bled and tested. No change – still useless!

Having lost patience with it, it was put into dock for someone else to have a go.

Got the vehicle back the next day. No change to the brakes, and no change (loose) in my pocket.

I enquired about a man who can, and found one.

Today (Sat) we got to it. Back to clamping, the fault had now moved, (as it does) from the off side to the nearside. The nearside rubber hose was replaced, brakes bled and tested, they are better, but not BETTER if you understand me. When the rubber hose is clamped the pedal is solid. Remove the clamp, square one. The old wheel cylinders were put back on as a test, because apparently the wheel cylinders on different years the bore size varies, and so could affect pressure. This wasn't the cast. The new ones were refitted.

Brakes better but not 100% Clamp nearside from, pedal solid, remove clamp and pedal not holding firm. No air in system. Owner going mental.

*Len went on about knowing why there were so many nuts in the nut house, and equating residence is said establishment with Reliant ownership, I shan't bore you with the details, but Len does ask if anyone out there can help resolve what to him is a mystery. That said I am curious about things like his master cylinder testing technique, the state of both his brakes adjustment, and indeed of the adjusters themselves, I have known them get so worn / rusty, that they can easily slip back, and as to the wisdom of clamping, particularly old, brake hoses, well that is another area all together. Goodrich stainless flexible hoses are great things. Which reminds me, members can now enjoy 20% discount on such things. Ed.*

Dear Mr. Marshall,

12th of December 2002

Spurred on by my new found infamy I write to you again! I'm sorry if you struggle with my handwriting, but when it comes to the information superhighway I'm probably sitting at the side of the road on a pile of bricks.

I think Reliant started fitting the new style of SU float chamber lid in 1980, but you can also rescue them from scrap Minis. Another potential source of leaks is the pickup pipe from the float chamber either because the bits are missing or the seal fails.

I don't think some of the parts on your salvage list (Mews 49) are quite so rare. Kitten brake drums are 850 Robin and Rialto, rear brake backplates can be salvaged from Rover Metros, the bonnet hinges are Hillman Imp £27 a pair new plus v.a.t. The bonnet is almost identical to the three wheeler, and the rear window stay is Robin and Imp. Aye Mr. Smith, you were doing fine till you got to the rear window stays, the Imp uses two, they are handed, and any of the Imp club lads I've spoken to would kill to get their hands on even one! Admittedly the Metro backplates are not identical to the early Metro / Mini / Kitten ones, but they come with a more substantial ring welded on the back and even a better adjuster. You need to remember that Reliant borrowed in a lot of the bits. Front backplates will become a problem, the last 10" Mini wheels were built about 1985, so most of them have rusted away by now.

Geoff, who was dreaming of Bedford Rascal pickups as a potential B1 drive is Kitten mounted now. He found one that's locked away in someone's garage, forever, and the last time I met him he was after one that was crash damaged and another one without any brakes may turn up too. If any of them come good I will try to send you the details. Hard knowing what to do with my Kitten, it needs more work than I can manage at the kerbside. So it ought to go. The only other thing is to find somewhere new to live where I can rebuild it. Anyway I hope you find a piece of wisdom in all this.

Yours faithfully R. Smith - Ashby

*Thanks for that, I had meant to send you pictures of Alan Shaw's head removal tool, (matter of another letter from Mr. Smith) Alan is an engineer, and would never dream of the sort of metal to metal contact you implied, even your preferred wooden wedges can do a lot of damage, but Alan's device is marvelous, cunning, non-destructive and very effective, I'll try and arrange for you to see it, Ed. By the way Alan, if you don't have it back yet, my fault, it is in Suffolk just now, sorry I couldn't get a better finish on the case, Moira hated the smell of the varnish, and I was banned from doing it in the house, and the weather was against me doing it outside, lots of excuses, but many thanks for the loan of it. Ed.*

Dear Brian,

27-12-2002

I hope you all had an enjoyable Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Enclosed is my subscription for 2003 together with a spares donation.

On the carb issue I have had one customer for the Burlen Fuel systems parts, Nigel Keast from Penzance. I did ask him to let me know how he got on, but I haven't heard yet – Well Nigel, don't be shy, how did it go? Ed – I thought I would enclose copies of what I sent him for your records, together with Burlen's website address for you clever people with computers. Thanks Malcolm, like I don't have enough bits of paper to deal with ! Ed. That said, I was amazed at the number of alternative carburettor float chamber lids there are available, but talk to Malcolm if you want details he said, trying to delegate 01948 840896 is the one you want to be ringing.

Progress with the Kitten last year – NONE, but I live in the hope that perhaps this year – Well you know, sorry about all these interruptions, I had been getting better for a while, but some things need saying while they are in my mind, or they are gone forever – now there's a thought – as I was saying, I had the Citroen in dock the other week, 'my' mechanic has a BSc in engineering you know, and I caught him, sneaking off to spend a few moments with nitromors, stripping the paint from a Ducatti fuel tank, when I challenged him as to why he was not working on my car, he pointed out that one of his merry men was working on my car, and that he had promised himself that he was going to spend some time each day this year on some of his own projects, and I can't fault him for that, let's all follow his lead, that's what I say, right if I can finish the major construction jobs on the bungalow that I might, make a start.

Mechanically the Kitten is running well, with several trips to London last year. The chap who was doing my mechanical repairs is proving a godsend. We had Jan's Metro converted to unleaded some years back by the garage that she used when she first moved to Shropshire, and in spite of several return visits, it never really ran well, and they said that it was the best they could do.

Having been impressed with the work my chap had done on the Kitten, we decided to give him a chance with the Metro. It took him quite a while, but eventually, having thrown the rule book out the window, he got it sorted, and the Metro now runs really well.

Will keep you posted, All the best for now. Malcolm Rush - Whitchurch

*Bill the builder gets a mention too, thanks Bill for doing the building (Bill built much of the Liege I was privileged enough to have a hurl in last year.) Thanks too for keeping us in touch with Bob and Judith, and for your note. Oh, and G'day Bob and Judith, (it's enough to make one hoarse, trying to shout loud enough to be heard in Australia!) I will always treasure the memory of our run to Dalgety Bay in the Liege last year, thank you again.*

Dear Brian,

Re comments in Mewsletter No. 49. Kitten silencers – ALL Kittens were supplied with a one piece exhaust system from new. The silencer repair kit was only supplied by Reliant until about 1986. Although by cutting to the same dimension and making as suitable hanger, an early Robin 850 silencer will fit.

Timing settings, assuming carburetion to be O.K. and cooling system etc., I would agree that many people will be able to go to 10 degrees before TDC. If however, like me, your Kitten

has to be driven hard and fast, often up hills, then in summer when all is warm, pinking does just start at TDC. Yours Graeme Shaw

P.S. Useless historical information :- The exhaust systems supplied by Reliant have over the years been bought from different manufacturers. The ones I have records of date from 1977, including the numbers on the silencers :- A Huntfields 25959 B – Armstrong 25959 C. Bosal 25959, for the silencer only Huntfield 1182, there, how useless can you get!

Graeme Shaw - Glossop                      Thanks for that Graeme,

*Then you get the really nice letters, which while in some ways are sad, I am very pleased that they take the time to let me know the score :-*

Dear Brian,

January 2003

I regret that I will not be renewing membership this year. I parted company with the Kitten, TRP 341R last August, both my wife Jean, and self were most reluctant to say goodbye after 26 years, but the age was (mine, not the car's! ) making working with the Kitten just too much.

In closing please accept thanks for the work you have put in providing the Mewsletters, we always enjoyed reading and learning from them.

Yours sincerely, Alex McGechaen - Corby

Dear Brian,

January 2003

I regret that I will need to resign from the Register. Since I've got married the vehicle is no longer suitable.

I hope that Haynes Museum will accept it as an exhibit.

I'm enclosing £5 merely as a donation to the useful and informative Register.

Kind regards, Hugh Rolfe - Bratton Fleming

*Well, what can I say, peoples lives move on, it is thanks to the generosity of Hugh, and others like him, that we can afford to enjoy, if that be the word, things like this extra long edition. It is really nice, oh how I dislike that word, but it does seem to express well, the warm feeling of comfort that I personally get when people who are leaving the fold, take the time to write and let us know what is happening, and especially, as with Hugh, are generous enough to send in a donation as well – I'll bet that does not happen with many organisations, it is appreciated. All the very best in the future to you both Hugh. Brian*

*Alex has been with us since 1998, and Hugh since 1996, and while it is always with a certain sorrow that I say goodbye to folk I have come to think of as friends, I realise that things change in this life. Thank you both for your support over the years, and, as I said, for keeping us informed. All good wishes for LaK - life after Kittens.*



## Tales From Tore

Dear Brian,

Saturday 11th January 2003

What has been happening on the Reliant front? Well on the matter of practical work on the Kitten, just bits & bobs really. The last big job was the fitting of new rear shockers in October. Here I have to admit that if the old ones had not been badly leaking oil then they would not have been replaced. Uncle Ebenezer rules my boy! It was not until they were on the car that I realised just how much they improved the ride. No doubt if I fitted new units to the front as well it would produce an equally pleasing result but that involves real money and will have to wait.

Apart from the monthly ball joint greasing ritual and the weekly topping up of oil, water etc. little else has been needed. I did replace the rear window wiper blade and was surprised to find that a 10" Mini blade was OK, a Mini windscreen must be more shallow than I had remembered.

Oh yes, and the near side rear flasher stopped working. At first I suspected the old problem of a blown bulb or perhaps a corroded bulb holder, but attention to these points achieved nothing. Could there be a hidden and corroded bullet connector behind the lamp? After some time spent trying to extract stuck fixing screws on a freezing cold day I gave up. So next I tried inspecting the wires behind the dash, but all seemed OK. Then I recalled having strange problems on another car years ago, all caused by corroded fuses. So I removed them and cleaned up both the fuses and their holders, after which the light came to life and both near side & off side flashers now work more enthusiastically. I find that a bit weird but never mind. Here I should note that both rear lamps have cracked lenses. Luckily new lamps are available so I have bought a pair and hope to fit them as soon as the weather improves, which should be good for a few comments in due course?

Now that we are in the season of considerable Chill Factor, a good car heater is essential, surely this is the most useful car accessory ever invented. So you can imagine my consternation when the hot / cold lever stuck in the cold position. As I was driving at that instant I just gave the lever a good yank, which only had the effect of the knob flying off! Luckily I found it later. At home I tried to work the lever free but it seemed stuck solid, odd to say the least. There seemed no alternative to removing the centre panel over the levers, not difficult apart from trying not to lose the nipple on the end of the choke cable. Well everything appeared in order and a bit of prising with a screwdriver freed the lever briefly only for it to stick again. There are 2 items I find useful in this sort of situation, a hammer and an oil can. But I resolutely put the hammer aside and applied oil to the sliding bits of the lever, to such success that the lever now moves almost on its own. Total cost, some time and about 4 drops of 3 in 1 oil, great!

This episode should be a good example to us all of why our Editor frequently exhorts us to 'grease those ball joints', timely lubrication is a marvellous thing. Which leads on to the subject of which grade of grease is best for the steering swivels. I have been using Moly grease from a local motor factor and with monthly greasing the steering stays quite free, but each time I grease a little water oozes out of the not very good rubber boots. Recently I read that lithium based greases are not really satisfactory where water can get at them because they are soap based (news to me) and wash away relatively easily. Which makes me wonder whether some type of waterproof grease might be better. Would one of our knowledgeable members care to give their views?

Recently the windscreen washers suddenly stopped working, not the nicest thing to happen in winter. So I filled the washer bottle and - they still didn't work. Then I realised that the washer motor was not buzzing when the switch was pressed. My good fairy must have been about for I noticed that one of the spade connectors had dropped off a motor terminal. I doubt very much that it dropped, I say it was pushed off ! Ed. After a quick squeeze with the pliers it went back and stayed on. I just love a no-cost solution!

At the start of the colder weather the car was very sluggish when first moving off in the morning. My first thought was the cause could be cold air being drawn into the air filter spout before the manifold had warmed up. Do you remember that I had fitted an air cleaner with a swivelling spout to intake warm air in winter? Then I recalled that the Allegro 1500 had the same problem until I used light oil in the carburettor dashpot. So out came the can of 3 in 1 oil again and into the dashpot some went, and it certainly has improved the engine response when cold.

There you have my recollections of the small events which have made running an older car such an 'interesting' experience during the past while.

Best Wishes, Dick Goodall

*Thanks Dick for keeping us in the picture, mind you it's the little things that bother me, like how did you remove the old oil from the dashpot to make room for your 3 in 1? Ed.*

### **Reliant did it before!**

I see that there is news in the motoring press of yet another 'new' hybrid car that runs on storage batteries in town to avoid air pollution, while on the open road a petrol engine kicks in to give extra power and range. Yes hybrid is definitely a buzz-word these days. But did you know that quite a few years ago Reliant and Lucas collaborated to produce a prototype 4-wheeled car doing just the same? It was shown at least in the publicity film 'World of Reliant'. Did 'Tomorrow's World' ever feature it? Can anyone can give more info or provide photos for the Mewsletter?

Dick Goodall.

## **Getting TECHNICAL**

Fox [or Kitten] Front Suspension

You will recall Duncan Bradford's interesting story on this subject began last time, here is the next part :-

Fox [or Kitten] Front Suspension - Part Two of Three

Whatever started it all off, in my case the need for new dampers, it's probably a good idea to think about renovating the whole front suspension as an assembly; [you might change your mind though]. In my case the damper lower mounting bolt wouldn't come out, and as it seemed a fair bet that there were quite a few other bits begging to be seen to, "best bite the bullet" I thought:

The anti-roll bar is easy to remove from the chassis fixings, but the ends are hard to get at without removing the lower shocker mountings. The upper wishbone bracket nuts come

undone easily, although they are not the most accessible, but the lower wishbone inner bolt is the most likely to be seized.

In other words, you can see what needs to be taken off, attack it as you will. I have put what size spanner you will need for each bolt, and some tips. The order of approach is just the best order I have found to do things in. First here's a list of bolt dimensions because the original may be un reusable and you may have to order from someone who specialises in UNF nuts & bolts, 'cos I don't think the originals are very available. All except lower wishbone can be longer if right length is not available.

- Upper wishbone bush bolt:  $3/8 \times 21/4$ , max  $11/2$ " unthreaded length
- Lower wishbone bush bolt:  $7/16 \times 21/2$  exactly, max 1" unthreaded length. There is also a special half-nut welded to an angled plate to make refitting easier, but a normal size Nyloc nut is OK [see later]
- Lower damper / balljoint bolt:  $1/2$ "  $\times$   $31/4$ , max  $21/4$ " unthreaded length
- Lower balljoint extra bolt:  $5/16 \times 21/2$ , max  $15/8$ " unthreaded length
- Tie bar to lower wishbone bolt:  $3/8 \times 2$ , max  $13/8$  unthreaded length

So, if you've got your tools together, notepad and pen, plastic tubs to put stuff in, oh the list is as endless as are the trips back to base to get something I've forgotten. The main two things I always forget are the two golden rules:

- 1: NOTE DOWN EVERYTHING THAT'S SO OBVIOUS OR IMPORTANT THAT I'M SURE I WON'T FORGET IT.
- 2: KEEP EVERYTHING. IF I THROW ANYTHING AWAY ONLY THROW IT INTO THAT SPECIAL BIN [CALLED 'THE SHED'] THAT NEVER GETS EMPTIED.

Before raising the car slacken the wheel nuts, and note how many shims there are behind each upper wishbone bracket, then loosen the upper wishbone mounting brackets to the last few turns [ $9/16$  socket and ring/open-end]. It's worth removing at least the battery for access. Remove the upper damper locknut and nut [ $11/16$  socket].

Put the car on axle stands set just by where the tie bars go through the chassis, so you'll have room to work on the wishbones etc. The higher the better, if stable. As you do this the shims will probably fall out from the loosened brackets, but at least you won't have to strain over into the engine bay for so long to remove the nuts! [They're tedious]. Remove the front wheels, either leave the brake drums on, or remove drums and shoes to somewhere clean, and tie a plastic bag over the backplate assembly. Disconnect the steering.

Remove antiroll bar chassis fixings [ $7/8$  socket] and bushes. These are tiny bolts that thread through the chassis, but usually strip, and are best replaced by hardened steel M4 bolts & nuts that fit through ignoring the thread.

Lower damper bolt [ $3/4$  socket]. This is nice and big - the sort where you can tread on the spanner. Unfortunately if you investigate the other end it's obscured by a flange so you can't get a decent spanner on it to stop it turning. And if it turns as you turn the nut, don't think it's because the bolt is free to turn; no, it's rusted to the inner sleeve of the bush and its the bush that's turning. The answer for me was a battery-power jigsaw and no end of spare

blades [lubricate them in use]. However, to make access easier, it may be best to tackle the following first:

Disconnect the rubber brake hose at the wheel end, blocking the end and tying it out of the way. I wrap it with card and clamp it flat in a grip wrench while I undo it to save leaks.

Remove the smaller bolt holding the lower ball joint,[1/2 socket + ring to hold head], just outside the damper one. This will normally tap out once the nut is unwound to level with the bolt end to protect the thread.

Now finish off removing the upper wishbone bracket nuts [9/16], and the upper wishbone/vertical link assembly will swivel out and down so you can get at the rest.

If you resort to sawing the damper bolt, do it now, because once the damper is off, you can get to the anti-roll bar nut behind it, and getting a spanner on the front tie-bar nut is easier if the lower wishbone can be easily raised to horizontal or above.

Anyhow get the damper off, then the vertical link complete with both ball joints and upper wishbones can be removed for studying later! Likewise the anti-roll bar.

Tie-bar: These are available, but not cheap. The earlier ones were later deposed by those with a thicker stud on the front, as they broke on removal. The tie-bar, being a semi-enclosed box section, tends to rust, and the effort of undoing the front nut can twist the whole thing. The rear bolt through the wishbone gets rusted into the tube it passes through, so leave it till last.

So... Steady the tie-bar with a grip-wrench as you undo the front nut [3/4 on later ones, don't know earlier] but only after you've removed the split pin if it's a castellated nut! If no go after a week of daily soaking with WD40, you may have to get the saw out. If you do, saw immediately behind the large washer that supports the bush next to the box-section end, without harming the washer. At this point you may as well saw / grind the fixing at the rear end too, without damaging the wishbone though. Or more likely you'll find it undoes perfectly now you can't reuse the tie-bar.

Lower wishbone pivot: This is a bolt through a cutaway in the chassis into which the wishbone slots. The bolt head is reached through a hole at the front with a 5/8 socket. Under the bolt head is a washer-plate with a lip along the bottom edge to locate it onto the chassis. Apart from strengthening the seating for the bolt, there seems to be no reason why it's not just a plain washer. At the other end of the bolt is a half-thickness nut welded to a similar locating-plate, and the reason here is to prevent the nut from turning as the bolt is undone, as there is precious little room for a spanner on the nut. If the nut still turns despite this plate, the nut can be held by use of a good strong long-nose self-grip wrench whose jaws have been filed down to as narrow as need be to fit into the recess. Rest assured the tool will be even more useful in its new form! If the bolt won't withdraw, proceed with care, 'cos turning it will break up the rubber part of the bush, which is OK, but the steel bush-liner will be pulled forward with the bolt and distort the chassis cutaway. However NOTE that before you resort to sawing the bolt, it must be undone to the point that very little thread extends beyond the nut, otherwise there will not be enough clearance to drop out the nut plus the sawn-off end out of the recess. I didn't realise this the first time and had to spend several hours filing it down by hand while attempting to grip it in the wrench. I used a jigsaw either side of the wishbone to cut through. An angle-grinder is quicker but will not reach into the recess far enough without risking damage.

The worst is over! While you've got this far you may as well check the brakes and ball joints though, plus one or two other things. Putting it all back will be very satisfying, once you've invested in a tub of copper grease, but there are one or two things it's helpful to watch for.

I have spares of most of the nuts and bolts, and can point you in the right direction for the rest. Give us a call on 01603 663311 if you like. So, nice to end on a positive note! Good luck.

Duncan Bradford, member no. 46, November 2002 - [hi.dunc@virgin.net](mailto:hi.dunc@virgin.net)

*Thanks for that Duncan, part three next time, oh, and if anyone wants the whole story in a single article, that can be arranged, just talk to Duncan or myself Ed.*

### **A Matter of Timing**

I am indebted to those who took the time to respond to the question on ignition timing in the last edition, and was particularly delighted to receive the following response from Harry Darby. Those who have been with us for a while will remember Harry's technical articles from the past. Sadly Harry has had to give up driving, one of our octogenarian members, his mind is clearly as sharp as ever, thank you Harry it was good to hear from you again.

Dear Brian,

22/12/02

My answer to your 750/850 ignition timing. I know the 750 stroke was lengthened by 9mm to make it into an 850, but this has nothing to do with the problem in my opinion. It's the carbs being the culprit I strongly suspect. The 750 had a Zenith 301 and the 850 an HS2 SU, now the SU delivers a good atomised mixture, I'm not so sure if the Zenith is its equal in this respect.

Now the theory behind ignition timing is, assuming that a correctly adjusted mixture is being delivered by whichever carb, and all other things being equal, a correct mixture giving maximum pressure and temperature with complete combustion, this is when all the oxygen molecules and all the fuel molecules have combined in the induced charge, this takes half a thousandth of a second, then we have maximum pressure on the piston, which should occur when the piston is twelve and a half degrees past TDC on the power stroke. It's obvious now that the combustion time, and the time the piston takes to reach 12.5 degrees ATDC must be coordinated, hence the difference between 10 degrees before TDC on the 750 and TDC on the 850.

I suspect the Zenith is not giving as good an atomised mixture as the SU, and the mixture is therefore taking longer to complete combustion, hence it is burning slower, and needs more time to reach maximum pressure on the piston, so the ignition timing is advanced to allow for this.

Sincerely Harry

Dear Brian,

Haisthorpe Gates, 18 XII 02

Ignition timing

748cc engines up to September 1973 fitted with a Zenith 301Z downdraught carburettor – ignition timing set at T.D.C.

748cc engines after September 1973 fitted with modified carburettor, 30IZE, to conform to emission regulations – ignition timing set at 10 degrees B.T.D.C.

848cc engines fitted with S.U. semi-downdraught carburettor – ignition timing set at T.D.C.

It's all to make ignition timing look like a science when it's a black art. I will write and tell you why.

All the best - Roger Goldthorpe.

### **Technical Tweaks from Thetford** 07th Jan. 03

A Osborn 35 Griston Rd. Watton,

Once again a few points left over from last newsletter, to see if I can throw some light. Ignition timing-Paul Wheatley had some thoughts especially after a specific rebuild. First a little back ground-why do we have an advance curve in the ignition in the first place? The first need for the engine (when being designed) is to run at speed and produce power, to do this we insert a 'gob' of mixture and set it alight by a spark! Due to inadequacies in engine/cylinder head design (ALL engines are a compromise) getting the mixture in and setting it alight for it to burn evenly takes time. So the ignition point is at some point before the piston gets to top dead centre and starts down for the big push, supplied by the burning mixture. The efficiency/design of the mixture path/cylinder head will define the advance needed in degrees for maximum power/efficiency. Usually we are fully advanced at about 3000 RPM for most of the overhead valve engines (cars and motorcycles) for the last 50 years. Any need for a lot of advance is usually an indication of a poor design.

This is fine for 'going' but starting and ticking over needs a little help in that as the speed of the engine is less you don't need the advance, and when starting there can be a tendency to kick back (with lots of advance or a fixed 'racing' ignition) so we retard the engine, to something near to top dead centre. Back to Reliants -The 750 did have quite a few differences in the head department, the rocker ratio being 1:1 as opposed to the 1:125 of the 850 hence less efficient. But if anyone knows of any specific reason for 10 degrees before top dead centre timing on the engine fully retarded, please let us know. Now please take note that these two timing marks on the fan pulley are only for tickover, and in fact are really a nominal figure, the real figure we should be worrying about is where are we at fully advanced? This figure is controlled by the bob weights in the distributor and the extent of the slots in them. The shape of the curve between fully retarded and fully advanced being controlled by the two springs that hold the bob weights back. There are two different poundages to these springs which give a 'knee' in the curve as well, this is to aid engine performance between 1000 and 3000 RPM (town driving/pulling away). And then there is the vacuum advance, this is designed to give a few more degrees of. advance under very light throttle conditions for economy cruising. Note :- When we investigated all this a few years ago, tearing about every where-tuning the engine up!-we found that we never cruised on minimum throttle anyway, so we abandoned the vacuum advance. In fact I fitted a 750 distributor which had a little more 'bob weight' advance and no vacuum mechanism. Paul Wheatley, in Mews 49 has it about right

with advancing it till it just pinks and then back a touch with the ignition timing. While reading Paul W I see he questions the Haynes book and turning of the distributor body to advance the ignition, BUT are these instructions left over from an earlier edition? Were they written to cover one of the early 750 engines which had a reverse direction distributor!?

When you examine the later you find that the dizzy drive shaft is reversed (to the later 750 and all the .850s) the oil pump its housing and the skew gear on the cam shaft are all reversed!! If you should be so silly to have some of these bits and get them mixed up your engine just might not work and/or self destruct. I speak from experience hear as I bought very cheap once a rebuilt and subsequently seized Robin engine. Stripped it for parts etc. Some time later trying to use the oil pump housing and oil pump I realised that the flow through them was 'all acock' due to mixed parts hence seized engine! Beware.

I was going to go on about the 'life of your engine' with regard to oil changing and its low mileage usage etc, but ignition advance matters got the better of me-still something for next time.

AI

*AI was also recently asking if I knew of any source of the wiper parking switches, the normally white plastic part that clips to the wiper motor, now I do remember other people having bother with those in the past, and must confess to never having tried to source them, can you help ?*

Dear Brian,

You may recall that a few weeks ago you put Graeme Shaw in touch with me. He verbally gave some very useful Kitten info, which I typed up and sent to him to ensure I had correctly understood him. A 2nd phone call confirmed that I had done so, and I suggested to him that he send this info to you. Well, it seems that Graeme is a busy man, so here is a printout of what I got from him, in case it is of use for the Mewsletter.

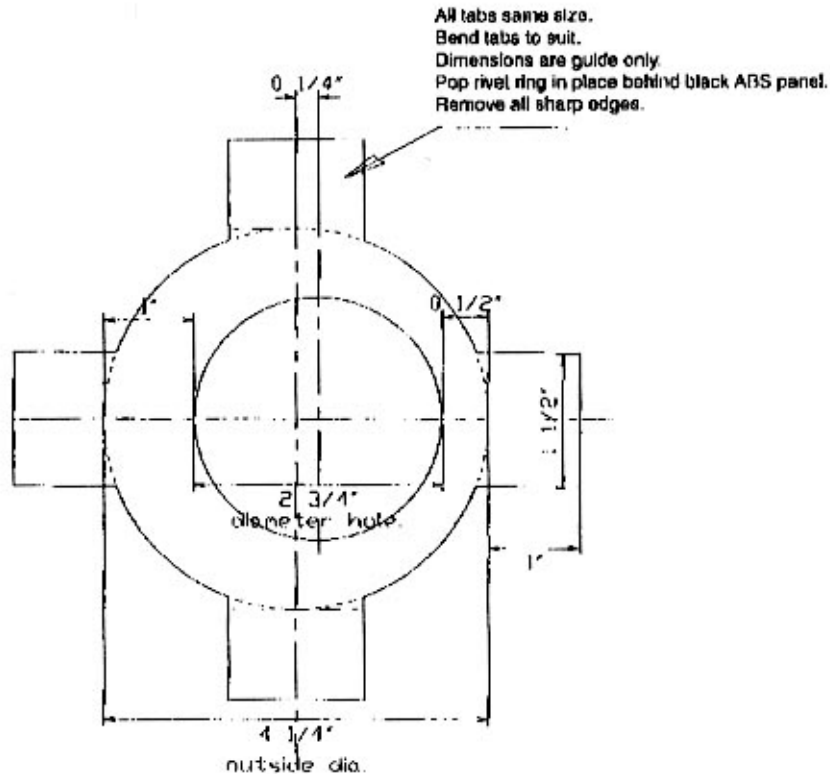
And to continue a story..All Gas and Gaiters? (Remember it on BBC1 in glorious monocolour? 'More sherry Archdeacon'. 'Don't mind if I do Bishop!')

Though the wooden stop for the gear lever gaiter on the 'Ghost' improved matters, it was not entirely satisfactory. Luckily Graeme Shaw pointed out to me that the gaiter should be trapped behind the black panel containing the ashtray and a second panel behind it. So I blithely (nice word!) set to, and removed the black panel, to find that the plastic on the upper half of the gaiter hole was badly cracked and bending anywhere. So much for ABS plastic?

Remedy. Make a sheet steel reinforcing ring with suitable securing tabs and pop rivet it to the back of the panel. For the first time ever I now have a Kitten with the gaiter staying in the correct place. Will this luck last??

Best Wishes, Dick Goodall - Tore





NOTE! Gear Lever Gatters can fail to be retained by the ABS panel, due to cracked plastic. This ring can effect a repair.

Reliant Kitten - Repair Ring for gear lever gatter aperture  
In black ABS panel, Drawn #167 April 2002

*With no intention to criticise, after all it took me 9 months to use that article, it's not luck Dick, it's engineering, and after the better part of a year, perhaps you can now tell us if indeed the mod lasted, and so was good engineering? Ed.*

## **FBHVC 02nd Nov. 02**

Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs, bit of a mouthful, but in this day of legislation by the bucket load out of Europe and from our very own government, then we need all the help we can get. Perhaps it is all a bit heavy when we just want to drive and fettle our motors, but bear in mind that cars like ours cannot be made any more. The carburettor is long dead and as for catalytic converters!!

We must think ourselves lucky that such things are not made retrospective. This is where the FBHVC comes in, they are the ones who keep an eye on all this legislation for us, things that, as individuals, we cannot get to grips with, let alone fight. So a few pence from your subscription is now going to this body.

Some of the things that are on going/on a back burner, reduction in road tax to be in line with Europe, the tax being transferred to the petrol. Daylight running lights. Zero sulphur in fuel.

Some of the things that have been looked at in the last few months; One off events would need planning permission i.e. car boots, vehicle displays, Rallys etc luckily this one had so much opposition that it was dropped, (for now!)

Lead Replacement Petrol is likely to be dropped soon as demand drops, so where are we with our historic vehicles then?

Perhaps this subject is a little dry for these pages, so let us be thankful that we are helping in the fight, albeit very modestly. Want to find out more? Then [www.fbhvc.co.uk](http://www.fbhvc.co.uk) would be good for a look, or you could join as an individual member for £10-00

Al Osborn

*What Al perhaps modestly fails to say is that he was present at the FBHVC's 3rd AGM at the Rolls Royce Enthusiasts Clubs premises in Northamptonshire, courtesy of the Sir Henry Royce Memorial Foundation. He even gets a mention in the minutes. Thanks for keeping us in the picture Al. The Register does receive a couple of copies of the Federations news letter, if you would like to know more, do get in touch, Ed.*

~.~.~.~.~

## **Sales and Wants**

For Sale :- New as in unused never been on the road Kitten chassis. Contact Howard Blackwell

For Sale :- New Fox galvanised chassis, contact John

For Sale :- Set of new Fox wheels, contact John

For Sale :- 1977 Kitten Saloon, yellow, taxed, MOT'd, well cared for and regularly serviced. New exhaust all original very clean and tidy £595.

For Sale :- Kitten DL estate 1977. Turquoise, Fiesta seats / sound insulated / new rear springs and wiper motor 1999. engine refurbishes 2000. front suspension / steering brakes 2001. Electric fan, Sierra 4-speaker radio cassette, rear wash / wipe ( wiring needs finishing) Very good chassis. Well maintained and regularly used 1995 – 2002. Laid up for 1st year hence no M.O.T. ~comes with new spares – radiator, points, fanbelt, rear brake cylinder, top ball joint, numerous seals and bearings and trim. Plus s/h spares inc. engine, gearbox, all glass, doors, bonnet (ventilated), chassis with back axle (some rust) and boxes of bits and pieces. Advancing years and essential rationalization of hobbies forces reluctant sale of faithful friend ! £650. Contact Jeremy Gibbons,

For Sale :- Kitten estate. Off the road for a few years, complete. Offers when seen. Contact Bob Langford

For Sale :- Reliant Kitten Van (converted to estate car) WDO 781T White, MOT till Jan. 2004 stainless steel exhaust, wax oiled chassis, £550. Contact Charles Barker

For Sale :- Kitten estate, white, runs but starter motor seized. Spares or repair. Free to a good home. Contact Brian Millar

For Sale :- 1983 Kitten. Just 160,000 miles from new. Needs some work. Spares or repair. Offers to Alan McKay of Southsea

For Sale :- Kitten van with many spares. M.O.T. till July 2003.

For Sale :- A pair of gas filled Kitten front dampers, £75 the pair. Contact Mr. G. Mellor

For Sale :- Reliant engine sump plugs in brass with an extra thick head for your spanner or socket to catch. Someone wanted one, from the south west, and I have 4 of them in stock, give me a ring. Brian 0141 8866117

For Sale :- Kitten 1600cc twin cam powered, off the road for two years, slight accident damage, needs set of Viva discs. Radiator & nose cone, spare shell available. offers in the region of £250.

For Sale :- Paul Bennett of Grantham has sent me a list of Kitten spares, mostly secondhand, some new, almost an entire dismantled car in fact, which he wants to sell. Trouble is that his neat list comes to almost 2 A4 sides, and so would take up about 3 pages. If you would like a copy, drop me a line. Ed.

For Sale :- Rebel van converted to estate. 850 unleaded engine fitted, original engine available, and lots of spares available. Also a Bond Bug. Talk to Graham

For Sale :- 10 cans of dinitrol cavity wax, slightly bent tins (arn't they always) £7 Each. Also new Lumination electronic ignition system Control Box Optronic switch High performance coil and ballast resistor worth Around £200. But you will need the Distributor fitting kit which will cost about £25, depending on what car you want to fit it to. Yours for just £80 the set (a bargain this as the Module is £128, the coil is £34 and optronic switch is £28 normally!)

Wanted :- Reliant Kitten Estate, must be in sound and tidy condition with MOT. Top price paid for correct vehicle. T. Dixon

Wanted :- Early Rebel gearbox remote gearlever linkage. Ring Howard Blackwell

Wanted :- Tow bar for a Kitten. Ring Richard Moulds

Wanted :- One of these wind guards you used to get for driving with the drivers window right down, to keep the draft down and the worst of the rain out, from the 70's. If you can help give the Editor a ring, and if it was you who wanted one, please remind me who you are! Brian 0141 8866117

Wanted :- Kitten in good condition, must have or not require much work for MOT. Preferably in the north of Scotland.

Wanted :- Do you know of any model Kittens ? Saloon car style, either in kit form or ready made up? About 1:43 scale. If so please contact Paul Durnsford via the Editor.

Wanted :- Kitten front suspension uprights / stub axles and steering arms.

~~~~~

## NOTES

Right, I must thank Alan Melmoth for the information on vehicle type approval he sent me, all goes to help bring home to me that I perhaps ought to delegate more if we are indeed going to expand the services we offer – then again I need to be clear in my mind where to draw the line between offering services, and simply pointing people in the right direction. The problem with either is my memory, by the time someone contacts me to ask about details, I will have put the paperwork ‘somewhere safe’, and most probably forgotten who sent it to me in the first place. Hence this note of recognition and thanks to Alan. Anyway, George Reid was the man he recommended, he founded STATUS, the Specialist Transport Advisory & Testing Utility Society back in 1988, and he can be contacted on 0161 236 8046 or e-mailed at [a.g.reid@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:a.g.reid@mmu.ac.uk)

Still in thanking mode, I didn't have room on the page to thank Derek Argyle for the mind twisting motoring quiz, as you may remember it was to have been a “Grand Christmas Quiz”, but someone lost the file! Anyway, as mentioned elsewhere, the first correct set of answers out of the hat, well, alright, it will probably be a tin rather than a hat, but the first correct set of answers drawn on the 1st of April 2003, will win the individual who sent them in a free subscription to the Register for this year. So be not shy about putting your name on the answer sheet. If I'm really organised I'll include the quiz on a separate sheet, and you can send it back with the answers without having to deface this publication, but as I said, don't forget to put your name on it! Why the 1st of April, well, just because that will just give me time to tell you in the March./ April edition who won! Oh, and while it is in my mind, you would not believe how many folk failed to answer the question on the renewal notice about wither or not I could publish their details on the proposed membership list – very frustrating. To date 4 people have asked that I exclude certain of their details, but over 20 of you failed to complete the renewal notice correctly, I don't know why I bother sometimes!

Back now to David Heywood's news about the 750 Motor Club and their proposed use of the Fiat FIRE engine, they will be running it alongside the Reliant unit during 2003. Though the Fiat engine is heavier than the Reliant unit, cast iron crankcase rather than our aluminum ones, it is shorter and narrower, just, and puts out almost 70 BHP in standard form. Hmm, ( a ‘normal’ tuned Reliant engine puts out about 75 BHP, just you ask Dick Harvey if you don't believe me) food for thought? No, I didn't say that!!

I am trying to learn from past mistakes, for example you may not have noticed that this edition for the first time, more accurately describes the assistants on page 3 as being “alternative parts list contacts” rather than the mistaken description which I used to use. Hopefully such corrections will make for less confusion in future.

That said, I hope in my excitement I have not forgotten to tell you about “Liege News” the new quarterly publication for those of that state of mind, John Sawle of the Liege Car Club can be contacted on :- 01872 552347 if you would like to get on his mailing list, he will tell you all about it I am sure. I recently received a copy after paying a subscription, and I have to say that I was very impressed at their first edition. Keep up the good work.

I seemed to get the feeling at several times during the creation of this extended edition, that mention was made rather too often of non-Reliant vehicles, but it is a special edition, I will try to make sure such contamination is kept to a minimum in future. That said, I am only aware of three of our number who own a Peerless, I don't suppose any of you guys has made any progress on that front during 2002, now if you were feeling a bit short on New Years

resolutions.... Feel free to keep me up to date – well, they do have a, very nice, fibreglass body, so at least we have that in common!

Right, again my apologies about your membership card, the latest info is that it is a memory problem with the software on my PC, so it's not just me ! Still no men in white coats! As to when you will receive your card, at this time I have no idea at all, but your membership number is the small number at the top right hand side of the address label on the envelope this came to you in – hundreds nationwide now dive into bins in search of envelopes, paper recycle bins that is I trust, though I have to admit that I don't recycle envelopes in the belief that the glue makes them unsuitable for recycling, but I do recycle all other waste paper.

Well, a bumper 50th edition it has been, all 50 pages of it, Brian (Millar), I'll bet you never thought I'd actually use that particular template, did you? that said there are letters I have not included, and indeed a lot of comments and questions which were written on your renewal notices, most of which I hope I will have answered directly before this comes out in print. What a joy it is to have to choose between which articles to include, I know that many club magazine editors would be very jealous of my situation. At least I have shared more of the flavour of my incoming mail with you this time – no, I will absolutely not consider making it monthly. Words like backs, camels, brakes and straw spring to mind, and that's my last word on the subject.

O.K., that's almost 20,000 words, a record for a Mewsletter I think, and I don't know about you, but I've had enough! On Thursday the 23rd of January, with just one page to go, I lost control of the document. After spending most of Thursday, and all Friday morning trying to restore control I gave up and enlisted professional help. By the following Thursday I had regained control, all to do with Tools / Track changes, and highlighting changes, quite funny really as it was a member of the Wensleydale Railway Association who put me right about "track changes", which seemed entirely appropriate! Anyway, then I realised that while I could again edit the document, I could only get it to print A4 pages in what the trade calls landscape format, with the page numbers at the bottom, two to a page, as required for the booklet, but none of the text would print! Sounds funny I am sure, but incredibly frustrating I can assure you. Then Vicki Shaw, no relation to Graeme or Alan, came to the rescue, and sanity returned.

Right, take care, and I just know that you greased those Kitten and Fox ball joints, and Rebel trunnions and handbrake mechanisms before you sat down to read all this, didn't you?

**Brian**

The following picture is one I failed to send to John Pearce, but since it's our 50th, I thought I'd treat you. Just be not expecting 100 pages for the centennial edition! The car in question belongs to Ray Best from Hereford, and unlike our front cover pictures, which, as a matter of policy, usually show us the more unusual vehicles, represents the sort of Reliant which many of us actually own. Thanks for the picture Ray.



