

# *Reliant Kitten* *Register*

NEWSLETTER 59

**July - August 2004**



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 59

Rebel parts stock

Kitten / Fox parts stock

Rebel alternative parts

Kitten alternative parts

Fox alternative parts

Our Mutual Aid Spares scheme

Mewsletter pictures

The Register is 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. Readers are invited to show their own support of this worthy cause by becoming members in their own right. Contact the editor for details.

Our front cover picture – well, I only sent this one to John to try and explain the fancy hat competition – which I didn't win by the way. Yes that is me beside Old Number One, Peter Davis' first Liege. Once again my thanks to Peter for the use of the car, and Paul Wheatley for organising the event in the Derbyshire Peaks back in May. Seems a long time ago now, but the memories are fresh, and will live with me for a very long time indeed – a wonderful weekend. The bonnet was only up to let Paul weaken the mixture on the second carb for me during our lunch stop.

web page :- <http://www.uk-classic-cars.com/kitten.htm>  
or have a look at <http://www.reliantkitten.co.uk>

# INDEX

Page 3	Contact details and cover story
Page 4	Index
Page 5	The Registrar speaks
Page 6	and shares a fax
Page 7	Some further thoughts on Kittens
Page 8	and parts
Page 9	Rebel Round Up
Page 10	A failure fixed
Page 11	Foxes den
Page 12	Indicators
Page 13	Kerrys tale
Page 14	A Tandy question
Page 15	Membership matters / Liege page
Page 16	Tempest
Page 17	Readers Letters
Page 18	Some more from Kerry
Page 19	Our man in Telford
Page 20	More readers letters
Page 21	Getting technical
Page 22	Steering racks
Page 23	Sales
Page 24	& wants
Page 25	Epilogue
Page 26	Advert

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.



Welcome to our late summer edition, well I hope it will not be late like the last one was, but it will be late summer.

My telephone is often busiest just after a magazine mailing, and the last edition was no exception. Denis Baggley rang me to get Les Richmond's telephone number to talk about matters Tempestuous, it seems that Denis' sense of humour extends to having a dummy double petrol filler on the Tempest, i.e. one on each side of the car, and he is planning a second exhaust tail pipe, (at the other side) just to fool those who frequently admire his car at the many shows he takes it to. Just thought I'd share that with you.

All (few as they have actually been) attempts to reduce the amount of 'stuff' that collects in the lock-ups, have failed miserably this year. There are a few boxes of mum's stuff that were put there temporarily during her house move, and there were a few bits salvaged from the dismantling of my Kitten van last month. A fresh attempt really needs to be made this side of the autumn. So if there are any odd bits you are needing, like doors, windows gearboxes engines down to things like bonnet hinges, please get in touch. Better yet, feel free to make me an offer for the lot.

Update on that situation, it has sadly become clear that I cannot continue to keep the lock-ups on, one has to be given up before the autumn, and the other cleared out to the degree that I can actually get a car in it, in other words 90% of the parts in it have to go, that also needs to happen this year. I need help to achieve this, and my brother, encouraged by my wife, are keen to hire a skip (or three!). No, they are not joking, so I need help. There are many useful parts in there, not the Kitten Register's stock of new or reconditioned bits, but my own stock of some three decades collection of mainly Reliant parts, and some tools. Now would be a good time to get in touch. The number you require is 0141 8866117.

One of the problems is that there is no catalogue, there are many parts, from doors and windows, through engines and gearboxes to bumper end caps, and just about everything you can imagine in between. I am not giving it all away, the storage boxes that about 5% of it are in owe me £50 for a start, the shelving can go too.

Don't worry Adrian, the Rebel stuff is all earmarked to go to you, but again I need help getting it loaded up and away from, Renfrew to Brentwood.

Mum is settling into her new flat as I type, and hopefully I will get her stuff out of the lock-ups by September – oh jings, that is only next month!

It occurs to me that while this is called the Kitten Register, I devote pages and pages to Rebels, Foxes, most of the specials. But seldom Kittens. Concentrating as I have done over the years on the specials, just look at the front covers, the vast majority of them do not feature a Kitten. Now that was deliberate policy in the early days, after all, we all know what a Kitten looks like – or do we? I had a visit the other day from Bob Prentice – I do hope I have got his name right, anyway, he has a Scimitar SS1, and was thinking about a Kitten, having heard of them through the pages of "Slice" (The Scimitar and Sabre Owners Club's publication), but he had never seen one, so I had invited him to come and see some pictures, and had borrowed John Johnstone's keys to let him sit in a Kitten. He is one of those individuals who thinks he wants a car, and promises to subscribe to the Register when he gets one, but says that you do not see them advertised very often – well I told him, just subscribe and you will receive the magazine, adverts and all. It was really funny, I only get one or two faxes a month these days – not a hint, the film is expensive, but within an hour of Bob leaving, with a handful of magazines and an application form, the following arrived, and I don't even have Bob's address or telephone number -yet!

Dear Brian,

10th August 2004

Just a quick Fax - to confirm our recent telephone conversation. I'm afraid that horological interests have to take priority for the foreseeable future. Reluctantly therefore I must dispose of my two Reliant Kittens, as I no longer have either the space or the time to restore them.

Hopefully they will find new owners from the Register members, who have the facilities and time to put them back on the road. I have owned the yellow estate for about 16 years, so it is with great reluctance that I have come to the decision to let it, and its stablemate turquoise saloon go.

I have been a big fan of GRP cars for more years than I care to remember, My interest started when I read an article by Lord Strathcarron on the Motor I think it was, way back in the early sixties. He was the first president of the Jensen Owners club, and made the case for big unstressed engined cars, with non-rusting GRP bodies. Although fuel prices and environmental concerns have moved the goalposts, I still hanker after one of those beautiful cars. ~The Kitten is of course much more environmentally friendly and is a great car, with a different design philosophy.

I think it quite possible that I will want to run a Kitten at some future time, meanwhile I hope you can run an advert which will ensure that my cars go to a good home. "Best offers" is the appropriate wording I think.

Keep up the good work, you do a great job for the Register. The Mewsletter is always a good read, I rarely put it down before I have read cover to cover. I wish you every success for the future.

Yours Sincerely, Stan Hodgson - Preston

*What can I say? The fax had a picture of an aluminium bodied 4 door saloon Jensen, with the spare wheel behind the passenger's front wheel. In front of the front door (bit like a Daimler I thought) but very nice it looked. Bill Dick and George Burdett I know both have Jensen 541's. or was the 541R different from the 541? No, we are not going to digress too far, but I am sure that Bill would be open to offers, well I know that Brenda would be delighted if he reduced the fleet! I can just hear her now, "yes Brian, one a week between now and Christmas would be good" – honestly, what is a man to do? Actually I can talk, I only own two cars just now, first time in decades that that has been the case, and still I am under pressure about the lock-ups! That said, life is simpler, I think!!*

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There was a young man called John, a Kitten he wanted one morn - oh I can't be bothered just now, but I had a chuckle, this came from Duncan Bradford's web group early in August this year, John was about to acquire his first Kitten, and not only wanted to know how many were on the road, but how many of them were white!?! Doesn't want to know much does he? I could just pick a number, say 15, though a dozen or even 10 might be closer to the mark, and who would be able to contradict me? As one of my proof readers was heard to quip, Who cares? John obviously does, and if he ever chooses to subscribe, I might do some research. Ed. I rather suspect he would be better finding out about insurance.

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So, as I was saying, Kittens, well, what do you want to know that you don't know already? I am confident that Alan Osborn, our technical tweeks man is finding it harder and harder to write meaningful technical answers, as we seem to be asking less and less technical questions. So, what is going on? Are you really not having any bother? Have we really solved all the problems? Answers on a postcard please, or even a letter or telephone call will suffice.

On the stock items front, and yes, I am indeed coming under increased pressure to give that all up too, but I am not quite mentally ready to give in on that front. That said I am finding it more difficult to get into the attic these days, and that is where the majority of the bits are kept. We carry many of the difficult bits here. Steering racks, headlights, accelerator cables, refurbished and improved lower ball joints and the likes. I used to be able to boast front dampers and lower steering columns, even new wishbones, but sadly no longer.

Though moves are afoot to rectify some of those shortages.

As a result of the request for interested parties to send in deposits for some of these items, I received two cheques, not yet cashed, because at that level of interest it really is not worthwhile proceeding. We really are looking at a batch of 10 minimum, i.e. 5 pairs, and while I am prepared to use Register funds to put one, or possibly two pairs into stock Well, you can I am sure do the maths.

So, back to you, what are we to do? I do still have serviceable second hand lower steering columns, and yes John C, I have not forgotten your offer to recondition them for us, also Mike P. has offered to help resolve this situation, I will eventually get round to sending you a worn old unit.

Decisions decisions, and too much paperwork lying about needing my attention to make decisions which are clearly not seen as important by that vast majority of readers.

In other words, the ball is in your court, talk to me or nothing will happen. Ed.

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## **Rebel Round up**

Dear Brian,

August 2004

Ahh, I jumped the gun! Thomas Mitchell, oddly enough from Renfrew, took his recently acquired Rebel on holiday this month, to the north of Scotland, and once at Dingwall, decided that he may as well go for broke, and just "pop up" to John O' Groats while he was "in the area" Those of us who know the country can tell you that Dingwall is a couple of hours brisk motoring from John O' Groats, but he did it anyway.

So, he was (is I hope), going to write me the story, I may have moved the goal posts on him as regards the closing date for input, but I am curious, what is it that attracts Rebels to John O'Groats? That makes at least half a dozen of them that I know have been there, and there really is not a lot to see or do at John O'Groats.

Anyway, hopefully Thomas will tell all in time for the next edition.

Still on the subject of Thomas's Rebel, I got to spend half a day yesterday, resolving it's latest mechanical./ electrical problem – this Rebel is one of many that has been adapted to take a larger than standard battery. There are several good reasons for doing such a mod, not the least of which are the cost and capacity of the larger and more common battery types available. For half the money you can get almost twice the power. There are as many solutions to this particular situation as there are types of battery available.

A previous owner of this car had chosen to simply weld a bracket to the front and back of the original battery tray, bent to offer clearance to a slightly longer battery, which then sat on top of the edges of the angle sides of the original tray. I don't think that is a good idea, unless a spacer, possibly timber, is used to spread the load over the bottom of the battery.

Getting back to the two additional brackets, they were both drilled to allow the original battery clamp rods to be attached, and, because the new battery is both larger, and sitting higher than the original, the clamp angle bracket which used to sit on the edge of the battery, holding it both down and in (against the inner wing) at the same time, now has to run straight across the top of the battery, just holding it tight down on the top of the battery tray.

Whither because the modified arrangement was not holding the battery in against the inner wing was the cause of the failure that occurred, not being an engineer, I could not say with certainty, however, over time, the two bolts which secured the battery tray to the inner wing, had torn out ( or in to be more precise) from the fiberglass inner wing, and the piece of string used by a previous owner to secure the battery against the inner wing was not up to the job either. The result of all this Heath Robinson work was that tremendous strain was being bourn by the one remaining attachment between the battery tray and the chassis.

Thomas had even noticed that when cornering, the car accelerated on its own – because the battery was so loose that it put pressure on the throttle cable. Yes, I know that Rebel's do not have throttle cables originally, but this one has an 850 engine, with SU carb, fitted, and the simplest way to operate its throttle, is with a cable. This car is also one of only three that I know of that use the 850 gearbox as well as engine, and has the Rebel remote gear change fitted – clever stuff.

Anyway, back to our tale, the final failure which stopped the car, was that the bottom corner of the vertical angle that secured the battery tray to the chassis, next to the steering idler (early Rebels had the battery on the other side from later ones, the passengers side), broke off, and so not only was the battery then free to roam on its tray, about the engine bay at will, but there was no earth! And so the car could not be started.

My brother Alan was enlisted to repair the battery tray. It had had an odd arrangement of two bits of metal welded to it - it looked as though they might have been a previous owner's way of mounting a throttle return spring, or even mounting one end of the cable. Whatever, they were serving no useful purpose, were rusty, and had sharp edges, so they were consigned to history.

Alan had some light weight angle in his garage, and was able to have it cut and welded to the battery tray, and also to provide a large bit of stainless to act as a spreader plate inside the wheel arch, to stop the bolts pulling through the inner wing in future.

So far so good, and Alan was able to come up with the goods in less than 20 hours. He did not however have the time to clean and paint the job, but come on, be fair, it was a rush job.



The next morning another old friend of mind, Derek Stevenson, was coming round, and so he got roped in to helping fit the newly modified and repaired battery tray. Problems problems. Alan's stock angle was about an inch in each dimension, the original was about three quarters by half, and because of the clearances at the chassis where the steering idler mounted, there was not room for the extra material. Also the stainless plate was too big to fit inside the wheel arch – how could it be, there is masses of room in there – I thought – not so, the headlights are enclosed from the back, and the way they are moulded in, the inner wing comes in immediately in front of where the battery sits. Now we could have cut a slot in the fiberglass, but in view of the cracking already present, and the absence of a suitable tool to hand, it was deemed appropriate to find a hacksaw, and so modify both the plate, and the bottom corner of the angle. Duly done at local engineering shop – well, it was raining by now, and we did not have a hacksaw with us.

I was disappointed that we did not have time to paint the thing before assembly – after all we are not likely to take the time to remove the battery and tray in the future, just to paint it, an opportunity missed, perhaps if it had not been raining...

Anyway, all that took the better part of four hours - the proverbial two minute job! Worse yet, I should have spent that day finishing off this edition of the mag – but what is a man to do?

So, there's a different excuse for the mag being late!

**Brian**

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## **Foxes Den**

Fox Front Indicator Lights.

Dear Brian,

23rd June 2004

Some time ago one of my indicators stopped working – bulb blown – simple job I thought, but, I could not remove the lens, the fixing screws had corroded. Even after an application of Plus-gas they would not budge. I drilled the heads off and found the metal interior of the lamp had corroded away.

The next part of the puzzle was to find how the lamp to body fixings were accessed. After a bit of thought I realised that the lights must have been fitted before the headlights as the headlight hole is the only possible way to get at the fixings, as all the other panels are 'blind'.

Firstly, the front bumper moulding must be removed; there are four fixings, two large crosshead screws at the sides and two captive bolts accessed through the metal plate in the engine bay, which provides access to the radiator chamber. The headlights themselves are screwed to plastic housings and these are then riveted to the glass fibre at each corner. My simple job was about to take on another dimension!

The four rivet heads were drilled off and the complete headlamp assembly can then be removed, (no need to dismantle any of the lamp fixings screws etc.). This leaves the lamps hanging on their wires and the indicator fixings can then be removed through the resulting cavity. In my case, the nuts turned but sheared off. The earth wire to the lamp is connected to one nut on the lamp. The live connection is a bullet connector.

It was at this stage that I made the decision to replace both the lamps with new ones. The lenses were very faded and the MOT man had commented last year that I would have to put yellow bulbs in them by the next test.

I ordered the two lamps from Reliant Partsworld. These lamps incidentally are the same ones fitted to GTE Scimitars and much cheaper to buy from Partsworld than the usual Scimitar suppliers.

Before reassembly there are a couple of jobs worth doing whilst you have access to the otherwise inaccessible chambers that house the lamps. There are drain holes drilled through these to take water from the engine bonnet lid recesses and engine bay through to the inner wheel arch – trouble is water from the wheel arch can also flood into the chamber and in the case of the passenger side there is only a small drain hole in the base which will block with sediment. This could cause a build up of water that can only gradually seep out – hence the rusted light fitting. The solution is to slightly enlarge the holes through the GRP and push a short length of rubber fuel tubing through from engine bay to inner wheel arch. Seal round on the inside with silicone sealant to fix it – something Reliants should really have done originally.

The other job to do is to paint Waxoyl onto any exposed bolt heads, threads and metal parts now that you have the chance. I do this every time I have to remove a fixing and also coat the threads of any new part I fit. It really does make a huge difference if things have to be loosened in the future. Everything can now go back from whence it came. The rivets to hold the headlight housings to the GRP I replaced with the largest diameter stainless steel self tappers I could get. The rivets Reliant used originally have ‘spreading heads’ like curved flower petals on the inside. I don’t know what the correct name for these is, but I was unable to obtain them. Normal DIY rivets will pull through as the holes are about ¼” diameter.

I recently suffered a suspension failure on my Fox in the lower wishbone where it mounts to the chassis. This is the only part that cannot be painted satisfactorily due to close proximity to the chassis. Members would be advised to inspect theirs very closely. They are unobtainable from Partsworld, so are going to be a serious problem in the future.

I hope this article will be of help to members.

J.S. Whitfield. No 424.

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Dear Brian,

27/7/04

Had a rumble on the Fox camper. Investigations seemed to indicate that the only play evident was in the propshaft spline. So I changed this. What a job. Getting at the bolts on the front end of the prop on the Fox are even worst than the Rialto. What with the gearbox bracket, chassis tubular cross-member and on my example even the exhaust is in the way!

After 2 hours of cursing and swearing and not managing to get even one bolt done up on the new prop. I resorted to the angle grinder! A 3" x 5" hole cut in the top of the propshaft tunnel and all four bolts inserted and tightened in 20 minutes. A small section of fibreglass with a couple of self tappers and the carpet put back in place and you'd never know.

Unfortunately new prop and the rumble was still there. However I decided to visit my daughter in Sunderland. The rumble seemed hardly noticeable whilst cruising at 70mph (yes the new engine seems great). However as I entered Yorkshire the rumble suddenly became

much louder so I decided to pull in at the services. As I did so the rumble became an irregular clanking/knocking sound, which remained with the van in neutral and even coasting with the engine off.

I jacked the van up and checked for play in the prop - nothing, jacked each wheel and rotated them and checked for play nothing noticeable. So set off again. Clunk, clank, clunk, clank. So I pulled off the M1. This time I removed the road wheel and brake drum. There appeared to be grease escaping from round the axle bearing and yet there WAS play. So I called the RAC not wanting to risk another 110 miles and then a 220 mile return journey. An hours wait and the RAC just confirmed that it was the wheel bearing, so another hour's wait for a recovery truck. Unfortunately the angle of the ascent was such that the overhang on the back of the camper scraped the ground - have not yet checked to see if there is much damage.

2am and finally home. A couple of hours kip, then set off for Sunderland once more in the Fox pickup. The first trip of >20 miles I have done. However it went great, happily cruising at 75mph, touching 90mph downhill! and still returned nearly 50mpg. An afternoon with my daughter and then home again. 550 miles in two Foxes and very little sleep, am I shattered or what?

The Fox axle bearings, are they the same as Rialto? You wouldn't know Reliant part number by chance?

All the best Kerry

*Well of course I looked up the Fox parts book and discovered that all is not that straightforward! according to the Fox parts book it is a 29501, but someone has written in the margin "use 24170". I would guess that you might want to replace the oil seal at the same time, it is a 25954.*

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Still on Foxes, Tandy Campervans in particular, I had a telephone call yesterday, July 11th, from Tony Plowright, Tony obviously has a problem, he now has three camper vans sitting on his drive – only one of them a Fox Tandy, and I think I am right in saying that it is the only one actually on the road. I am sure one of the others is a 1930's one, and the third a converted ambulance – Orkney resident readers note – you are not alone! Anyway, Tony, having just acquired the Tandy, was looking for Duncan Bradford's telephone number, and I had no computer, it being in dock for a third new motherboard in 6 years, I am not impressed, but the supplier tells me that is not uncommon – hmm...

Anyway, the point was that I could not easily get access to Duncan's number, and while the code may be elusive, his number is or should be easily remembered – so in case I lose my computer again, here it is Duncan Bradford, Fox specialist and enthusiast, 01603 663311.

The other question Tony was asking, and I could not remember, though I thought not, was the answer to the question was there ever a handbook for the Fox Tandy? And did I have any? Well I do somewhere have copies of the Fox owners handbooks, and we do have copies of the Fox Parts manual, I don't think they ever got round to producing a Fox Workshop manual, but if you know differently, or if you have a Fox Tandy handbook, please let me know.

## Membership Matters

At the last count there were 316 people on the mailing list, take away the advertisers and other clubs with whom we exchange publications and there were 302 of us at the middle of August. We still happily seem to sign up on average one new subscriber a week. I have all but given up trying to predict when I will be able to produce a membership list, the database really needs a little more work to refine it – or closer to the truth, I ought to learn how to use it properly – one day.

One aspect of the membership list that has come to light, and that is regarding those few who have expressed the desire not to have their details included on it – should those people be entitled to a copy of everyone else's details? See, this job is not easy!

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Don't forget that Dave Price's kind offer to do something for the Kitten's 30th anniversary, I don't actually need to see 100 of you there, but well into double figures would be good. Dave is the man, talk to him. If you have any interest whatever is a get together **please complete and return the enclosed questionnaire.**

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## Liege Page

For the benefit of Phil Hallam, and others who may be interested, I can tell you that there are now 25 Liege that have passed their SVA inspections, Jim Spink & Alan Hall being the latest through, well done chaps. Geoff Hughes I understand has not only had his Liege at Liege, but has had it sideways on the Nurburgring when he was over there recently – well done Geoff, sounds like fun to me.

*Brian*

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## Tempest Update

I have it on the best authority that Mike has successfully completed the design of the remote gear change and is forging ahead with the remaining mods necessary to enable him to move forwards. Watch this space

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## Readers Letters

Dear Brian,

22 June 2004

My sincere apologies for the delay in replying to your request of. Oh I don't know when. It came to light as I tried to clear a corner of the lounge prior to visitors arriving from our French twinning village (We had a jolly weekend, tres entente cordiale!)

I must confess that I had previously deferred replying to you as I lacked the courage to tell you that I have abandoned my planned restoration of my Fox van. Two years standing in the marine atmosphere had taken its toll. I had hoped that Pete Vosper would take it on, but I think the scale of the task of getting the Kitten I passed on to him back on the road has taken all of his time and energy. I reluctantly passed the Fox on to a commercial spare parts dealer in Plymouth.

I am therefore Reliantless and will not continue with my membership of the Register. Please accept the enclosed cheque as a donation. Thanks for your past work and my best wishes for the continued success of the Register.

Bob Bridger - Plymouth.

*Now this is where my failings come to light, obviously thank you Bob for taking the time to return the form and keep us posted, and thanks too for the donation. But I really ought to send him a copy of this edition to let him see the acknowledgement, however if I set his "current member" flag to "Y" now, to get the system to produce an address label for him when I do the next label print run, how will I remember to re-set it afterwards? I'll try to get it right – more things to try and remember!*

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*Now a collection of correspondence which I have received in recent months from Kerry Croxton, some I should have used in previous editions, and so some of the information may be out of date now – apologies to all concerned, my fault, not Kerry's.*

*Kerry has yet to learn the no word, and as a result has now in his possession more Reliants that I have had at one time, more than one for each day of the week! I really do not know whither to offer him my congratulations or my condolences! It is good that so many vehicles which may otherwise had an uncertain future, have been saved, and in many cases are back on the road – well done Kerry.*

Dear Brian,

27/4/04

Had a letter from Telford ROC member Brian Norman (who actually lives in Liskeard, Cornwall!) who wants to sell his Kitten saloon plus spares. It is brown and has an interesting reg. RAY 691R. He is open to sensible offers.

I also had an Email from someone selling a Rebel van (with side windows but no engine) for £75.

My latest acquisition is quite a smart motor - far too good to break for spares, which was the premise on which it was originally offered to me.

Instead I chose to buy another engine to fit into the camper. I already had a good standard 850 but for the sake of originality and extra torque I wanted a yellow top. Was offered two from different sources, both £100 - twice the normal going rate for a Reliant engine, however in the grand scheme of things and the fact it was for the camper I decided it was worth spending the money. I had seen the engine running, indeed watched the Rialto it was in being written off at the banger racing at Cannock! It is now fitted in the camper and seems to run well. I put a new clutch in for good measure too. Shall tax it next month ready for National.



The Rebel estate is now ready for respray (have finished sanding it down and have been given a spray kit). I have also recently been given another Rebel estate, albeit in sections. I have a nearside front wing, dashboard, all three doors. Will be collecting the rear wings other front wing, steering box, rad and glass in due course.

Regards Kerry

Dear Brian,

17/07/04

I went to see the chap (Eric Cox) in Broseley, Telford with the Fox camper today. It is a Firecrest he purchased from Southampton for a bargain price of £350 complete with new tyres and more interestingly a very finely crafted pair of new door window surrounds the previous owner had had made by a friend. I have asked if Eric can find out if he will make any more and if so how much. My camper is in desperate need of some new window surrounds.

The chap also has a very late Rebel estate which he has offered me for nothing, could not quite bring myself to utter the "No" word so another car on the way, just got to borrow a trailer. It would only have been scrapped if no-one had taken it.

The Rebel appears complete, though the driver's do is suffering from delamination. The chassis outriggers are rotted but the main members appear sound. The 750 engine turns over. At present the car is covered in moss and is filled with junk. It has not been used since 1993 but was not laid up for any reason other than it was surplus to requirements. It is interesting that not only has it been shod with 13" wheels but has front disc brakes!

It was well used in the past having covered 93k miles and toured the continent, even towed a caravan.

The owner is not a club member of any of the Reliant clubs. I have brought to his attention the Kitten reg and ROC. He may join one or other.

He also has a Bond Minicar MkA undergoing restoration.

Regards Kerry

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18/7/04

Just to let you know the progress. Have done the fibreglass repairs on rear wheel arch, sill and rear wing. Next to start on door and door frame.

Regards Kerry

*I did suggest to Kerry that he ought to be considering the NO word, and this response arrived shortly after -*

Too late, the Rebel estate I am collecting on Thursday will be the 8th 4-wheeled Reliant. I have:- 25th July 2004

1985 Tandy Fox Camper van B530 PLR  
1984 Fox Pickup/estate/van B177 EVK  
1976 Kitten estate RAC 587R  
1976 Kitten estate PRW 24R

1968 Rebel estate YFK 550F  
1966 Rebel saloon FJA 492D  
1965 Rebel saloon DAF 813C

plus the 1974 Rebel estate arriving shortly.

Regards Kerry

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Update on the Rebel situation received from Kerry on August the 14th

Just to let you know that my Rebel saloon FJA 492D (that had been written off) went through its MOT on Thursday and is now back on the road. Went to a classic car show today in the Rebel and once again it generated much interest, many people having never seen one before. It made me smile listening to the chap in the Austin A40 convertible parked next to me saying how rare his car was with only 100 left on the road. How many Mk1 Rebels are left I wonder! (Only 4 that I know of off the top of my head, Ed) Or for that matter Tandy Foxes, (about 15 of them according to our records, Ed.) (Eric Cox from Broseley, Telford had come along in his, and had a constant stream of people showing an interest).

It was a good show in the grounds of a National Trust property, with about 50 cars and 15 motorbikes on display.

All the best, Kerry

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Lance Peak, our man in Silsden, recently received a £40 penalty and £18 back tax for failure to display a current tax disc on his Kitten, and for not declaring the car as being off the road, i.e. completing and returning the SORN declaration. This even though the car is sitting in his drive waiting for a head gasket to be replaced. So the moral is, if your tax disc expires, it is **absolutely essential** that you do not ignore the reminder, you have to do something, either re-tax the car, or declare it SORN, the penalty for doing neither is a MINIMUM £1,000 fine, though they do normally, as they did in this case, let you away with paying the un-paid tax, and giving you a warning together with the fixed penalty of £40, providing you pay there and then, but you still have to declare the vehicle as being off the road – doing nothing is no longer an option! You have been warned.

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

Dear Brian & readers,

10/06/04

“Humps Hammer Heap”

For the second time in two years I have suffered a broken shocker mount on the rear axle of my Reliant.

I did hit a number of traffic humps the other day. Is this a “common Kitten occurrence?” I have to find a welder to do the repair.

My car was re-taxed and insured this week, and is now off the road due to the off side rear shocker coming adrift. o

Have any other readers had similar problems? And how do we prevent the problem recurring?

Regards, Les Gill - Merseyside

~~~~~

## Getting Technical - Steering Racks

At the risk of labouring the topic, here are some notes on steering racks.

Those received for reconditioning seem to have been lubricated by one or more of the following.

Nothing.

Brown water (sucked in by the action of the bellows past what is described in the workshop manual as a "dust seal").

An emulsion of oil and water.

A very small amount of black sludge.

This is very sad. Properly – even moderately fed with oil – the assembly would outlast the rest of the vehicle.

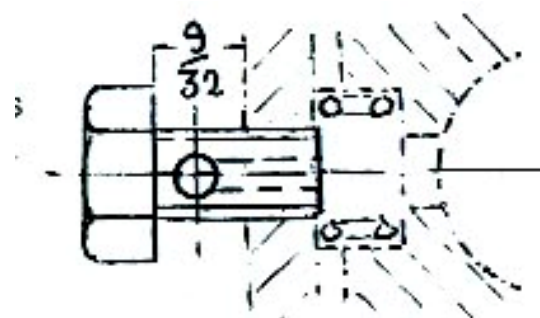
I have kept that on my car oiled by occasionally removing the end plate and shims, giving the drivers side of the track rod a twitch to separate the pinion adjuster button from the rack, and squirting oil through the spring and central hole until it wouldn't have any more, hoping that it would be enough.

As it turned out "Yes", but being tired of this performance, I decided to do something about the problem. The accompanying drawing shows what, and it works well. Every half dozen pumps, detach the oil can to check the level. The drainage is very positive, and so is its end.

By experiment, the complete assembly was found to be filled by 8 fluid ounces of oil. The 1/3 pint (6 2/3 fluid ounces) recommended accords well with the oil level from the use of this fitting.

There are alternatives. The tapped hole (5/16 UNF or 8mm fine) can be simply closed by a screw after the oil has been fed through from an oil can having a short right angled bend at its spout. This is slower.

Or, a setscrew can be modified as shown. Simply wind the screw out until the oil hole clear, squirt as required, and close up again. An oil can with a rigid spout is needed, and more dribbles are likely, but the oil spilt will be clean and recoverable.



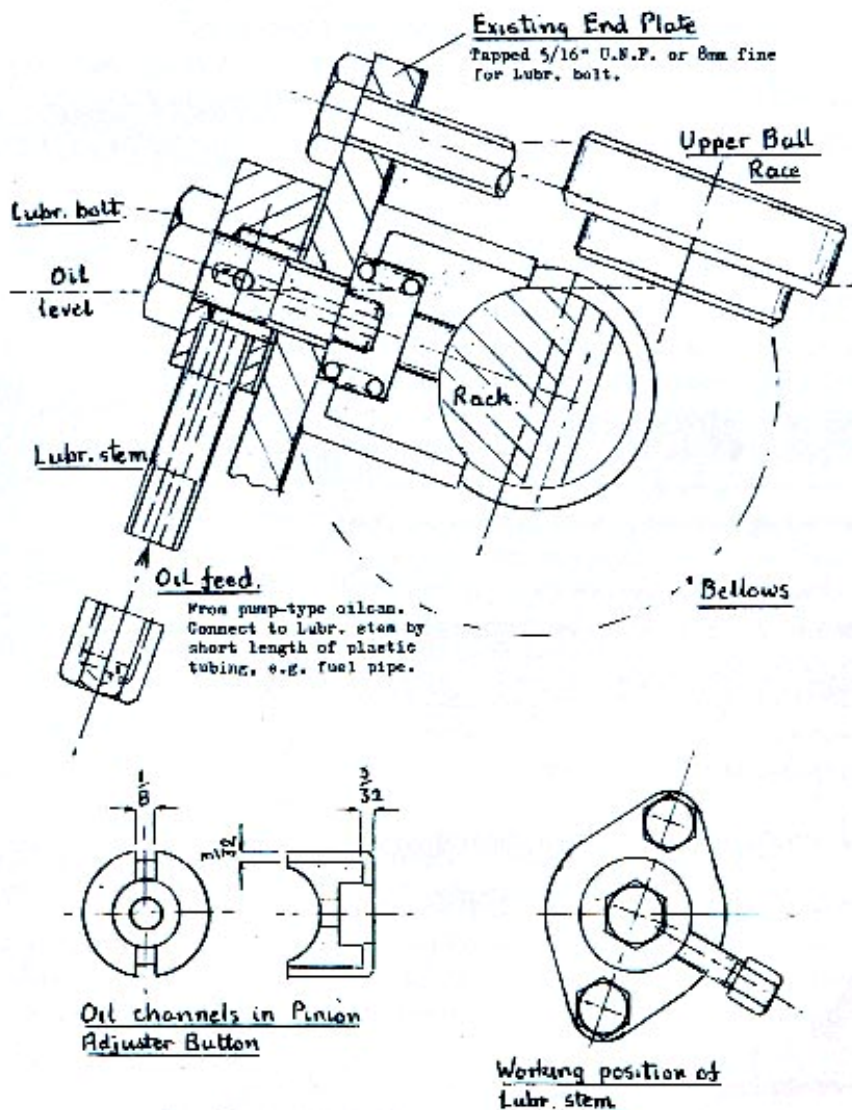
Both alternatives will result in a lower oil level than that given by the more complicated device, but it will be enough. Vehicle movement will wet the upper ball race, and a good dab of oil on the lower universal joint on the steering column and on the "dust seal" will keep the water out. Once per month will do.

The oil channels in the pinion adjuster button are essential. They don't have to be rectangular. Vee-grooves cut with a junior hacksaw (new blade) would be O.K. Whilst the button is out, tap a central hole 5/16" B.S.W. for a short setscrew. It's helpful in stripping and assembling. Nylon expands about five times as much as the aluminum alloy casing. In hot weather leave it in the freezer whilst you have a coffee. It will go in easier.

A. Shaw August 2004

*As ever I am deeply indebted to Alan for his technical expertise, time and effort. A4 versions of the drawing are available from the Editor, just send an s.a.e. with a brief note saying "Steering rack mod drawings", and I will get them off by return. Ed.*

### Lubrication fitting for Reliant Kitten / Fox Rack & Pinion steering gear



Scales 2/1, 1/1.  
(1/4, 1/2 after reduction)

AL. 22-09-04

## Sales & Wants

For Sale: A pair of Kittens, a saloon and an estate. Best offers, contact Stan Hodgson for details

For Sale: Rebel window frames in good condition, two sets, one set still attached to the doors.

For Sale: A set of 4 Kitten wheels, blasted and painted, with new (never used) tyres. Yours for £100 plus carriage, or buyer collects.

For Sale: Tempest kit No1 MNC140P, yes the first John Box Tempest kit. Never finished. Rebuilt in 2002 after standing 15 years. Needs interior, tidying, and documentation sorting out. Need space. Less than the kit cost at just £1,500.00. Steve Campbell

For Sale: 2 1977 Kitten saloons in the Edinburgh area, one blue and one yellow, spares or repair though both are believed to be sound. Contact Hall Mossman

For Sale: Kitten DL salon 1978 London Red (resprayed) SS exhaust, four new ball joints, Kenlow fan £500 Contact Keith White

For Sale: Scimitar SE6B 1980 Carmen Red fawn velour auto. Essex 3 litre SS exhaust, power steering electric windows. £1,500 Contact Keith White

For Sale: Kitten estate for spares or repair, or will break, contact Douglas

For Sale: Sadly a prospective buyer of the Salamander advertised in here last time, came to look at the car, said he would return to collect and pay for it, then left a note a few weeks later to say he had been, but no one was in – always best to make firm arrangements and not to turn up on spec. So the Salamander is still for sale – unless the individual concerned – not a subscriber – has returned by arrangement meantime. Contact Robin He also has a Robin looking for a home.

For Sale: 1977 Kitten Estate in yellow (advertised incorrectly last time due to my failing eyesight!) Newly MOT'd. Unleaded head, alloy wheels, electronic ignition, new front shock absorbers, stainless exhaust, Offers to David Wright

Fro Sale: Reliant Rialto. Mot till September '04 contact John Stork for details

A rare opportunity to acquire a Salamander, Mr. Faulkner

Free to a good home: two Kitten estates, one has a stainless exhaust and recent ball joints. Contact John Stork The cars are at Glenelg on the west coast of Scotland near the Isle of Skye.

Wanted: Bruce Jones is in need of a Kitten heater blower unit, if you can help please ring him

Wanted: Rob from Marlow needs a black Kitten driver's seat for his car,

Wanted: A clock for a Reliant dashboard. I know that Scimitars had them, but I have never seen a Reliant one in a Rebel, Kitten or Fox. However, one of our number, and I did not make a note of his name, the number you require however is



## Epilogue

I wish I could claim that the inclusion of the colour flyer (just over a year late!) indicated that I was finally getting on top of the paperwork. Sadly that is not the case, Moira asked what was in the cardboard box on top of the rack in the porch the other day, (the new cat had jumped up there for the first time, and so it came to light) and I hadn't a clue, so had a look to see, and low and behold, the flyers that I had spent hours searching for in vain over a year ago were uncovered – ah well, that is one less box in the house.

Lessons learnt? Well, I am not sure, do things at the time I guess, but the simple fact is that I need to be better organised. Now whether that means taking on less, or just working harder / more efficiently, I am really not sure. But “must do better” would be fair comment.

I had an interesting call in August from one Linda, not quite clear what her surname was, anyway, she rang to ask for help in finding funding for the restoration / storage of her partner's collection of Reliants. Apparently the council were putting them under pressure to remove them from their garden. I was not hopeful of being able to solve that one, but did provide them with the number to enable them to contact the “Awards for All” folk. I doubt very much if they will qualify, and given that they are not subscribers and I do not have an address – anyway, I have asked that we are given details of the 4 wheeled Reliants that they have, and will report progress as and when.

On the “Let's get Brian organised front”, even here, in my “office” things are getting more difficult as the years go by. I still have for example, a number of copies of some of the early editions of the magazine, the old A4 style ones. So many in fact that the space they take up has been earmarked for a more up-to date purpose (quite what that is I m not sure, but it now falls into the category of “things untouched this year”, which I am told makes it fair game for disposal – just who is in charge here I sometimes wonder? This is all to do with the amount of stuff, there's a good adjective, stuff! that we had to re-home when mum moved earlier this year – I am informed that I am not going to be allowed to put my family in a similar situation. Yes of course I pointed out that I am never going to move from here, save in a wooden box, but even then, especially then, they (my beloved family) have made it abundantly clear that they do not want left to sort everything out “It will all go in a skip” I am being told. So, if you would like any of the early editions, they will go on a first come first served basis for just – oh more decisions, do I say 50p a copy plus postage, or a pound a copy delivered? Something like that anyway, three for £2.00 sounds good. Get in touch now if you would like some, most of editions 1 to 27 I think it is in there.

Moving swiftly on, I am told there will be a garage sale on the weekend of the 18th / 19th of September, in an effort to clear out some of my bits and pieces – do feel free to come along, or even send a list of parts you might be interested in – that said, I failed miserably to deal appropriately with the Rebel guys wishes and desires earlier this year – perhaps I will be better organised this time?

Not for the first time I am running late. The front covers have been here for a week now, and I am out of time. It is still August – just but by the time this goes to the printers – they usually take a week to ten days – and gets packed and out. You will not receive it by my lock-up clear out weekend. So I must press on – no time for proof reading – oops! So I hope you'll be understanding. I do not doubt that I will cringe at the result but there we are – compromise strikes again.

My apologies to Alan Osborn, who has been my most regular and faithful contributor over the years – he did provide an article for this edition but I am out of time and space – perhaps next time if you have raised any technical points this time around.

I have not even had time to check if all the adverts are still current so just bear with me please. I'll update them properly next time.

So that's it, lubricate liberally things mechanical and I will talk to you again when the nights are longer.....

**Brian**

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