

Reliant Kitten Register

NEWSLETTER 59
January – February 2005



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 62

Rebel parts stock

Kitten / Fox parts stock

Rebel alternative parts I

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 this time should be a Jimp. Now we do have a small number of Jimp owners in the Register. Peter Kulka, who was responsible for producing them, used our services to find one a couple of years or so back, but sadly he did not join our number. Speaking of numbers, there were only 57 of them made, not the larger figure that we used to suspect. What he did tell me was that they used the Kitten chassis, but he also was adamant that they were galvanised, which led me to think they would in fact have been made on the Fox chassis – we never did resolve that – more research needed. Anyway, thanks to Bob Neal for the picture.

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

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Hello and welcome to our first edition of 2005. I started this in November, then life got in the way!

Listen, it really is not important, but my memory, poor as it is, usually remembers things from decades ago, like my Jowett Javelin was LGB 750, ignition key FA 517, chassis number E2PD21955D, things like that I remember fine, that was however over thirty years ago. I have this memory from even further back of an odd sentence which was supposed to help me remember something, possibly mathematical, and I can remember the sentence, but not what it was to remind me of – can you help? The sentence was “Some officers have curly auburn hair till old age”.

While I am in totally irrelevant mode (as far as Reliants are concerned) I don't suppose anyone has a taped copy of the version of HMS Pinafore with Kevin Kline and Angela Lansbury that I could have a loan of? One of my failures as a parent has been to instill much culture in my daughter, it was only thanks to Michael Bentley that we finally got her to watch the Sound of Music a few years ago, (she actually enjoyed it!) and she reels back in horror any time I suggest we might go and see anything by G & S, but that version was almost as funny as the original, in a modern way, (I thought of Robin Hood, Men in tights, when I saw it) and I just thought.....

Moving swiftly on then..

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Rebel Round up

Hi Brian,

23/10/2004

The Rebel, as you know, is not fitted with hazard flashers. A ready made device is available from Holden but is rather expensive, about £55 incl vat and p&p. This omission has probably been rectified by others but if not you may be interested in my solution. The only new parts are a flasher unit, 12volt 4 pole change-over relay, in-line 10amp fuse, single pole switch, red indicator unit and a small box. The box houses the relay but may be omitted. The original flasher unit is unsuitable in this application so a flasher unit from a scrap Mk 1 Fiesta was used. This is suitable for both normal and hazard functions. The circuit is attached.

There is only one modification to existing wiring and that is to insert one pole (R1/1, normally closed) of the relay in series with the supply to the flasher unit. This has to be earthed. All other wiring is added to the original. When the hazard switch is operated the relay is energised and supplies 12 volts directly to the flasher unit, bypassing the ignition switch. Relay poles R1/2 and R1/3 provide a supply to the left and indicators respectively. The four pole R1/4 lights an indicator mounted in a suitable location on the dashboard.

All components were obtained from Maplins and cost around £10, excluding the flasher unit.

The construction of this unit was hastened when the engine died on joining the M4, in rush-hour, and the hard shoulder was coned off!!

Regards, John Unwin 411

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Membership Matters

I keep meaning to do things, some of which I just never seem to get round to, the adage of well intention paved roads springs to mind, one of those things is to impart information. Once a year you all have an excellent opportunity to communicate with me, when your renewal notice has to be returned to me, and many folk take the opportunity, and it is appreciated, though I do not often acknowledge the fact, nor do I often pass the information on – much of it is personal, but every so often a wee gem arrives, like for example Nigel Wescott, our man in Hullavington in Wiltshire for example, tells me that his Kitten is still running, and that it covered 12,300 miles in 2004 – so now we know!

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The Kitten 30th anniversary event

Dave is the man, talk to him if you have not already done so, and are interested.

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Liege Page

Hi Brian,

November 2004

With regard to John's comment about the carb jetting "out of the box" possibly being incorrect (a good pun from someone with that surname). Yes, I completely agree. The Weber 32 ICH was used on a whole range of cars, many of them Fords, from Fiesta 950s right up to the Transit van. There was also a differently orientated version for the Fiat 850 Sport. All of these vehicles would have different mixture requirements. There were at least two different venturi sizes (23mm and 25mm) within the range.

It is essential to have a new carb set up properly using the correct equipment, by someone who knows what they are doing. Failing to do this may result in severe engine damage such as detonation and holed pistons. What I should have mentioned in my previous letter that you published in the last Mewsletter, is that after I fitted the Weber to my car, initial road testing made it obvious that my car was running too weak.

As soon as I was able, I took it to Chatsworth Motor Spares at Chesterfield. CMS is a carburettor specialist workshop owned by Eike Wellhausen, who very successfully builds and races Classic Jaguars. They checked the mixture using a Sun Diagnostic Tester, and confirmed that all the jets were too small. They asked me if I wanted the car set up for power (slightly richer) or economy (weaker). I replied that I could do with all the horsepower they could find. The carb was rejetted, which only took about twenty minutes and cost £35 all in.

I asked what the new jet sizes were and they told me, quite rightly, that it was pointless me passing on this info to anyone else, as each individual car will be slightly different (the jets are fixed, unlike an SU, so the owner can't tweak the mixture, other than the idle circuit). My engine is modified from standard in any case. It was satisfying to know that a tuned Reliant 850 flows more air than a "one litre" Ford Fiesta, hence the need for bigger jets.

I can concur to some extent with John's statement regarding performance, although I can't make relevant comparison with the usual Reliant single SU setup as my car was originally

fitted with twin SUs on Liege manifolds. I found there is no noticeable difference in top speed but certainly the economy has improved, as has the lower end and especially mid range performance. My inlet manifold is performance modified (as per Hans Kirimaa's "Rebel Racers" which does include transferring the carb fixing studs to a position 90 degrees away from the original.) Simpler still to use an early 700 or 750 Reliant inlet manifold as they had them that way anyway for the Zenith carb those engines used, Ed. This puts the float chamber to the front of the car and the linkage nearest passenger footwell. I have a vent pipe from the float chamber to the underside of the car, in fact I just re-used the overflow pipe from the SU setup and the idle is actually very good. It is quite likely that the single manifold still ultimately flows less air than my "original" twin manifolds did, but the likely advantage is that the air / fuel mixture is now more evenly distributed, giving a good compromise of power and economy.

Overall I prefer the car with the Weber, particularly as it gives much better engine bay access (this is in the Liege remember), however Eike Wellhausen told me that my carb is quite possibly too restrictive for my particular engine and that a 32 ICH with the 25mm venturi, rather than 23mm, might give more power at the top end. If I can find one I might try it, which of course would mean rejetting again.

With regard to carb icing, I understand the optimum inlet air temperature is 40C, after some previous road testing with a temperature probe and a test meter fitted, I discovered that my inlet temperature was a lot higher than this figure. My car now has a 70mm diameter cold air pipe from the nosecone, which was fitted last summer with the twin SUs fitted. My cold weather mod is to block it with a rolled up carrier bag, this has so far been enough to prevent icing as engine bay heat then prevails, bearing in mind that I have a 4 branch tubular exhaust manifold which probably radiates a lot more heat than a single downpipe, and the Liege engine compartment is a lot smaller than a Reliant one.

Hope this clears up a few things!

Paul Wheatley

It certainly does thank you Paul. I can honestly say that I don't know why Reliant do not use the Weber carb instead of the SU these days, Ed.

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Still on the Liege front, I read with interest that Simon Robson, Tweetie Pie's master, is endeavouring to stimulate interest amongst fellow Liegists to participate in a Le-Jog towards the end of April this year. I must keep an eye out for them as they pass through Scotland, could be some more great photo opportunities. The big worry is how our publication dates fall in with this kind of thing – more next time – if it is not too late then!

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2004 The Quiz

My thanks to Duncan Bradford, the winner of last years Quiz, for being prepared to continue the tradition of providing us with this years – congratulations to this years winner -: Well, unless something arrives between this going to print and arriving through your letter box, there have, as at 18th January, been no responses. More decisions, do I delete the answers and give you more time?

Answers:-

- 1] A cold
- 2] Regal
- 3] Rebel [First four-wheeler]
- 4] Dustbin lorry
- 5] Kitten [Kit next to ten]
- 6] Sabre [from Sabra, the Israeli national cactus emblem adopted for the car].
- 7] Fox [foxing = water-discolouration of paper].
- 8] Carmel [car(a)mel, another Israeli Reliant model].
- 9] A sponge [Arguably a sieve could be used in freezing weather!].
- 10] Ant [in America an ant is called an emmet]
- 11] Liege [check in a dictionary!]
- 12] A hole

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Readers Letters

Dear Brian,

October 2004

I thought that I would just let you know that I have sold my red Reliant Kitten, WOB 163T, so I will not be renewing my membership next year (2005).

I sold the car cos the chassis had gone, the Kitten had 98,000 miles on the clock (almost run in then Michael, Ed) and has been a good car for the past ten years. I was sad to see it go.

I sold it to John Cartwright from Sheffield and he is going to do it up and put it back on the road.

So that is the news from Sheffield, all the best with the Register Brian.

Michael Edwards - Sheffield - No. 501

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Dear Brian,

4-9-04

Please find enclosed photos as promised. They were taken on 2nd Sept 2004, and so they are still quite warm.

On the front view you can see the two Perspex bubbles on the doors (wind deflectors) no more draughts or rain, even on motorways.

The 'scrapes' on the nearside door and rear are reflections of the sun onto the parking lines which spoil those pictures to a degree, not to be confused with my state of panic when I first saw the pictures and legged it round to the garage to double check. My heart rate was definitely up short term – but all was fine. Phew!

The colour is Honda Chianti Red Pearl. Volcano Red is another name I have heard for it, but Chianti is what is on the bill for the van, for that is what it is, not an estate. It was stripped down to nothing and then resprayed. Then it was re-assembled by a muppet with a

tool box, it took me weeks to re-strip it and re-assemble it properly. The back door had to be done again. I was advised to take it back, which I did, but they only screwed up something else, so I decided to D.I.Y. Much better and more satisfying.

I still have painting to do as I wish it to be uniform all over. The interior and the engine bay are the same colour and the engine bay is scrupulously clean.

I know the rear lights are on upside down, but they work. They put the door internals on back to front, upside down, and in the wrong doors as well, so whilst they work, they stay.

The wheels are originals – you know – optional extras. Cosmic Gemini 5J's painted and polished.

Kate – SHP 219R is a 1976 Kitten Van with side windows. It has done but 31,000 miles and a bit, It had its 29th birthday in October, and as it says on the back window, it still goes MEEEEEEOW.

Len Gardner (614) - Kent

Thank you Len, my apologies to everyone, that letter should of course have been in edition 60, when Len's car featured on the front cover – I would say that one day I will get organised, but I think by now we all know the likelihood of that happening! However I am going to try and anticipate a question that I feel sure I will be asked as a result to Len's letter, and that is where did you get the Perspex draught excluders Len? Well, I asked the question, and Len tells me he bought them from a Reliant dealer for £10. He was there for something else, saw them on a shelf, the last pair of course, but now you know.

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Dear Brian,

11-11-2004

You may remember I was trying to decide whether or not to have the engine for my Kitten rebuilt, well I finally went ahead, which was just as well, because when it was stripped, my mechanic found two broken piston rings, a scored crankshaft, and the bores, although these did not seem to be worn much, were actually oval when checked by machine. In the end we put in new pistons and liners, reground the crank with new bearings, converted the head to unleaded, replaced the oil pump with a Mini one (Midland Mini Centre 01217771961, Part No GLP142 Direct Replacement), rebuilt the carb. finally fitting the float lid with overflow obtained from Burlen Fuel Systems (01722412500) who were very helpful. In fact I sent the order off with a cheque on the Wednesday and the parts arrived on the Saturday which I think is pretty good service. The float lid used is Part No AVE 600.

As well as the engine the radiator and heater were cleaned, clutch sorted, and new oil seals in the gearbox. I think that's about all the oily bits that were done and as you can appreciate, it was quite a thorough job.

After all that I finally started on the bodywork. I completely stripped the paint back to bare fibreglass before priming and top coating in Deep Brunswick Green cellulose. Although the finish is not perfect I am very pleased with the improved looks of the car. As always with these jobs it snowballed, and I decided to remove all lights, handles etc. instead of masking them for the respray, most of which I have replaced with new items. Other jobs done during the respray were: -

Windscreen removed to allow a new front section of headlining to be fitted; a second hand windscreen rubber was obtained from Rossefield Motors (01274544009) which was in excellent condition to replace the original that was split at the corners. Unfortunately the filler strip that came with the rubber was serviceable but very hard so I bought a new filler strip from Woolies (01778347347 Part No 358) which was an exact match to the original.

The inner and outer weatherstrips at the bottom of the windows on both doors were replaced again supplied by Woolies (Part No 255). These I found to be a good substitute for the rather expensive Reliant ones, and the only problem I found was that whereas the Reliant ones on the outside are pop riveted, on the Woolies ones the tongue was not wide enough for this, so I stuck them on with panel adhesive, which worked very well. The inner strip can be pop riveted as original.

The new front headlining although it matched the pattern of the rear half the colour was not quite the same so to make a good job I sprayed the whole of the headlining with Vinylcote Light Grey available from Woolies (Part No373).

The rear fog and reversing lights were repositioned above the bumper to avoid being subjected to too much road spray.

On checking the wiring from the body into the rear door I discovered that underneath the insulation tape wrapping, the cable insulation was badly cracked with years of opening and closing the door.

I have now replaced all the cables routing them through corrugated PVC sleeving which should help to prevent this happening in the future.

All cables, connections and sleeving etc. which I found impossible to obtain locally, were bought from Vehicle Wiring Products (01159305454) whose service I found to be excellent.

On removing the rear wiper I found the rubber sleeve under the nut to be split, I remember this being mentioned in a recent Mewsletter. I overcame this problem by using a large tap washer super glued to a firm plastic (from an old water tank) disc for the nut to tighten onto and then a thin soft rubber gasket super glued to the tap washer to seal onto the bodywork. All these filed out to suit the upper spindle. I found this to match the original and to work very well.

To avoid any problems in the future I have replaced all fixings for lights, handles, mirrors, bumpers etc. with stainless steel ones.

I think that is about all so far and Kitten is back on the road. The only job still to do is to sort out the seats; I will let you know what I do with these, and I will let you have some photos when I have finished the film.

All the best for now Malcolm Rush (352) - Whitchurch

Malcolm, thanks for the update, I quite agree with your comments about Burlen Fuel Systems, they are the best in the business, and very helpful. I look forward to the pictures, and yes dear reader, I have rung all of the above mentioned suppliers to check that the telephone numbers are correct! Ed.

Dear Brian,

30 Oct.

I recently put my Kitten Estate through an MOT. (A friend of mine said "Where do you take it – Toys R Us?"). It failed on wheel bearings and a brake hose. So, an easy repair. What the chap did say was he was advising me that the front damper units were weak and would need replacing soon. Oh dear. Dear being the appropriate word as I priced them at £194 a pair (makes our ones at £150 a pair, delivered, with adjustable spring seats and damping rates, look like a real bargain then, Ed).

However, I also own a Triumph Herald which recently had some Spitfire front springs fitted. Whilst this was being done the bloke at the Triumph place in Warrington where I go, discovered that one of the front dampers was totally non-operational, so he fitted two new springs to two new Herald damper units. At £70 a pair (without the springs). Some difference. He saved me the old unit that was functional, which, just out of curiosity I compared with a Kitten unit. The upshot of all this is that a rough visual comparison suggests not much difference. The Herald unit is about half an inch shorter, and the springs will be stiffer (maybe no bad thing). I haven't tried this theory out yet – *why ever not? Ed* – I will next year. But I thought I'd chuck the idea in to everybody for perusal. What's the Yankee expression – lets run it up the flagpole and see if anyone salutes it!

Next thing – topically, bearing in mind the time of year – is heaters. I have a mate with a Kitten saloon and his heater is at least twice as good as mine. Which is rather annoying given the fact that he has done absolutely nothing with his unit, it just works well, full stop. I on the other hand have had my unit completely in bits earlier this year, and couldn't spot anything obviously wrong. The heater rad was A1, flushed out vigorously and supplied with gallons of hot water (92 degree thermostat) but the air output was warm(ish). A word I like is serendipitous, and it describes accurately a discovery I made whilst attending to something else. As we all know the temperature of the heater output in a Kitten, in common with many up-market cars, is controlled by mixing hot air and cold air, which is then hoofed out of the heater into the car.

Now then, I had removed the bonnet from the car, and was standing in front of the radiator grill looking back along the top of the engine. The cold air elephant's trunk was also removed, and Eureka! Purely by accident I was able to see right into the heater inlet. I noticed that the heater rad was exposed as was the temperature control flap, which was one third open. I checked in the cabin, and saw that the temperature control lever was in the hot position, but the cold air flap was definitely still open. Not wanting to take the whole unit apart (again), as I was involved in other task, I embarked on the temporary expedient of the skilful employment of a long self tapper.

Remove the circular attachment that accepts the rear of the cold air trunk on the bulkhead, push the cold air flap right up till it's tight shut, and whiz the screw (having drilled a small hole first) through the bulkhead so the bit of the screw that protrudes out the other side holds the flap shut. It's obvious how to do it when you get right up to it, and it's not really as crude as it sounds. Anyway, crude or not, no cold air now gets in to dilute what is now 100% forced through the heater rad. Brilliant result, hot air output from all three level vents (remember to take it out next spring) So lads, pull your trunks off and give your hole an eyeball, and you may discover that you too have a wonky flap!

Stay warm out there. Bye for now Mike Bercroft – 669 - Chorlton

Thanks for that Mike, now, this business of front dampers, I remember telling someone recently that Herald ones will not fit, so if you can prove otherwise that will be interesting. That

said, I could be getting confused here, you see Rebel front suspension is Triumph based, Spitfire / Vittesse, wishbones, uprights and stub axles, wheel bearings bottom trunnions and top ball joints, but not the dampers. Could it really be after two decades of running these wee cars I am about to learn something new? Watch this space. No, John Box would know about that, he used to work for Triumph, I really can't believe that the Herald unit will do the job, Ed. (I checked with John, they don't, the spring mounting ring is in the wrong place, Ed.) Meantime, by the time you read this, we should have Kitten / Fox adjustable front dampers in stock.

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Dear Brian,

21/12/04

Many thanks for sending out a subs renewal form with the latest Mewsletter. Unfortunately I will not be renewing my membership this time. As you know, over the course of the past year or so, both Rebels have had to move on to other homes. This was simply due to there not being enough hours in the day, and I didn't want to watch them deteriorate before my eyes! I was particularly sad to see KRC 161K (to RKR member John Unwin) go, as it was in such an original state, and I doubt that many of them are these days. But the upside is, I have since seen 'Rosie' (the blue one John Unwin now has custody of) and she is now MOT'd and on the road again – her rightful place!

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as a member, and have always looked forward to receiving the next magazine. Your efforts are very much appreciated, and cannot be underestimated in helping keep these cars alive.

I hope to get another Rebel one day, under different circumstances, and rest assured, the first thing I will do is renew my subscription.

Thanks once again for all your help.

King regards, Carl Langridge - Fleet, Hampshire

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The latest from Stalybridge is :-

(It should be noted that after years of getting it wrong, I have finally removed the "e" from the middle of Stalybridge, thank you Alan, Ed.)

Dear Brian,

22/10/04

Despite their wretched appearance, the 2 steering racks that you left, and the 3 that subsequently arrived turned out very well. I now have 5 in stock.

This is not a plea to get them shifted, just keeping you up to date.

Haynes talked about "matched" racks and pinions. I must have done about 15 by now, and they're all the same – involute teeth, 12 D.P. (very British), 20 degrees pressure angle, pinion 5 teeth, corrected to avoid undercutting, helix angle 28 degrees. How matched?

Looking at the oxide colours along the length of the rack teeth, I guess that this length has been heated to about 300 degrees C. This cannot be heat treatment to change properties – the material is free cutting M.S. – and I can only conclude that the oxide layer has been

created to obviate scuffing between teeth. If so, it appears to have been successful, all credit to Burman.

Our best wishes to all, and there is no need to add this to any list of unanswered correspondence.

Alan & Megan

Dear Brian,

3-11-04

I am enclosing the rope you lent me, which came in very useful for holding the Kitten down on the trailer. Actually in spite of being well tied down, the blue tarpaulin you had taken me to B & Q to buy, flapped about quite a bit, upsetting the view through the mirrors, made more difficult by the left hand drive tow car. So, in the end, we took it off and drove down without it.

As I mentioned, Rod Sterry's car was better than I had expected. I had bought it and the Rebel sight unseen, as over the phone Rod seemed like a trustworthy fellow, which he proved to be, as have all the Reliant Kitten Register people I have met. Rod's car is in fact not too bad, and more original than your brother's / Mike's car. It is also identical yellow, so they looked like a wee pair of twins setting off on the high seas together.

I called the fellow at Reliant PartsWorld for any advice on converting to left hand drive, as during the dismantling process I noticed that the offside footwell is quite a bit larger than the nearside one. He said they managed to squeeze the accelerator brake and clutch bracket and mechanisms all into that tiny space (presumably suitably reinforced to withstand the strain). So I think I will first try to present / drop, the VW derv engine which is non crossflow, but has a turbo on the admission / exhaust side, and then I can see how much modifying and re-glassing is required to squeeze in my size 11-12 clod hoppers into that wee somewhat claustrophobic space. I will see if perhaps Thomas Touw can send me some photos of his LHD Kitten footwell taken from both inside the passenger compartment and from under the bonnet (*if any of our other left hand drive Kitten owners reading this can help in this regard, it would be appreciated, that said, Frank is not yet on line, so you could post them to me for forwarding, Ed.*)

As you know, in the event I could only take the two Kittens back to Chile, and so the Rebel is still with Rod, it looks to be in quite good condition, though without an engine or transmission. Please try to find it a good home as it is too good to use as a parts car, it could easily be got back on the road in the hands of an enthusiast, and should be saved from the axe. Please give my regards to Dick Goodall, it was nice meeting him at his home near Tore.

Thank you very much Brian for introducing me to such a nice bunch of blokes, all so very friendly. I hope to meet some more of them when I am over again next time, possibly in a couple of years or so.

My regards to Moira and Arleen.

Frank – Santiago, Chile - South America

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Not that I am needing to fill gaps, but Moira and I both thought, as I have often thought myself in times past, that I risk losing some of the flavour of the uplifting comments many people make on their renewal notices – so here are a few of those recently received :-

Dear Brian,

Jan / 2005

Please find enclosed cheque for sub renewal. Nice to see the photo of XNK 521S in the colour centrespread. *(See, I do, sometimes, eventually, occasionally, get round to using these pictures you send me – do keep them coming, Ed).*

Kitty is still running very well. I shall be 85 later this month, and hope to clock up a few more miles yet.

I look forward to the Register Mewsletter.

Wishing you a healthy New Year.

J. Waller No. 498 - Bedford

John, thanks for that, I know that you are by no means the only octogenarian reader we enjoy, I am not sure however that I want to encourage any competition on that front – feel free, those concerned, to write in and express an opinion, Ed.

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Thank you for your help over the years, but I will not be renewing as I have sold all of my Kats. The Register info was passed on to the new owners, so maybe.

All the best, Keith Watling - Hull

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Fibre glass body still drying out! I knew of osmosis, but not how badly it affected car bodies.

Although having been kept in a dry garage, small water blisters persist – 12 months on. Repeated rubbing down, and the dust from grey primer, seem to draw the moisture from the fibreglass, and areas do eventually dry out. Did Reliant ever make a PERSEVERANCE model? Yes they did!

Many thanks for the work that you do. David Beale – Doncaster

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Dear Sir,

January 2005

I am now 74 and have decided to hang my tools up after a heart by-pass. Thanks for your help, and a fiver to club funds.

Very best wishes. Bernard Harding - Merthyr Tydfil

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Tales from Tore

Dick Goodall sends me so much good (I missed an "o" out of that word when I first typed it!) stuff, but because he tends to do so weekly, often several times a week, some of it would be out of date by the time the magazine comes out, and so chunks get edited out – in no way a criticism Dick, your correspondence and comments are always welcome and refreshing, indeed often have us rolling about the floor in stiches (the reason all this wit fails to make it into the magazine is because most of it is, how can I explain this, I guess to say it is "cartoon like" covers it pretty well, and my inability to easily and cheaply include pictures in the mag – frustration strikes again!) it is my fault, all too often I leave the whole thing out rather than do a bit of editing. Anyway, the following is an extract from Dick's 258th electronic communication (since September 2002) – who's counting? (Bill Gates actually! Well, one of his minions more likely). Oh and yes, he (Dick) actually writes to me sometimes as well. Listen, tell you what, I'll try to give you a better flavour of what I receive from Dick over the next few pages, some, not all, of his communications with me since November 2004

Dear Brian,

4/12/04

The Kitten steering started to stiffen up yesterday after over 400 miles since greasing with the Moly Bentone stuff, as opposed to about 200 miles with ordinary Moly grease. Yes I could just ignore the situation, but it would be a bit daft considering the extra strain on lower steering column, rack, etc. So I have greased those ###*!!?? ball joints again with Bentone grease as I am going to finish the tin before trying another type. Scrooge rules, ok? I am still unimpressed by the 'new' grease gun but am working round its drawbacks, and took the opportunity to remove and clean out the brake drums and adjust the brakes too.

Another Reliant situation appeared last week in that the passenger door, always a bit dodgy on closing in spite of my efforts, refused to catch properly at all. After oiling the hinges and catch and inspecting the door fit in the body, I decided that adjustment of the catch plate position might help and it has certainly improved matters somewhat. Perhaps I may try fitting a different door if we get a dry spell of weather next summer?

Best Wishes to you & yours, Dick Goodall.

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Good evening Brian.

29/11/04

Ref. - Practical Classics, Jan 2005 issue, page 119. Peugeot 205i article. Quote 'check for play in the lower steering swivel joint (£59)'. Well, well, just as expensive as one for a kitten!

Cheers, Dick Goodall.

I had e-mailed Dick the picture of the supercharger before the mag came out, and this was his response, I think I made reference to the master cylinder situation elsewhere, Ed. :-

Good evening Brian.

20/11/04

Nice to hear your dulcet tones on the dog & bone today.

Yes the photo was a big file, it took 7 minutes to receive but the quality is well worth it. I'm not

sure if the blower would fit under a Kitten bonnet? Wonder how many more horses it is supposed to give? There seem to be two pipes coming from the master cylinder, so I assume the brakes are dual circuit, which makes me wonder whether an old cylinder was rebuilt or a source of new ones has been found.

If I ever get the spare cash I would like to try fitting a diesel engine (perhaps the factory tried it?) to a Kitty with the aim of getting towards the 100 mpg mark. Dream on!!

Best Regards, Dick Goodall.

Well funnily enough – on the diesel engine front - you should talk to Frank.... Moving on, or, as you may have spotted from the dates, moving back....

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Good evening Brian.

18/11/04

Full Stop. I recently took part in the good old sport of car pushing with Kitty. It came gently to rest in the village and would not start, which was most unsporting of the ungrateful beast. Had I not recently greased you, changed the engine oil & filter and contact breaker points? So it was into the drive of a friend to puzzle things out away from the traffic.

The SU fuel pump was ticking away at intervals so there must be petrol. So let's look for sparks. Flicking the points open with the ignition turned on gave a spark there, so the LT circuit was complete and the points gap looked O.K. After removing the distributor cap I flicked the points open and a spark there indicated LT voltage was present. The main HT lead seemed a slack fit in both the distributor cap and at the coil so I opened the ends out a little. When the end of the main lead was held near to the engine and the points were flicked open then a good spark resulted. After replacing things the rest of the leads were given a good push into place and the engine started.

The engine still didn't run too well so I retreated back home for more investigation. The HT did not seem to be always reaching the spark plugs.

Thinks.... Let's try a different set of HT leads and distributor cap. So I did and so far Kitty is purring as it should. By pure coincidence I bought a copy of Practical Classics next day and one of the writers was telling of troubles with his VW Golf which were also cured with new HT leads. Ah me, nothing lasts for ever!

Best Regards, Dick Goodall

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Then, also on the 18th of November :-

The postie arrived this morning, with the CD-ROM which I sent to Frank Heynes in September! For some reason (I can't understand the Spanish writing) it had been returned to me, could it be because he was away on holiday for so long? Hey ho. Now just how do I find out whether it is worth sending it again? I don't really feel like risking high charges for an international phone call and don't have a fax, perhaps a note in the post might do. Ah the challenges of long distance communication.

*I just put that in to remind me that I had said to Dick to do nothing meantime, and I would sort it out – Do you have it yet Frank?
Moving back to another situation Dick was trying to help me resolve relating to Salamander windscreens :-*

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Good evening Brian.

13/11/04

To my surprise I found the gentleman who sent Salamander info. He is Paul Humphries and I have e-mailed him to see whether he has any info. I also gave your e-mail address to him in case he wishes to contact you directly.

Which once again made me realise that I still cannot archive e-mails to a separate place apart from a folder in Outlook. Hmmm. Hope I don't need to use the rescue CD and lose the lot!

Best Wishes, Dick

Good evening Brian.

Yet again I have proved the saying about 'the best laid plans of mice and men'. The e-mail I sent to Paul Humphries was returned with a note to the effect that the address is no longer valid, so I assume he has changed his ISP or whatever. Perhaps you know another method of contact?

Cheers, Dick Goodall

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Hello Brian.

6/11/04

I have just had a week or so rest from playing with the PC, after all, when the library has good books on the shelf, it would be discourteous to ignore them.

The hobbits called this season 'leaf-fall' and once again I appreciate their accuracy of terminology. I'm now able to put in the odd hour a day and the tally in two weeks is twenty barrow loads of leaves collected and carted away. I managed to avoid doing any more for the rain started and has continued all afternoon.

You have mentioned that papers tend to accumulate in your office. Well I have a 'pile' system too and it had reached a surprising height. Just why I don't file stuff quickly I don't know, I suppose it could be laziness? A couple of hours sorting out resulted in a full bin for the wheelie bin, a pile to be burnt to keep personal details safe and a marked enlargement in the size of some ring binders. There's more to do of course. One snag always encountered is that some binders are full to bursting and old stuff in them needs to be sorted out and discarded. Happily I did find a couple of Mewsletters which I had mislaid so perhaps I can bring the Indexes a little more up to date ere long.

Son promised that he would bring a selection of fireworks home yesterday but on arrival home for dinner (never misses that!) he had forgotten them. Oh well. There's no local display this year and I didn't feel like braving the crowds in Inverness.

Trust you & yours are in good health, Dick.

Humour, it's what makes the world go round. Here's something I came across recently.

THESE ARE ACTUAL QUOTES TAKEN FROM FEDERAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS.

1. "Since my last report, this employee has reached rock-bottom and has started to dig."
2. "I would not allow this employee to breed."
3. "This employee is really not so much of a has-been, but more of a definite won't be."
4. "Works well when under constant supervision and cornered like a rat in a trap."
5. "When she opens her mouth, it seems that it is only to change feet."
6. "He would be out of his depth in a parking lot puddle."
7. "This young lady has delusions of adequacy."
8. "He sets low personal standards and then consistently fails to achieve them."
9. "This employee is depriving a village somewhere of an idiot."
10. "This employee should go far, and the sooner he starts, the better."
11. "Got a full 6-pack, but lacks the plastic thingy to hold it all together."
12. "A gross ignoramus, 144 times worse than an ordinary ignoramus."
13. "He doesn't have ulcers, but he's a carrier."
14. "I would like to go hunting with him sometime."
15. "He's been working with glue too much."
16. "He would argue with a signpost."
17. "He brings a lot of joy whenever he leaves the room."
18. "When his IQ reaches 50, he should sell."
19. "If you see two people talking and one looks bored, he's the other one."
20. "A photographic memory but with the lens cover glued on."
21. "A prime candidate for natural de-selection."
22. "Donated his brain to science before he was through using it"
23. "Gates are down, the lights are flashing, but the train ain't coming."
24. "He's got two brains, one is lost and the other is out looking for it."
25. "If he were any more stupid, he'd have to be watered twice a week."
26. "If you give him a penny for his thoughts, you'd get change."
27. "If you stand close enough to him, you can hear the ocean."
28. "It's hard to believe he beat off 1,000,000 other sperm."
29. "One neuron short of a synapse."
30. "Some drink from the fountain of knowledge; he only gargled."
31. "Takes him 2 hours to watch '60 Minutes'."
32. "The wheel is turning, but the hamster is dead."

So there you are, an attempt at balancing some of my past shortcomings as regards keeping you informed of what arrives to brighten our lives from Tore on a regular basis, thanks Dick, keep it coming, Ed.

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The Spares Situation is in hand, more on this next time.

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A timely reminder - Hand held mobiles.

It is an offence to use a hand held phone whilst driving. The definition of driving includes whilst the engine is running, even when the vehicle is stationary. It is not permitted to

use a hand held phone when a vehicle is at rest, when stopped at traffic lights, in traffic jams or during hold ups that may occur during a typical journey.

Hand held phones can be used inside a vehicle that is safely parked with the engine turned off. The Department of Transport suggests that it would be permissible to use a hand held phone in an exceptional traffic jamb (such as a stoppage on a motorway due to an accident.) where there is absolutely no movement and where it would be possible to safely turn off the engine. There is an exemption in an emergency for a 999 call to be made on a phone where it is impractical or unsafe to stop. Passengers in a vehicle are permitted to use hand held phones.

Hands free phones.

Using a hands free phone while the vehicle engine is running is permissible provided it does not have to be 'held' in any way (e.g. in the hand or placed between the ear and shoulder) at any point during its operation. Using an ear piece kit is permissible if the phone is in a cradle and not 'held' when receiving or making a call. The Department of Transport have also stated that it is permissible to push the buttons on a phone to make or receive a call, if it is in a cradle attached to the dashboard, in a cradle on the steering wheel, or on the handlebars of a motorbike.

However, we strongly advise drivers not to use even hands free phones, as research shows that drivers who do so are four times more likely to be involved in an accident. If there is an incident and the driver is using any phone (hands free included) that causes him or her to be distracted at the time of the incident, police can use existing legislation to prosecute the motorist for failing to exercise proper control of the vehicle. Police are able to check phone records to see if a phone was in use at the time of the incident. The use of hands free phones while driving increases the risk of prosecution for careless or dangerous driving.

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Snippets from the net :-

December 2004, Tom Hannah says, "I did the manifolds on Saturday, opened out the exhaust ports and slightly siamesed the inlet ports. It has made a difference both in acceleration pickup and in idling."

Not exactly news I know, we have been telling folk that for a while, but good to know the old favourites still work, that said I think he meant un-siamesed the ports! Though it is a conundrum, I always say that in an ideal world you should only change one thing at a time, but when you are in there anyway, the temptation to do both inlet and exhaust together is enormous. Ed.

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Sadly 3 weeks ago my kitten met its maker, I slid into the rear of a transit van writing the poor 1976 estate off, the insurance company don't feel its worth saving. Luckily I was ok, and I can now move on to restore the Rebel and Robin that are hiding in the garage!!

Happy New Year

John Davies - Fife

What is particularly sad about this one is that John had recently had a full page spread in the Daily Record's "Road Record" magazine about this car, complete with large colour picture – sad that its remains are now in a scrapyards, particularly as it had just had a full set of new brake backplates fitted – just wish I had the energy to go and try to secure such rare parts, but I don't, Ed.

Getting Technical

Dear Brian,

23 Oct. 04

You may be interested in a potential MOT failure defect on the Fox.

The upper seat belt anchor is secured to a tubular member that is bonded within the cavity that forms the roof and rear section of the cab. This tube rises from its bolted connection with the chassis within the hollow door pillars and runs across the roof above the interior light.

Unlike the chassis it is not galvanised, and on my example, was found to be almost non-existent just above the chassis connection, see picture.

It was possible to remove the defective section by cutting a hole in the fibreglass door pillar at the same height as the circular hole in the door opening. Through these holes it is possible to weld a new section to the old.

A little foresight by Reliant would have saved a lot of work.

Your faithfully, David Beale - Doncaster

Thanks for that David, I need to be able to include pictures in the mag, I did seek a quote from another publisher recently, they would improve things, and enable pictures to be included regularly, just two and a half times what we pay at the moment! I think this failure is a more modern version of the one on the Kitten that we dealt with a number of years ago, though in the case of the Kitten I don't think it involved a seatbelt mounting, 'just' the roll over bar. Probably made worse on the Fox because of its galvanised chassis. I have this theory about all other metal parts in a vehicle with a galvanised chassis rusting faster, a kind of sacrificial corrosion if you like, but, yes, if they had just galvanised that part too, but where do you stop? there are always cost and weight implications. Fox door window frames spring to mind.

John Sawle has sold the first batch of modified inlet manifolds for the Reliant 850 engine, and is considering another batch. They are cast aluminium, and follow the same basic shape as the original but with the following changes:

1. 3/4" or 19mm has been added to the length of each branch, which moves the carburettor away from the engine centre line by the same amount. This allows clearance when fitting a 4-branch exhaust manifold for nos. 2 and 3 cylinders to have a larger pipe diameter, and a decent radius on the pipe bend. The same effect can be obtained by using spacers between the block and the original inlet manifold, but these then require longer studs.

2. The passages passing forwards and backwards, which are twin pipes siamesed together in the original manifold, are now one oval pipe with an hour glass cross section. This is an improvement on, and saves the work of, cutting away the web between the pipes at the

cylinder block flange. A new gasket can be supplied to match, with the square exhaust ports opened out to 32mm diameter circles.

3. The carburettor flange is a square with 4 tapped holes to mount either the standard S.U. carb. and pre-heater or the Weber 34 ICH carburettor. The hole into the manifold is enlarged to 1 1/2", (38mm), diameter. The hotspot connection to the standard exhaust manifold is removed.

If you wish to order one, they will cost £50 including P & P with gaskets at £6.50 each.

Moving the carburettor and air filters may have consequences for under bonnet clearance, but there is sufficient space in the Liege for the alteration to succeed, and other cars have, I think, more room. This manifold should also work with the supercharger, but exact information on that will have to wait until I have fitted one to my own car.

If you wish to order a manifold please write with a cheque to John Sawle, Beacon Cottage Farm, St Agnes, Cornwall, TR5 0NU, or if you have any queries phone 01872 553932.

Sales & Wants

For Sale :- 1986 Reliant Fox Tandy Camper. New tyres, battery, windscreen, galvanised chassis. No time to finish – low miles, engine runs, lots of parts to finish interior. £350 to take it away, call Tony. Stockport.

For Sale :- Kitten saloon, turquoise, was regular reliable runner until laid up. Buyer collects £100 o.n.o.

For Sale :- A set of 4 Kitten wheels, blasted and painted, with new (never used) tyres. Yours for £150 delivered if you live within 30 miles of the M6 or M1.

For Sale :- Scimitar Contact Keith White Coventry

For Sale :- A new Fox chassis, complete with new engine, rebuilt gearbox, new suspension (disc brakes at the front), new radiator, new 4.1axle, new Fox wiring loom, pedal box, many other bits and 5 second hand Fox wheels. £1,750 the lot. Contact John Box

A rare opportunity to acquire a Salamander, Mr. Faulkner

Wanted :- Pair of Rebel seat belts, ring John Denis

Wanted :- Drivers side front seat (preferably a reclining one) for a Kitten, Brown or Beige.

Wanted :- Fox rear panel at the back of the cab, contact Bruce.

Epilogue

That's about it for now. It has been a good week for the war on paperwork front, it is now the 7th of December, and this edition is currently 8548 words long, a normal edition is between 8 and 9 thousand, so I am well ahead of the game, must go and print your renewal notices now, or all of the above will be a bit academic!

Once again it is time to remind some people about subscription renewals. At the time of writing, now early January, 141 folk have renewed, so the future is secure for another year. If you are one of the ones who has not done so, please DO IT NOW!

As ever I am struggling to keep up, attempts have been made to both produce and encapsulate membership cards for 2005, and if we are lucky, (we being you and I), you may find your card enclosed, assuming you have paid your subscription for 2005, and yes some folk have, even before the renewal notice arrived, well intentioned I know, but does cause gaps in the records as those people seldom take the time to complete and return the form when it does arrive, and so the current condition / situation / condition of their vehicle(s) is unknown to me, which is one reason that my vehicle records are never going to be 100%. Ahh, compromise strikes again.

As some of you will know already, Moira spent some time in hospital in December, she has a brain tumour, so as you can imagine, life has been more trying than usual of late. We are not certain what the future holds, but she came through the first two operations well, and we have high hopes of her making a full recovery. The latest news is that they don't want to see her again for 6 months, so things are looking promising.

I made a rare telephone call yesterday, to Switzerland, our man there, Patrick Vallat, was one of many who write to me along with their renewal notice, and the thing this time was that Patrick has finished rebuilding his right hand drive Kitten, (just in time to take it to the Swiss Classic British Car meeting near Geneva, 1,500 British cars, and his the only Kitten) and before doing the same to one of his left hand drive ones, has a 1932 Morgan Super Sport Aero to "do" for a friend, and half of its engine is missing – now, quite by chance, our patternmaker, Mike Cullingworth, the man who does the alloy rocker covers for us, makes almost any part you could need for the V twin JAP engine that the Morgan uses, so I had to put them in touch, and a telephone call seemed much quicker than writing a letter, so now you know!

Have a really good 2005, will I make an appearance at the Kitten's 30th anniversary do? And if so, what will I be driving? – That old Jowett adage springs to mind - Wait and ...

Brian

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