

Reliant Kitten Register

NEWSLETTER 69

March - April 2006



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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Web page:- <http://www.kitreg.org.uk/> or have a look at <http://www.reliantkitten.co.uk>

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Now this is an interesting front cover picture, taken, as you can see, on a very bright summers day back in August 2005. Our very own Phil Hallam in the passengers seat being chauffeured into the ring by Debbie Sloan, the 20 year old daughter of Derek, who used to own a Rebel estate some years back. The car belongs to Robert Fairfoull from Ayr, yes of course you know where that is, near Prestwick Airport. Rebel chassis number 00003, which was rescued from the factory, after much persuasion, by the late John Bowcott of Joseph Lucas fame for his wife Margaret. Regular readers may recall the excellent electrical articles John used to provide us with.

The Registrar speaks

Hello and welcome once again. At the time of writing, March 2006, it looks as though we may have peaked as far as membership numbers are concerned. I have thought for a few years that with the diminishing numbers of cars on the road, our membership must surely have reached its peak, but year on year I have been proved wrong, and our mailing list has continued to grow.

Last year we had as many subscribers as there were Kittens on the road, and for all I know this year may be the same, but with falling numbers of vehicles in use, I am not sure where this will lead us. Ahh, statistics, there can be little more misleading in life!

When visiting Alan and Megan Shaw earlier this month, I collected 5 more reconditioned steering racks. Thank you Alan, now I know that I have been known to ask for any surplus old units to be sent to Alan, and that is still the case, but I was only expecting 2 or 3 to have been there as that is all I have sold since my last visit. This means that there is either an individual out there whom I should be thanking for the donation of a couple of old unit racks, or two individuals who should be thanked for one each. Whatever, I have no way of knowing who sent them to Alan, (I suspect it was as the result of one or more of the numerous telephone calls I receive, but I really can't remember) we are however very grateful, and the future is well secured on the reconditioned Kitten and Fox rack front - (feel free to remind me I said that if we run out next year!). That brings me neatly onto the question of just what level of stock of which parts we should be spending the spares fund on. The new batch of lower wishbones is now in stock, though we have still to source the bushes at a sensible price. The compromise there is that they have the Fox reinforcing plates, seam welded to both the back and front, so they are no longer handed, (not that Kitten ones ever were) but we only had them drilled to fit the Kitten, so Fox owners will need to drill the strut locating holes out (the logic being that there are more Kittens out there than Foxes) – Kitten owners will also have to drill the holes out if you have followed our recommendations of the past and up-graded your lower wishbones and struts to the later spec. in any case, it is a simple modification and easily carried out.

I had a telephone call yesterday, two in fact, from Thomas Touw from Holland. Regular readers will remember Thomas, he did the Lands End to John O'Groats run in his Ciper and his brother tagged along in one of Thomas' Foxes back in 1998. Well, over the last two or three years he has got married and is a dad, so other things have risen up his priority list. He tells me he has reduced his fleet of Reliants from 20 to 11, and that he would be prepared to sell one of his Ciphers if an enthusiast could be found to take the project on. Volunteers please make yourselves known. We are not talking about vast sums of money, but the vehicle is in need of complete restoration.

I hope this finds you well, and that the cars have survived another winter with minimal deterioration, and are fit for the coming summer.

Brian.

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Old Rebel update

One of our active but quiet readers is Robert Fairfoull from Ayr. Robert has owned a number of interesting vehicles over the decades, things like a Daimler SP250 and a Scimitar, as well as a couple of Bentleys at different times. It is however his interest in the smaller fibreglass bodied 4 wheelers that bring him to mind. Robert has been a Rebel owner since I first met him over 20 years ago. He did manage to sell one a couple of years ago, it moved to Benbecula (on an island in the north Atlantic between Scotland and America!) a move forced upon him by the imminent arrival of his latest Bentley. By then he had acquired Rebel chassis number 00003, the ex John Bowcott car, to keep his lonely estate car company – it was pining for the saloon he sold you see, and, as you will gather from the following letter, it was only John's car in as much as it was his name on the log book – probably because he used his influence with

Reliant, when he worked for Joseph Lucas, to persuade them to sell him what had in fact been the factory prototype.

Sadly John died in 1999, and the car was sold, mechanically fully refurbished and on the road, but bodily in need of a lot of TLC. It moved from one custodian to another before Robert rescued it from an uncertain fate, and had it resprayed. That was over two years ago now, and I had promised John's widow, Margaret, that I would organise a picture of the car as it looks now. Robert kindly sent me a copy recently of the car, taken at Edlington in the summer of 2005, I duly sent the picture to Margaret with a grovelling apology for the fact that it had taken me two years to actually manage to organise it, (though the way things are going, it is getting to look like two years is about right given the speed I seem to get things done at these days!) and the following arrived the next week :-

Dear Brian,

21st February 2006

What a lovely surprise to receive the photo of my (John's only by name on the registration document) car back to its full glory. John had always planned to work on the car when he retired, but found so many other things to do that it became a low priority. Especially as we didn't need two cars once the birds had flown the nest!

The original purchaser had assured us of his great intentions – which came to nought as you know – so it is very pleasing to see that the car has found a happy home amongst enthusiasts. It was a good servant to me and the youngsters, well able to help us carry out activities that might otherwise have been impossible.

It was good to have news of you at Christmas, and to know that the old Reliants still have their fans. The last one I saw in excellent condition was in New Zealand. I am in fact heading for Auckland tomorrow to stay with friends who live a few miles south of it for three weeks – hence this somewhat tardy note.

My regards to you and your family. Margaret (Bowcott)

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REBELLIOUS CONDUCT - THE FIRST 2000 MILES

In my previous ramblings, I admitted to purchasing a vehicle that I knew nothing about. My white 1972 Rebel estate, or so I thought. A closer examination of the documentation proved that LRF 671K left the Tamworth factory as a van. The dashboard and engine compartment are finished in what I assume to be either Honey beige or Golden brown. Whatever, it has also been green and later maroon before Jerry, the second owner, sprayed it white. The V5 proclaimed the vehicle as – Van / with side windows, whilst a receipt for fitting the windows is dated 1975. The first owner lived in Southampton and reportedly bought the Rebel from the local agent. However, LRF is a Staffordshire issue suggesting that it may have been registered by the factory – bit of a mystery there. The collection of old MOT certificates indicate that the 850cc engine was fitted in 1983. It has an alternator and the wiring loom suggests that it never had a dynamo and control box. The rear seat is very much a 'home brew' and something I would like to replace with a genuine estate seat. I guess the absence of a headlining is also due to it originally being a van, any headlinings out there I wonder, because I would like to fit one.

Following its successful journey from Southampton to its new home in Yate, it was immediately pressed into its new role as my daily transport to work the very next morning. Top of the list of jobs to be done, the pulling front brakes. I put this down to the lack of use in recent times, most likely seized slave cylinders in the offside front drum. The return journey presented one of those occasions when full 3 wheel braking was required. This resulted in the offside front brake from being stuck in the off position to the on position. Fortunately, I was almost home at the time and the heat generated stopped short of the offside front hub cap from glowing cherry red. A few minutes with a can of WD40 and the Mole grips had both slave cylinder pistons freed up and operating properly. At this point I checked out the other three brakes

and gave the rears a tweak on the adjusters. I must say, the brakes are now really rather good given the unusual pedal action. I have even stopped thinking about fitting disc front brakes now.

In the absence of a workshop manual, I did what I could to perform a service, change oil and filter, top up gearbox, once I found the filler plug, check tappets, points, plugs, air filter etc. I didn't check the battery, it didn't last long enough. The 3rd day of commuting, it started easily first thing, but then I stalled it when reversing into a parking place at work. Would it restart? Absolutely dead, not a volt to be had. Oh the embarrassment of not only having a Reliant, but having colleagues help push it into a parking slot. Fortunately, or so I thought, there are three tyre depots near to work and two car accessory shops. All five said "A Reliant what?" All professed to having trouble in sourcing Reliant batteries before, all had trouble in believing that this one had four wheels. Kwik Fit said they could get one for the following day, for £90! A troll through Yellow Pages and a call to Bristol Batteries confirmed that they could supply the exact type for £45. The only trouble being I couldn't get there. My wife was off work that day so a phone call home and amid much pleading, she drove into Bristol, picked up a battery and delivered it to my workplace – phew! Strangely, the old battery showed no of signs weakness in its brief period with me, just total and immediate failure, it does happen.

Certainly, August is a good time to get to know a new (to its owner) vehicle. Warm weather and long evenings are ideal for having the conditions to check things out. I gradually worked my way around the Rebel to ascertain its true condition and list jobs to do. The first owner had performed some unusual wiring additions which I thought best to remove. Also, the electric windscreen washer pump was on the opposite side of the engine compartment to the reservoir, in moving the pump next to the reservoir, I now have enough spare piping and cable to sell at a car boot sale. I wasn't really finding much amiss with the Rebel, so I made up some blanking plates for the bulkhead apertures in the misguided belief that I might reduce the noise level. Well, it does look neat if nothing else, which is exactly what this exercise achieved. In fact, the noise from various rattles has occupied much investigation, and gradually I have reduced these irritating features. Still one or two obscure ones to conquer but that may have to wait until the lighter evenings return. There is one that is sounding rather serious. A heavy crunch from the nearside front on rebound. This only occurs on the downward slope of those monstrous speed humps that our local council mistakenly called 'cushions'. Might be a lower trunnion but as there are no other symptoms with the steering, again this awaits lighter evenings.

Other than the battery failing, the only other failing that actually required expenditure was one sealed beam unit. This was rather frustrating as I have an attic full of spare sealed beam units. (OK, that's an exaggeration). Trouble was, all but one did not have the side light window. The one that did, worked, but only very briefly. It started to discolour, then smoke appeared, then it went pop. £9 for a new one thank you very much. The rear lights must belong to the same union, one out, all out. The back lights were working, then they didn't. Just a bad connection but in investigating this one, I noticed that the earth for the indicators was adrift. Made good, the indicators are now much livelier.

Having the 850cc engine with SU carb, the induction noise was rather loud thanks to the short air filter intake. Also, the warm up period was inclined to be rather jerky until the carb was fully warmed. I have now fitted a flexible pipe from the intake down to the exhaust pipe that has not only improved the warm up period but dramatically reduced the intake noise. I can now hear other noises I couldn't hear before. Either subject to further investigation or taking the flexible pipe off in the warmer weather. I note that other owners have experienced heat soak into the SU carburettor on the 850cc engine. Mine does not have an insulator block twixt carb and manifold elbow and so far, no problems in hot starting. Cold starting has been excellent too.

As purchased, I was impressed by the clean and leak free engine, but that didn't last long. I now have a leak from the crankshaft pulley. Not serious in itself but as the oil gets onto the twirly bits, it goes everywhere. I hope that it can wait to the warmer weather. As can the broken engine mount, if you tend to get the impression that I am a fair weather mechanic – you're right.

I was hoping that the Rebel would prove economical to run, to date it is chewing its way through unleaded and Millers VSP at the rate of 44mpg. Considering the traffic conditions on my return journey from work each day, I am very pleased indeed with this. It must have been on the plus side of 50mpg when I drove it home from Southampton.

Although primarily the Rebel is for practical usage, I can also use it as a free ticket into the Classic car rallies. I always like going to these events but seldom use any of my other three 'Classics' for such purpose. Having two Austin-Healey Sprites and a Mk1 Escort GT, which are hardly rare cars, I rather got tired of the opening line "I used to have one of these mate". Same is true when I go along with Tony in the Anglia; we get all the reminiscences of past owners, which seems to be just about everybody. I needed a change, no more "I used to". Instead, "What the hell is that?" So now I can do the talking rather than the listening. Trouble is, I don't really know what I am talking about at the moment, but that's never troubled me in the past!

To date, I have done three shows in the Rebel (That's £15 saved already). The first was a village show where I enjoyed the visitors approaching with a similar look of bewilderment as I must have had when I first saw the Rebel. Until Nigel Westcott introduced himself. Someone who did indeed 'Used to own one of these' and now has a Kitten estate and an SS1. Nigel kindly lent me his collection of 'Mewsletters' when I next saw him and hence made me aware that there was some support for these little Reliants. My knowledge suddenly expanded and certainly explained why I hadn't seen any other Rebels. With less than 50 on the road, it seems that I have indeed something rather unusual.

It was therefore with some surprise, that when I entered my second show unannounced, that the man on the gate immediately identified the Rebel correctly. He then lost the plot when he called me John Parker. Now we were both puzzled, but apparently another Rebel used to appear at this particular show, belonging to a Mr. John Parker. It so happened that John was expected today, but turned up in his Jensen instead. I had not been there long when John came up and introduced himself. Nigel was also at this show so in just two outings, my Rebel contacts were growing rapidly. Nigel was organising the car display at Brinkworth House country show the following day, so that's how both John's and my Rebel met up for the cover photo you saw in Mewsletter last year. Also at this show I met Ian (sorry, no surname). Ian lives near where I work in Patchway and has a Rebel pickup. Unfortunately not on the road at the moment but we could just have three Rebels together at some stage. Ian seems to have a good knowledge of these cars for which I may be grateful being so close to home.

In just three months and three shows and now joining the register, I am not feeling so lonely in being a Rebel owner.

Terry Horler - Bristol, No. 755

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Foxes Den

Dear Brian,

6th Jan 2006

Together with my subscription I enclose a photocopy of a page from "The Complete Encyclopedia of Four Wheel Drive vehicles". This is one of those cheapies picked up at a motorway service area on one of my trips to the deep south on a job. How did the Fox get a mention?

No doubt it is all old hat to you, but I do wonder about the mention of a Ford four cylinder 848cc motor. I also wonder about the 12.6 inch ground clearance with 10 inch wheels, or were they 12?

Yours, P. A. Burt - Cumbria .

Ahh, firstly no, it isn't old hat to me, and thanks for the letter and copy. A four wheel drive Fox, hmmm, I wonder, no, it isn't April the first – so what is the story? I see from the article on page 159 of the afore mentioned publication that this is attributed to Meba, a Greek company who, according to the story, made the Fox under a franchise from Reliant, and it does say that a Ford V4, well, it actually said 4V Ford of 848cc 40hp at 5,500rpm, it also mentions an 85 inch wheelbase, 133 inch vehicle length, 61 inches wide and it being available in either hard top or canvas top versions with a canvas tilt in the back and has a couple of quite good pictures of a canvas top with side windows in the canvas, the picture is headed "Meba Fox" More research needed methinks – any volunteers?

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Matters Tempestuous

Well, there seems to be some more news on the re-birth of the Tempest project. After some time, Steve Campbell is taking re-ownership of the concern and is planning to produce a small batch of cars to order (apparently one is already being built by a third party). Having spoken to Steve, he seems quite upbeat about getting the project moving forward again and there does seem to be some interest from people who have contacted both Steve and myself with regard to purchasing kits.

There has been some criticism in the past that not all of the (Steve Campbell) parts and specs were completely uniform or always available. By Steve's own admission there were some areas that could have benefited from more time being spent on getting completely sorted and Mike Philips (who took on the project) certainly started work on improvements and updates. Hopefully these will be incorporated/continued to be developed, now that the project has returned into Steve's hands.

As it stands, the current price list of the individual parts for the kit as on the website (www.tempestcars.com) and if you are interested in one of the beasts now would be a good time to get in touch. The continuing problem will be of finding suitable donor vehicles, as Foxes are fairly rare on the ground and Steve says that he does not want to cannibalise Foxes that are currently on the road. Although the Kitten chassis is also a possibility with some modification, in the long run, if the kit is to survive, a bespoke chassis, or an altered 3 wheeler chassis will be required. Both of which would have to go through the dreaded SVA test.

I am always one who looks on the optimistic side, so let's hope that the full rebirth of the Tempest will not be too far away! Do let me know of any other kits that are gathering dust in garages somewhere, as it is always useful to find out the story behind them.

Martin (miseymo@hotmail.com)

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Liege Page

"Little Lucy" has been off the road since last October and needed an MOT, her first since SVA, as she is now officially three years old!

I booked her in after the new year holiday but she failed on two minor points.

Firstly, a lighting fault. If the lights were on, the offside rear sidelight went off when the brake pedal was operated and there was no brake light either on that side. However, all the sidelights and the brakelights worked independently, only not together! I had checked all the lights the day before but missed this strange fault. I put it down to a bad earth, which it was - a broken earth wire from the right hand light unit at a 4-way bullet connector. Unfortunately, to repair it one needs four foot long arms, as it means

reaching inside the boot, removing the spare wheel bracket, the boot floor and side panels and reaching past the seat backs to do so. A couple of hours work, all in. Anyway, it's now resoldered and all is well.

Secondly, I had put the spare wheel on the nearside rear as it had more tread. He spotted there is rotation arrow and didn't like the fact that it was facing the wrong way. I don't think they are critical but he's the Boss, so I swapped them back again and he was happy. So she is back on the road again

As you know, I've spent the last three years searching for the optimum setup regarding carburettor type and size (Weber 34 ICH), inlet and exhaust manifolds, ignition advance settings, spark plug choice etc. The most recent modification was a Malcolm Curnow 4 into 1 stainless steel manifold and exhaust, which freed up the revs and decibels! I decided it was finally time to put Little Lucy through a proper rolling road session. I have to watch the mixture carefully due to the very high CR of her modified ex-yellow top engine. I was a bit concerned because with the new larger diameter exhaust, she was popping and banging like a 12 bore shotgun on the overrun. To my teenager son's delight, a foot long yellow flame issued from the sidepipe every time this happened, but it scared little old ladies and little children!

The rolling road operator, John Lamb, of Clowne Garage, was very good indeed (he's been doing rolling road work full time since 1979). We discussed the engine specifications in some detail. I explained that I wanted to make sure that the jetting was OK and that my ignition settings were safe and if possible find a bit more power. He ran the car up and we were pleasantly surprised to see a consistent 40 bhp at the rear wheels straight away; the best power reading we saw was 43 bhp. The Reliant figure was 39 bhp at the crank for a yellow-top, so this is a very useful improvement. At this stage John told me he was confirming there was no detonation or other untoward noises.

John subsequently went through a very thorough routine of checking everything over, running the car up, noting down figures, making minor adjustments and rechecking. Altogether the car ran up about 6 or 7 times and the work took about three hours. I had previously modified (reduced) the total advance of the "E" distributor, which allowed a setting of 15 degrees BTDC at idle, much better for the low end and mid-range pickup. John said my settings were not far out but he reamed the main jet slightly bigger, it was a 120 now it's 130. She was running slightly weak at the top end (which proves you can't trust the colour of the tailpipe using unleaded - it was quite black already). He also advanced the static ignition setting to 17 BTDC and these two things found a further 5-6 hp in mid-range. He said there was no more top-end power to be had. The emissions were not far out (already passed the MOT) but he improved them by resetting the idle mixture.

He also advised me to fit a more powerful coil to suit the "Aldon Igniter" ignition trigger as he thought the output of my Lucas "Sports" coil could be improved upon. This is already in hand; there is an epoxy filled coil sitting in front of me as I type. I had already fitted his recommended spark pugs (NGK BP6ES). One other piece of information was a recommendation NOT to use "super unleaded" fuel. He said it was safer to use only the standard stuff, or Shell Optimax, or any of the other branded higher octane fuels. He had heard stories of problems with super and said there is a rumour that it might not be available much longer.

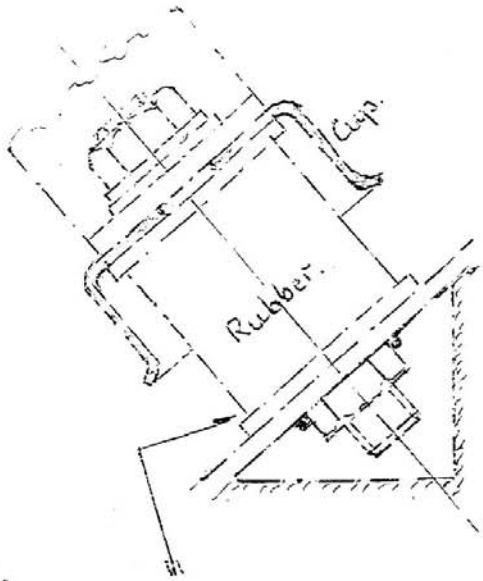
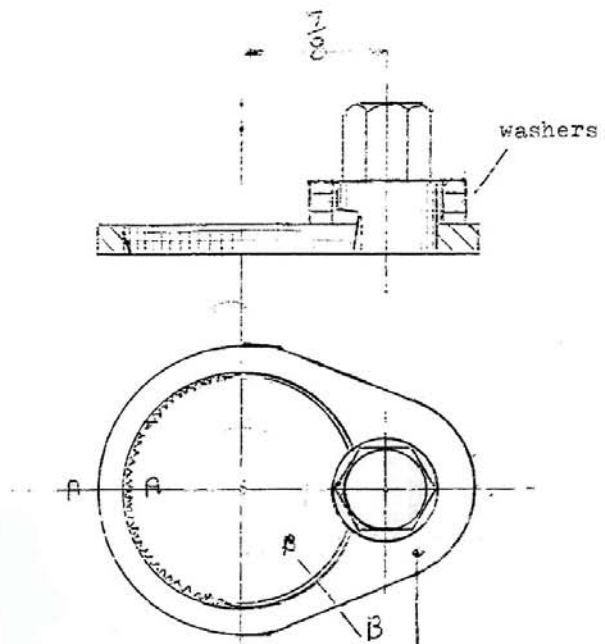
So, was the rolling road session worth the money? Definitely. Although I gained no more top-end power, the car now picks up far more crisply. The idle is now rock steady and I know I'm not going to melt a piston. The flames from the tailpipe and popping and banging have also now stopped.

It seems the Curnow big-bore exhaust was the final piece in the jigsaw. The power output probably now compares reasonably well with the figure quoted by Hans Kirimaa for his "Rebel Racer" car engines (52 bhp at the crank?). There may be slightly more mid-range performance to be had by modifying the ignition advance curve but I think that is about it.

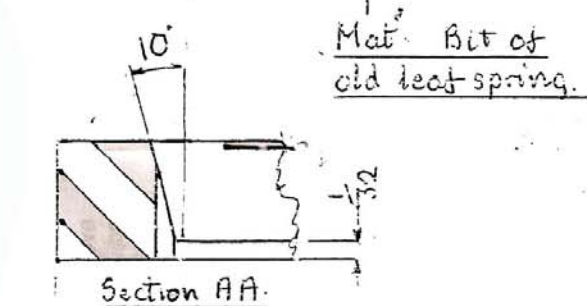
Paul Wheatley - 10 Feb 2006

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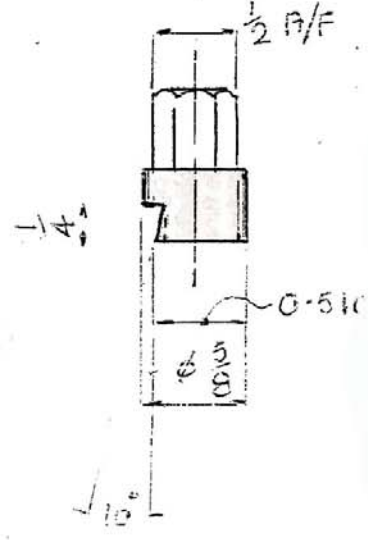
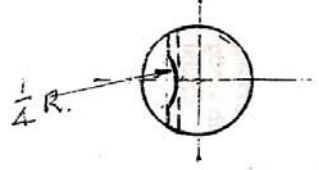
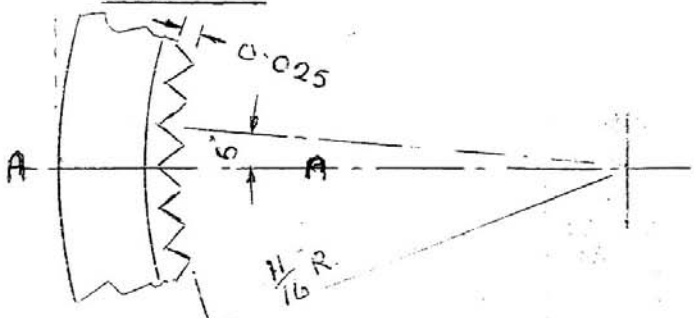
Reliant 'Kitten'
Tool for removing end of
engine heater (front) from
chassis.



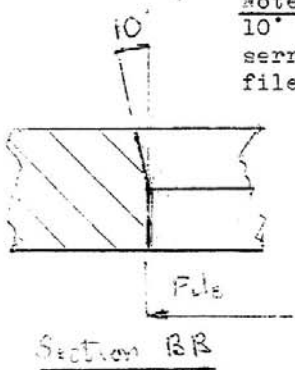
Separation usually occurs here, an area unprotected by the cup.



Mat. Bit of old leaf spring.



Notes. Bore 3/8 dia, then 10° taper to obtain 1/32, cut serrations halfway round and file the other half as shown to give more clearance.



Mat. S.S.

Reliant Kitten. Failure of front engine mountings.

Dear Brian,

05-11-05

Time, vibration, load and contamination combine to destroy the bond between rubber and metal. Renewing the clutch doesn't help – pays to tilt the engine/gearbox assembly as little as possible.

Of the three replacements dealt with so far, all were on the left hand (passenger) side, where the torque from the engine (when driving the car) tends to lift, and all at the bottom where contamination is at its worst and there is no restraint from the cup.

This leaves the steel end of the mounting screwed into the chassis, with not very much exposed to unscrew it. One of the above failures was rusted in. Rust never sleeps.

This led to removal of battery and alternator, the difficult business of drilling out the 3/8" U.N.F., (care and good luck left most of the thread intact) and removal of the radiator to permit the use of a small chisel on an extension.

Not wanting this performance again, the tool shown on the previous page was made up and tried out using an old (good) end fastened to a bit of plate with a 3/8" U.N.F. nut. It was found that no matter how tight the nut, the device could grip and unscrew the end.

I hope I never need to do the job again, but feel that the information might help someone else.

A. Shaw.

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Hello Brian,

12th February 2006

Thank you for putting my question forward in the latest Mewsletter.

I was pleasantly surprised when I received and read it just yesterday but let me explain what my intentions are with those tuning parts.

Dutch traffic is very hectic nowadays and somewhat comparable to France and Italy. So Dutch drivers are very hostile and discriminating towards anything on the road that is both very small, slow and unknown to them.

So that is the reason I need a little more power from the 850 engine just to anticipate a little bit more.

I use the car now almost everyday because I made a move from work to a different job so instead of making 60 miles a day as I did ,I am now doing only 25 miles a day but in less heavy traffic so I can use the car were it was made for.

Sometimes when the circumstances allow it this little car is doing 140 km/h at 5000 rpm, almost 90 miles/h ,just in standard trim and with 100000 miles on the clock ! Just for safety reasons I fitted an oil temperature gauge and a rev counter.

Depending on the ambient temperatures and driving style the oil temperature will reach 80 degrees Celsius on a 12 mile drive in this wintertime but when it's raining then the engine is losing its oil temperature very fast, even to a point below 40 degrees!

This has everything to do to the fact that the engine has a steel sump which dissipates the heat very fast and that (in general) a small engine is making little power and so generates little heat but the engine revs are largely responsible for a quick rise in oil temperature rather than engine load.

An aluminium sump had been better but what I have done is to fit a water/oil heat exchanger behind the oil filter base and fitted a 92 degrees thermostat and use premium quality oil.

It all helps very well and the oil temperature comes to life after a few miles of driving even in wintertime. So back to my story, the power I need for my daily driver is a little bit different than what I am looking for in the car I am restoring (I still have 2 cars).

So that's why I need a twin inlet manifold AND a supercharger (it's for two different cars). If I can't find twin inlets than I have to make them myself, not a big problem but I am still lacking the time I need for that.

Brian, can you also confirm the fact that there are only 60 lhd Kittens have been build ?

I hope this will take some confusion away Brian,

Best regards and thanks for your help. Wouter.

This story moves on, because we had not one, but two offers of the twin inlet manifolds in response to the request in the last edition -

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Readers Letters

Hi Brian,

16/1/06

Thank you for your letter regarding the chassis number of my Kitten. You are quite correct the third digit is a 6 not a G. I would say that the digits on the chassis plate are scratched rather than etched, and there the 6 does look very much like a G.

My vehicle was first registered on 16/6/76 at Cheltenham. Just out of interest could you hazard a guess at the number of Kittens still running which are older than mine?.

On the last Mot, the garage advised me that the chassis was corroding, and that the vehicle may not pass the MOT next year because of this. Please could you advise me of the best way of preserving / repairing the chassis so that it would pass its MOT next time?

Cheers, Malcolm (McHugh) Harrogate No 687

Right, that's a question that you may be better placed than I am to answer – assuming that you have one - is your Kitten on the road, and registered before the 16th of June 1976? Answers on a postcard please. (or letter or even telephone call if you can catch me in!) Ed.

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Kitten on an 'A Frame'

For ten years now my wife and I have been towing our 1976 Reliant Kitten saloon on an 'A' frame behind our motorhome when on holiday or visiting relatives. Firstly with a Mercedes Autorail and for the last three years with a Fiat Ducato based Elna Slim 3.

The Kitten is ideal for towing as it is well under 750kg and so does not require an expensive braked A frame. Being rear wheel drive it allows the front wheels to follow easily, thus reducing front tyre wear and an oversteer condition on the towing vehicle when on twisting country lanes.

We have removed the rear seat and back rest to provide a flat space for luggage and our two dogs, our cat, the cat potty and pushchair, when touring around with the Kitten off the leash. Our cat thinks he is a dog because from 12 weeks old he was brought up by 'Pixie' our miniature Schnauser as her baby with our Yorkshire terrier 'Penny' keeping an eye on them both. 'Jonny' our cat walks with the dogs on a harness and lead or in the push chair if there are other dogs about, or when we are in towns. Walking along the promenade at Llandudno in August 2004 we were the major attraction with people taking photographs and talking to us.

In May 2005 we had a 4 week tour with our motorhome and Kitten up in Scotland from Poole in Dorset. We covered a total of 2634 miles of which the Kitten was driven 700 miles off the leash. We would set up our motorhome on campsites in the area we wished to explore, plug in the electric hook up, rig up the awning, tune in the television and make ourselves at home in the comforting knowledge that we wouldn't have to move the motorhome until we wished to relocate.

We stopped at Kendal for 3 nights on the way up to Scotland and spent a day touring round Lake Windermere in the Kitten with all the family on board. Our first stop in Scotland was at Callander for 3 nights, then on to Oban for 5 nights during which time we Kittened down to Seil Island, over the "bridge over the Atlantic" and generally toured the area. Then off to Kintyre, Kittenning down to Campbletown and the Mull of Kintyre. Next day over to the Isle of Arran with Kitten and family.

Our next campsite was at Inverary from where we Kittened around Loch Fyne, Loch Long and Loch Lomond, then back home.,

Anyone interested in "a" framing phone Reg Wyatt on 01202 631974 for a chat.

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Dear Brian,

10/4/06

I am classifying my numbers of RKR newsletters and I am lost.

July – August 2005 Mewsletter 65 I receive
September – October 2005 I do not have.
November – December 2005 Mewsletter 65? I receive
January – February 2006 Mewsletter 67? I did receive

I have not receive the September – October issue. Could you please send me one.

Also could you please insert the following advert :- Look to find a registration book V5 for me Bug ~Bond.

Thank you in advance.

Regards Buntinx Guy

The above arrived by fax on the 11th of April. I am sure we made mention of the magazine numbering hiccups at the time, well, in the following editions at any rate. However, let me put the record straight. It's all my fault for trying to be clever and alter from one edition to the next the layout of the covers. We used to use the same basic layout, until that is I asked John to do a couple of specials where the advert on the back cover was replaced with something different. John not unreasonably created a different version of the document, but when doing the subsequent edition, reverted to the original document, and simply added one to the issue number on that document, which of course meant that we then had two editions with the same number, with one edition in between. A similar situation arose shortly after that, again my fault for chasing John for the covers. Thankfully we have, probably by accident rather than in anticipation of such a situation, a belt and braces approach which has been in place for many years in that the cover not only has an edition number, but also the names of the two months it covers. So, for the latter part of 2005 and the first edition of 2006, we have to rely on the months stipulated rather than the actual edition number. Helps to make us a little different from everyone else I am sure you will agree, but I do apologise for the confusion caused.

On the subject of the missing edition Guy, I have no idea what might have happened, but you should have the missing edition long before you read this. Ed.

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A Triumph of Experience.

A wealthy old lady decides to go on a photo safari in Africa, taking her faithful aged poodle named Cuddles, along for the company. One day the poodle starts chasing butterflies and before long, Cuddles discovers that she's lost. Wandering about, she notices a leopard heading rapidly in her direction with the intention of having lunch.

The old poodle thinks, "Oh, oh! I'm in deep doo-doo now!" Noticing some bones on the ground close by, she immediately settles down to chew on the bones with her back to the approaching cat. Just as the leopard is about to leap, the old poodle exclaims loudly, "Boy, that was one delicious leopard! I wonder if there are any more around here?"

Hearing this, the young leopard halts his attack in mid-strike, a look of terror comes over him and he slinks away into the trees. "Whew!", says the leopard, "That was close! That old poodle nearly had me!"

Meanwhile, a monkey who had been watching the whole scene from a nearby tree, figures he can put this knowledge to good use and trade it for protection from the leopard. So off he goes, but the old poodle sees him heading after the leopard with great speed, and figures that something must be up. The monkey soon catches up with the leopard, spills the beans and strikes a deal for himself with the leopard.

The young leopard is furious at being made a fool of and says, "Here, monkey, hop on my back and see what's going to happen to that conniving canine!"

Now, the old poodle sees the leopard coming with the monkey on his back and thinks, "What am I going to do now?", but instead of running, the dog sits down with her back to her attackers, pretending she hasn't seen them yet, and just when they get close enough to hear, the old poodle says: "Where's that damn monkey? I sent him off an hour ago to bring me another leopard!"

And the moral of this story..... Don't mess with apparent decrepitude... age and treachery will always overcome youth and skill! Polished balderdash and brilliant deception only come with age and experience!

I am not in any way insinuating that you are old. Just, with a few young exceptions reading this, cured of youthful ineptitude!!!!

Now I really can't remember with certainty, but I think it was Dick Goodall who sent me that snippet, found on the internet somewhere I suspect – whoever, thank you. Ed.

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Tales from Tore

Good evening Brian,

19th March 2006

Kitty persists in keeping me busy.

Just before the snow came the battery seemed to be rather low on charge. While the snow was lying I avoided using the car. After the thaw I did a wee inspection and found the fan belt had little tension, and the alternator pulley was hardly being driven. It seemed a simple job to loosen the slotted link bolts and tighten the belt. Well it was easy to loosen the bolts when the link fell into 2 parts! It had snapped. Luckily I found a spare used one and it remedied the problem. Funny how the car always runs better when the battery gets a good charge.

On the way home from Tesco there was a sudden 'clonking' noise from under the car and the exhaust noise immediately developed into a mighty roar, as with a Spitfire. Having stopped I ran back and managed to retrieve the silencer before it was squashed by traffic. Once home I found the answer. Though the exhaust system is made of stainless steel, the 'U'-clip holding the front pipe and silencer is mild steel and had rusted through, letting them part company. Luckily the system is made of a thick gauge of stainless steel. So it was easy to bend the hanger back into position, re-fit the silencer and hold all together with a new clip.

Then on Friday a light 'roaring' noise developed when coming home. What now? It didn't seem to be an exhaust problem. So I raised the bonnet and looked round. The answer was obvious. The top of the air cleaner had come unclipped and was lying between the rocker cover and carburettor. The noise was intake roar when the throttle was opened. It took all of a minute to rectify that. The only cause I can think of was that I had recently fitted a new filter element and could not have replaced the clips properly.

By the way. I know that the handbook suggests replacing the air filter element every 5,000 miles. I find that period too long and do it at 3,000 miles. Otherwise I get 'chugging' due to a clogged element.

All this reminds me of when the airborne 'early warning radar' flown from Lossiemouth was 3 old Shackletons. Often referred to as '10,000 parts all flying in close formation'. Often they would all be unserviceable by evening but the lads always got them airworthy again by next day. Well I always try to get Kitty going again by next day too!

Best Regards, Dick Goodall

Thanks as ever Dick, a couple of points while my mind is in gear, I had heard the Shackleton story too, though the version I heard was of 10,000 rivets flying in close formation. On the air cleaner front, my experience is quite different from yours, and even given the absence of heavy industry from the Clyde valley these days, compared to Tore I really would have thought the air in your neck of the woods to be cleaner than ours, and I only ever changed air cleaner elements between 20 and 30 thousand miles, indeed the one on my current car only gets changed when it looks dirty, usually about once in 50,000 miles (about 2 to 3 years of my motoring these days). Sounds like a good topic for debate – how often do you have the air cleaner element on your car changed? Ed.

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Parts supply

Right, we again have new lower wishbones in stock, though I need to get the bushes sorted out. I have just sold the last pair of Kitten struts, so only have half a pair of them left – and so it goes on.

The demand for these parts is very slow and erratic. The 4 struts we had made back in 2000 have kept us going for six years, though we did help a couple of folk out with serviceable secondhand ones in that time, and my stock of them is also depleted. We are now looking at having a batch of 10 made – what do I do? Wait till we run out before tying up another couple of hundred pounds of our diminishing spares fund – or order them now?

That said, Moira has again reminded me that the house is not for keeping car parts in, but it is a lot drier and warmer than the lock-up, and they are only insured when kept in the house – just as well the loft is almost finished, I can keep them up there out of sight! Ed.

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More snippets from the net :-

I doubt if there will be many of our readers who will benefit from the following information, but recently seen on Peter Davis' Liege group I learn from Geoff that when he was accompanying Adrian Young (Liege chassis number 013) to the SVA Centre in Derby recently (early April 2006 I believe), one of the SVA examiners (Mark) advised that he organises 1 day courses on "How to Prepare your Car for its SVA". They are held in the SVA Training Room in Derby, usually on Saturdays. The cost of the course is £15, and this includes tuition and a set of work sheets based on the latest SVA regs. He has booked a place on the next course likely to be held towards the end of April / early May. We think that if you rang the SVA test centre in Derby and spoke to Mark, that he would be happy to give you all the information and perhaps be able to advise if other centres can offer similar courses.

Geoff goes on to say that he will let everyone know how beneficial the course is, although its likely to be some time before his own Liege, No. 57 (Heinz) [No need for much explanation as to where that particular Liege name came from then! Variety is indeed the spice of life.] is in the position of requiring its SVA. Like a Liege, Tempus fugit.

Our thanks to Geoff for this interesting piece of news

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Sales and Wants

A very special offer :- Reg Wyatt's Kitten complete with towing 'A' frame, see article on page 19. Reg is moving to a simpler lifestyle, and the car is for sale. Contact him for details Dorset.

Kitten needs a new home. Reliant Kitten 848cc saloon, been stood a while so brakes and clutch rusted but engine runs sweetly. Bodywork O.K. Chassis has been oiled and looks O.K. Space urgently needed. No time to sort, Lots of good spares thrown in. May break but would rather see it preserved by enthusiast. Offers. Gareth Jones, North Wales

For Sale :- Reliant Fox, no MOT but good condition, brakes done, good engine, almost ready for MOT. Offers to Norman

For Sale :- Reliant Kitten, only 29,000 miles from new this yellow estate has been in the same family all its life. Off the road for about 8 years, offers to Mr. D. Beale of Littlehampton in West Sussex.

For Sale :- Reliant Rebel estate road tax exempt, only two owners from new as featured on the cover of edition 45. Full service history and a year's MOT, £952 o.v.n.o. Contact Dave

For Sale :- Reliant Rebel estate 1972 (Tax exempt) 850cc engine, 4 speed with overdrive! Super seats, 'new' tyres etc etc., Many extras, tow ball £450

For Sale :- a rare opportunity, Reliant Tempest kit No. 1 is for sale taxed and tested. Stuart Vickers from East Yorkshire is the man you need to talk to and for £4.600 SRH 949R can be yours. This car was at Burford last year and has to be the lowest mileage John Box Tempest out there.

For Sale :- A unique special, was once a Reliant Kitten, now – wow. Open top 2 seater, finished in black, very smart, taxed and tested, yours for just £1,600, contact Brian Ayres Ravenshead.

Wanted :- A copy of Dick Harvey's book the 750 Racer. Patrick Vallatt in Switzerland is looking for a copy.

Wanted :- front offside spring and shock absorber assembly for a kitten. Ray Clark.

Wanted :- One, yes just the one, new Rebel front damper, contact Mark Hayton.

WANTED : O.K., I confess, I have yet again been caught out by my lack of proper organisational skills. What I thought were a Rebel Parts Book and a Rebel Workshop Manual, turned out to be two Parts books and a Regal Workshop Manual. So, if you have a good condition Rebel workshop Manual, I would appreciate a loan of one to copy to restore the Register's archive, and of course if you know of anyone in the market for a Regal Workshop Manual, I have one here! Oh, and we need a Kitten hazard switch, can you help? Brian.

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Epilogue

Oh how I need more discipline! I have been lazy / tired / busy since my trip south in March, in fact when I look at the outstanding tasks since last year, since last May sounds more like it!

At the time of writing, March 21st , I have again cleared the desk – into three boxes this time, A, B, and C in order of priority – annoyingly (though it is all my fault for letting things get so far behind), Box A has the most bits of paper in it! So the rule of 10 has again been adopted – but I made the mistake of checking e-mails, and discovered that our Australian reader, Ray Parker, will be over in England in June – and is on the lookout for an Ant tipper, so I just had to reply, that took quarter of an hour, and it is now breakfast time – Aaarrrrrggghhh, I need to work faster!

Then today, Wednesday, Len Winter's completed application form and cheque arrived – but he had joined us back in November, so I checked, and sure enough, there he was on the mailing list, but this was a different Kitten, like his estate car it too was one we had been aware of, and the previous owner had let his subscription lapse – how good it is to learn of a car that we have had contact with, but have 'lost', welcoming such ones back into the fold is one of the very satisfying aspects of running the Register. So I had to write to Len to sort things out. He had asked me for a form for his son a few weeks ago, I will get there – one day.

Right enough, till next time take care, may you have happy and trouble free motoring, oh don't forget to G.T.B.J.

Brian

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