MEWSLETTER 92

January – February 2010

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Rebuilt in 2001 by Eric Wallis of Ipswich on a Fox chassis with 12" wheels, this lovely well maintained estate car became the property of Alan Osborn in December 2008, since when he has covered about 6,000 miles in it. See the story inside starting on page 21 (or possibly not page 21 if Brian sneaks another 4 pages into this edition!)

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……

The Reliant Kitten Register

Rebel parts stock held by: - Adrian Hanwell

New Kitten / Fox / Rebel parts stock held by Brian Marshall
E-Mail info@kitreg.org.uk

Rebel alternative parts list contact: John Blagburn
E-mail: wirelessjohn@googlemail.com

Kitten alternative parts list: **Situation vacant**. Contact the Editor to volunteer.

Fox alternative parts list contact: Duncan Bradford, 52 St. Phillips Road, Norwich, NR2 3BN.
E-Mail hidunc@ntlworld.com

Our Mutual Aid Spares scheme is run for us by Phil Hallam 4, Greenhead Holding, Stevenston, Ayrshire KA20 4JX

Tempest Registrar: Martin Seymour 19 Cedar Court, Churchfields, South Woodford, London E18 2QU
E-mail mseymour@freenetname.co.uk

Mewsletter pictures – should be sent to John Pearce at Toddbury Farm, Slapton Road, Lt Billington, Beds. LU7 9BP
E-mail john@atodini.co.uk

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.

It should be noted that opinions and ideas, information and advice printed in this publication are as recommended by our readers and others, and, while believed to be accurate and correct, such information is given in good faith, and it does not necessarily have the approval of the Reliant Kitten Register, and cannot be guaranteed by either the Editor, or the Reliant Kitten Register. Owners must satisfy themselves as to the suitability of any suggestions made within these pages, as no responsibility can be accepted.

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

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Welcome to our first edition of 2010. As I type (still in November 2009 actually!) Richard Plaxton has just finished doing some work on my PC, I am struggling a bit with the new look of many of the screens. He did resolve the vast majority of the things on my wish list, so no complaints, many thanks Richard.

The covers last time, now I know that on about a fifth of them the printing was fine, so those lucky enough to have had one of them will be wondering what I am talking about. That'll teach me to stray from cars on the cover! What everyone did have to live with was the thinner paper for the cover. I had only last year got to the kind of standard I have long aspired to, though I know the card we used for most of last year's editions gives John some difficulties, nonetheless he got the job done, well done and thank you John. All fine, till I tried to be clever! Still, nothing ventured and all that. So long as I learn from my mistakes....

Simon Dyal deserves a special mention, as you might remember, unlike me! he was the man who designed the logo we have been using since 1992 he tells me. Thanks again Simon, and thank you too for taking the time to remind me, with a little help I can get there!

On the To Do list this year, with a higher priority than I gave it last year, must be the matter of a booklet of hints and tips for the new Reliant owner we are of course talking wee 4 wheeler Reliants here, though there will be huge areas of overlap with those with the missing wheel (who would no doubt argue that it is us who have the extra wheel!)

Other aspirations – I wait in some trepidation to learn how hard we have been hit by the Government's scrappage scheme – but continuing to do what we can to keep the cars remaining fit for service remains a key aim, along with keeping track of as many of our wonderful wee cars as possible.

You can help with the latter by completing the vehicle details side of the renewal notice (assuming that you have not been organised and have returned it already!)

Even if you are leaving us, for whatever reason, if you would be so good as to complete the car details part of the form to the best of your knowledge that would be much appreciated as it would mean that we have the opportunity to keep the records as up-to-date as possible.

To revert briefly – I will not make a regular habit of doing so, honest, but Jowetts featured a bit in the last edition, and you may remember my asking if there was no escape? and pointing out that I had not actually renewed my subscription last year (purely as part of a wider economy drive in the Marshall household). Well, the answer is that there is indeed no escape! They made me an Honorary Life Member at that AGM I had booked for them but did not attend – I was on the agenda, an item they always have, but seldom use, called "Formal proposals", it seems that my elevation was discussed and unanimously approved. To say that I was flattered barely begins to cover it, deeply honoured is more like it. I guess I shouldn't complain about making the odd telephone call for them in future!

Right, moving on. Desk clearing managed to get beyond first gear in December (nothing to do with Moira being away for a few days – honest!) and so you may find the odd letter within these pages which – had I been on top of things at the time – might have appeared earlier, i.e. in an earlier edition – better late than never – well, that's my story, and I'm sticking to it!

The old expression "There's always one" sprung to mind the other day when my 'phone rang. It was George Mitchell, late of Jowett spares fame, more recently into 300 Volvos (not that he has 300, closer to 20 I think at the last count!) to point out to me that my solution to the three consecutive days question in the last edition was of course not the only correct answer, citing Christmas Eve, Christmas day and Boxing day as one alternative contender – take your pick - I was going to say Michael Miles, but thought that few reading this would recollect Hughie Green's counterpart – Me, I'd just take the money, I've got plenty of boxes to open at this time of year! If you don't get it, ask your parents!

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Rebel round up

Hi Brian, 10/12/2009

Thanks for the latest Mewsletter. Interesting article on the inlet manifold modification at last. Not convinced that it is worth pulling the manifolds off just for this alone though. I'm not really using the Rebel enough to evaluate this at the moment. It is getting some usage and no plans to sell it – it's still fun to drive even though the paint is flaking off big time.

No Rebellious Conduct this time, so I attach the latest Rebel Register totals instead.

Regards, Terry (Horler) - No. 755 from Bristol

REBEL REGISTER

How many left? How many currently in use? How many under restoration? All questions that I don't have answers for I'm sorry to say. However, I have been Rebel watching on ebay as it is here that the hitherto unknown Rebel comes to light. These I have been adding to the Register although the VIN is seldom stated. The current Rebel statistics are as follows –

600 SALOON	21	including declared scrapped of	3
700 SALOON	25		2
700 ESTATE/VAN	36		3
750 SALOON	14		2
750 ESTATE	16		1
750 VAN	20		5
Total	132		16

In addition to these, we have another 58 examples for which we have registration numbers but no VIN.

Just to save you working it out, that is 190 Rebels that we have at least a snippet of information on.

I would again ask that you keep the RKR informed of the current status of your Rebel or any Rebel sightings. We may even break the 200 mark this year.

Terry Horler - December 2009

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Foxes Den

I was going to say that the Fox fraternity must be hibernating, till Duncan very kindly sent in his heating article, see pages 26 to 32. Thank you Duncan, may all your winter journeys be warm.

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A WEEKEND IN OCTOBER.

By Mike Oakins

You have to be a little mad to own and drive old or 'interesting' vehicles when you can have a modern air conditioned box and drive in splendid isolation from the world with surround sound as an accompaniment. You have to be very deranged to indulge in the weekend we had recently.

We have just driven 700 miles in three days in a small capacity (850cc) open sports car, namely my Liege, whose running gear was designed about 50 years ago, and which is seriously lacking in creature comforts. With my friend and navigator, John, I have just taken part in the 85th annual Edinburgh Trial organized by the Motor Cycling Club. One of the oldest motor clubs, it has been in existence and putting on motor sports events since 1901. As well as the challenge, it is the history, tradition and nostalgia of long distance reliability trials which appeals to me. A whole range of two, three, and four wheel vehicles take part from small moderns e.g. Peugeot 205s and Corsas to pre-war M.G.'s, H.R.G.s and Trojans, with a lot of individually built or modified trials specials, including a mid-engined Reliant three wheeler.

It is called the Edinburgh Trial for historical reasons, but is in fact now a scenic tour round the Derbyshire Peak District! This year's Trial had about 250 entrants, made up of around 100 motor cycles and 150 cars with a smattering of three wheelers, cars and combinations.

Day one, Friday: 240 miles from Devon to Tamworth. The motor way is not good in a low powered open car, so the tedium was relieved by stretches of the old A38 and other A roads. The M42, round Birmingham, provided points of interest! Particularly as we were directed to drive on the hard shoulder to introduce a fourth carriage way. A very different experience for those of us up from the country!
Day two, Saturday: the Trial, with an 05.30 start. This year our class had a late start time (we usually have several hours driving in the dark) and so only had an hour of night driving – this was the less scenic bit getting up into the Dales. This year the sun shone for a lot of the time and so we were able to appreciate the wonderful scenery and the lovely driving roads. The one drawback was the high wind, which at the higher parts was forecast at about 50 m.p.h.

The route was tortuous taking in Ashbourne, Buxton, Matlock and many of the villages, mainly on the more minor roads, and included about 15 miles of unsurfaced road and track. There were 10 observed sections, which comprised unsurfaced hills up which the cars and bikes had to scramble without stopping -- except for four. On these there was an obligatory hill start on the steepest or most slippery part, made more difficult because you were told exactly where to place your wheels. Rolling back, being unable to restart or stopping anywhere on the hill resulted in a penalty. To add to the interest there were two special tests. For these a route was marked out on the 'rough', between bollards, with a stop and restart in the middle. This to be tackled against the clock.

The Trial was 160 miles of proper motoring, finishing late afternoon just outside Buxton. After signing off we headed gratefully for our pre-booked bed and breakfast and a couple of hours R and R before a Club supper in the Buxton Assembly Rooms. A very convivial evening, meeting up with old friends and much talk of the day's events and cars and bikes in general.

Day three, Sunday: the long haul home, 280 miles. After about 40 miles of A road we joined the M 6 and then the M 5 heading south. Needing a break from the noise and bustle, we got off at Tewksbury to join the A38 through Gloucester (minor navigational problems in the city centre) and onto the Severn Bridge service area at Aust, and then joining the M5 again at Avonmouth, thus avoiding most of the roadworks round Bristol. Due south then, back to Devon, and the weather (as it frequently seems to) deteriorated as we crossed the county boundary.

The Liege behaved faultlessly, and John and I voted it a very good weekend - enhanced by the fact that we had earned an award. This will be in the form of a medal – cast from Cornish tin.

If anyone is interested in spectating or even taking part in this sort of madness, the Motor Cycling Club hold two other long distance trials each year. The next ,The Lands End, is on 2nd.& 3rd.April 2010 (which is in Devon and Cornwall), The Edinburgh again on 2nd. October 2010 (in Derbyshire) and The Exeter, on 7th.& 8th. January 2011 (mainly in Devon). The MCC have a very good website for further details.

Mike Oakins, Devon - No. 292

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From your renewal notices

Brian, 07/12/2009

With regret I will not rejoin this year, but have found your support wonderful, many thanks.

I sold the Fox in March 2009 to a gentleman from Kent (regret contact details not to hand) he knew about Reliants, and he came to see the Fox in a very nice Scimitar.

I am confident that it went to a good home. I sold it for £1,450 if you make a note of such things. The vehicle is still very original and is still on the road. When I got it it had done just 11,000 miles and when I sold it it was at 33,000.

The reason I sold it was because I had fallen for a 1994 Rialto SE estate – 1 owner, 9,000 miles, serviced every year, undersealed!! I paid £1,000 for it from e-bay. I find it fantastic fun to drive, even with only 3 wheels!

Paul Stevenson - Norfolk - No. 389

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Hi Brian, 7/12/09

I thought I'd break with tradition and send an early reply and renewal – Thanks Steve – I'm afraid I've been seduced by the dark side after the failure of the turbocharger (it was a turbo failure, not the Reliant engine) and I am busily putting the R1 motorbike engine into the Kitten that I had planned for it originally.

I'll send photos when there's some more progress.

Regards Steve (Broomhall) Sidbury - No. 780

Thanks for the update Steve, at least you tried the Reliant option first, well done, just sorry the turbo let you down. We look forward to the pictures, good luck with the project. Ed.

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From time to time I am reminded that I do not always succeed in my attempts at communicating effectively. I try to avoid going over old ground if possible, but in not doing so perhaps contribute to misunderstandings, particularly when people have only been with us for a year or two and have not availed themselves of the back issues of the Mewsletter – I grant you I cringe a bit reading some of them, but I believe we are improving, albeit with the odd slip along the way!

By the time you read this I will either have spoken to or written to Peter to bring him up to speed, but his perception, it occurs to me, might not be unique – here is what he said :-

Dear Brian, 8 Dec 2009

Wanted, Fox up to 1970, reasonable condition (MOT / Tax exempt.) I sold my Kitten special TTO 240R, and I would like to replace it with a Fox.

Yours Peter (Loughran) Dungannon - No. 818

The point being that there are no road tax exempt Foxes, (or Kittens) and no MOT exempt vehicles with the possible exception of some electric powered ones I believe, but it turned out to be O.K., as Peter was looking at Ian Johnston's Rebel estate which had been advertised within these pages, and it is a "Historic Vehicle" (and as such road tax exempt), having been built before the end of 1973. Ed.

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Dear Brian, 14th Dec. 2009

Rebel, is O.K., but hibernating during the winter months.

Fox is in almost daily use – but due another engine rebuild – total mileage now approaching 150,000. 850 engines seem to last about 70 / 80k miles, in my experience, while 700 engines go round the clock easily.

This year we have completed 40 continuous years of 4 wheeled Reliant ownership!

All the best for the season and the coming New Year.

Dave Richmond, Hayes (Middx) - No. 338

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Les Smith from Ashford in Kent has added to the already extensive list of mods to his Fox – to the extent that "the system" cannot cope! I'll need to find another way of recording such things!

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John Unwin tells me that he is about to fit a vacuum operated servo to his Rebel, John, if you could make the time to let us know how you do that and how you find it, I am certain that I am not the only one who would be interested. Brian.

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Now I know that we ought not to count chickens and all that, but it was Frank Heil who told me on his renewal notice that his Cipher is "Just about back on the road" I look forward to the pictures Frank. As far as we know this is the only complete Cipher in the U.K., and we very much look forward to it being back on the road, well done and good luck Frank.

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Speaking of pictures promised, Chris Tooth tells me that his Kitten which has enjoyed a body off rebuild and many new parts, is nearing completion, and he will be sending me pictures "soon" Looking forward to them Chris.

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Clive Angel tells me that his Kitten Estate's body-off rebuild has been delayed by a house (and garage!) move, but all being well, work on the car will recommence in the spring of 2010. Please keep us posted Clive, and good luck with the move.

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Readers Letters

Dear Brian, June 2009

Many thanks for your note. Yes, Martin across the road now has PMF 309R. I have not spoken to him for a while, just wave on the way past to work, I don't know where the time goes! I only got round to reading Mewsletter 86, the February one, in April!

Unfortunately I could not get the boss indoors to agree to the purchase of the nice looking red kitten estate you had featured on the front cover – maybe next time? It was pointed out to me that only two of the 4 two wheelers in the garage are used, the others being non-runners. You have to admit it does not look good! I am trying my best. I don't know if I mentioned it, but the BMW 650 I use most days, the Triumph Tina automatic scooter is on the road, the Ariel Colt is awaiting my attention, which leaves the Frances Barnet Falcon 197cc with its engine removed till I get organised!

Anyway, many thanks again, I just don't know where you find the time!

All the best regards, Geoff (Smith) Portsmouth - No 376

Oh, Geoff, if you ever crack that "getting organised" thing, you will share the knowledge – Please ! Ed

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Dear Brian, December 2009

Thank you for your good wishes with the membership renewal form, I send you and Moira reciprocal greetings.

In answer to your question about future spares requirement I will soon have to replace Kitty' exhaust. Even stainless steel seems to have a species of tin worm ready to consume it, fortunately it has taken almost 30 years to do so.

I have sourced some brake parts and had the radiator re-cored locally, but have not yet fitted the fuel tank sender unit you supplied several years ago. It would be helpful if you could print a list of parts you keep in stock or can help with, this is something I know you have touched on.

A few issues ago there was mention of a book with a report on a "Rebel" which turned out to be an American truck re-cycling the Reliant name, well I saw another example recently when a car passed me,. It was an "Allegro", but not as we know it, I wonder if this is a fortunate choice.

I have some comments on the latest Mewsletter :- Someone was surprised not to have a non-return valve on a clutch master cylinder repair kit, I think only the braking system has such a valve.

Also mentioned was carrying sheet material. I have just collected a 1200 x 600mm sheet of plasterboard with Kitty, I needed it in two 32 ½" by 1200mm pieces leaving an off-cut a few inches narrower, all three pieces fitted in nicely, we just had the protesting comment – do you think I'm a lorry?"

I can give a useful tip on this subject – to carry a sheet of plywood (or similar) that is too big to reach round, put one arm over the top edge of the sheet, and hook the scissor jack handle under the bottom edge and hold it by the first bend on the cranked part, this extends your reach and means that you can move a fairly large sheet on your own.

You printed an idea by Lyn Rodden that you might include other subjects to encourage more cross communication through these pages.

So, does anyone else watch Quest TV? (freeview channel 38) Particularly the series "American Hotrod"? if you can tolerate the bickering and arguments it is amazing what they are doing. A specialist custom car builder with state of the art machinery, using parts ranging from bodies and chassis to axles, brakes and suspension units, all specially made, yet readily available, it seems to be a flourishing business in the states, there must be lots of people with plenty of bucks!

Finally, I would like to wish all “staff” and members a Happy New Year.

Thanks for what you do.

Yours truly, Brian Martin, Norwich - No. 583

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Us.

At the time of writing, January 11th, I am hoping to be going to print in the next few days. 124 people have renewed their subscription for this year – thank you. That is about half within a month, about average. Everyone else reading this, please let me know what the position is! This will be the last magazine you receive until and unless I hear from you.

I will try to be organised enough to make it clear, either in or on the envelope this comes to you in, which category I think you fall into – the presence (or absence) of a membership card might be a clue! Feel free to correct me if you think I am mistaken – 01418866117 is the number you require (441418866117 for those outside the UK).

I’ve said it before, and will no doubt do so again, but it really does cause a lot of hassle when renewals are late, and it really would take you less time to DO IT NOW than it does, for example, to put fuel in your car, so please – action this day! (nae, this moment if you please).

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The latest from the Federation. - Continuous insurance

Just after the last (F.B.H.V.C.) newsletter went to press, there was a sudden flurry of enquiries following media reports about new measures to enforce motor insurance regulations. The reports were triggered by a press announcement issued by the Department for Transport to coincide with the publication of their analysis of the responses to the consultation on a ‘Scheme of Continuous Enforcement of Motor Insurance’ (see Newsletter 2/2009).

There have been a series of consultations on this topic, going back several years. The underlying proposal is to undertake regular comparison between the DVLA database of vehicles that are licensed for road use and the motor insurers’ database (MID) of vehicles that are insured. The comparison would identify vehicles that appear only on the former, and keepers of those vehicles would then become liable to penalty, whether or not the vehicle concerned was actually in use. Legislation to make this possible was contained in Section 22 of the Road Safety Act of 2006, allowing the Secretary of State to make appropriate regulations for the application of the new law and to decide when it should start. The latest consultation was concerned with the detail of those regulations.

Typically, some of the media reports caused needless anxiety for some whose vehicles were licensed, but temporarily out of use and uninsured, by suggesting this was some new idea and hinting that the new system was already in operation. A closer look at the press announcement would have shown the journalists responsible that DfT expects the new enforcement regime to come into force in the 'next financial year'.

At present, it is only illegal to use, or keep, an uninsured vehicle on the road - provided it is off the road, it doesn't matter whether it is insured or not. However, once the new regulations come into force, and Section 22 of the Road Safety Act of 2006 commences, it will be an offence to keep an uninsured vehicle unless it is SORNed (or has been off the road since before the SORN system began in January 1998).

FBHVC supports the principle of this scheme as it believes it will reduce the number of uninsured vehicles on the roads. The obvious caveat is the risk that a properly insured vehicle may not show up on the MID for some reason, such as being one of many vehicles on a multi-vehicle policy. Owners can check that their vehicles appear on the insurance database by checking at www.askmid.com - and we recommend that everyone should make that basic check shortly after each insurance renewal.

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I was made aware recently of a problem encountered by a friend, who, when trying to re-tax his car "on-line" was unable to do so because the system said his car was not insured – it was, he had the paperwork to prove it - but! The insurance company had made a mistake, by incorrectly entering his registration number on the system, they had used a capital letter O where they should have used a numeric zero. You can just imagine, in extreme circumstances, a vehicle being impounded, possibly even crushed, because of some computer operator's finger trouble. Imagine trying to explain that to an enthusiastic police officer who stops you for some reason, and discovers that – according to the system – your car is not insured, you would be lost. You can't be too careful with such things. Especially these days when so many companies are willing and able to do it on line – attention to detail is paramount. Check yours at www.askmid.com now! Yes, it's free. If you do not have internet access at home, go to your local library and ask.

Registration of historic vehicles

The DVLA leaflet INF 26, Guidelines for the Registration of Rebuilt or Radically Altered Vehicles and Kitcars, gives definitions for 'Radically Altered Vehicles' and 'Reconstructed Classics' and allocates a point score to the various major components of the vehicle. The chassis or monocoque bodyshell scores five points; suspension, both axles, transmission, and steering assembly all score two points each; the engine scores one point. If an already registered vehicle is radically altered then, provided it scores more than eight points, it may retain its original registration number. For a vehicle with a separate chassis, the body is not scored by the points system, so a new body should not affect the retention of the registration number.

However, for a vehicle where either there is no documentary evidence to claim the original number, or if the original number is unknown, then an age related number should be allocated assuming the criterion of 'Reconstructed Classics' is met. The definition is: 'Vehicles comprising genuine period components of the same specifications, all over 25 years old, will be assigned an age-related registration mark. The appropriate vehicle enthusiasts club must confirm the authenticity of the components'. I had assumed until now, that the period components were the major mechanical components in the radically altered points system. However, it appears that this may not strictly be the case. The consequence of this is that the installation of a new body prior to registration could mean that the vehicle is allocated a 'Q' plate. The principle is for 'genuine period components of the same specifications, all over 25 years old' should be used. It therefore follows that the vehicle should be registered with its existing 'over 25 years old' body still in place provided, of course, that it can meet the MoT requirements. Only when the vehicle is registered, should a body replacement be contemplated.

This particular case came to light because the owner passed to DVLA a receipt for what could be interpreted as being a new body. There has been another case where the DVLA local office has required that form V627/1, entitled 'Built Up Vehicle Inspection Report' is completed. This form requests receipts for replacement parts. It is perfectly understandable that if DVLA are given information they will take it into account when assessing the vehicle. The moral of this story is that if it is an age-related application, careful consideration needs to be given to how a vehicle and its documents, including the covering dating letter/certificate, are presented to a DVLA local office.

Declaring SORN on a newly acquired vehicle

SORN (Statutory Off Road Notification) is only applicable to a vehicle whose licence disc expired on, or after, 31 January 1998. If you have just acquired a vehicle that is subject to SORN, a recent case has indicated that the on-line SORN system should not be used to declare the initial SORN under your new ownership. This is because of the way in which the SORN legislation, and on-line SORN system works. If a vehicle is being taxed, then it is perfectly normal for the new owner to take over the unexpired period of tax. However, the SORN period starts at the beginning of a month, and then stops when there is a change in ownership. The online SORN system can only start a period of SORN at the start of the month, and then stops that SORN when the ownership changes.

SORN cannot be made online within the month of registering as keeper.

If you have acquired a vehicle, and you are going to declare SORN, as well as filling in the V5C to register the change of ownership, (or V62 if V5/V5C was missing) it is essential that you fill in a V890, (SORN form) as well. The V890 SORN form is available for download on line from www.direct.gov.uk, or should be available from a main Post Office. Staple these forms together, and send to DVLA Swansea, SA99 1AR. I would suggest that it is always wise to make copies of these forms before sending them off.

You should receive written confirmation of the SORN declaration within four weeks. If no acknowledgement letter is received then the DVLA instructions are that you must contact Customer Enquiries Group on 0870 240 0010 immediately.

In summary, new keepers should make a SORN declaration via the paper based SORN V890 application form.

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My thanks to the FBHVC for their kind permission to use the above articles from their newsletter. I am sure they will help you to see just some of the hard and vital work that they do on our behalf. Ed.

Getting Technical

You will have no doubt heard me admit that my memory is less than perfect, certainly my short term memory, but only recently has my memory from further back found itself wanting. My phone rang one November day back in 2009, and I was asked a technical question that left me feeling a bit odd, a bit frustrated and more than a little worried – the question? Do we leave the bolts on the rear spring shackle loose enough that the shackle is free to swing back and forth, both on the chassis and the spring, or do we nip them up tight and let the bonded rubber in the two metalistic bushes do all the work?

Now I know the way to do that, I've done it on Rebels and Kittens (the first Kitten I ever owned turned out to have come with a broken rear spring!), but could I think at that moment in time? Could I heck! Now this doubt might be down to having been admiring the full chassis lubrication on a pre-war Riley, where the spring shackles have brass bushes, (or are they in fact phosphor bronze?) shoulders on the bolts just so that the shackles can swing with the movement even though the nuts are fully tightened, all lubricated by a spider-web of tiny diameter pipes feeding oil from a reservoir activated by a ratchet like device which gets operated as the vehicle bounces over the no doubt rougher roads from 7 or 8 decades or more ago (or were road surfaces in pre-war Britain in fact better than those we enjoy today? – ahh, I've got it, speed humps have really been introduced because manufacturers are planning reverting to full chassis lubrication and need the extra movement of the suspension to drive the lubricator pumps – it's all becoming clear to me now!) No, still no men in white coats – I looked!

Whatever, it gave me an excuse to talk to some of our technical gurus, thank you Alan, John, George and Phil (who by coincidence owns a Riley 9 Monaco built in 1934 I think) for keeping me on the straight and narrow. The answer, as I am sure you are aware, is to leave them slack after fitting the spring, until after you lower the car onto its wheels, that is put the load on the springs. Feel free to then bounce the car up and down a bit, and then, tighten the bolts up just as tight as you can. If you have to jack the car up to get clearance, Jack the axle not the chassis!

Alan Shaw tells me that he made a special tool for doing this, consisting of a length of old leaf from a broken back spring, into which he neatly cut a hexagonal hole just the right size to fit the nuts on the spring shackle (now, see that's the kind of thing which makes me realise just how clumsy and incapable I am – I mean how do you "just cut a neat and accurate hexagonal hole" in the leaf of an old spring? Seriously, is this done with drills and files and a lot of hard work and patience, or do you need a milling machine – and the skills and expertise to be able to use it? We will be into toolmaking before you know it – does anyone actually teach such skills in this country these days?), thus giving himself a long spanner with which to apply sufficient force for the task in hand.

Now I know that my memory is not great, and of course I ought to check, but it is the wee small hours, and I'll never remember to check later, so I'll just say it, though I dislike compromises, this really is not a compromise at all, just a fact, one of the very close matches between the metric and Imperial systems of measurement is the almost negligible difference – certainly close enough in my experience – between ¾" and 19mm, and a spanner of either size should fit those nuts and bolts.

One advantage of changing springs with the body off (mind you, how are you going to load them accurately with the body off?) is that there is plenty of room to use a socket or box spanner (in either case 6 sided) rather than an open ender or ring key!

Freeing off the "U" bolt nuts that attach the spring to the axle can be a challenge, as they are often neglected, and, exposed as they are, can become badly corroded, (I mean, when last did you either paint or grease the ones on your car?) so in the absence of a good historical maintenance programme, best to start soaking them in something appropriate regularly, indeed daily, as far in advance of trying to remove them as possible. Good luck. Ed

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Clutch release bearing carrier Roll pin replacement on the 850 Reliant – early type

This is a re-print of an article we published 8 years ago, but in view of the tale that follows, I thought it appropriate to repeat it.

Dennis, well Fred (the foreman) at Michaels uses a 1/8" "Snap-On" parallel pin punch :-

With the gearbox out of the car :-

First remove the thrust bearing from its carrier (two spring clips). Then remove the locating washer(s) from the end of the shaft – outside the bellhousing – sometimes there are two of these fitted. Next remove the right hand roll pin first. (Right hand as viewed from the front of the bellhousing) Pull the clutch operating lever as far as it will go (have an assistant pull it for you – and hold it there), while you look at the angle the pin is in at, and, using a good quality 1/8" pin punch (must be a good quality one, they recommend the Snap on one), punch the right hand roll pin as far through as you can – it will eventually foul the back of the housing, (unless it was in fact broken, as some are, in which case the bits will fall off as you punch it through, and in that case you will most likely be able to punch it right out) then knock the shaft as though you are going to remove it from the bellhousing, and the pin will bend or break, in either case you will then be able to punch it further through.

Repeat process for the other pin, you will then be able to rotate the bearing carrier on the shaft, and so be able to remove the shaft from the bellhousing, disengaging the carrier from the shaft as it goes. You can then easily remove the remains of the roll pins from the carrier on the bench. Clean everything thoroughly, and the holes in the bellhousing, before re-assembly.

To reassemble :- Slide the shaft back into the bellhousing, engaging the thrust bearing carrier as you go. Use the pin punch in left hand hole to locate the carrier on the shaft, while you put the new right hand roll pin in. Then fit the left hand pin. You may now lightly oil where the shaft passes through the bellhousing.

On some cars (normally newer than the Kitten) the carrier now slips easily on the shaft, to stop this movement, and so to make life easier on the roll pins, some people now use Locktite, after the thrust bearing carrier goes in place on the shaft.

The roll pins (unless you use stainless ones) are fairly soft, and will easily flair, like a rivet, which is why it is essential to use a good quality pin punch of the correct size - (1/8") both for removal and replacement.

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The following is the full text of a recent communication from Alan Osborn, the owner of the lovely car on the cover. Alan was keen to have details of his solution to the roll pin situation before I printed the story, and we will do that, but I thought the "as it develops" version might give others an opportunity to learn, or even contribute, Ed.

Brian, November 2009

You wanted the low down on my new Kitty, in a mo. In the meantime the box is out (and engine, easiest way to do it) and the clutch cross shaft had lost its 'push' due to the roll pins being replaced by high tensile bolts which had NOT failed, but they have cut the holes in the cross shaft into slots! So it appears some slight shuffle here gets you into trouble. I am looking closely at a moded roll pin replacement on the replacement box/cross shaft, will tell more when that is done. As regards constant mesh starter, the engine plate stays thus and the holes that match the bell housing, the starter itself has its holes seriously slotted, it looks a bit dodgy i.e. as if the bolts will fall out, but after a year's use without any trouble it must be ok. The Bell housing though needs outer ring around the starter removing to allow the end bearing on the new starter to fit in, looks straight forward as I have the original bell housing to work from.

Now to PRW 13R? I got it from Eric Wallis last December (2008) in all good condition, apart from poor blue paintwork. Recently I have touched the blue up, Vauxhall Nordic blue, about the most boring on the rack! I then wizzed some silver wheel paint along the lower parts, and finally some stone chip sprayed on the bottom bits. Removed the bumper rubbers and the 4 corners, to tidy them up, and fitted a new roof aerial.

The car has had the sunshine roof for a long time. It might even get darkened windows when I get time! It says 70,000 on the speedo - we expect it should have a 1 in front. I have done just on 6,000 in the year of ownership, totally reliably. The car was rebuilt by Eric W. on a Fox galvanised chassis and 12" Wheels (which adds to its good looks!)

Other mods - there is a Reliant 4 branch exhaust, one of my moded inlet manifolds, and gas flowed carb. Constant mesh starter. The ignition is a Lucas RITA, with the usual radiator header tank, and electric fan. Now comes another clever bit, we have a heat exchanger, this takes heat out of the oil and puts it into the water, so engine runs cooler but the heater runs hotter!! This is the first time I have known a Reliant heater that needs to be turned down in the winter. There is a cast alloy rocker cover, and a lot of extra sound proofing, unfortunately negated by a very small silencer. It is a very tidy car in just about every way, except that the engine block is really standard. Having got used to balanced bottom ends and go

faster cams, this one is a bit slow. It handles well though, even if a bit of 4 wheel drifting and/or opposite lock cornering is yet to come!

Alan Osborn

Thanks for the update Alan. It just goes to show that different individuals come up with different solutions. I was a bit shocked by both the roll pin replacement with bolts, (we used to use stainless roll pins) and by the method of adapting the rear engine plate and bellhousing to take the pre-engaged starter motor. What should be done there is to replace the rear engine plate and gearbox housing with the later ones that were designed and manufactured for use with the pre-engaged starter (its locating holes are closer together than the earlier type). But it shows you what can be done.

O*n the roll pin front, the cross tube is both fairly thin walled and relatively soft – if that is an acceptable term to use to describe a bit of metal tube!*

On the "heat exchanger" I am sure that is an oil cooler, probably from a Citroen if memory serves. Is this an alloy lump (what an adjective to describe a cleverly designed and manufactured piece of lightweight metal!) which fits between the crankcase and the oil filter with two "heater" pipes attached – one inlet one outlet?

From memory, the coolant temperature rises more rapidly than the lubricant temperature when starting from cold, and if that is indeed the case then you could argue that the device is an oil heater, at least until the oil temperature exceeds the coolant temperature – does that in fact actually happen? Ed

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A note on front dampers whilst the information is to hand.

Keith Gittus, our man in Norton Cannes, fitted a pair towards the end of November 2009 and reports that he found satisfaction on his Fox at 20 turns up from the bottom on the spring seat and 6 clicks from fully backed off on the damping rate. This setting enables his Fox to cope well with the numerous speed humps in the neighbourhood. Thanks for the up-date Keith.

On the same subject, Mark Hinton fitted his, and reports that with the spring seat adjuster 6cm from the start of the threads and the damping set at 10 clicks his Fox gives a ride height of 23 ½" or 59cm from the ground to the bottom of the middle of the front wheel arches. He reckons that looks right (he fitted new back springs as well) and equates to the approximate hand's width between the top of the front tyre and the wheel arch that one finds on most kittens.

And yes I am well aware of the need to standardise on the units of measure – but I only print what I receive, I'll try and make some comparative measurements before going to print, e.g. how many turns to the cm.

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More on manifolds

By Clive Angel

Dear Brian, December 2009

On the article about the subject in Mewsletter 91, I would make the following observations:-

The object being to try and get the gas flow entering ports 1 & 4 about the same as 2 & 3. A very good idea. But, the method suggested of cutting a groove between the two “tubes” at the flange face is counterproductive.

For any gains in trying to get the gas flow the same that you are trying to achieve is nullified by the massive turbulence created by allowing the gasses to hit the flat section on the side of the cylinderhead ports.

The old 750cc racer boys were right in “putting a hole” between the tubes upstream of the flange is spot on. If you take a look at the manifold at the flange face you can see that if you were to mount the manifold in the big vice of a vertical milling machine, and by using a long 8mm cutter, you could create a hole (more of a slot actually) about 20mm upstream from the flange (joint face with the head). Then, by careful use of a set of riffling files, open up and blend the hole into a smooth slot, with knife edges in both directions along the flow path. (Try to keep it central or you will direct the flow).

The most productive way of getting the best out of our little engines is to do what the Americans call blueprinting. Us old sprinting boys call It meticulous attention to engine building.

Gas flow turbulence is created when the flow hits a sharp change in direction. The biggest cause of such sharp changes is the join between the inlet manifold and the head. If you set about reducing that change to an absolute minimum, you will find the engine will rev far more freely.

To achieve that smooth state, the best thing to do is to start the process by making sure that all the stud holes are clear and burr free. If by now your stud holes are much bigger than they were before than you need to get a new gasket and clean it both sides. Cover one side with Prussian Blue, or failing that a light smear of molybdenum grease (or any black grease).

Clean the faces of the head and manifold., preferably with fine emery cloth on a flat base (first stuff rag into the holes in the head to prevent grit getting into the engine) That’s if the head is not on the bench! Even then it’s not bad practice.

Put the studs back in the head and offer up the gasket. Check to see it is central on all the holes. When you have got it about right put sticky tape over the ends of the gasket to locate it, then smear some grease or blue on the exposed face and place the manifold over the studs, centralize it before pressing firmly, put a washer and nut on the studs and pull it up tight. If you do have sloppy stud holes – and that is no bad thing – the best solution is to put a couple of small dowels in to locate it accurately – 3mm ones will do nicely, and not too deep please! This will allow you to fit the manifold in exactly the same position every time you remove it in future.

When you have fitted the dowels, you can remove the nuts and washers and separate the manifold from the head carefully. You will see clearly the black, or blue, outline of the gasket holes, carefully run a scriber round the outline to preserve the position. Do the same on the head by running the scriber round the gasket edges.

Now, clean off the grease or blue, and set about opening up the inlet ports to the scribed lines. Make sure that you blend the opening back into the head, and the manifold, by at least 15 - 20mm (that’s between just over ½” to ¾” to some of us! Ed.) Gas flow does not mind a change in section, so long as it’s gradual.

If you complete the above procedure on all the ports, not only will the inlet gas get into the combustion chamber quicker, but the exhaust gasses will get out faster too! Thus the engine will breath better.

If you follow the same principals with the carburettor mounting flanges etc you will again help increase the airflow into the engine.

There has always been some debate about the best surface finish of, for example, the inlet bores. Some reckon that a highly polished surface is best, but recent studies would seem to suggest that a surface that is polished, then lightly sand blasted helps the gas layers close to the inlet tract surface slide along more easily. Apparently the polished surface can encourage microscopic eddies.

So, the moral of the story is, avoid sharp changes in area in the inlet tract, or your fuel consumption will suffer, and the engine will not give its best.

This system has worked for me on many engines, but I have yet to check it out on my Kitten – it is still in bits awaiting my release from other projects – hopefully this year (2010).

Have fun. Clive Angel Lincs - No. 510

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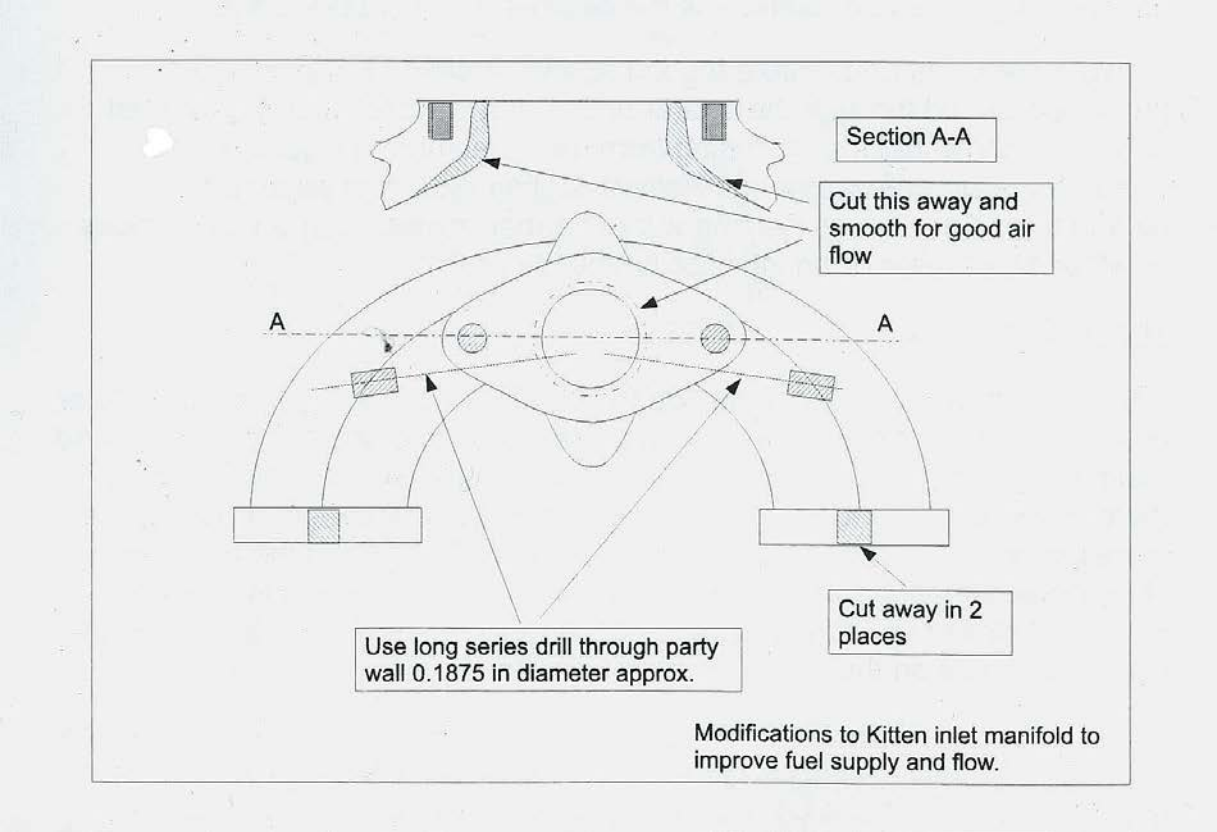


Fox and Kitten Heater systems *by Duncan Bradford*

This is obviously the time of year when we regret not sorting the heater out when we didn't need it, so maybe this is a 'cut out and keep' article. Just don't forget where you keep it!

To set the scene, I have had blue Fox since new. It was February 1984 when I bought it, and the heater [using the term loosely] was my biggest disappointment. It's never been any good despite several engine changes, new water pumps, engine flushes and so on.

The red Fox now has an engine built from new by John Box, and I have verified a free flow of coolant through the heater, yet it is, and always was, even poorer at its job than that in Blue Fox.

The camper, which I got six years ago, has now done a high mileage on its original engine, with no remedial work or replacements. Its heater is splendid. In fact I usually turn the fan off in about twenty

minutes as my feet get uncomfortably hot. So I know good heating is possible. I must confess that it does have a fan from some other vehicle in, which is more powerful than the original. The fans used in Reliants, including Scimitars – they use substantially the same heater – is the weakest in the Lucas range.

Two ingredients go to make a good heater: A plentiful supply of air, properly directed through the heater unit, and a plentiful supply of heated coolant. I know that's a confusing term, but I can't bring myself to say 'water' as using pure water in a Reliant cooling system is as sure and certain a road to ruin, as running without a thermostat. Correct proportions of either an inhibitor or an inhibitor antifreeze are vital.

The Air Supply Side

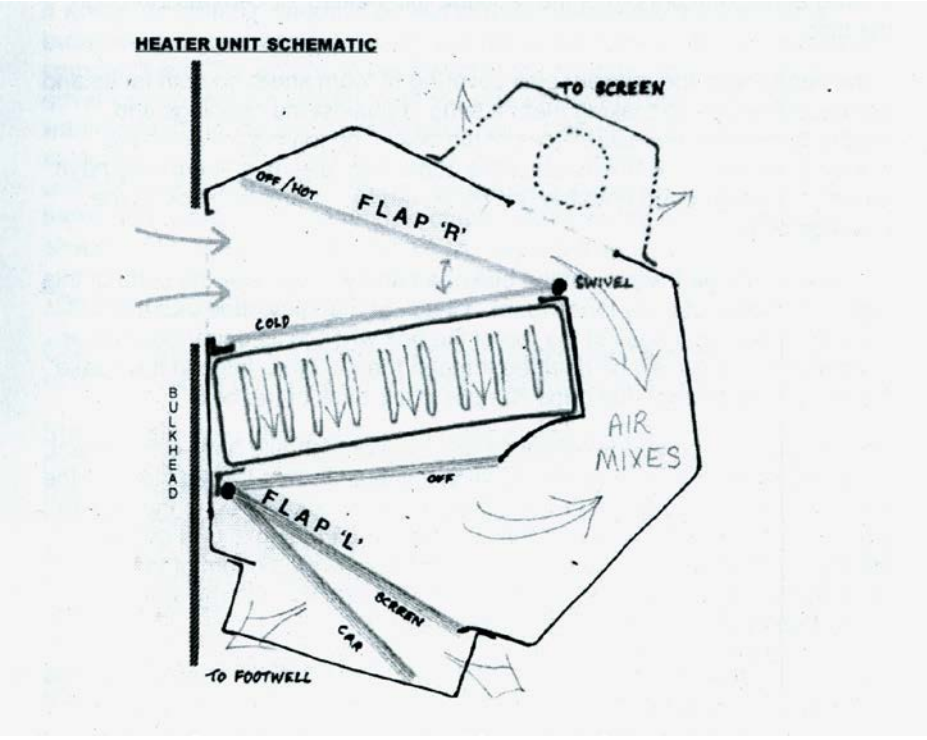
Most British-built cars from the 50s to the 80s used a version of 'our' blower unit. The motor, complete with its fan, lifts out on undoing three screws, and can be swapped with a better one. As a guide: the taller the motor, the more powerful; and those whose wiring is direct into the motor housing are more beefy than those where the wires plug into the side of the housing. More powerful motors have a resistor mounted on the casing to give an additional slower speed [should anyone want one!]. I discard this bit and put spade terminals on the motor wires to take the Reliant connectors.

Check that the blower is working well, and that there are no air leaks in the case or air trunking. The blowers were originally mounted on metalastic-type mounts, but simple L-brackets are good enough, with self-tappers in convenient places. A loose motor can shake off its air trunking.

Once the incoming air enters the heater box through the bulkhead it gets directed by two flaps which govern how much passes through the heater radiator, or matrix, and whether any goes out to the footwells or not. The outlet to the screen vents is always open, but is smaller than that to the footwells, thus cleverly balancing the flow when there is access allowed to the footwell outlet.

These two flaps are positioned across the heater box, on axles allowing them to swivel up and down. Their position is governed by the two heater control levers, which operate rods in adjustable trunnions mounted on the cranked ends of the axles.

I've drawn a schematic diagram, which is accurate enough to show what happens, although I've simplified details to make the drawing easier to read.



The right hand heater control lever operates the upper flap. This is either down, fully or partially blocking off access to the radiator and allowing air to go straight up to the screen and further around the back of the box towards the footwell outlet, or the flap is at least partially raised, directing some or all of the incoming air to go through the fins of the radiator and then up to the screen and down to the footwells. When this flap is fully up it seals across the top of the box, directing all incoming air down through the radiator. No cold air can pass through the box.

The lower flap, operated by the left hand control lever, allows or excludes access to the footwell vents, so it determines whether all the flow goes to the screen or some goes to the footwells. When this flap is in the lowest position the most air can get to the footwells. Rising towards its middle position it moves towards cutting off all flow to the footwells, forming a sealed floor to the bottom of the box. Above the middle position is a bit of a no-man's-land, and is a meaningless state best avoided. However, fully up it seals across the bottom of the radiator. No heated air can pass through the box.

The flaps are made efficient by a covering of foam sheet on both faces and around the edges so making them a snug fit against the openings and ledges formed on the inside faces of the box. The foam may well have started to break up. In the case of the upper flap, pieces of foam may have detached and dropped onto the fins of the radiator, partially blocking the passage of air.

Take off the air trunking at the bulkhead and you can see the state of this flap, and hoover out any loose foam. Check at the same time that it is making a good seal against the top of the box when in its upper position as otherwise not all air will be directed through the radiator. Instead it will take the easy route through the gaps straight to the back of the box.

Once the air has gone down through the radiator it should have gained heat. If the lower flap is in the 'screen' position it should form a sealed 'floor' to the box, directing all heated air around the rear of the box and up to the screen outlets. If this flap is lowered to the 'car' position, the flap allows air down into the footwell distribution tunnel mounted across the bottom of the box. Up in the 'off' position it [nearly] blocks off the bottom of the radiator, preventing the flow of heated air to anywhere.

One note: the right hand lever has 'off' printed near the 'hot' position. This is because it has to be in the upper position in order to prevent passage of any air, in conjunction with the left lever. So for the right lever the upper position can mean 'hot' or 'off' according to the setting for the left lever. There is no difference.

Two crucial points:-

1] The position of the flaps at the stop positions is important, and can be adjusted at the trunnions connecting the rods to the axle levers.

2] The foam must be in good condition.

To get at the unit for adjustment the centre console has to be removed. Apart from the obvious fixing screws, of which there are more on the Kitten because of it's two-part cover, the choke cable must be disconnected from the carburettor by undoing the setscrew clamping the cable in the trunnion. Store the trunnion somewhere safe! Then remove the heater control knobs – without losing the tiny spring plates which secure them by pressure. Once the console fastenings are undone, withdrawing the console rearwards will pull the choke cable through the bulkhead. Notice the rubber tubing around it which, on refitting, needs to be slid to a position where it will act as a bulkhead grommet against the entry of noise and fumes into the passenger compartment. For access to the inside of the heater unit the right hand cover can be removed by undoing the screws, and prising off the star washers holding the free ends of each axle. Undoing the four hex-headed setscrews through the bulkhead, and removal of the two hoses, allows the unit to be taken out of the vehicle. Should you want new control knobs, those from various Nissan models of the 1980s, eg the pre 'Mr Magoo' shape Micra, are a good alternative as they are a tight push-on fit.

The Coolant Supply Side

Checking that there's a proper supply of heated coolant to the heater radiator involves understanding how the cooling system works.

Starting from cold, the coolant is circulated around the engine block and cylinder head by the pump. The pump draws water in through two hoses: one coming from the rear of the head via the heater unit, the other coming from the front of the head via the heat-exchanger mounted below the carburettor. In the first year or so of production Kittens used a by-pass hose from the front of the head direct to the pump, and the coolant went from the rear of the head to the carb, then to the heater and on to the pump. This layout did not circulate water from the rear of the engine enough and was soon dropped, although it continued in use in the Robin until 1975 when the 850 engine was introduced.

This then is an enclosed system, with pumping capacity sufficient to induce strong circulation. Once the temperature has built up to around 88 degrees, the thermostat begins to open, allowing a small flow of cold coolant in from the bottom of the radiator, in exchange for losing the hottest coolant from the top of the engine. It's important to realise though that the thermostat doesn't open fully unless and until the temperature builds to about 103 degrees, which is not often in the Reliant engine; and even when it is fully open, the gap is no more than a few millimetres opening of a lid with a much smaller diameter than the hose outlet itself. With no thermostat in place almost all coolant would circulate around just the front of the engine and radiator, leading to localised overheating at the rear of the engine, due to sluggish circulation, and consequent silting up. Under only seven pounds of pressure, coolant will start to boil and gas at not much more than 112 degrees, depending on the concentration of the antifreeze, which is quite achievable in hot spots local to the cylinders, without raising the overall coolant temperature noticeably. As the engine is turned off and pumping ceases this can cause audible boiling briefly and is a sign to get out the RadFlush two-pack.

Poor circulation of hot coolant through the heater may then be due to a thermostat stuck open, or missing, or due to silting up caused by running in this state at some time in the past.

Those who have dismantled engines report that a build-up of sludge, silt and chunks of scale and clinker is very common around the rear of the block and head. Fortunately there is a drain plug there, and removing it to prod around and flush repeatedly can get rid of a lot of the blockage, and restore good flow. This is good because it's where the heater gets its supply from. Having cleared the way so far, let's look at further causes of poor circulation through the heater:

The take-off to the heater is via an adaptor screwed into the head. The adaptor has a long threaded tail, and it is common for it to screw so far in as to 'bottom' on the opposite face of the casting, effectively cutting off much of the supply. The remedy is to shorten it judiciously with a hacksaw. [Thanks to John Box for that one!]

When the hose leaves this adaptor it commonly goes up and over the air trunking, on a Fox at least. When new, though, Reliant routed it under the trunking. This helps preclude airlocks. As this is the highest part of the cooling system it is where air locks will collect. Gassing can be due to localised overheating, or minor gas leaks across the head gasket involving a waterway, also caused by localised overheating – likely causes of this having already been discussed. Gas building up to an air-lock shows as the heater blowing colder at idle, when there is little circulation. Blipping the throttle temporarily clears it.

Localised overheating won't show on the temperature gauge, by the way. It's also worth remembering that the gauge is only of relative value. Because of the simple nature of the gauge and the sender unit, they are in no way accurate. They are designed to give a stable reading within a wide band of approximation. In other words, get to know where yours normally sits, and take note of any deviant behaviour. Lower reading than usual implies a thermostat sticking open; a gradual increase from normal,

which falls back with less use of the throttle, implies a partially blocked radiator; an inexorable rise indicates a loss of coolant.

The most likely cause of poor circulation is undoubtedly blockage of the tubes in the heater matrix. These tubes are even narrower than those in the main radiator, so act as a very efficient filter for all the silt and broken up scale in the whole system. Additionally the flow of coolant, once in the matrix, slows down dramatically as it spreads out among the tubes, like a river delta, in order to impart more heat over more time. To add to this effect, the radiator core lies flat across the vehicle, encouraging the deposit of any silt.

Furthermore the layout of the radiator requires both flow and return pipes to be at one end, so the 'header tank' is partitioned in half by a relatively flimsy plate. [The coolant flows across one half and back along the other]. It is easy to cause this plate to blow out of position by flushing at mains pressure. Thus the coolant can enter and leave again without even bothering to travel down the core and back.
I am indebted to Tony Idle for this information – he has dismantled several of these radiators in an attempt to restore them, after having little success using descaler. He reports that it is necessary to resort to brute force and a bicycle spoke to clear the tubes, as descaler needs to be able to actually circulate through in order to work.

I can only assume the matrix on my red truck has been damaged by blowing through, as there is circulation in and out of the pipes, but no heat, and there was me thinking that an overnight soaking in RadFlush had cleared it out.

RadFlush is excellent at cleaning out sludge. It makes the inside of your radiator gleam brassily, but it can only work where it can reach. It is important to realise too, that it can loosen lumps that are bigger than it can break down completely, so it is necessary to flush through well, and repeat the treatment periodically. If your heater works at all, I'm sure RadFlush will improve it no end.

Enquire at your local radiator place about recoring the heater matrix. It's not cheap but new ones are even dearer.

Of course the natural way to check for good circulation through the heater is to feel the hoses: If they are not very hot then this would suggest poor circulation. However if the heater radiator is 'blown', and circulation is bypassing the core tubes you will still get hot hoses. How hot? Well on my Camper, with the excellent heater, they are on a par with the hoses serving the carburettor. With the fan on, the inlet hose feels hotter than the outlet, as you'd expect. Both are uncomfortably hot to hold for more than about ten seconds.

Finally the water pump itself may be the cause of less than perfect circulation. Reliant's original designers and engineers were excellent in their specifications and their products were carefully thought through and quality-controlled. Since those days though it has not always been possible to source so reliably, and I have seen one version of the water pump that did not impress at all. Trawling through various versions recently in a dealer's stores we couldn't find a duff one, but it's possible there was a batch with poorly formed impeller blades.

I started this article in order to clarify my thoughts on what to do about my two poor-performers. A recent cold snap galvanised me into improving things as soon as the weather gets kinder for working out there. My conclusions are:

1] I must Radflush the Camper while circulation is evidently still good, before silting up makes it ineffective.

2] Having checked everything else on the Red Fox I must assume I need to get Express Radiators on the case [They like a challenge, and I know they've sorted at least one Reliant heater recently!]

3] I must put more into the blue Fox. I know the foam needs replacing, and the lower flap needs adjusting. A bigger blower needs to be fitted [I have replaced the split trunking] and although the engine has never

been run without a stat, I daresay it could do with RadFlushing as I have often used our hard tapwater over the years, and although I trust the guy who rebuilt the engine I never saw how well he'd cleaned out the block did I? There is some sediment in view from the radiator cap, in some of the core tubes that are visible, so I know the heater matrix can only be worse.

Roll on warmer weather! All errors in the above are mine. Use it at your own risk…

Duncan Bradford No.46 - January 2010

Parts

To date the response from the questionnaire on the back of your renewal notices has been sporadic and inconclusive, (approximately 1 in 20 wrote anything!) still, I tried, and who knows how it might work out in the end, but so far, we have not learned much from that exercise, other possibly than the fact that our wee cars are so well maintained that they sail through the annual check with relative ease – a case of Wait and See I guess – oh jings, there he goes into Jowett references again – Oh no I don't! It was just a figure of speech – honest!

Fox brake back plates, help me out here please, Gwilm Pritchard is restoring a Fox, and needs all 4, I can't remember what fits, do you know where we can get new ones at a sensible price?

ATTENTION ALL FOX OWNERS, DUNCAN IS CONSIDERING COMISSIONING A BATCH OF PETROL FILLER HOSES, THEY ARE NOT CHEAP, BUT IF YOU ORDER NOW YOU CAN HAVE ONE FOR £44 delivered. Cost is related to batch quantity, set up costs are high, that price is based on a batch of 10. Production will only proceed if we get orders for 4. Contact Duncan on hidunc@ntlworld.com if you want one or for more details.

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Sales and Wants

For Sale :- Norman's has a comprehensive list of spares available

For Sale :- R reg Kitten saloon, Reliant blue, new tyres and windscreen. Taxed. Mot expired Sept. 2009 needs to be used and some cosmetics . Located in Hertfordshire. Reluctant sale £550 - Terry Silke

For Sale :- Gearbox Syncro rings John Box at Stable Cottage, Thornleigh Drive, Burton in Kendal LA6 1NQ johnsbox711@btinternet.com

Looking for a new home :- Reliant Kitten saloon project, outside Balluinluig near Pitlochry contact Lyn

Looking for a new home :- Blue Kitten estate car. R registered, no tax or test but too good to break. Ralph Erwin near Glasgow

EPILOGUE

Before I forget, and lest I have failed to mention it elsewhere, unless you have already renewed your subscription, and if you have, thank you (and if I am organised your current membership card will be enclosed), your subscription for this year is overdue, so, please attend to that promptly, thank you.

Here at central office my transport situation has been fun since October. It's all right for you, but I have had to endure several years in the wilderness – living with front wheel drive - however, the joys of oversteer have returned to my life, but it is not a Reliant, you will need to subscribe to George Mitchell's FOTV300 Group if you want to know more!

Right, faced with the ever returning question – what to do about the size of the first edition each year, I have, through a combination of laziness, frugality, and a desire not to keep you waiting too long since the last one, opted to keep this one brief, and with no photographs! Everyone who was with us last year gets this edition – unless they have been good enough to advise me that they are no longer on board – see Paul Stevenson's letter on page 10 as an example – and, given that all the new people we sign up this year get this year's back numbers, a certain amount of, hopefully educated, guesswork is involved in deciding how many copies of this edition to get printed – I'm going for 300 this time – that assumes that new subscribers in 2010 will not exceed those who do not renew by many. A formula which has served us reasonably well in the past, (only twice in the last few years have I had to have re-prints done).

Ok, Ok, Duncan Bradford very kindly sent in his heater article, I caught the cold, and took an executive decision to add another A4 sheet to this edition, it is January the 4th and I want to draw a line under this and get started to the next one – have the best possible time in 2010 – oh, any thoughts on a get-to-gether? Mind you the Register will be 20 years old in 2011…

Brian

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