



# MEWSLETTER 95

*July - August 2010*

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Geoffrey Mellor from Sutton-in-Ashfield has been with us for a decade now, keeps his car on the road year in, year out, flies the flag at a variety of events, yet keeps his light under the proverbial bushel. Well Geoffrey, your time has come, my good friend Derek Sloan was in England the other week, spotted your car in a show, took the picture, and sent it to me! I don't need to say anything about Geoffrey's standards of vehicle maintenance, the picture speaks for itself. Congratulations Geoffrey, keep up the good work.

***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  
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Rebel alternative parts list contact: John Blagburn  
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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](mailto:hidunc@ntlworld.com)

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

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

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# **Dinky Cars**

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Welcome once again. Thanks to a number of individuals, whose input is greatly appreciated, you know who you are, everyone was, at the time, spared a blow by blow account of my trip south back in March.

However, thanks to those people it has not been an arduous task to maintain the size of the Mewsletter over the past year or so, suddenly, that has changed. I have now waited expectantly for the whole of July, to see what little gems arrive for inclusion within these pages, Peter Hemming wrote a letter which you will read further on, but other than that – and an article from my son-in-law in June, not a sausage! So, unless and until someone provides some appropriate material, you will have to both suffer more of my ramblings, and, in the short term at least, less pages – you know what is required should you wish normal service to be resumed. Sammy's (our beloved Citroen BX auto) tyre pressures to provide better fuel consumption – I'd forgotten just how efficient a well maintained foot pump is, thanks chaps. All this and two Kittens and a Robin on the premises as well, and all owned by the Shaw family from new.

On then via John Copestake's place to the wonderful couple of hours you read about last time with Paul Wheatley and "Little Lucy" – oh, that carb by the way was a 38mm ISO, I may tell you more about that in the technical bit, sorry I omitted that last time.

That night was spent at Thurlaston ahead of my Birmingham meeting on the Sunday.

The following three days were spent with my aunt in London, we visited the Greenwich Observatory, (something I have long wanted to do, well worth a visit if you have never been, you will learn a lot) a couple of miles from where she lives, an afternoon in Brighton, and I did get time out to call in and share a pizza with our Tempest man Martin Seymour, good to see you again Martin. I spent the Wednesday night with relatives in Beaconsfield.

On the way north from Beaconsfield on the Thursday I called in to Watford to see Brenda Dick, who I was delighted to find in excellent health, new hips can indeed make dramatic improvements to peoples' lifestyles – the dog even gets walked properly again!

Thence by way of Doncaster to Wensleydale to stay with old friends Michael and Janet, I used to believe that Michael had what was probably the best Rebel saloon in the land, till Phil renovated his over the past year. Mind you, Michael's must surely be one of very few remaining one owner Rebels in the land.

On the Friday morning, too lazy to read the map, I allowed the sat-nav to guide me from Wensleydale to the abode of a couple of old family friends whom I had not spent time with in a decade and a half or more. They live in a cottage in the middle of nowhere outside the village of Walton near Brampton. The sat-nav took me along some wonderful single track roads which reduced my average speed to 23 miles an hour, and so I was almost an hour behind schedule arriving, and, as a result, got invited to join them for lunch. Very enjoyable it was too. The original cottage is rectangular and symmetrical, door in the middle, windows either side of the door. Inside there are no internal walls, it is just one big room, no hall, through the front door and that's you. To the right is a three piece suite surrounding a coffee table, a T.V. on the corner, and on the end wall a real working fireplace. To the left, while the back wall is covered in bookshelves, the main floor space is dominated by a lovely black grand piano, there is a south facing window in the opposite end to the fireplace, it sheds light impressively on the piano.

The extensions the guys have put on over the years almost trebled the original footprint, and at the back and on the end beyond the fireplace there is a kitchen, bedrooms bathroom and workshop, Anthony makes harpsichords.

Anyway, time soon ran away, and I left them to head home. The plan had been to be ahead of the Glasgow rush hour traffic on the Kingston bridge, and with the fine weather and light traffic I decided to throw economy to the wind and make good progress – a plan which was going just fine, until I failed to spot an unmarked police car in a string of slow moving traffic I was passing just south of Beattock.

That was Friday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March, today (3<sup>rd</sup> July), I received in the post the court's decision, which I won't bore you with, suffice to say, make sure that you know where your driving licence is – I could not find mine, spent the weekend looking, applied for a replacement on the Monday (15/3/10) and finally got a new licence in June, far too late to be able to comply with the 28 day fixed penalty notice I had been given by the officers of the law on the day of the offence. Though the case was well documented (in my opinion, I had kept both the court, the DVLA and my doctor informed every step of the way) the court completely ignored the fact that the DVLA had taken 3 months to do something they claim to be able to do in 3 weeks, and the fine imposed was more than twice the fixed penalty. I had often thought that the law and common sense were strangers, sadly this experience has only served to reinforce that opinion.

Oh, the relevant point is that what I have said in the past about there being no fixed speed cameras on the A74, still is true, but of course there are unmarked police cars!

I was annoyed that I hadn't spotted it, and angry with myself because I have known for years that I don't know where my licence is – particularly infuriating because, after 12 years on a restricted one, after my last medical (about 15 years ago) they gave me one that ran till I was 70, that is the one I lost, now I have a photo one, which you need to carry with you, and I am back to a 3 year restriction, so, the moral is, keep your licence safe, and pay close attention to the occupants of the cars you are passing. Moira was quick to point out that if I had not been speeding in the first place all the hassle and stress, not to say expense, could have been avoided, and I guess she is not wrong.

Daughter and her close circle of friends were well Impressed that her aged father, and his equally aged (in car terms) diesel automatic car could do 94.3MPH, - I'm just glad they didn't catch me on the downhill bit! (I had been using the sat nav to check my speed closely, in fact the Citroen's speedo, though reading high at anything between walking pace to 60 or so, becomes very accurate at high speed, certainly on the well worn front tyres (2.2mm tread) it had on it at the time – I am conscious of the fact they take a particularly dim view of three figure speeds, so I had been well aware and careful what I was doing, perhaps more time spent on





headlight bowls are just held into the body with self tappers which have stripped the fiberglass, which is too thick to fit the metal clips to, a situation to resolve here as you can adjust the headlight in the bowl, but the whole assembly is not as secure in the body as it ought to be), and a slight rear brake imbalance, so, work to do before next June. Then we encountered electrical gremlins while at an ROC (that would be the Reliant Owners Club, not the Rover Owners Club, though there were some tidy Rovers at the event too!) meeting at Bo'ness, home of the Scottish Railway Preservation Society.

Colin (my son-in-law, in whose garage the Rebel usually lives these days) fitted new fuses, but to no avail.

So, Colin duly brought the car to Renfrew in July, and on Tuesday the 27<sup>th</sup> I took it to Paisley and my old friend John's garage (he has a big well equipped one, and a lot of experience) and set about making things work again. The main problem turned out to be old age, and cleaning up (with fine emery paper) and coating the spades on the fuse box with Vaseline, soon had most things working again, though only very briefly in the case of the indicators. That turned out to be four and a half decades of deterioration in the (Regal, dash mounted type) indicator switch, a bit of a pig to remove, but we did, cleaned it, and it works now – though the warning light has gone on the blink, well, it no longer blinks! – or did we just disturb it?)

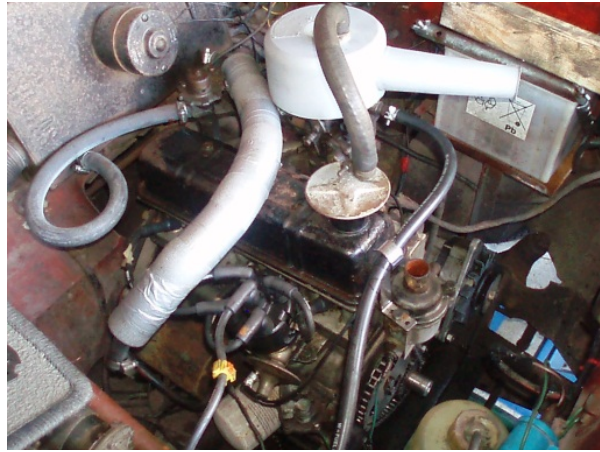
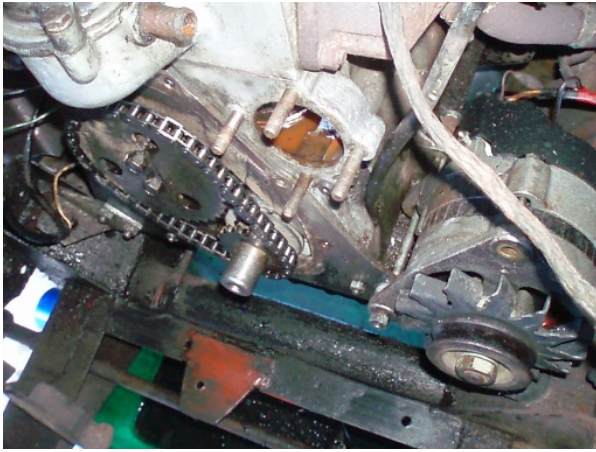
One feature the car has that I had been blissfully unaware of is that the front indicators are in fact stop tail light units with orange lenses, twin filament bulbs! I would wonder "Why?" but remember, this was a Reliant prototype, I guess they just used what was to hand!

So running maintenance, and some use, but are we actually making progress? Well, the new headlining that Phil kindly made and fitted has been much admired, along with the new window rubbers and retaining strips, and the new door seals not only look great but keep drafts down and rain out, so yes, we are making progress. The polish that Colin has got on the less than perfect paintwork is a mixed blessing, my hand just slides off it when I lean on the car to keep my balance, and you have no chance of a paper cup resting on the gently sloping bonnet, but it is sparkling. We even painted the radiator matrix black when we had it out to replace the front crank oil seal – it had quite a lot of red overspray on it from when the car was resprayed in 2004. We even moved the horns to sit, exposed to the elements, behind the grill, to give us clear access to the steering box filler plug which had been obscured by them, and at the same time we re-routed the horn wiring and tidied it up.

The car has been to two car club events in three months, with another one planned in August, so yes, progress is being made, on a number of fronts, not the least of which is teaching the younger generation about our wonderful wee cars. Wheels and tyres are soon to be the subject of attention, we like the original wheel colour, the ones on the car are black, and the hub caps are both rusty and not a matching set. Now I happen to know that Phil has some of the paint he used to paint his Rebels' wheels left, (a very good match to the original colour) and you can still buy those hub caps – but finance is coming into this, there is plenty of tread on the (old) tyres, and while the front pair match, the others are all quite different tread patterns, a fact that I feel might explain the oversteering tendency on left handers in particular.

Unwisely as it happens, I filled it with fuel the other day, only to discover the following morning that there is a leak when it is full and facing uphill – something else to investigate – probably a perished or badly fitted filler hose or corroded filler pipe, the war continues...

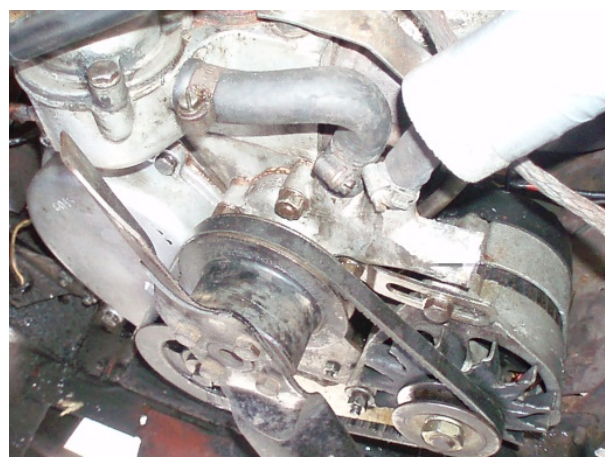
Oh, we did treat the car to a car cover the other month – it was going to be outside for a few days, we didn't want bird droppings on that gleaming paintwork! – the firm that do the best deal on these has a Glasgow based U.K. distributor – yes, I let the youngsters "surf the net", to find the best deal, compared notes with Phil, who had bought a similar thing last year, then saved the p&p by going to Rutherglen to collect it, it is the same type that Phil got for his, so we can recommend them, they will fit a Kitten, and no doubt the Fox too, though someone to confirm that would be a useful check.. If you have the facilities, it is the small one in the range offered at :- [Motorlicious.co.uk](http://Motorlicious.co.uk) *Or give me a ring,* Brian



One of the unusual features of this Rebel is the radiator mounting, you can see clearly here the bracket that has been welded onto the cross bracket that mounted the rad in the production models, just below and in front of the crankshaft, if you look very carefully you can just see part of the correct' mounting hole to the immediate left on the 'new' bracket. The other production rad mounting hole (not used on this car) can be seen just in front of the left hand side of the alternator pulley. I'll show you the – awkward – passengers side rad mounting hole another time!



We have yet to fit the electronic ignition kit (the box on the left wing) and you see the freshly painted radiator. Can't think why I can't see the new spring tensioner!



Observant enthusiasts will spot the redundant mechanical fuel pump, must remember to get a blanking plate and remove the old pump, I often wonder how much energy is wasted cranking its operating lever up and







Alan Osborn, motivated by Les Smith's article on sun roofs last time, was quick to point out that Les is not the only Reliant owner who enjoys the benefits of such a device, and kindly sent me this picture :-



Please note the lovely sun roof, as fitted by Les on his Fox last month. Wonderful piece of kit, until you leave it open when it rains! Also note the 'boy racer' black bonnet and the sexy black rear windows!!

Cheers, Alan

### **Lyn Rodden's DEMENTIA QUIZ . . . .**

*First Question* : You are a participant in a race. You overtake the second person. What position are you in?

*Answer* : If you answered that you are first, then you are absolutely WRONG! If you overtake the second person and you take his place, YOU are in second place!

Try not to screw up next time. Now answer the second question, but don't take as much time as you took for the first question, OK?

*Second Question* : If you overtake the last person, then you are...?

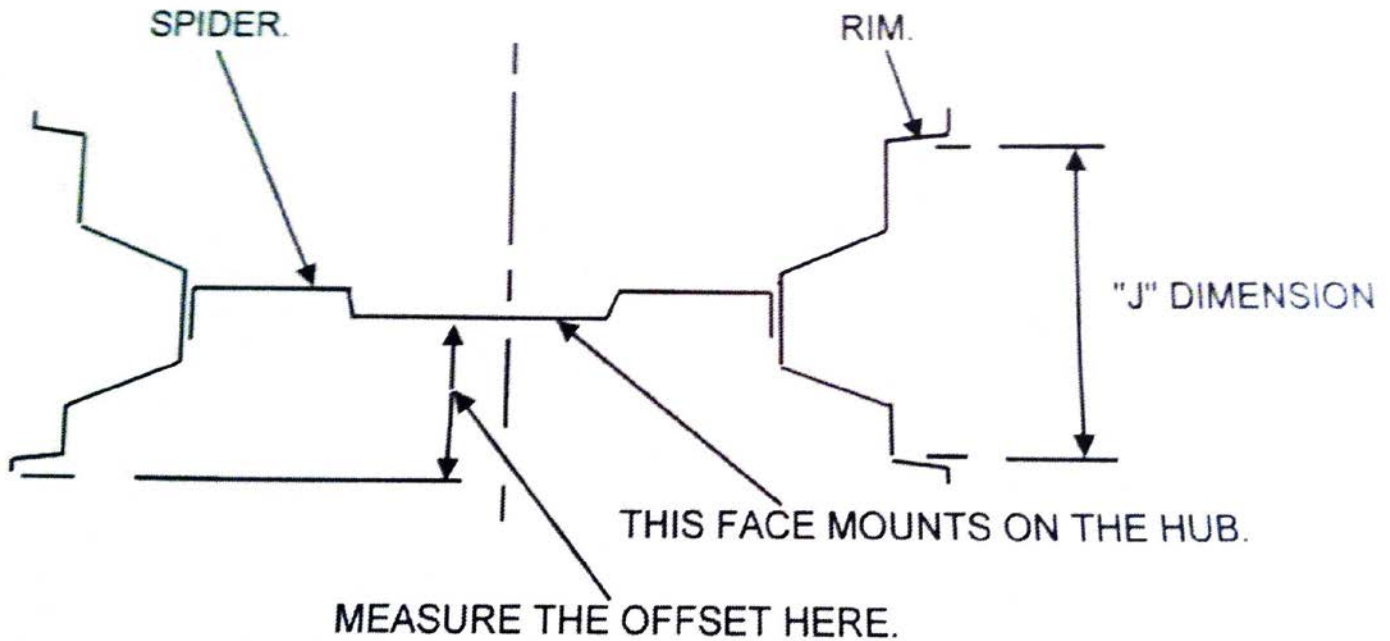
*Answer*: If you answered that you are second to last, then you are..... WRONG again. Tell me Sunshine, how can you overtake the LAST person??

You're not very good at this, are you?

*Third Question* : Very tricky arithmetic! Note: This must be done in your head only. Do NOT use paper and pencil or a calculator. Try it.



## SECTIONAL DIAGRAM OF A CAR WHEEL.



Now I know I am making a meal of this, but my rule is not calibrated from the end (beginning if you will) there are a couple or three mm of plain uncalibrated steel at the start, so, I can't just sit the wheel, outside face down, place a straight edge across the inner rim, and measure from the hub mounting face of the spider to the straight edge, well I can, but I need to take off the uncalibrated bit at the start of the rule from the figure. Likewise, placing the wheel inner face down and trying to measure through the hole in the middle is difficult because of the significant radius on the lip of that hole in the middle. In short, the offset, that distance from the hub mounting face to the inner rim, is somewhere between 3 to 3 ½", not very precise!

Trying to measure the "J" dimension has similar difficulties, because the angles are not right angles, and so the faces taper, do we measure in the middle, or at the narrowest point, or the widest? In any case the changes in direction are not instant, the turns (bends in the metal) are just that, bends, and so have a radius you need to know how the industry measures these things if you are to be able to make sense of it all and be able to communicate effectively. Thanks to ADRIAN, I NOW KNOW THAT YOU MEASURE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TAPER!

*Here endeth my confusing thought of the day – do feel free to enlighten me further. - Ed*

### Some 'tuning' musing.

First a little of my Reliant background, just in case you have forgotten or are new around here. I have been trying to get just a little more 'go faster' from the Kitty engine for some 25 years now. We have had Piper road cams, balanced bottom ends, gas flowed carbs, electronic ignitions, electric fans, gas flowed heads, gas flowed manifolds, and various other little things that did or didn't work.

I then bought a new car (old ones' chassis died) so now I am back to a standard cam and bottom end, but with all of the above other bits and a Reliant 4 into 1 exhaust manifold. This left me with an engine that









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