



MEWSLETTER 99

March — April 2011

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This fine Fox belongs to Dave Smith and has been recently restored to this very high standard for general use and as his business runabout. All he has left to do is source a tonneau cover for the load deck and it's finished. The wheels are 13" Minilites running 60 profile tyres and do clear the arches, but only just.

The Register caters for all the under 1 litre Reliant 4-wheeled vehicles plus all of their derivatives: Foxes, Rebels, Tempests, Salamanders, Ciphers, Jimps, Asquiths, Vantiques 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>

Dinky Cars

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**SALES, SPARES, REPAIRS,
ENGINE RECONDITIONING**

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Welcome once again. Oh my, the big one looms! I've said it before, and I'll say it again – feel free to help! Input for our 100th edition is eagerly awaited....

Meantime, 17th of January, I have in fact just passed edition 98 to my lovely proof reader, and am actively processing some of the 99 (yes, really!) renewal notices that had arrived here so far.

We could potentially use a gazebo (for ensuring good weather on the 3rd of July!), do you have one? do you live anywhere near Wrexham? could we possibly borrow it? If the answers to these questions is yes, please contact Malcolm Rush on 01948 840896 thank you.

I had a really good day in January, the second bank of cylinders suddenly started working, the turbo was on – if only one could predict such days! It was so good and I was working so well that I even typed up a summary of the day's events and e-mailed it to about 50 friends and acquaintances, several of whom replied over the following days, one quote, though don't ask me to remember who is was, but they said one should always try to remember that life is a journey, not a destination, and that it might make for a useful change if one were able to plan the route occasionally! That really struck a chord.

One thing I omitted to tell you last time, the date question from University Challenge, well the first date this millennium that uses 8 different numbers is of course 17/06/2345, only 4 people responded, two of them oddly enough edit magazines for other car club type groups and as such do not in fact pay a subscription but enjoy the Mewsletter on our mutual magazine exchange relationship, in other words they were not going to gain anything by taking part other than the fun of it – or were they just showing off?

Anyway, the year's free subscription was won, by several days, by Simon Dyall, subscriber number 122 from Wolverhampton, congratulations Simon. One thing you can be sure of, and that is that I won't be doing this in June 2345!

Friday March 4th now, a few interesting phone calls today, jings it is lunch time already! Anyway, I had a half hour chat with Andrew Thomas who I think we might hear more of in the future. He rang me up to ask what he should do with his Kitten estate, MoT'd until about 3 years ago, but not actually used in a decade, only covered about 25,000 miles from new, interesting history – as I said, we hope to learn more.

Then a call to Rimmer Brothers to check on the current brake master cylinder situation – see story in parts page, and then rang Joe Lemon to answer his question about same.

Also this morning had, not for the first time, a call from Jimmy Davidson who loves his Kitten, but is concerned about engine longevity, his is approaching 90,000 miles now, and though it is running well, he is anxious to know about engine supply or alternatives. That did make me think again about test beds and or a spare engine being built / held by the Register – not in my damp lock-up mind you! Though I do have a number of old units there, hmm, any thoughts chaps?

~~~~~

## *Us / You*

*Oh help me out here with a meaningful or witty name for this new bit!?!*

As part of an attempt at better communications, showing off that I am not a stuck in a rut old fuddy duddy, and can actually change when to do so is beneficial, I thought I'd introduce a **New Subscribers** page into the Mewsletter.

At the back of my mind is the production of a membership list, something I have spoken of often in the past, and really do aim to achieve at some point (*note the crafty old sod is not daft enough to actually commit himself to a timetable! Learning from past over-enthusiasm!*)

So, this year, 2011, we welcome the following folk :-

- 903 Colin White from Chesham with a 1978 Kitten estate
- 904 Andrew Holmes from Wareham with a 1977 Kitten saloon
- 067 Nick Carter from Belper with a 1984 Fox custom Van / Estate
- 905 Richard Lane from Birmingham with a 1977 Kitten saloon
- 906 Stephen Bakewell from Uttoxeter with a 1976 Kitten saloon
- 907 Gareth Owen from Cleethorpes with a 1969 Rebel saloon
- 908 Jonathan Fairbanks from Pudsey with a 1976 Kitten DL saloon
- 909 Tony Richards from Devon who is looking for a Rebel estate or a Fox
- 910 William Parry from Aberystwyth with a 1983 Fox
- 911 Grant Stothard from Crook in Co. Durham, with a Kitten
- 912 Eddie Kelly from Colemaine with a 1980 Kitten saloon

A couple of points of interest, Nick Carter was with us for a couple of years a decade or so back, hence the apparently out of sequence number, He has just acquired his "new" Fox.

The take-up of our 5 year subscription offer has been really good, twice as many people have adopted it as had before, so over 15% of our subscribers are now with us for the long haul. Thank you all concerned, it

means less bits of paper for me to process over the next few years – who knows, if the banks have their way we might not be using cheques in 5 year’s time! It also lets me confidently invest in stamps, and so will delay any increase in subscriptions for everyone for another year at least, well done.

I can tell you that John Pearce’s Kitten, “the Jaffa”, sailed through its MoT in February, his standard of maintenance, as ever, paying dividends, not even one advisory – well done John.

Ed.

~~~~~

The Rebel in me... Part Four

A tale in numerous parts by Colin Barr (and *Brian Marshall*)

Old number three update

Still January, no snow on the ground at the moment, but the temperature outside is less than 32 degrees (old money) which means that water lying out there is no longer in a liquid state – in short, it is too b.... cold for this wimp to be working on cars!

I did dig out the two best Rebel rims from the lock-up over the festive period, and the two best and matching tyres, and a pair of new valves. Colin, who has continued his motor mechanic’s class at night-school, took them in with him on Tuesday evening, January 18th and fitted the new valves to the rims, cleaned everything up, and fitted the tyres and balanced things, so we should no longer be plagued by that puncture!

There is a plan (don’t tell anyone – we would not want to disappoint folk) but Moira has suggested that she would not be adverse to driving the Rebel south in July – however, while she used to cover thousands of miles in her Rebel every year, that was 25 years ago, and it did not enjoy the very snatchy clutch that old number three has....

Given my physical limitations these days, the thought of changing a clutch is about as intimidating to me as say running up Everest this weekend might be to you. That said I know every nut, bolt setscrew and clip that needs to come off, never mind the slightly knurled end of the speedo cable and that easily removed, but slightly footery to re-fit “D” clip that holds the gearlever in. Oh and the 4 self-tappers that locate the gear lever rubber grommet retaining ring to the top of the prop shaft tunnel. Young Colin on the other hand seems to have few physical limitations – this is the guy who re-laid all 34 of the 3 by 2 slabs in my back garden in 9 hours, including cutting some of them to fit round the whirlie and the new gate – oh and “planted” the new gate-post, “Postcrete” does save a lot of time mind you!

So, plan A then was for me to go over one day / evening, and supervise the removal of the gearbox and clutch. Leave Colin then to spend a bit of time cleaning and painting things, gearbox cross member, starter motor (it is the rustiest starter motor body I can remember!) etc, by which time I would have sourced any seals that might need changing while we are in there.

Back then another day to refit everything – where did I put that gearbox input shaft that I used to use as a clutch alignment tool?

At something over a tenner a round trip in fuel alone, never mind the hour and a bit’s drive – twice that if you catch the Glasgow rush hour(s) , Plan B is to bring the Rebel over here, utilise friend John’s well equipped double garage – with pit – and organise a work party, and not only do it all in a day, but do some of the other wee jobs at the same time, like the brakes and the headlight security, the exhaust manifold swap (to get one in there with new studs ahead of the proposed new exhaust system).

A full report on progress (I hope!) next time. Ed.

~~~~~

Ian Johnson, and Oliver of Rebel Rescue fame are not the only people doing Rebels up – who do you suppose this one belongs to?



More on that another time.

## **REBELLIOUS CONDUCT 21**

It has been quite some time since I last wrote about the life and times of LRF 671K, my 1972 van/estate Rebel with a later 848cc engine. Since it passed the MOT last August without any trouble, it has continued to enjoy a leisurely and spanner free period to the point where I am beginning to feel rather neglectful of the poor old thing. Just to remind me, I thought I ought to show a little interest and try and find out a bit more about its history. As purchased from its second owner in 2005, the accompanying V5C showed that it was first registered on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July 1972 and that the first keeper lived in Southampton. Curiously, the registration number was issued by the Staffordshire authority, also the locality of the Reliant factory at Tamworth. On receiving the new V5C, this confirmed that I was the third registered keeper. Originally a van, side windows were fitted in 1975 and the 750cc engine replaced by an 848cc unit. Knowing very little about Rebels and the significance of the VIN and the engine number at the time of purchase, I enjoyed a brief period of ignorant bliss, but not for long!

I soon learned that the 750cc Rebel came with a hydraulic operated clutch and with synchromesh on all four forward gears, which LRF had. However, I subsequently discovered that the E150 prefix to the VIN and 701 prefix to the engine number meant that LRF was built as a 701cc version which should have a mechanically operated clutch and no synchromesh on first gear. OK, so maybe someone had changed the clutch and gearbox as well as fitting an 848cc engine, but no. The later specification entailed changes to the chassis, floor and transmission tunnel, but LRF displayed no signs of any modifications being carried out in this department. Furthermore, a sticker on the windscreen displayed the different reverse gear position with the all synchromesh gearbox. I became convinced that LRF was built as a 701cc Rebel but had the transmission and accompanying revisions of the soon to be announced 750cc version. The 750 being announced in October 1972 whilst LRF was first registered in July 1972, so could LRF have been a development vehicle I wondered?

Somehow, the registration details I had did not bear this out, despite the Staffordshire registration mark, LRF was registered to the first keeper in Southampton, evidently on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July 1972. Subsequent to the fitting of side windows, the 848cc engine and a couple of changes of colour, the original owner sold the Rebel in 2003 to the fellow I bought it from in August 2005. No one I asked seemed to have any idea why a 700 Rebel should have a 750 clutch and transmission, seemingly built as original. The Staffordshire registration always had me curious as to the history of LRF, time to investigate. I logged into the DVLA website and downloaded form V888. This is used to apply for any past documentation that DVLA may have on a particular vehicle. It costs just £5 but you do have to state a good reason as to why you want such information, which I did. What arrived was rather more than I expected, some 25 photocopied pages of information. These mostly being copies of the original style log book VE 60, V5 and V5C registration documents. These revealed more about LRF's past life than I was aware of. Although first registered on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July 1972, LRF belonged to the Reliant Motor Co until May 1974, then it passed to Lawton and Wilson Ltd of Southampton. It was from here that the 'First registered keeper' purchased it in the same month. So, it was Reliant that 'owned' LRF 671K for the first 22 months or so, I wonder why? The odd specification of the transmission in relation to the rest of the vehicle may explain that this may have been a development vehicle for the forthcoming 750 Rebel. Or just a factory hack perhaps?

Despite receiving quite a bit of documentation when I purchased LRF, neither this or the registration details failed to indicate that what appeared to be the first owner was simply not the case. But then, perhaps the vehicle manufacturer doesn't count or the supplying dealership that was also shown on the copy of the log book. Furthermore, the capacity of the engine also raises a question. The Log book states a 701 engine number prefix as does the VIN plate under the bonnet, yet the capacity in the copy of the original(?) VE60 log book states 750cc. This is also reflected on all the old MOT certificates up until the fitment of the 848cc engine. I had assumed that the 848cc engine currently fitted was the only engine change but the information from DVLA indicated that this was the second such engine of this capacity. The copies of previous registration documents showed that the 'first' keeper moved home in Southampton several times up until the final document in his name, this being overwritten "Deceased". It was at this time that LRF moved onto its second (third) keeper in 2003. What a good job I had not tried to contact the first keeper for information, I may have upset a family member should I have asked "Is Raymond there?"

Despite me believing that my Rebel had but just two previous keepers in reference to the V5C, there was just a little more to it that. I now have a much better history of LRF and feel that the £5 spent for the V888 search was well worthwhile. However, whatever Reliant used LRF for, and why it stated 750 on the original log book, is still a question to be answered.

I have to add that as a keeper of the car register for another motor club in the past, I have examined many registration documents that contained errors. The early hand written VE60 log books frequently contained errors or omissions concerning chassis and engine numbers and prefixes/suffixes. These being continued when the computerised V5 system took over. My own 1960 Sprite had the 'Body number' recorded in the VE60 when new instead of the 'Car number' (VIN). The two numbers being the way that the Abingdon factory traditionally identified vehicles, the two numbers appearing on different plates in different locations on the car. Obviously, someone at the point of original registration didn't know this and recorded the wrong numbers. This error was repeated on the later V5 and V5C but eventually got caught up with when the computerised MOT took effect. The MOT examiner would not accept the error with the result that I had a visit from a DVLA vehicle inspector. Explaining how these cars were identified and the location of all the different plates (three not including the engine, gearbox and rear axle!) I eventually received a corrected V5C document and no more funny looks at the MOT test. After almost 48 years, the 'system' caught up with the error concerning my Sprite. Hence, I strongly recommend that owners and potential purchasers always check very carefully the numbers on both vehicle and documents to ensure that no errors exist. The MOT logging system is not even minor error tolerant, a missing dash, slash, prefix or suffix could mean problems and a visit from officialdom.

I also applied for a V888 search on a more recent vehicle to my driveway, a 2004 smart roadster with 3 previous owners recorded on the V5C. Again, despite the shorter history span but more declared



## From your renewal notices

Bev Crook from Buckinghamshire, who has been with us since 2001 – that's a decade ago already! tells me he is Reliantless at the moment, but he loves the magazine and can he stay with us - of course you can Bev, and very welcome you are too. Ed.

~~~~~

Yoland and Roger Brown have accommodation that would be handy for Erdigg 01939 261121 or brownhill@eleventowns.co.uk

~~~~~

Coen Bouwmeester from Holland who still runs his Kitten estate wishes us every success for 2011. The same to you Coen, and thank you for your continued support.

~~~~~

There were a couple of renewals that definitely crossed in the post with me getting the January / February edition out promptly, they arrived the day after I posted the mags. Here are two of them :-

Dear Brian,

31/1/11

A quick apology for the delay in submitting my subs, but I have taken the decision to take up your offer of a five year term. As you say it saves a lot of hassle. I hope that you will understand that for a person of my nationality this is not a decision that has been taken lightly, remember that the definition of a Yorkshireman is a Scotsman with the generosity kicked out of him!

I hope that all is well in your neck of the woods and may I say how much pleasure each edition of the Mewsletter gives.

Regards, Keith Bannister No. 023 from Sheffield in Yorkshire

Hello Brian

Porrentury, 30.1.2011

I am as always busy with cars and bikes, finishing the last details on a 1953 BSA 500cc bike my friend bought on E-bay two years ago in Blackburn, what a mess it was, and he painted the body of my Metro while I was making electrics and carburetor works on his TR6 car.

I have dismantled my black Kitten and the body stands on an old chassis lying in my back garden, I could not throw it away after so many years of faithful services. It will be a playing ground for my future grandchildren.

My blue Kitten is going well but needs a gearbox rebuild, the third gear jumps out, but I have so many projects, and so much work for others, my workshop is full like an egg, an E type engine and gearbox arrived yesterday for a rebuild, a 1964 lotus Seven is waiting for a restoration, and my Marcos is coming slowly to the end of 20 years of sleep.

This year will be that of my fitting in the Kitten a tuned engine, lightened crank and rods, Piper cam, twin carbs and banana exhaust, the reading of 750 Racing by Dick Harvey gave me a lot of ideas.

I am happy for you to be a granddad and send you my best wishes for the new year.

I am thinking of coming to Britain for the spring Beaulieu jumble, last year saw me 4 times on the island for jumbles and holiday.

Best regards, Patrick (Vallat) No. 702 - Switzerland

~~~~~

Dear Brian,

31<sup>st</sup> January 2011

I came across the enclosed write up on the 598cc Reliant engine by Bob Currie reprinted from the "Motor Cycle" in December 1963. It came under the heading "Modern Engines"

The story of the engine design is quite interesting, and perhaps you could use some of it to fill the odd page in the Mewsletter?

The story you printed of the O.H.C engine and its apparently poor performance reminds me that in the late 1960's David Newman who was the 750cc champion for several seasons, was getting 50 BHP out of a 600cc engine bored to 80thou oversize but still with carb restrictions – maybe Reliant should have got him to develop a higher performance version of our engine!! Our first Rebel UPG 355F, (which went to the late Bill Dick) was fitted, by me, with an SU carb long before Tamworth started fitting them, one of the tuning people used to supply a conversion adaptor. That Rebel also had a David Newman alloy rocker cover which was finned and used a Rover V8 oil filler cap.

On one of our visits to Two Gates in the early 70's I was told that the first batch of 700cc engines fitted to Rebels, some 50 or so, were "blueprinted" and that was borne out by that engine going right round the clock with no problems. Have you any idea what happened to Bill's collection, and to UPG in particular?

Currently I am running in a rebuilt engine in the Fox. The Rebel is hibernating under its cover and hopefully will get a new clutch and its gearbox oil leak fixed when the temperature in my workshop goes up a bit!

In a "Car" magazine of April 1975 there are some pictures of a prototype kitten GOV 52N, showing it to have a Robin front with round lamps and no side windows or vent trims. In the write up there was mention of a BRM cylinder head. The car is shown painted yellow.

On our visit to Tamworth round about 1974 I saw another prototype Kitten which had completely different front suspension consisting of twin parallel links on each side running forward to a control beam front axle – could this have been done to use a standard Robin chassis I wonder? This car was being driven out of the works as we arrived, so a fleeting glance was had.

Anyway Brian, I could bore for Britain on Reliant 4 wheelers, so I had better shut up!

All the best, Dave Richmond - No. 338, from Hayes in Middlesex

*See, I really am getting so much better at not interrupting! Dave, thank you very much for taking the time to put pen to paper – you are I assure you, a long way short of boring us. However, a few points and a couple of thoughts / and a question.*

*Firstly, I too had heard that the early Rebel engines were blueprinted in an effort to give the somewhat heavier Rebel a level of performance closer to the Regal – the three wheeler of the day.*

*On the subject of Bill Dick's collection, and UPG in particular, I know that one of his sons was selling bits on e-bay a couple of years ago. I will ask Brenda to put me directly in touch and see what I can learn.*

*The second "prototype Kitten" you saw driving out of the factory about 1974. Now I am the first to advise caution about jumping to conclusions – but, first question, what colour was it? Secondly, how did you know about the front suspension layout if it was moving? – it sounds very similar in that regard to the FW9 arrangement, so I am really curious to know if that was what you saw? or if there was another design about at that time also?*

~~~~~

In the middle of January Tony Luxton's renewal notice arrived, and on it was a note explaining that he was needing to simplify his life, and so would not be renewing his subscription – I took the bull by the horns and e-mailed him as follows :-

Dear Tony,

17th January 2011

Just trying to use this modern technology to do 3 things.

One - show off that I can use e-mail!

Two – to say thank you for letting me know that you are not (for the moment) renewing your subscription to the Register.

Three - Just to confirm that :- A - you still have the Kitten? and to say, if so, and if you are not going to do anything with it, B :- would you like me to advertise it in the Mewsletter.

Anyway, that's all. All the best for the future, and good luck with those projects (I too need to simplify life, but always lack the courage to actually throw things out!)

Regards from Renfrew. G. B. (Grandpa Brian)

He replied as follows :-

Dear Brian,

21st January 2011

Thanks for getting in touch. I fear it is too late to do anything with my Kitten (RIP). I should have thought of e-mailing you before I went beserk with the angle grinder. All that remains now is the V5 and the back axle. Feel free to make those available FOC to any needy souls.

Thanks for the offer to keep me on the mailing list but I think I had better decline. The other distractions comprise two Pilbeam single-seater hill-climb cars (jointly owned) one the last Pilbeam to win the British Hillclimb Championship (1997), two Triumph 2.5 PIs, two Ginettas, a 1978 Mustang, a 1958 Standard 8 (about to be rejuvenated with a full-house 1500 Spitfire engine) and a couple of moderns we won't mention. As I fall into the Oscar Wilde category of being able to resist everything except temptation, I must try and eliminate thoughts of Kittens from my mind.

Best regards, Tony (Luxton) No. 242 - Solihull

Dear Brian,

7th January 2011

Enclosed subscription for the Mewsletter. Although I no longer have my Kitten I still like to read all about other peoples and always look forward to receiving the magazine.

Regards, Tricia (Nash) No. 282 - St. Albans

The sentiment of Tricia's letter sums up in a nutshell why I enjoy doing this so much, as for Clive (I battled with my conscience long and hard as to whether I should refer to him as "Old Clive" or not!)... Well....

Hello Young Brian,

13-01-2011

Thanks again for another year of interesting Mewsletters. I really appreciate the effort that goes into it. Having run a newsletter for a few years, I know just how much you depend on the readers for content.

From time to time I suddenly realise that I have not done something I ought to have, and maintaining contact, in spite of my ramblings, is not always executed as effectively as it might be, and in some cases my attempts just seem to fall on stony ground. We had not heard from Frank Haynes in Chile for over a year, (Frank is not on the internet yet) indeed since the earthquake over there, the proximity to which he lives is far too close for comfort, we had heard nothing from him. But, he did send us a Christmas card and tells us he is working on a big letter – watch this space.

Australia next, and with the terrible flooding there I thought of Bob and Judith. Quite by chance I had been talking to George Mitchell (of Jowett and Volvo fame) who, at the time of writing, mid January, still has over a foot of snow to contend with (George has been the “postman” in Sheriffmuir for the past couple of months, as his tractor is the only thing that can get up the hill from Dunblane – I’m sure he must be making a killing rescuing those brave enough to try that road in cars!) Anyway, George had just been telling me that he is far from convinced that all this climate change we are experiencing is not in fact just part of a great cycle of things, and that man’s lifespan is simply too short to realise that what is going on is just the way nature works. Then, in response to that missive that I sent to a few folk at the end of a particularly productive day I had on January the 17th, the following response arrived. Whatever view you might hold, (personally I believe that we have, and continue to, cut down too many trees, and that the industrial revolution is probably responsible for a fair bit of environmental damage – and as for this genetic modification of things – edible or not – well, I still sleep at night, but not as well as I used to!) Anyway, as I was saying, I think Bob puts his understanding of it rather well, and it gives me a golden opportunity to re-introduce a Liege Page.

Ed.

~~~~~  
*Liege page*

***The word from down under***

Brian and Moira,

January 18<sup>th</sup> 2011

Lovely to hear from you and to learn that you are still maintaining the pace.

As you say the weather pendulum has swung the other way and instead of fire we now have floods!

Everything seems worse than it used to be, but when you get old you realise that it is all cyclic. The difference to the old days is that we now have three or four times the number of people who can get themselves into harm's way, and there is an army of people spreading the news rapidly around the world. It will all happen again, and when it does the politicians will still be arguing and blaming something or someone, instead of rectifying the situation.

Pleased to see that the Reliant group are still prospering. John Sawle has just announced that the Christmas issue was the last Liege News that he will produce. Pity; I shall now have to rely on you to keep me informed of any momentous happenings in the Reliant based world !

Our motoring has changed a bit because late in 2009 Judith had a total knee replacement, by mid last year she was walking well and without pain, but the surgeon warned that I should no longer risk leg damage on a motorcycle. In consequence after 63years of riding together we have sold / given away our two wheelers, and are now down to just two toys, the Austin Ulster and the Liege .

As you know I supercharged the later in 2008 and it continues to perform well although I think we are rapidly approaching a new set of rings. I haven't found a Suzuki (five speed) gearbox yet, but it remains on my list of projects. Currently am collecting the parts to convert to disc front brakes.

Congratulations on becoming grand parents, just wait, you thought you were busy now? Our best wishes to you both , Bob and Judith, Oz.

*Still on matters Liege, there are plans afoot for a Le-Jog by Liege "Le Liege Jog" (The first sight I ever had of Peter Davis and a Liege (number one) was whilst marshaling on a stage of Le-Jog in the hills of Scotland back in the mists of time!) and Mark, who is organising things this time, tells me that the bit near here might be something like:-*

Brian,

February 5<sup>th</sup> 2011

Good to hear from you. At the moment, plans are to travel along the Ayrshire coast and cross the Clyde on the Gourrock ferry and on up to the Rest and Be Thankful on Thursday 14th July, eventually overnighing at Inverness. This may all change yet though! I'll keep you posted.

Regards Mark Worsfold

~~~~~

Ode to Erddig

*It's twenty years since Brian began,
And no-one else has carried the can,
With dedication plus the odd joke
He's proved to be one helluva bloke.*

*Fill in your booking form today,
Check your diary - don't delay
The summer's closer than you think -
Try not to be the weakest link!*

*Let's hope the barometer is set to "Fair"
Spruce up your car and wash your hair,
Get there early - avoiding the queue,
Don your glad rags and come to the "Do".*

Jan Rush 2010

I was asked to print that un-edited, duly done. The date is Sunday the 3rd of July, Erddig is described as the jewel in the crown of Welsh country houses, owned by the National Trust it is located just a couple of miles from Wrexham. Map reference 117: SJ326482 for those who do it the old way, or postcode LL13 0YT for those who like to let the satellites do it for them. Slightly further south of Liverpool than it is east of Crewe, it is within 45 minutes of the M6. The final approach roads, unless they have been updated since I was last in that neck of the woods, are narrow without white lines, and need to be negotiated with care, coaches use those roads as well as cars!

As the ode implies there should be a form enclosed, please complete and return it to Malcolm if you are hoping to join us on the day.

I recall a complaint from Burford that there were not enough awards, well, we had no idea how many people were coming or what vehicles they were coming in, so planning was nigh impossible, last time out we spent over £200 of awards, still unsure of exact numbers and vehicle types, and I am struggling to get the returnable shields back - So, there is a form this time in an effort to help us be better organised, indeed to ensure that the parking allocated is appropriate. In other words :- PLEASE FILL OUT AND RETURN THE ENCLOSED FORM IF YOU INTEND TO BE WITH US ON SUNDAY JULY THE THIRD - THANK YOU.

~~~~~

Right, I have just returned from my trip south in March and have a couple of pages to fill, so, fresh out of the camera....



John Pearce in "the Jaffa" March 2011



Alan Osborn's Kitten in Wisbech March 2011



Now, what is that I wonder?

## **Technical times**

### Hinges

Having some NOS (new old stock) door hinges to sell recently I tried to identify them from the parts list. So if we assume that not all of you have the parts list and as these parts are getting older/rarer then perhaps a few facts might be useful.

I only have the experience of mid 70s Kitten and it is understood that the MKI Robin at least is the same. Certainly Rialto is not the same (No don't ask!) So we have four hinges, Uppers, Lower, Right (driver) and Left (passenger). The lowers have a sprung check mechanism to hold the door when open. (On my car it is inoperable- not an issue) Now the clever bit? The Upper R looks exactly the same as the Lower L. Except for this check mechanism. And the Upper R has a 'gubbins' to operate the door light switch. Would you believe that the Lower R looks the same as the Upper L! There would appear to be part number change at one point in the 70s as well no idea when, or why.

U R 21967 later changed to 25845

L R 21969 with check mech.

U L 21968 later change to 25846

L L 21970 with check mech.

Strangely enough with these hinges I had an Upper L (no check mech. So not a LR) WITH a 'gubbins' to operate a door switch! Would this have been for Left Hand drive? Not sure if it would be a real rarity, but it has gone its way to do its hinge thing on a British car.

*Alan Osborn. Still Norfolk and all that. No. 295*

*Thanks Alan, I should point out that we do have copies of the manuals and parts books in stock, I guess the fact that I don't actually push the sales of such items (though we do make all new subscribers aware that we have them) might explain the lack of sales in recent years. Also, the Register has a set of those hinges too, they cost over £100!*

*Ed.*

### The Worth of your Instruments.

I have wanted to write this item for some time. I think it pertains to most older vehicles not just Reliants, but I write it with the Reliant dash-board in mind. My idea is to look at the worth of all the 'add on' dials on the dashboard.

First my credentials, having been an electronic engineer most of my life I am always using meters to see 'what is going on'. With car dashboards a bevy of instruments is invariably impressive, but what do they tell you? And is it worthwhile? First we will leave out the essentials, Speedometer and the Fuel gauge. The temperature gauge is also pretty basic although it never says that it is a 'water' temp. gauge! It is also a bit of a pointer in the breeze, nothing very specific about what it is measuring for you, but engine temperature can be crucial! Now we move on to the esoteric additions.

**Voltmeter:-** MY OPINION is that the Reliant one is a 'waste of space' it is slow to react and by the time it has reacted to a low voltage-not charging situation you could be too late to avoid the flat battery syndrome. It is very easily overlooked and a slight change is not readily seen either. Alternative -Sorry to insert a commercial but I sell a Battery Status Monitor that looks at the battery voltage on a 10mm multicolour LED. Red says we are not charging, Orange says we are starting to win and Green says all is well. Over and under volts is done with flashing Red. The point of this indicator (apart from saving dashboard space,) is that the colour is instantly noticeable, slight changes are always there under your eye. Any failings with charging or fan belt are instantly seen. While on the charging subject, there is the original fitting red charge lamp. (In the speedo.) It is always best to understand this especially if it is your only charge warning device. It must be ON with ignition - engine not running - so that the alternator is energised to start charging. It should go out when engine starts - some proof of charging.(but not the whole picture.) But note if you didn't see it when you started, then it could be a few miles down the road that you find your battery is going flat.

**Oil Pressure:-** This is one of the most popular early fitments. But what does it tell you? After the first rush of 60lbs when cold and a worry when hot, ticking over - not much. If you have the same set up for many miles then, in time, you can see lower readings to tell you your engine is wearing out and/or the oil needs changing! But, IF you lost oil pressure all of a sudden, a large lamp on the dash is more use than a meter that you don't notice all that often. So please retain the traditional lamp if you must fit this 'go faster' gauge. P.S. the best place to connect to the engine is to remove the rear most socket head from the oil gallery on the exhaust side of the engine. I was waiting at a road junction once, just happened to glance at oil pressure, saw it drop to next to nothing and then come back up but it was now some 10lbs shorter on oil pressure??? I did investigate by dropping the sump and oil pump, and I found that the head of a pop rivet I had used to hold the oil pump strainer on had come lose and whistled through the pump-having a modest chew on the way! I don't therefore say that you all need oil pressure gauges to see this phenomenon!

**Oil Temperature:-** Now this one can be a bit more useful, especially if you do my trick wanting to rush about with a cold engine! The oil temp. getting up to a certain figure can be a better guide to a warm engine and provide the answer to the 'can I safely thrash it yet?' question!

I used to wait for one of these to get up to a blue sector before I went over 5.000 revs! I think I was being kind to the engine? The only snag with oil temp is the fitting of the temperature sender, fitting into the block/sump is not that easy, you might try a sandwich plate behind the oil filter and a shorter oil filter?

**Tachometer:-** The first mention of this Oxometer appeared above. For the man in the street they might not be much use (apart from the GT factor!) But I find we can decide on a particular tickover that works and stick to it. You can see where you are in the rev band to see if you can overtake sensibly, do I change down? Can I safely change down? There is also that 'go faster' part of me that chases the revs round the gauge. But if you don't need any of that then you don't need the Oxometer.

**Vacuum Gauge:-** Now this is a funny thing. When I first had one of these years ago I really thought it just bounced around willy nilly, all rather academic what ever it was trying to tell me. But this time of having one I have learned how to 'use' it. It should be treated as an economy gauge (Carpet slippers and short legs are probably better!) The more Vac. you can get what ever you are doing with the throttle, the more economy you are supposed to be getting. As I spend various times playing with manifold and carb. tuning and the likes, I am always trying to get the best speed at the greatest Vac. Some time you can even reduce the throttle quite considerably, lots of vacuum appears yet your actual speed hardly changes. I think it is a fun gauge, just really tells you where your right foot is!

**Ammeter:-** Just included this one for completeness. It will tell you if your battery is winning or losing. It should have quite thick wires to it and they need careful positioning where they connect to in the wiring, they are also un-fused wires so if you must fit one of these please be very careful of how you do it as regard cables/terminals etc. Real advice is do not do it. Monitor the charging with a voltmeter of some sort (BSM?)

Next time I might witter on about warning lamps if you like!

Alan Osborn Norfolk and all that. No. 295

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Parts

One part I have been aware of a need for, and no idea where to get them, is that metal runner that is pressed onto the bottom of the door windows to enable them to be opened and closed. Are they the same on the Rebel and Kitten? Should we get some made? If so how many? O.K., so much for the thinking out loud.



Now I happen to know of one reader who is trying to make these, but he is not expecting to go into production – please let us know how you get on Peter?

~~~~~

Andy Yuill recently rang me in search of a windscreen rubber, his laminated screen had been damaged by a bit falling off the roof of his house during the bad winter, and to cut a long story brief, he has found that a readily available commercial product called "Clayton Rite" with the chrome insert will do the job nicely for about £40 including the V.A.T.

~~~~~

Kitten brake master cylinder alternative

One that can be fitted is the same as that used on a pre-1976 MGB, this may require the mounting hole on the Kitten to be drilled out slightly, but it is a close match.

The MGB one is $\frac{3}{4}$ " Bore, the original Kitten one is $\frac{5}{8}$ " Bore.

The $\frac{3}{4}$ " cylinder works fine on a Kitten, the pedal is firm, less pedal travel for a given amount of slave piston movement – but that means higher pressure on the pedal is required. Not a problem for most drivers, and avoids the long pedal travel often associated with Kitten brakes.

These are available, off the shelf, from Rimmer Brothers 01522 568000, Option 3 (MG Rover) Part no. GMC150 Delivery to U.K. mainland is £6.85, total delivered price including V.A.T. as at February 2011 is £63.22.

~~~~~

### Sales and Wants

A set of heater vents are available. Contact Roger Brown for details [brownhill@eleventowns.co.uk](mailto:brownhill@eleventowns.co.uk)

For Sale :- Kitten locking fuel filler cap with 2 keys £15 delivered, Ring Brian

For Sale :- Kitten chassis. Contact Andy Yuill ABERDEEN.

I only have the V5 and the back axle from my Kitten left. Feel free to make those available FOC to any needy souls. Tony Luxton SOLIHULL

WANTED :- 13" Wheels with 4"pcd and no more than 5" (5 ½" at a push) wide rims. MG Midget ones are just fine. Contact Robert Fairfoull if you can help please

A Kitten for sale :-

- First registered in June 1977- Estate Model, Turquoise in colour.
- Two owners - dad acquired it in February 1994
- Last MOT expired December 2008
- Mileage at December 2008 was 47,701 (has not been driven since then apart from moving on/off driveway)
- Currently has no battery and very little petrol, but last time it was moved, approx July 2009 started first time - dad not able to drive now.
- Body needs a bit of TLC - as shown in the photos, otherwise in good condition.
- The car is located on Canvey Island in Essex
- Looking for around £800 although negotiation is accepted to a reasonable level.

Would prefer to keep my details private and use the Kitten Register as a point of contact.

~~~~~

Epilogue

Just thinking back, both to George Mitchell and Bob Riches' comments earlier in this edition about extreme weather, sceptical or not I could look even further back and point out that there was a reason why that Noah chap built his Ark!

O.K., it is February the 5th, this is now 24 pages long with only 2 pictures in it so far, I am itching to get it finished so that I can get "The Rebellion" (magazine of the Thistle Branch of the R.O.C.) out of the way, and focus on making a start to our 100th edition. Feel free to contribute to that, it should be going to the printers in May, which really means an input deadline of the end of April – please nicely?

Looking forward, to date we have 164 (as at 14/2/11 – that was a quick week between paragraphs, and this is now page 26!) individuals who have renewed their subscriptions, almost 15% of whom have taken up our 5 year offer, and in doing so not only saved themselves a few bob, but – more importantly – saved me from having so many bits of paper to be dealing with over the next few years – thank you. (They have also saved everyone else from a rise in subscriptions for a year as I felt able to invest in a couple of thousand second class stamps ahead of the 3p (or is it 4p?) price rise in April!)

I know there has been speculation in the media about the long term future of cheques as a method of payment in the banking system, and I recognise that the day may come when some kind of viable, cost effective alternative becomes available, but for now, the good old cheque is the preferred method of payment to the Register.

Right, I'm back I just got side-tracked trying to decide about the second car – not sure if I was trying to make the case for or against – but the memory of scrapping the "spare" BX some 18 months or so back, and then the daily transport breaking down less than a week later, is still surprisingly fresh in my mind. At the end of the day, having the second car costs about a tenner a week, (excluding fuel – which we would burn in the other car anyway) really very cheap by modern standards, but that £500 a year could help close the gap betwixt income and expenditure – what price peace of mind?... (just how does a keen driver weigh financial stability against vehicle availability /security in the peace of mind stakes anyway?) Old Sammy Citroen is 20 now, dare I rely solely on him? I mean he has only done 152,000 miles, just sailed through his MoT with 3 minor advisories, and these Peugeot diesels can do twice that and then some. Mind you there is that 29 year old Volvo of Richard's in the lock-up that I could fall back on in an emergency (It will probably reach its first 20,000 miles this year!) – what to do...?

I don't often dwell on those who leave us, perhaps I should, but I tend to try and stay focused on those good enough to stay with us. However, we can lose touch with interesting vehicles as well as people if we are not careful. Case in point being Alex Marsden from Pembrokeshire, whose last mag was returned marked "addressee gone away", we had a phone number for him on file, so I rang it on Valentines day – the day his mag was returned. I had a great chat with the lady who, since November, has had that telephone number, but she is in a different address in Pembrokeshire and does not know or know of Mr. Marsden or his Fox. She did know Paisley, and Greenock, and was in the middle of painting a ceiling when I rang, she laughed, but declined, when I suggested she should get herself and her paintbrush up here without delay.

Anyway, the reason for singling Alex out as a special case was that his Fox was not just any Fox, but an electric one. Pretty rare, and I'd hate to lose touch because of an oversight. So, if you know Alex Marsden, or his electric Fox, please get in touch.

O.K., time to draw a line under this one and get the decks cleared to progress with number 100. That said, it is now the middle of March, renewals now stand at 186 souls (including our new subscribers), and if you are reading this and have not renewed, now would be a good time to do that!

Get those grease guns exercised, and the WD Squirty liberally used please, let's be keeping the deterioration process as slow as possible thank you.

Till number 100 take care, *Brian*

~~~~~

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