

## NISSAN FIGARO NIGGLES – PART 4

### I CAN'T SEEM TO FIND NEW TYRES FOR MY FIGARO

There were two sizes of tyres fitted to the Figaro originally: 155SR12 or 165 70 12. Don't mix these sizes on the car – all four tyres should be one size. It is recommended that if you're fitting a new set of tyres – then go for 165 70 12 – these will give better handling and ride quality.

12 inch wheels are pretty rare on cars nowadays, so most of the premium tyre manufacturers such as Dunlop and Pirelli stopped manufacturing 12 inch tyres some years ago. Therefore you're fairly limited in terms of brands you'll find. There are three brands commonly found in the UK – Federal, Nankang and GT. These originate in the Far East and are all perfectly decent tyres. Tyres sold in the UK have to comply with certain standards and must carry the “E” compliance mark.

At times it will be very difficult to find 12 inch tyres so you'll need to shop around and probably wait a couple of days whilst your tyre depot orders them in. Tyre outlets tend to deal with 2 or 3 distributors so you may need to try more than outlet, You may well be more successful with web based tyre dealers – some of these can arrange local fitting – try Camskill, Tyres Delivered and Black Circles to name just a few.

At the time of writing, Kwik Fit have a competitive web based offer on 165 70 12 tyres by GT.

A set of 4 tyres including VAT, fitting, balance and new valves should cost you in the region of £135 (Jan 2010)

### UPDATE 20 March 2010

*The difficulty continues with the supply of 165 70 12 tyres to the extent that it's virtually impossible to find any. It's not at all a popular size and may well disappear altogether in the longer term.*

*Some Figaro's were originally supplied with 155 80 12 tyres – fortunately these are still readily available. This is a way forward if you're fitting 4 new tyres but doesn't help people looking for 1 or 2 tyres – all 4 tyres must be the same size.*

*If you do move to 155 80 12 tyres then inflation pressure is higher at 31.5 psi*

## HOW DO I CHANGE THE OIL AND FILTER ON MY FIGARO?

With a fair amount of difficulty!! The oil filter is at the back of the engine and it's virtually impossible to reach it from above. With the car up on a lift or over a car pit – it's simple to reach up and change the filter. It's a different story if the car is on axle stands or ramps – it's not easy to reach the filter lying on your back and you'll probably end up anointing yourself in engine oil! If this isn't your idea of fun – there's another way.....

Nowadays there are plenty of rapid service centres who will change oil and filter for around £28 – a pretty good deal! Generally these centres use quality semi- synthetic oils such as Mobil S – check this first! It may not be the best idea to ask for an oil and filter change on a Figaro – you may well get blank looks! Just ask for an oil and filter change on a 1989 Nissan Micra K10 1 litre – the oil filter, sump plug seal and procedure are the same as the Figaro! A bonus is that you don't have dispose of the old oil!

## I CAN'T REMOVE THE END SPARK PLUG ON MY FIGARO!

The end spark plug on the passenger side of the car is a little difficult to remove. We've seen owners removing turbo pipes and doing various amounts of dismantling to get at the plug - we've even seen plug sockets firmly wedged in the plug recess! In reality - all you need is the right tool, so it may cost you a few £'s to do the job properly and easily. First of all, you'll need a 21mm spark plug socket. Go for a 3/8 drive, good quality plug socket – ½ inch drive or cheap sockets tend to be thick walled and are therefore a tight fit into the plug recess. Use an universal joint in conjunction with a short extension and a ratchet handle or T bar and the job's simple. When replacing the plug – hold the extension, and screw the plug by hand until a few threads have engaged – this avoids any risk of cross threading the plug.

If you've tried it – you'll know that a one piece swivel spark plug spanner is pretty useless to change Figaro spark plugs!

## I'VE GOT A WATER LEAK - THE CARPETS ARE WET!

The first thing to ascertain is whether the wet carpets are a result of rainwater leaks. If the wetness is in the front foot wells towards the centre of the car – the issue could well be a leaking heater matrix – this is

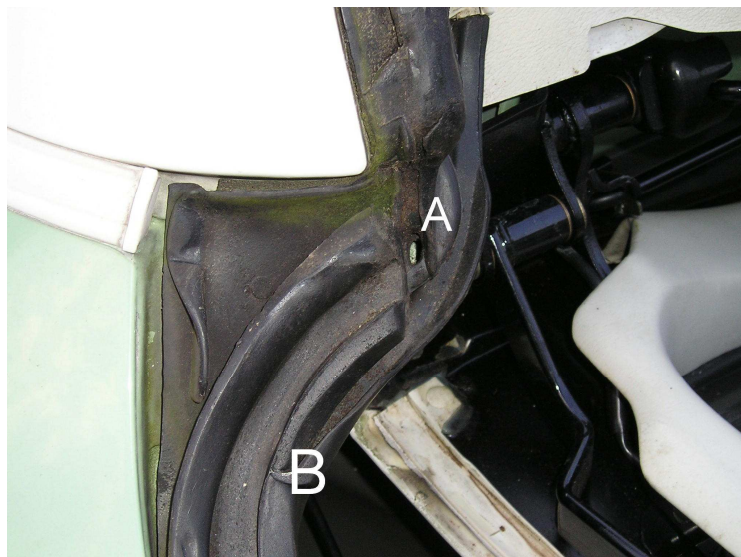
becoming a significant problem. Usually the smell of coolant can be detected and the carpet won't dry fully - there may well be unexplained drops in level of the coolant system.

Having eliminated the possibility of a coolant leak, there is a need to investigate likely routes of rainwater into the car. It's highly unlikely that rainwater is entering the car via door seals or the vinyl roof even if badly shrunk – except of course if the vinyl has split! If you drive in very wet conditions with the front underwing plastic guards missing – water can get past the door seals – check that the guards are fitted! Water can enter the car in one of 5 ways

1. There are roof gutter drains near the front of the roof. These do very little in normal circumstances. However if the car is parked facing downhill -rainwater can collect in the gutter until it eventually overflows. It's usually pretty obvious if this is the problem and the solution is to unblock the drain pipes. . Test routinely by pouring water into the drains. The tubes drain into the sills so you should see the water draining from the sill drains.
2. When clearing the drain holes at the front of the roof channels – take care that you don't push the drain tubes off the spigots - otherwise water will drain into the car rather than the drain tube! These drain tubes can be difficult to clear by poking and it's sometimes necessary to remove a couple of inner roof panels in order to get at the tube
3. The chrome trim which runs across the top of the windscreen is attached with clips that go through holes in the roof of the car. There is a rubber seal along the edge of the trim – this deteriorates and allows water to get under the trim – this can leak into the car via the clip holes. Usually the leak occurs when the car is regularly parked facing downhill. Water getting into the car in this way flows behind the plastic interior panels and ends up on the floor – it's sometimes possible to observe water droplets at the joins of the interior panels. The solution is to lift the chrome trim and apply clear silicon sealant along the trim edge.
4. If the rubber seal around the edge of the roof aperture becomes detached – rainwater will collect between the seal and the metal of the roof. It's not particularly common, but rust holes can develop and water will then leak into the car. Before rust takes hold, any loose section of seal needs to be re-secured as soon as possible with contact adhesive, and any gaps or imperfections made good with black silicon sealant. Before sticking the rubber – pull the seal to one side and treat any rust with Kurust followed by a coat of paint.

5. Wet carpets in the rear foot wells and wetness beneath the rear seat will usually have originated in the lower boot – check for dampness in the boot. There are several ways for rainwater to get into the bottom boot:

- Blockage of the two drains in the hinge side channel of the top boot will cause water to trickle past the edge of the top boot tray and enter the bottom boot. Check and clean these drain lines regularly.
- Water can leak past the rear window seal and is often solved by removing and refitting the seal. Any leaks can usually be observed after unclipping the inside window surround panel and gently spraying water on to the rear panel.
- The top boot isn't designed to be dry – hence there are two drains in the bottom of the boot tray. If these aren't kept clear, water will slosh over the edge of the boot tray and into the bottom boot. Check and clean these drain lines regularly
- The seal at the top of the upper boot diverts water sideways to the splits in the seal (these splits are inline with the sides of the rear window panel). Water collects in a rubber reservoir beneath each split and is diverted to the channels either side of the top boot opening. There are two drain holes in each reservoir which block easily and a blockage causes the reservoir to overflow. The overflowing water should enter the top boot tray but some will trickle past the side of the tray and into the lower boot. These drain holes are frequently overlooked – have you ever cleaned these on your Figaro!! The drain holes are marked A and B in the photo below – drain B is quite difficult to see – it's right in the bottom corner of the reservoir!



*After investigating and curing a water leak into the car – it's important to dry out the wet areas otherwise it's all too easy to end up with serious corrosion in the floor panels. It may be wise to remove the carpet, allow it to dry and refit when you're confident there's no longer a leak. Carefully check the car and lower boot floor – treat any rust with Kurust and finish with a coat of paint.*

### THE REAR WINDOW DEMISTER DOESN'T WORK

If the demister does nothing, then the first thing is to use a test bulb or multimeter across the 2 edge terminals on the rear glass. If no voltage, it's a case of checking fuses, connections etc. However before doing this you should be aware that there a system that isolates the power to the window when the roof is open! There's a switch mounted on the roof frame hinge – top boot drivers side, and it has a habit of sticking when the roof has been open. It's easy to free off with a little WD 40 after peeling back the protective rubber boot.

If only some elements on the window work, then there is an electrical break in the non-working elements. It's possible to find the breaks in the elements and repair them with a special paint which contains silver powder – this is not always successful. What's not possible is to fit a new window – this is now an obsolete Nissan part. However.....

.....Even when new the rear demister isn't very effective – it certainly won't clear ice and takes quite a while to demist the glass. It's actually far quicker to use the aircon to demist the inside of the car and many owners therefore just don't bother with the rear window demister!

