

## NISSAN FIGARO NIGGLES – PART 1

### CAR WON'T START IN PARK

More correctly – the engine doesn't turn over when you turn the ignition key. Of course the problem could be a flat battery – you can check this by looking at the panel warning lights as you turn the key – if they go dim when the key is in the start position then you've probably got a flat battery.

If the car starts when you fiddle with the gear-stick or put the stick in N – chances are that it's just a worn plastic bush on the gear selector lever. The system checks that the stick is in Park or Neutral before allowing the engine to turn over. The worn bush causes too much free play in the selector system such that the system fails to recognise that the stick is in Park! It's a very common problem on the Figaro!

In 95% of cases – changing the plastic bush will solve the problem – it's an easy job and you'll find the bush in the Maintenance Parts section of our Website. It comes with full instructions.

### REVERSE WON'T ENGAGE

You put the car in Reverse and nothing happens – you fiddle with the gear-stick and Reverse engages. It's actually the same root cause as the problem above – infact the two problems may be experienced together! Solved by changing the plastic bush discussed above!

### GEAR-STICK WON'T MOVE FROM PARK!

With the engine running and your foot on the brake – it's not possible to press the button on the gear-stick to move it out of Park! To get you away – you can press the red button on the base of the gear stick – this will allow you to move out of P. There can be several causes but the most common is the failure of an inhibitor amplifier which controls the function – the problem may come and go but usually gets more persistent as time goes on. After fully investigating the problem – the solution may be to replace the inhibitor amplifier – quite an expensive little black box at around £100! We have them in stock if you need one. Up to a couple of years ago this was a very rare problem – now on the increase!

### CAN'T WITHDRAW THE IGNITION KEY!

The key will only release when the gear-stick is in Park and the small button on the ignition switch is pressed. (the key will also not release if you have a flat battery). Again – there are a few possible causes but the most common is failure of the inhibitor relay mentioned above! Indeed the issue of “Won't move from Park” and “Ignition key won't release” can often occur together. Sometimes the failure of the inhibitor amplifier can result in the problems being intermittent!

*Obviously you wouldn't want to leave your Figaro with the key stuck in the ignition switch. It can be removed as follows. Unclip the round plastic surround of the ignition switch – it should lift off with your fingernails. Under the surround you'll see a small lever – if you move it across – it will allow the key to be withdrawn.*

### CAN'T LOCK / UNLOCK DOOR!

You might find that you can't unlock or lock one of the doors – the key only has limited movement. You then find that you can't move the lock button on the inside of the door up or down! If you've remote central locking fitted – it's the same issue – the fob won't allow the door to be locked / unlocked.

Although it can be one of several issues – in the vast majority of cases it's one of two things:

- The operating trigger on the outside door handle needs to spring back fully when released. If it doesn't – you can't turn the key or move the inside lock pin! The trigger may not spring back fully because it's gunged up or the return spring is a bit weak. Usually solved with copious WD40 sprayed around the pivot of the trigger. Flick the trigger several times until it returns freely.
- The lock on the door edge doesn't spring over fully – the door may appear to be closed properly but the lock is stuck in a half-way position. You can often get the lock to jump to it's correct position by grasping the outer door handle and shaking the door in and out. When you eventually get the door open remember to get the lock cleaned and lubricated – otherwise it's likely that the problem will recur!

### THE CATALYTIC CONVERTER LIGHT REMAINS ILLUMINATED!

This is the 4<sup>th</sup> warning light from the left on the right hand lower corner of the dashboard – it looks like a pipe with steam rising from it! The warning light should always be off but if it's illuminated – it indicates that the catalytic converter (the cat) has overheated. This usually happens when unburnt fuel enters the cat where it then burns resulting in a high temperature. It's an undesirable condition because it can damage the cat. Causes can be many – including simple things like a plug lead not being fitted properly.

The issue is that the light stays illuminated even though the root cause of the problem has been resolved and the cat is no longer being overheated. Owners and garages have spent hours trying to reset the warning light or search for non-existent problems that continue seemingly to cause the cat to overheat! The fact of the matter is that once the warning light has been triggered - even by a minor transient problem – it remains illuminated!! It can only be reset by replacing the temperature switch located at the base of the cat (the switch is actually a fusible link so once it's melted then it needs replacing)!! Unfortunately the switch is a Nissan part that costs an arm and a leg! We will, however, at some point in the future, discuss cheaper alternatives to replacing the switch and reducing fuel consumption at the same time!

### THE HANDBRAKE WARNING LIGHT REMAINS ILLUMINATED!

The handbrake is in the fully off position but the warning light is still on. Alternatively the warning light flickers when you're driving along and you're certain that the handbrake is off! What's going on?

The handbrake warning light actually has a dual function and also warns that the level in the brake fluid reservoir is low! Check the brake fluid level and top up to between the Min and Max marks and check again in a few days. If the level keeps falling – get the brake system checked!