

PROJECT FIGARO PART 4 INTERIOR REFURBISHMENT

We head down to The Figaro Shop in Didcot to get some expert help with one major and several minor improvements in the Figaro's cabin. **REPORT: SIMON GOLDSWORTHY**



So far, the work we have carried out on our Figaro has concentrated on making it safe and reliable on the road – new tyres, exhaust, drive belts, cambelt and indicator relay. With the car then running sweetly, last issue we took it to Simon Smith of the Figaro Owners Club for his impressions and while he did point out a few tasks that needed doing, it is fair to say that he was very impressed with the car overall and especially with the way that it drove.

Our next port of call was The Figaro Shop in Didcot, who have been specialising in the model for the best part of a decade now. Owner Tobyn Brooks had very kindly offered us a space in the workshop in which we could work on our car under the watchful eyes of their expert technicians. The beauty of this arrangement was that I could tackle bigger jobs than I would be comfortable doing at home, safe in the knowledge that help would be at hand to explain what needed to be done, and to step in and take over when I was struggling. An added bonus was that I would have instant access to The Figaro Shop's huge stock of new and used spare parts, so we could test some components by substitution if necessary and know that work would not necessarily be brought to a premature halt by a broken or missing widget.

And believe me, I was expecting a few broken widgets because one of the main

tasks we were planning was to change the top of the dash. This is notorious on the Figaro for cracking, and our car had a split of epic proportions right ahead of the driver. This did not affect the way the car drove of course, but it did let down an otherwise fairly tidy interior. And since The Figaro Shop offer a leather-covered replacement for £350, we had ordered one of those.

The technician assigned to babysit me through the work was Ant Absolom, who took on the role with cheerful enthusiasm and was extremely generous with both his time and his expertise. Ant was not alone in this regard, because everyone at The Figaro Shop was most welcoming and helpful. And before the cynics among you say: 'He would say that, wouldn't he?' I must point out that I am under no obligation to sing The Figaro Shop's praises, but I was genuinely impressed by their enthusiasm for the model and the expertise they had in it.

After two days, we came away with a much improved Figaro and a bill for parts that came to £645.83 once the VAT had been added. As you discover how much that covered, I think you will agree that it was a bargain for such a rare and unusual car which was never sold new in the UK, especially as over half the money went on the new leather dash. I will save the breakdown of costs until next issue though, when we have put it all back together. **CM**



The Figaro Shop

The Figaro Shop offer an unrivalled range of services for Nissan Figaros, including sales of hand-picked, low mileage cars, complete renovation and refurbishment of your Figaro, not to mention a bodyshop where they carry out restoration work, full and partial resprays, as well as crash and insurance repair. The service department deals with everything from engine rebuilds to MoT repairs and oil changes, while an extensive parts department sells replacement and upgraded items which can be purchased online, by phone and in their shop.

**Rich's Sidings, Lower Broadway,
Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 8AG
Tel: 01235 812511
www.thenissanfigaroshop.co.uk**



1 One of the jobs on our list was that the electrically-operated window in the driver's door would no longer operate. So Toby flicked out the switch unit...



2 ...and tried another switch from their parts shop. That gave the same problem though, namely that we could hear the relay click, but the window did not move.



3 So now we had to remove the door card to examine other components in the system. There are four screws in cup washers holding the bottom edge of the door card to the frame. One was so rusted that Ant had to cut a slot in the head and use a flatblade screwdriver to turn it out.



4 The card could then be levered out of the retaining clips and twisted up and out after removing door pull and handle screws and disconnecting the window switches.



5 Now we could test the window motor, but running power directly to it had the window opening and closing on demand. So the only suspect left was the relay box.



6 The contacts on this can corrode, but it is very hard to open and close the unit to access them for cleaning. So we tested it by substituting another relay. That did the trick, and that was duly fitted.



7 We needed both door cards off anyway because the speaker grilles had gone rusty – this is another common Figaro problem. With time at a premium, we removed the old grilles...



8 ...and replaced them with a refurbished pair from The Figaro Shop's shelves. Little details like this can make a big difference to the whole feel of a car.



9 As did the handbrake! It came to us wrapped in insulating tape like this and just felt so wrong, even though we had no way of knowing what was underneath.



10 Cutting off the tape revealed this vinyl cover. I didn't realise at the time, but this was a home-made addition to cover a plastic lever that had decayed.



11 Ant showed us how the entire plastic and vinyl handle was simply knocked forwards and off the handbrake lever itself using a protective block of wood...



12 ...while a secondhand replacement from the stores was bought and knocked back on. As you can see from this picture if you look closely, this was fitted later because first...



13 ...we took out the plastic surround to the gearstick and handbrake lever (four screws and the lead to the power socket) followed by the front seats to create more room.



14 That's because the dash on our car had been painted in the past and finished very well, but it had cracked badly ahead of the driver and we wanted to replace this with a new leather cover.



15 The stereo unit that can be seen in the picture with Step 13 was next to come out. Again the screws were easily visible, and this was followed by this lower fascia panel behind it.



16 The heater knobs pulled off, then the chrome surround to the levers could be removed. After releasing the screw holding the lever box to the fascia, Ant pushed the levers away.



17 After releasing the steering column and lowering it to the floor to create more space and also removing the plastic side panels across the cant rails, attention turned to the two Torx screws at either end of the dash assembly.

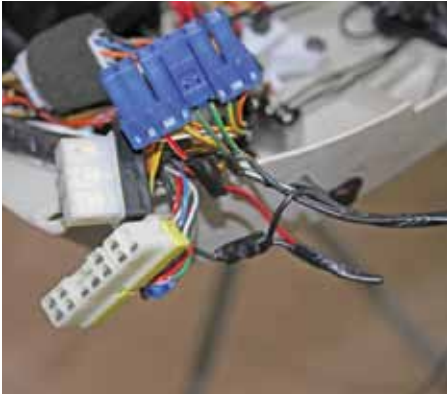


18 You have to go easy when undoing these Torx screws as they can stick to the dash – ours was already cracked and crumbling on the nearside.



19 There was also a 10mm nut at each end under removable covers in the dash top. However, before releasing these, Ant disconnected the speedo cable...

«



20 ...and the dash wiring plugs as well as the plastic piping to the offside heater vent. Note the soldered connections for the alarm wiring and rear fog light.



21 Finally the dash could be manoeuvred out of the car and laid on a padded bench. Note that the rev counter has for some strange reason stuck at 1000rpm!



22 Enjoying the comfort of now working on the bench, our next task was to remove all of the plastic pipework for the heater and fresh air circulation system.



23 Before undoing the many screws holding the green dash top to the dash itself, we had to carefully pop out these grilles, which are easily damaged.



24 Aftermarket alarms are often more trouble than they are worth, so we also took out miles of alarm wiring and the microphones. The alarm's 'brain' had already been taken out on our car, so it was not working anyway.



25 Finally the dash top itself could come off. We were surprised to discover that it was actually metal underneath and the crack was only in the top shell.

NEXT ISSUE: Dash replacement, seatbelt mechanism adjustment, LED dash lights and more.