

Experiences of a Nymph-omaniac!

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I share the ACO duties for the York Area Centre with Mark Watson. Mark has been Imp-less for a while since his car was involved in an accident. (I'll leave Mark to explain and show you the photos.) As a consequence, for Bridgewater and Bangor Nationals, Mark has driven my Nymph to the events thus allowing me to bring the Puck caravan, behind a modern car, as I'm getting a bit old and cronky for camping. This arrangement works well, for me at least. The Puck awning then becomes the York AC, for those essential late evening drinking sessions.

However, for Becky, Mark's long suffering partner, it has not been such a good experience. Both were long trips in mixed weather, and the Nymph is not ideal when you are used to a modern car with heater, CD player, etc. Becky was not slow to make us all aware of her discomfort! The trip to Wales was made even more fraught when the Nymph developed a loss of power somewhere on the A55.

After some inspection by Malcolm Cross, Mark and myself, it was decided to use one of the group's Rescue/Recovery memberships to sort out the problem. The Rescue man was clearly a bit perplexed by a dubious group of three male and two females with two old cars and one small caravan. We didn't offer

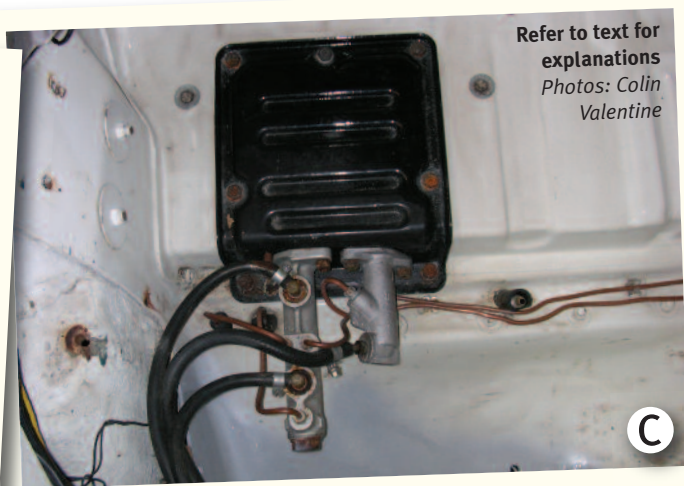


him any explanation – actually, by the time he arrived, Mark had found that the fuel filter was full of rubbish. Mark used a different word! This was probably the cause of the fuel shortage. Also one of the wires on the electronic ignition inside the distributor had worn through causing the engine to cut-out intermittently. Both problems had been sorted by the time the Rescue arrived, but we were short of confidence as the A55 is a busy road, and other users are not expecting any stationary traffic. After some checks we decided to go to the next services, which were only at the top of the hill. Some more checks and a drive round the car-park restored confidence and we proceeded, albeit at a reduced pace. The excellent Rescue Man followed the convoy for a while, to ensure all was well, and we duly made it to Bangor, for an excellent weekend.

The Nymph toured around North Wales with the occasional hiccup, and duly made it back to Yorkshire, when I decided that it needed fixing properly. Six months later I think it is nearly fixed! First I decided that the dirt in the fuel tank needed removing. I found that removing a Nymph petrol tank is a fraught affair compared to an Imp. I started by draining the tank of petrol, and then releasing the connection to the fuel pipe. I made sure the fuel was kept somewhere safe!

The Nymph is a fibreglass monocoque, and so has a metal strut brace between the top mounts for the front suspension so the car has to be put up on blocks to enable the front suspension to be released, while taking care not to let the suspension hang on the brake flexi-hoses. The strut brace also has a T-piece which goes through the bulkhead into the car and supports the steering column. So the steering column also has to be released before the strut brace can be removed. This last part may be unique to my Nymph, as it doesn't use a standard Imp steering column. (The car was built by Jim Fraser in 2004 and he thought that it might be subject to the SVA test. Hence, he fitted a Fiat column which has UJs to allow it to collapse in an accident.) Now, at last, the tank can be removed. However, the front of a Nymph curves in, and there is not the same clearance one is used to with an Imp. Also, the rubber elbow for the fuel filler has to be shortened to fit behind the headlight, added to which it is 40 years old and not as flexible as it used to be. To be blunt it was rock hard, and didn't want to flex at all, to release the filler but it came out eventually.

While the tank was out I looked



at it and decided that it could be trimmed to give more clearance to re-fit. Picture A shows where I trimmed the tank on the nearside and the offside. It is easier to look at the pictures, than trying to explain. Some words of warning, the top and bottom of the tank are sealed together, so there are limits on how far you can cut into the sealed area, else the tank may leak when it is re-fitted. The other warning is that petrol tanks still have petrol fumes inside them, when they are empty so avoid making sparks. Best not to use the angle grinder; I used large shears and a hand file to trim the tank. It took several sessions to determine how much needed trimming to make re-fitting possible.

While looking at the pictures you will also have spotted the 'modification' Jim made to the

underside of the fuel tank. The large dent (Picture B) is to allow clearance room for the Lada split brake master cylinder (Picture C). This has two cylinders, end on end. It fits the Imp but in an upright position. Hence, the need for the dent in the tank. There is one outlet on the front cylinder which goes to the back brakes, and two outlets on the rear cylinder which go one to each front brake. Jim built his own version of the Fiesta disc kit which works really well in conjunction with the Lada master cylinder; the travel and feel are excellent. I would recommend this to anyone who wants the comfort factor of a split cylinder braking system. Even on the lightweight Nymph, the front brakes do not give any concern about the front end locking up under heavy braking though the oversize tyres possibly help. Just to finish this part, rumour has it that Jim put the dent in the petrol tank with his bare fist! I would expect no less from a typically hard Scotsman! English wimps may use a lump hammer.

Please note that fitting the Lada master cylinder will make it difficult to fit a spare wheel in the conventional Imp position. This is another of the 'Jim'll fix it' items to meet the SVA Test.

Apparently, after all his labours the inspector was not concerned about meeting the SVA requirements, and treated it as if the car was built 'in period'!

When it came to re-building the car, after fitting the fuel tank I also fitted some Clan front springs which only have a 70lb rating, as against the Imp of 195lb. As the Nymph is nearer in weight to a Clan than an Imp I was hoping the ride would be improved. It was, in fact this mod has transformed the ride. Subsequently, I bought some Clan rear springs which are 250lb as against the Imp 460lb. Again the transformation is immense, the car now rides the speed bumps, as opposed to crashing over them. I would recommend any other Nymph owner to do this, if they do not have the 'special' springs which were sold in period with the Nymph. However, the rear Clan springs were difficult to fit – at 12" uncompressed, they are more than 2" longer than an Imp spring. I had to use spring clamps to get them in. Once the car is lowered to the ground they settle fine, but ideally some similar rated springs of about 11" free length would be better.



Fitting Clan springs has transformed the ride quality of Colin Valentine's Nymph without any detriment to the handling

Photo: www.rallyaround.co.uk



TECHNICAL QUERY? Got a problem with your Imp or a question on any Imp-related subject? Why not send it in to Impressions? Your question will be published in our **IMP CLINIC** and will hopefully receive an answer from one of the experts in the club. Yet another service offered to help Keep Your Imp Alive!