Early 3.8 E Type petrol leak!

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About a month ago, I had just been out to obtain yet another new Warrant of Fitness for our early 3.8 E type (only 200 miles since the last one...why can't we have an annual check on classic cars; a topic for another time). Thankfully, the car went through without issue. On the way home I topped up the tank with fuel, parked the car in the garage, put back its dust cover and joined Marianne for a nice cup of tea. THE END for another 6 months...or so I thought!

A day later, I went back into the garage to discover an very strong smell of petrol. I quickly opened all the doors and windows, after finding a large pond of fuel under the rear of the car. To my horror, I found lots of fuel bubbling up around the 12V power cable into the fuel tank that powers the submersible pump inside the tank. Petrol was pouring out through the fuel tank sump aperture in the boot floor!

After draining a few litres of fuel off via the glass fuel filter bowl connection in the engine bay and disconnecting the battery, I removed the Lucas 2FP submersible fuel pump. I found that the flexible, mesh covered, rubber power cable conduit (meant to form a sealed electrical connection into the pump), had completely disintegrated and was allowing the fuel in the tank to capillary vertically upwards via the electrical cable, out of the tank.



Disintegrated rubber conduit (new when installed in 2015) – Ethanol damage possibly?

Luckily, I still had a "ready to fit", fully restored, early in-tank 2FP fuel pump dated 2/61 (factory installed on my car) on my display shelf of "interesting early E Type components"

However, upon reflection, I decided to leave this original artifact on display as a point of interest and ordered one of the upgraded SNG Barratt (UK) replacement in-tank pumps. The new pump fits exactly as per the original and when viewed on the outside of the tank, looks identical to the original.

Despite all the problems with shipping post-COVID, the part arrived in my Auckland letterbox in in less than a week. Having installed the new pump on its new sealing gasket without issue, I ran the engine up to temperature to ensure all was well and it was. However I did not test drive the car at this point as we were experiencing one of our recent rain bombs with 120mm in 2 hours. The car's dust cover went back on and inside for another cup of tea (or was it a beer).



Factory fitted Lucas 2FP pump to chassis 875029

It wasn't until about a week later on a lovely blue clear dry day that we decided to take the E-Type for a run along Tamaki Waterfront to visit Marianne's 93 year old mother in St Heliers.



Upgraded, simplified replacement in tank pump The car started easily and we were off, roof down and with cool dense air the engine just purred.

Along the way at Mission Bay we discovered a section of the road works all coned off on both sides of the road and down the centre. As bad luck would have it, we were right in the middle of this barriered single lane section of road, with traffic in front and behind when the engine died as if I had switched the ignition off or run out of fuel!

With rather better luck prevailing a small "E Type sized" gap appeared in the cones on the centre of the road. I also spied an open area of concrete apron on the opposite side of the road just as the E Type was busy slowing to a halt and horns were sounding behind us! I only just managed to squeeze the car between the centre cones in a right turn (with no oncoming traffic thankfully), and by more good luck, the car's momentum took us up onto the concrete apron and stopped dead!

I leapt (well actually dragged my 6'3" frame) out of the flat floor cockpit, opened the boot, removed the floorboard and with my ear to the tank, asked Marianne to switch on the ignition. Total silence prevailed in the fuel tank!

I then opened the centre dash to check the fuses and sure enough the original 5A fuse had blown. I replaced it with one of the 15A spares stored in the fuse block and we were back in business. The engine started instantly and we were off down the Tamaki Drive.

When I got home a couple of hours later, I checked the previously hitherto <u>unread</u> installation instructions that came with the Barratt pump.

There it was in black and white... "Ensure No. 6 fuse is uprated to 7.5A upon fitting" (i.e 7.5amps continuous /15amps blow).

Clearly the new pump draws more current"!!

