Light the Bullet!

With more and more frequency, vehicles are being fitted with bright, daytime running lights – or LEDs.

BikeVis Bullets are unique, award winning, miniature, high powered light pods that help to get you seen. They emit a bright white light, are weather proof, ultra-low power (1W per pod), yet brighter than 5W sidelights, have an ultra-long life of >50,000 hours, are hand made in the UK by bikers and come with a 1 year warranty.

'BikeVis Motorcycle Lighting' claim that these are easy to fit. For someone who's reasonably practical, but with a very basic wiring knowledge, let's see! The kit contains: 2 x BikeVis Bullet LED pods, each pre-wired with 1m of cable, high tack 3M tape (on each Bullet's foot) for easy and safe fitting, instructions with a mounting template and cable ties to keep wires safe and tidy.

These bright, little lights are tiny, but careful consideration needs to be given regarding their positioning. They obviously need to visible to approaching traffic and to those potentially crossing your path, up ahead. The instructions suggest that they should be mounted as far forward on the bike, but where? The first consideration is to find somewhere not obscured by bodywork, or at least by the 'flares and dips' of some of the panels. I offered one of the Bullets up to different positions, also thinking about their position juxtapose to other lights; not too close as they wouldn't benefit from their own 'space' in which to shine, i.e. being overpowered and 'swallowed' in the bright light from the headlight or so bright themselves that they might reduce the effect of

others, for example, the indicators. It has also been suggested in certain circles, that it's best to create a 'triangle' of lights to help other road users gauge the distance of your approaching bike, therefore, fitting to the headlight protector bracket, creating a flat line of lights, also seemed incorrect. I seriously considered mounting them in the recess in front of the oil cooler, nicely out of the way and creating an (all-be-it) shallow triangle of light. However, the Bullet lights are fixed to the bike by peeling the high-tack double sided tape on each of their flat bases. The base is also the exit point for the power cable and a small hole would need to be drilled to facilitate the flush fitting of the unit. Whilst this small hole would ultimately be covered by the Bullet, I was reluctant to start drilling holes in my 'pride and joy!' I therefore decided to mount the Bullets on brackets; this would allow me to mount the lights further forward, as suggested by the supplier. I scoured my local car spares store and cycle shop and failed to find any brackets small or cheap enough and in desperation went to a near by DIY store in search of something suitable. The shelves seemed equally devoid of anything suitable; either too big and robust for such tiny lights, or made of mild steel which would soon rust and look unsightly – then I spotted the picture hooks – they might work I thought and at less than £2 a pair, wouldn't break the bank if I decided they weren't any good!

I had already decided that a fixing point for the 'beak' on the GS would double up as a good mounting point. I could use the existing bolt without the need for drilling any extra holes on the bike and the wiring would tuck up tidily underneath, on it's way to the 'loom'. After a little modification of the hooks, (drilling two holes: one to allow hanging and the other for the wire – using the supplied guide). I gently hammered the picture hook over a suitable piece of wood, on both returns, (the wood the same width as the base of the Bullet) to create a flat trough in which to stick the Bullet! Voilà! One Bullet-light bracket!

Offering the bullet up, to find the best place to fit

The cable out of the 'foot' of the Bullet

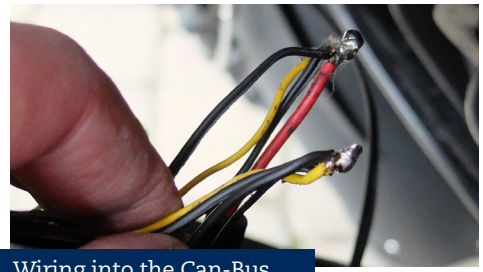
Modification of the picture hook

The brackets were mounted to either side of the bike and the wires fed through (following the route of some existing wires) and secured using the cable ties supplied.

The instructions suggest identifying the cables to the lights and splicing into those, but having a BMW with the ever-useful Can-Bus power point, I chose to run the power from there. I currently have a USB port powered from here, mounted up near the clocks; a useful place to power/charge phones, iPod and satnav (I now have a proper bike Garmin, so I don't use it for that anymore!) As the Bullets have such a low power drain (only 1W each!) I had no qualms about simply soldering the wires to the same point used to power the USB jack. Plug connectors would probably be better, but I didn't have any and a soldering iron creates a solid and reliable joint – if you do it this way though (or if you use connectors and they aren't insulated), remember to wrap the bare wire areas securely with electrical insulating tape to avoid short circuiting! Another good reason for using the Can-Bus connector, is that the lights remain 'live', i.e. Lit, for a couple of minutes after the ignition is turned off, which will hopefully make my task of putting the bike away in a dark garage somewhat easier (time of the year dependent of course!). It just remained for me to bend the new brackets outward slightly, to lift the Bullets clear of the flaring of the bike's beak. Despite the brackets being quite lightweight, so far I am very happy with them; they have survived the first few rides with it's bumps and clatters of the road surface and the wind on national speed limits without any noticeable flex or bending.

Whilst the photographs don't really do the brightness of these little dazzlers justice, they seem quite effective. In much the same way many of us now chose to wear high viz clothing to make us more visible – 'just in case', these little lights should help with visibility. They are not going to 'blind' other road users in to noticing us, but if they help to avoid someone pulling out in front, for an outlay of only around twenty quid, then they're more than worth it! Talking to Colin at a recent club night, he has also fitted a set to his bike, along with a modulator unit; this causes the lights to glint and twinkle, supposedly making them even more noticeable! May be we'll test one of these units in the future too!

Use of the drilling 'guide' and shaping the bracket



Wiring into the Can-Bus and hanging the brackets