

industry insight

MOTORHOME LEVELLING

Automated levelling can make touring much easier, and a new system from Staffordshire-based firm M-level is 100% UK made. Nigel Hutson takes a look



1 M-level Sales Director Phil Newbury



2 Laika Kreos L 5009 raised by the M-level system fitted at Camper UK

3 Smartly branded M-level jacks

4 Octagonal feet on jacks provide anchor points for securing bikes and so on



Although motorhome levelling systems are not new – they’ve been around for several years now – when I heard about a device being made in Britain, it caught my attention. A few weeks later, I met up with M-level Sales Director Phil Newbury at the premises of Camper UK in Lincoln, for a tour and demonstration of M-level’s new levelling system, fitted to a Laika Kreos L 5009 by Camper UK.

System development

Phil has worked in the motorhome industry for over 30 years, and about eight years ago, formed the company Aphiam with a business partner, to sell top accessories such as satellite TV systems, semi-air suspension, tow bars and so on. They also became agents for an Italian company that manufactures levelling systems, but issues deriving from Brexit, Covid and long delays for parts became a big problem. So they decided to look into developing their own system.

Over the past three years, the M-level system has been devised and was finally launched in August 2023. Phil told me their main objectives were reliability, simplicity and longevity, and if any spare parts are needed, there should be no delay in obtaining them. Their ambition is for the system to be basically “fit and forget”.

The two main parts of a levelling system are hydraulics and electronics. M-level approached several UK-based manufacturers of hydraulic systems, one of which was very interested in the idea. Ironically, that company has built a bespoke motorhome levelling system before, as well as supplying many industries – including the Italian military! Apparently, when Phil took his business partner to meet the hydraulics company, his reaction was: “Wow – they really know what they are doing.”

Although the jacks are designed to be one size, irrespective of the vehicle they’re going to be fitted to, shorter jacks can be obtained should the need arise.

Electronic components

The electronics side of things is a little more complicated, but again, they tracked down a small company keen to be involved.

The firm began by examining the electronics contained in another levelling system and, once they took things apart, they discovered there were items included that they felt weren’t really needed for a levelling system – the whole thing seemed more complicated than necessary.

Over the next 18 months, they perfected their own electronics and developed a simple-to-use and intuitive control panel. **▶**

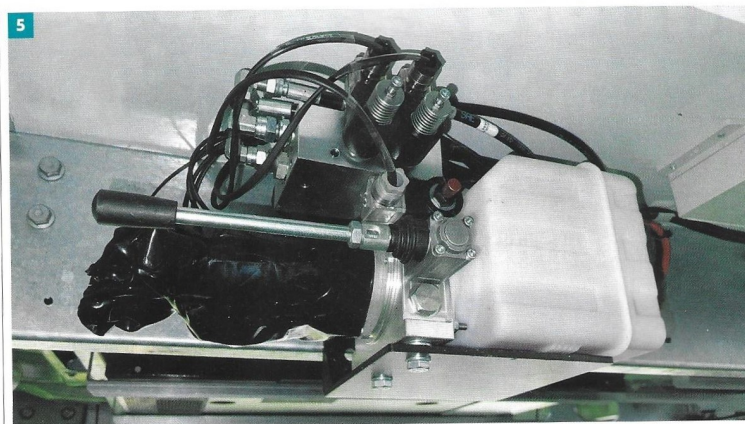


INDUSTRY INSIGHT M-LEVEL

5 The M-level pump unit

6 Control panel in its cradle, which is fixed to the wall by the habitation door

7 Screen shots showing the control panel in operation



Among the major components in any levelling system are the brackets that attach the jacks to the vehicle. Working with another UK-based engineering company, M-level has specific brackets for specific vehicles.

Currently it has Fiat, Fiat/Al-Ko, Ford and Fiat van conversions, and it is working on units for Mercedes and other vehicles.

Building up a network

Phil also told me that although M-level had only recently been launched, orders have been coming in thick and fast, and the company has built up a good network of dealerships/installers.

The firm is also considering the feasibility of sending out a mobile engineer to install systems at smaller motorhome dealerships.

Theoretically, M-level’s system has a 12-tonne limit, but sensibly, the company advertises the maximum as being 10 tonnes, which should cover the majority of motorhomes.

Having learned a little bit about the history and development of the M-level system, it was time for me to have a look at the various components and to see it in operation.

Thankfully, Camper UK had a beautifully clean showroom floor, so it was no problem crawling underneath the Laika Kreos!

I was very impressed by the appearance of not only the bright blue jacks (all proudly displaying a Union Jack sticker and M-level’s branding), but also the quality of the hydraulic hoses/unions and the pump unit, which was compact and neat.

There are no cables and so on to feed through the floor of the motorhome because the system is totally wireless, something that’s unique to M-level. Changes to the feet on the jacks mean that, rather than the circular ones I saw, they are now octagonal in shape, with ‘M’ cutouts and four anchor points for securing items such as bikes, chairs and the like, making the potential theft of any items less likely (a very neat idea).

The touchscreen control panel is stored in a cradle, which (where possible) will be attached to the wall inside and near the entrance door.



The cradle is connected to a 12V supply and the vehicle’s ignition system. Simply removing the control unit from the cradle wakes it up. It’s then a case of using the functions manually or with the Auto Level button. For security purposes, you can set a PIN number for the control unit, too.

Security precautions

As with other systems, if the vehicle’s ignition is switched on, the jacks retract automatically, but as an extra precaution against vehicle theft, the M-level provides the option to retract the jacks manually. A warning light and alarm on the dash alerts you if the system is used manually.

Phil said they wanted a simple-to-operate system, so while competitors have various modes (for emptying water tanks and so on), M-level keeps things more straightforward. If you want to raise the offside to empty the tank, you press the Adjust Right button to lift that side manually.

The system can cope with 7° slopes in automatic mode, while using the manual mode and levelling blocks, it can deal with steeper inclines. It is very quiet in operation, and I was also impressed with its build quality and simple functionality.

■ M-level m-level.co.uk
■ Camper UK camperuk.co.uk

