



### Replacing a V8 speedometer that had stopped working

When driving home to Remseck in Germany from the V8 50th Anniversary week of celebrations in 2023 the speedometer needle on Kai Knickmann's MGBGT V8 first started to swing more and more violently as he drove through the Netherlands. Closer to home it finally stopped working altogether – with a speed indication of zero and no movement on the odometer either. Kai says “for the remainder of the year that didn't bother me too much, but now the German TÜV (the equivalent of the MOT in the UK) is coming up and with no working speedometer, it is a sure fail for the TÜV. The speedometer had been replaced at Clive Wheatley some years, probably 15,000 miles ago, so I hoped it was not the speedo again. The least expensive next potential culprit could be the speedo cable”. Thinking of what might be necessary Kai added “now I remember that getting to the speedo cable connections is not an easy task at either end (both gearbox and the speedo). At which end would you start investigations – a crawl under the car (which is on axle stands anyway) or looking under the dashboard to confirm the idea? And are there different versions of speedo cables - my car now sports an LT77 gearbox?” In a post on the V8 Bulletin Board Kai welcome any advice from fellow members before he started the next step.

**Bob Owen** thought it sounded like a failed speedo cable. The swinging pointer would happen as frayed strands of the inner bound on the outer causing the cable to successively wind up then release until eventually the cable inner broke. No easy wins here. I would probably opt for removing the speedo by releasing the two knurled nuts that hold the back clamp bracket then withdrawing it until I could release the cable. This is cleaner and a bit easier than the gearbox end. If the knurled cable clamp is tight you can at least then easily get your pliers on it. With the speedo removed (unplug the lamp) you can check the

cable inner”. Welcoming that advice, Kai he prepared himself to get to work on the next weekend!

### Investigating the problem

Kai reported “the speedo cable was indeed broken and he found it was a “pig of a job” to separate the broken cable from both the gearbox and the speedo. Kai recalled “my wife said my hands looked like I had a tough fight with an angry cat after the job was done!”

Thanks to Clive Wheatley and his able team at mgv8parts, the correct replacement part was promptly delivered. Unfortunately found the swinging needle seems to have broken the return spring in the speedo, as the first try-out was showing the needle swing to full speed as soon as the car picks up any speed at all. Now I always understood that V8 speedos with their different ratio and 140 mph lettering are as rare as hen's teeth these days. To my big surprise the original Smiths instruments are still produced today by Caerbont Automotive Instruments Ltd. (CAI) in Swansea (<http://www.caigauge.com>) and it seems that they are the true successor to Smiths after multiple protracted management buy-outs. I found Gavin at CAI's customer service was very helpful and I'm now in the process of ordering a brand new V8 kph speedo (which will be quite helpful to have here in Germany) as well as having my mph speedo repaired in Germany to tuck away as a spare one - you never know I may need it again”.

**Peter Berry** posted on the V8BB: “that sounds like an excellent 'win-win', Kai, because for the first time you will have kph dial in front of you, rather than having to do the mental maths with a mph gauge whenever you drive the car in Germany!”

**Mike Howlett** added “Caerbont are also known as Speedy Cables and have another website under that name - I don't know why. I have used Speedy Cables several times both for new gauges and for repairs to gauges. They could fix your broken speedo, I have no doubt. Their service has always been excellent in my experience”. **Kai Knickmann** replied “thanks for pointing out that CAI and Speedy Cables are linked - I wasn't aware of the affiliation and didn't spot that on their website either. With the repair I will stay with the German guys who do nothing but classic car and bike instrument repairs with an excellent reputation - and it is much less hassle for all involved regarding the logistics without customs duties and surcharges back and forth to the UK”.

<https://www.speedycables.com>

### Successful outcome

Kai Knickmann concluded the story saying “finally I now have two working speedos to choose from - the repaired mph one and a brand new kph one. The new one came from Caerbont, was delivered within two weeks with no customs troubles, was quoted with £292 all in with Fedex delivery and I can only praise their customer service (thanks Gavin!). Highly recommended”.