

RV8NOTE306 – curing a speedometer fault

306

Curing RV8 speedometer faults

Peter Garton, an RV8 enthusiast in Germany, posted a VBB note reporting he had a faulty kph speedo. The responses were very interesting and highlighted some concerns for UK enthusiasts who still have a kph speedo on their reimported RV8. (Jul 09)

Peter Garton reported “my RV8 speedo has just gone awry. It shows 180 kph at around 50 kph and does not go back to zero, only when one disconnects the drive at the rear. I was wondering if anyone has an original speedo from a reimported RV8 lying around that I might put to good use? In the meantime I will try to get it repaired by VDO in Cologne, assuming they still have the bits and pieces!” He added “I noticed that the rear hole in the speedo, where the cable is inserted, seemed to be loose in that one could move it a fraction in and out and then the speedo would work manually at least. When the cable drive was then inserted and screwed tight the needle went wild again and stuck at around 60 kph only going back when one tapped on the speedo glass. This happened when I went to collect the RV8 from my workshops after they did my rear brakes and so one instinctively accuses the poor mechanic that he touched something or inadvertently damaged the cable whilst it was up on the ramp. I only drove 20 metres or so before I noticed the needle gyrating wildly up to 180 kph whilst travelling at around 40 kph!”

Gavin Brown in Australia responded saying “it’s not uncommon, I’ve had about half a dozen repaired, there is a spring that goes inside them from memory. There is nothing your mechanic would have done, just unfortunate timing. Your symptoms all point the same problems as I have seen on the speedos I have had repaired. A word of warning though, as soon as the speedo develops a fault, stop using the gauge and take the cable out of the back. Prolonged use can permanently damage the gauge so that it is no longer repairable.

Bill Cole noted “Just a short story about the very helpful people at VDO. My speedo cable broke right behind the speedo which left the square end stuck fast in the back of the speedo and no amount of prodding or drilling would remove it. I took the speedo apart in an attempt to push it out but ended up with a speedo that was beyond repair. I saw that Brown and Gammons had a replacement offer going but this only applied to kilometre speedos and, as mine was a British unit, there was a mark up on the price and as my unit was broken there was a second mark up. I decided that £400 plus was too much so I then rang VDO. I was told that the fountain of all information had retired but was in work part time at the moment - his name escapes me, but this very helpful guy checked his stock and confirmed he had some but they were not calibrated. He told me to put a chalk mark on the floor and tyre and then push the car three and a half times and measure the distance. I did this and called him back and paid by card (around £60 I recall) and I had my new speedo the following day. The recommendation is ring VDO - they really are very helpful.”



Peter Jevons added “That is really interesting regarding VDO, how long ago was this and have you got the phone number for VDO? I am really getting fed up doing mental arithmetic as I have a kph speedo in my RV8 at the moment. Fred Jenns, who supplied the car, does not change the speedos on his RV8 reimports as he believes it maintains the provenance of the car. The price you paid was that for buying a new speed outright?”

Bill Cole responded “I wondered how long ago it was that I replaced my speedo but remembered that at the time I commented on it on the MG Enthusiast’s BBS

RV8NOTE306 – curing a speedometer fault

page. Well I have just done a search of the archive and found that it was actually in March 2001 and the cost was £64.63 including the delivery - search it under RV8 speedo. Well this thread has shown what a great help this V8BB is and I wonder how many people now searching for a mph speedo so VDO will be busy tomorrow.”

Legality of driving a UK registered car with a kph speedo - at this point the V8BB thread touched on this topic with a query from **John Bolt** who noted the reimported Japan spec RV8s have speedos calibrated only in kph and not in both mph and kph. **Fred Jenks** noted “I think we all should remember that all RV8 have Euro COCs and these documents can still be made available for each car by VIN number. If this was not the case, it would make the lives of RV8 owners throughout Europe a bit difficult, to say the least! **Bryan Shacklady** found a useful VCA reference saying “if you import a car and have it registered in the UK, it needs an mph speedometer – see www.vca.gov.uk/other/faqs-vehicle-importi.asp

Peter Jevons responded saying “Well this has certainly opened up a can of worms. Bryan’s link to the VCA was most useful and opened up several other avenues of research. After several hours of browsing and trying to understand the volumes of legislation, I am convinced that Bryan is right and that we are obliged to have an mph or a dual mph/kph speedo if a car is registered for use in the UK. Although the COC (certificate of compliance) document provides the basic EU requirement, cars registered in member states with specific differences are required to be changed to meet the differences – for example mph speedo and left dipping headlights in the UK. The form you have to fill in to get a VCA certificate (which you need prior to registration) specifically requires you to make a statement that the changes have been made, and in addition they specify what is acceptable regarding speedos. So you can change the speedo or have a calibrated overlay which is clear and visible day and night. Additional speed monitoring devices like satnavs are not acceptable. I am sure this is a bit of a shock to many, especially as VOSA have not been enforcing this at MOT. Only in the event of the car being stolen and involved with the police is it likely to have consequences. However can anybody suggest a way forward, I am sure Clive Wheatley has not got enough VDO speedos in stock to supply everybody?”

Rob Collier added “I changed my speedo to a mph one just after I bought my RV8 as mental arithmetic is not one of my strong points and I don’t like stickers. I would suggest that anyone with a kph speedo changes it as soon as possible. It’s a 5 minute job to change it rather than fall foul of the law. It is also cost effective compared to speed awareness courses and receiving speeding fines. Clive Wheatley supplies mph speedos on an exchange basis so perhaps the long term supply isn’t such a problem.”

Mike Lane noted he had “just spotted an eBay link to a Lockwood Speedo Dial Kit for MG RV8s that will change existing kph dials to the standard UK dual mph/kph. It is

available at £42.47 including post and packaging. I have not used them so cannot vouch for the product but, thought it may help someone with this UK illegal problem?” Go to:

<http://cgi.ebay.co.uk/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=180386908756&ssPageName=ADME:B:SS:GB:1123>

Peter Jevons noted “that the eBay seller was a trader with a huge mark up and postage charge, however you can purchase the replacement mph dial direct from Lockwood, part number 8029 for less than £20 including VAT and postage. I have one on order and will let you know how successful it is. With just a dial change the odometer and trip meter will still record in kms does anyone know how to get this re-calibrated?”

Peter Garton posted a message about four later saying “my repaired speedo is now back from VDO and functions well again. The cost was around £115. The actual defect had something to do with the drive shaft within the part itself. The engineer who did the job is mailing me a photo as to which part failed so that I can pass it on to the editor for the RV8NOTES series. Interestingly the people who do the repairs are called Kienzle who belong to the VDO group. The address and contacts for Kienzle and contacts are set out below which may be useful for UK members. Coming back to the speedo defect, I noticed after they had removed the speedo that as I drove home in the RV8 I could see the drive cable itself turning just behind the dash. The head of the cable was slightly bent. Herr Guntzel (the very helpful guy that helped me at Kienzle) told me that this puts additional strain onto the drive shaft within the speedo and thus should be absolutely straight. Stating the obvious, I suppose, but worth noting!”

Kienzle Automotive
Alexanderstrasse 37-39
45472 Mülheim/Ruhr
Germany
Tel: (0049)((0)208 49505142
Fax: (0049)(0)208 49505353
automotive@kienzle.de
www.kienzle.de



Bent speedometer dial spindle. (Photo: Fa. Kienzle)

Peter Garton later sent over a set of photos kindly taken by Herr Guntzel of Fa. Kienzle showing how the end of the dial spindle had been bent, following which the speedometer had gyrated wildly. A full set of the photos is provided on the next page.

RV8NOTE306 – curing a speedometer fault



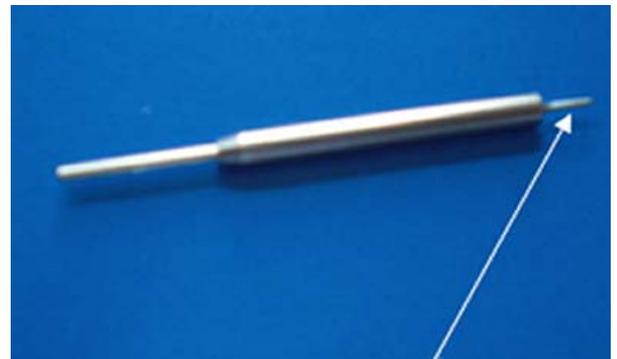
Bent dial spindle in the speedometer housing



New dial spindle in the speedometer housing



Damage to the spindle was sufficient to cause the speedometer to gyrate wildly.



Comparing the bent spindle alongside with a new replacement shows the bend very clearly.