

Donning the Speedos

By Philip McCumisky

I recently purchased a December build Executive which was not sold new by the Leyland Geelong dealers in Victoria until March 1974.

This car was equipped with a km speedo, as I understand it, the car would/should have has a mph speedo as metrication did not officially start until January 1, 1974.

I spoke with both Marcus and Martyn about this and decided to buy a mph speedo from club parts and fit this to maintain the "originality".

When the car was bought by me, a km speedo was in the car, and has 56,000+kms recorded. This led to some mild concern as to what mileage the car has actually done. Was it as shown or was it the second time around?

The car is in pretty good nick, but not that good to only have the mileage as shown on the speedo to be considered as being accurate and original whether it was miles or kilometres that had been recorded.

This has led to the following questions, for which other P-nuts may appreciate factual answers, from any Leyland past employees who are not yet in a retirement home or suffer from Alzheimer's or dementia.

1. When did Leyland start putting km speedos into production Leyland cars at Zetland?
2. Did Leyland start replacing the mph speedos with km speedos some time in December 1973 knowing that those cars would not be sold until early in 1974 and knowing also that it may have been illegal to sell a new vehicle from 1/1/74 with a mph speedo?
3. Did VDO replace the face of the speedos with a km face in late 1973 and "convert" the distance travelled to km as well?
4. If so, why only a five figure distance recorder on a km speedo and not a six figure one when fitted to new Leyland cars in December 1973?
5. When did VDO start sending km speedos to car makers?
6. When did six figure recorders start appearing on new cars?
7. Did Leyland start fitting km speedos in December 1973?

There is no evidence that the dashboard had been tampered with on my Executive, which somewhat discounts the theory that:

1. The selling dealer may have replaced the speedo either prior to sale to himself (as his own company demonstrator)
2. The next owner replaced the speedo with a km one

When I removed the km speedo from the car, to replace it with a mph speedo, there was a small old paper slip on the rear of the speedo which gave the following information:

AYD 9090 W:0.63 1.11.73

Does this mean that the speedo could have been an original fitment at the factory? Normally the build date and serial numbers of the instruments supplied by VDO to Leyland (and others), has this information stamped into the rear case of the instrument, e.g. AYD 9090 11/73

In the lead up period to official metric conversion in Australia, that is from 01/01/73 until the start of metrication on 01/01/74 all new car sales had dual readings on their speedometer, mph on the outside in bigger figures and kms on the inside in smaller figures. This type of speedo as described is fitted to all Leyland cars during that period, my other P76, 3M26 is no exception.

The cars books also have a recorded service history, but there is an anomaly here as well. The last service entry in the Buyer Protection Service book dated 5/4/79 lists the speedo reading as 60,130km. When I bought the car, the speedo reading was 56,416km.

Service book entries indicate that very little mileage was done over a long period between listed services, which carry the selling dealers official servicing stamping each new entry.

Could this seemingly incorrect mileage entry for the last listed service be the result of "anticipated" mileage by the dealer service department as to when the car would be due for its next service?

The history of the car indicates that the previous owner did not use the car at all after he had a slight accident and in his advancing years did not drive the car at all, and it lay in the garage until his demise and his estate then sold the car.

None of the previous owners (up to five in total) as far as I know, including the original dealer (no longer in the trade) have any answers for any of these questions.

I would appreciate some factual answers/opinions on this from readers.

Hopefully fellow P76 owners may also benefit from this article and I would encourage other owners to ask for any factual information from those who used to work in the trade in those years past. Perhaps there may be an ex Leyland employee reading this who would do a series of articles on everything that he/she may have experiences whilst in the employ of the last truly Australian car builder.

Perhaps someone could fill in the gaps the parts book does not appear to list the part numbers for the Six Cylinder speedos.

Phil,

Some of the info you seek follows. The 6 Cyl Km/h speedo is still a mystery. Anyone out there know the answer?

