



WRITTEN BY IAIN COX



CJ7 THE LUMP PART 2

So after the eventful trip from Melbourne to Brisbane (see previous issue of Jeep Action Magazine) the mighty CJ7 arrived at Seven Slot Off Road for some much needed work. The sad part being that it had to make the last 1,000km on the back of a truck.

The first two obvious jobs were the transmission and the rear brakes. The transmission had failed due to the vehicle not being driven enough and the rear brakes had lost effectiveness due to being covered in diff oil, which was caused by failed wheel bearings and seals. So the

transmission was removed and sent off for a rebuild, while the bearings and a conversion kit from drum brakes to disc brakes were sourced.

The Turbo 700 transmission and transfer case were rebuilt courtesy of Russell's Transmission, Oxenford and returned to Seven Slot Off Road and job number one was completed successfully.

While the brake conversion kit was being ordered some other jobs were attacked as well. Firstly, a custom built radiator and transmission cooler was fitted and looks magnificent. This was combined with twin electric fans to enable the

removal of the clutch fan, thus reducing the drag on the engine.

It turned out that the rear diff housing was damaged where the axle seals run so Speedy-Sleeves were inserted to provide a good surface for the new seals.

Other issues had also been addressed such as electrical failures under the dash, lights repaired and the winch exchanged for an LED light bar so all was good. The rear brake conversion was completed and it was time to drive the CJ again.

I spent the next week taking short trips around Brisbane and travelled approximately 800km and everything



appeared to be performing well, so I decided to drive to Sydney – 1,000km. The first day went really well and I was looking forward to the remainder of the trip. Early on the second day a loud grinding sound started, so I stopped in Ballina and called the workshop and for a second time the Jeep arrived at the workshop under someone else's power.

It was determined that the Speedy-Sleeves had spun within the housing, so a new diff housing and bearings were sourced and fitted. The mighty CJ7 was back on the road again.

The next excursion was a trip to Stradbroke Island. On the second day, the noise had returned so I limped the car around for a few more days before returning to Seven Slot Off Road (this time under its own power). The bearings fell out when the axles were removed so the diff



housing was sent back to the diff specialists again.

More time was spent working out why the bearings were failing. It took some serious brain power (and the fortuitous event that a spare diff housing had been obtained, already fitted with a brake conversion kit). It was determined that the brake backing plate for the conversion to disc brakes was a different thickness to the brake backing plate for the drum brakes, which meant that the pre-load on the bearings was incorrect. In addition, no shim was in the brake kit, so we fabricated one and this sorted the issue. I was incredibly relieved to know that there was a mechanical reason for the failure

and it was not actually directly related to my driving style. After all, it is a big V8 in a CJ, which weighs nothing so she does get driven rather hard.

Stage 3 of the build is scheduled to commence soon. The engine will be removed so that it may be rebuilt, suspension will be returned to something resembling a normal CJ7, as the previous owner had done a spring-over conversion to the suspension which resulted in some very unusual behavior, especially under braking. The steering requires an upgrade, as there is significant play, probably related to the spring-over conversion. The brake booster needs an upgrade, a new set of extractors and twin exhaust (to make

it breath nicer and sound like a V8) and some final stage preparation for the build is needed.

Other embellishments include new front bar, rear bar, rock sliders, an engineered towing hitch (as I believe original CJ7's are not rated for towing), upgrade to the lighting system (new headlights, reverse lights, replacement of other old and deteriorating systems), etc. Anything to make her look as good as she runs.

The final stage four, will be to separate the body from the chassis so that a complete new paint job can be done properly. There are a couple of minor rust spots that need to be repaired and the



panel joints have been bogged and painted over, which have subsequently cracked. Todd will install a new main wiring harness to eliminate all the superfluous wiring and the interior needs to be revamped to make her as comfortable as she is beautiful, and some more creature comforts – like a radio.

Other ideas include the conversion to

a manual gearbox, as I really love to drive manual vehicles, (but it is an argument I may still not win), a new roll cage in order to change the profile of the vehicle, a new soft top to let her go topless at times, a hard top and solid doors (with a sun roof of course for those days when a soft top is impractical), a lockable storage box for the rear of the vehicle – and so the list goes.

I must admit that there have been days when I questioned why I purchased a 35 year old vehicle, but every other day I have more fun driving my CJ7 than I have had driving any vehicle for a very long time and am reminded that I have made the right decision. I guess I have also found out the meaning to the saying "It's a Jeep thing".



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