



Mostly for the suffix A V8 but most will apply to all of our wonderful (when they behave) cars: I recently had a tail lamp fail in the V8 and decided to bite the bullet and go for LED replacements.

I'd considered this for a long time but cost was always against the LEDs, as they were several times the cost of a conventional bulb and the advantages just did not justify the cost. Things have changed drastically over the last few years and places like ebay will get your car totally kitted out (including the dash) with decent quality LEDs for about 15 notes.

Incidentally LED is Light Emitting Diode, the light is generated by the action of electrons flowing across a specially manufactured junction. In a conventional bulb the light is a result of a coil of wire glowing white hot.

The advantages of LEDs are:

1. Lower heat output, important for dash lamps and the interior lamp.
2. Instant switch on at full brightness, surprisingly noticeable once you check.
3. Very low current consumption.
4. Very long life, probably longer than our cars will last.

The only disadvantages for us are:

1. You need to replace both the indicator flasher unit and the hazard flasher unit.
2. Some of the 'white' lamps have a distinctly blue tinge to them.

Now the reason you need to replace the flasher units is that the old units rely on the current flowing through the bulbs to operate the mechanism. Because LEDs draw such a small current the unit won't work. You need to buy a 3 pin (indicators) and a 2 pin (hazards) electronic flasher units. These won't break the bank and are included in my 15 notes quote above. You need to carefully search for these as some places will charge nearly a tenner for a unit that you can buy for a quid, including postage, from wherever they're made. Incidentally both flasher cans are behind the driver's glovebox lid on the right hand side, the hazard one is square and the indicator one is a round tube, not to be confused with the similar looking switch unit for the alternator

warning light on car models with an I IAC alternator.

Regarding the white lamps, these are a bit hit and miss in that you really need to see them working to check the purity of the light. Otherwise you do what I did and buy a pack of 10 for about 3 quid and take pot luck! The Police and MoT man seem to be quite relaxed about the slight blue tinge but some asses take the micky and put in pure blue lights because they think it's cool. Maybe in a Corsa it is but not in a P6!

You may notice some lamps on offer appear to have clear LEDs on them. Don't be concerned by this, the actual lamp colour is determined by the electronics and will be as stated by the maker. If your indicator plastic is fading then a yellow LED may be preferable to a white one for this application.

Some lamps are sold as CANBUS error free. These have an additional bit in the electronics to allow more current to flow when they operate. This is for modern cars that monitor the current flow for fault indication purposes. They are not necessary in the P6.

Not much help with sources, Ebay and Amazon are your friends. The different bulb bases are all catered for (not found one yet for the dash reading lamp), and make sure you get the correct length and diameters for the festoon (tube shaped) lamps.

If you open up your lamp units and find a mass of corrosion it's your own fault! WD40 or its equivalent is cheap and a quick squirt will prevent a lot of this sort of rubbish! My units are doused in waxoyl on the bits you can't see and WD40 where you can see!

Headlamp bulbs at present are available in LED form but I've not tried them yet. If you have original sealed beam units with their candle like output then I'd upgrade to a set of Halogens, not a bank busting job. The reflector and lens in a headlamp is designed to have the bulb filament in a very specific location for maximum output and optimum beam pattern, I don't think the designers of the LED headlamp units take this into account judging by the number of different styles that are available. At present I'd say stick with conventional headlamps but that will almost certainly change soon.

Steve Wyles