

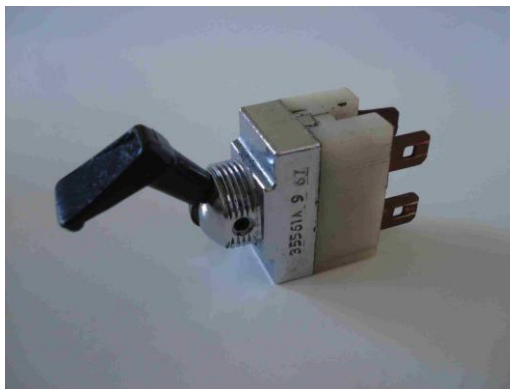
## SLUGGISH OVERDRIVE

I recently came across an MGB overdrive which was slow to engage, and in some cases wouldn't engage at all until the car had warmed up.

I suspected either a weak solenoid, wear in the O rings in the plunger, or a poor electrical connection somewhere. The solenoid and O rings were replaced, but this gave no improvement. I then swapped the overdrive switch on the dashboard with one from another MGB and suddenly the overdrive worked perfectly.

One option was to buy a new switch, but I took the original switch and squirted some electrical contact cleaning spray through any openings in the switch and switched it on and off several times to help clean the contacts. When this original switch was replaced in the car the overdrive again worked perfectly, engaging without the delay which had previously been present. Presumably, gunge had built up inside the switch over its lifetime, and this was slowing down the 'over centre' pivoted spring which drives the contacts inside the switch.

The moral of this story is: 'always try the simple solution first'. An obvious thing to do, but one I suspect we are all guilty of not doing sometimes!



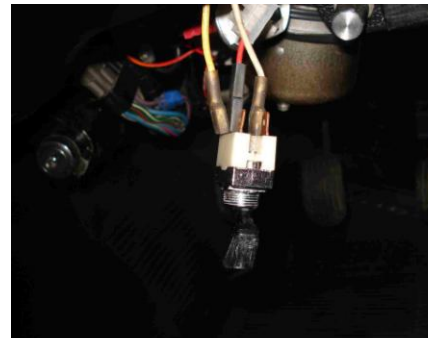
Overdrive switch (left) and electrical contact cleaner (right)



On the subject of overdrive switches, I found that I often forgot that I'd still got the overdrive switched on after changing down a gear, leading to sluggish acceleration when changing back up from second gear to overdrive third (instead of normal third gear). There are some complicated solutions to this, involving tricky electronics that automatically trip out the overdrive when changing down to second gear, but I went for a simpler solution:

Since the dash panel light dimmer control on my MGB between the rev counter and the speedo was worse than useless (with the panel lights being dim even with it on maximum) I decided to remove it. I then wired a 12volt light in its place which is

linked to the overdrive switch (see photos), so that this lights up when the overdrive is engaged. I still sometimes forget to switch off the overdrive, but not as often!



Green 'overdrive on' light

Overdrive switch  
Connection  
(lead)

Finally, I replaced the instrument light bulbs with LEDs and that made a big improvement to the level of instrument lighting, although they are still not bright enough to need the dimmer switch re-installing.

Kevin Prosser