

### The Lucas PLC 2 Switch

The Lucas PLC switches fitted to early T-Types were quite robust, and all are of similar construction. The parts which get damaged are: the lock barrel, the switch knob and the bezel. To change the lock barrel (difficult to find now), the nut in the centre of the back of the case must be removed. To replace the knob, or bezel the switch must be disassembled.

To start disassembly, it is necessary to remove the nut soldered to the threaded spigot which is part of the lock barrel. This nut is located between the two centre terminals on the rear of the switch case. I used a gas soldering iron to heat until the solder melted and then sucked away the solder with a solder sucker. Sufficient solder can be removed this way to enable the nut to be unthreaded. Inserting the key will enable the lock barrel to be withdrawn.

At this stage the switch is being held together by its bezel. A twist of the bezel to line up with the release grooves in the casing should result in a handful of springs, washers and contacts. There are two springs inside and so controlled release of the bezel is necessary. Take a note of the order in which the switch comes apart as some time may elapse before the bezel is restored. (See photo 1).



**Photo 1 – Take care in disassembling the switch!**

The components were dirty with hard deposits of old Lucas grease, I cleaned all this with isopropyl alcohol, and had the bezel re-chromed.

The bezel will need painting and lettering. To do this, mask the edges and carefully take the shine off the centre lettered area using fine wet and dry paper. Spray with a thin coat of primer and a thin coat of satin black and leave to dry. With a fine brush, fill the grooves of the lettering with white emulsion paint and remove the surplus with damp lint free cotton material stretched over a finger. This will remove some paint from the lettering grooves. Leave to dry, fill these areas again as before until the lettering is complete.

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Make two clips to fit into the grooves on opposite sides of the switch case to hold the SRBP washer with the centre cut-out and contact ring. One, 5/8-inch-wide for the groove adjacent to a grub screw socket and one 3/4 inch wide for the other, I used welding wire. Now to the tricky part: how to fit together.

1/. First orientate the bezel so that its lugs fit the grooves in the case, because of the position of the lugs this can only be done in one position. Mark both with sliver of tape for locating later. Note that the lock barrel has a flat section at the thread end, this means that it only inserts correctly in one position. Note the position of the moulded projection in the centre of the switch case as viewed looking into the switch for later location of the lock barrel tube. Use tape to mark this.

2/. Place the knob into the bezel then put on the circlip cover dished side out, then the circlip, followed by the large plain SRBP washer then the large spring, with small end against the washer.

3/. Place the small insulation backed ignition contact ring into the case with contacts in location. Place its dished metal cover on top, dished side inwards. This metal cover has two cut away parts at its edge, the larger one should be against the projection moulded into the case close to its centre, Now ensure that the flat on the inside of the ignition contact ring lines up with the flat on its cover – it could be 90 degrees out. Follow this with the small spring, small end out. The small SRBF washer is balanced on top.

4/. Place a ballpoint pen through the centre of this assembly and slide the Mazak lock body cover over the pen. The lock body cover has cut away parts on its inside end, with fingers either side. One side is deeper than the other which should line up with the small moulded projection near the centre of the case. The two fingers should fit into the slots in the back of the casing. It should not rock when pressed fully in, it is essential to get this orientation correct. Remove the pen. Look into the centre of the lock barrel holder and ensure that the flats on the inside of the ignition contact ring and its cover still line up. The cover can be moved with a small screwdriver.

5/. Dab some lubricant on the contacts in the case. (I used Servisol Switch Lubricant). Place the large contact ring into the case followed by the large SRBP washer with cut outs. Rotate both clockwise so that they stop at the projection on the inside of the case, check that the centre cut-outs line up.

6/. Fit the two wire clips in the grooves moulded into the sides of the switch case to retain the plain washer and large contact ring in position when pressed fully in. Secure the clips around the outside of the case with a broad elastic band (*see Photo 2*).



**Photo 2 – Secure the clips around the outside of the case with a broad elastic band.**

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Note from photo 2 that the cut out in the centre of the SRBP ring at 9 o'clock is smaller than the other three and the projections at 2 and 5 o'clock are the same width but narrower than those opposite. This means that the knob will only fit in one position.

7/. Again, ensure that the contact ring and its covering washer are rotated fully clockwise so that the cut away parts line up. With the large spring and the large SRBP washer on the inside of the switch knob, place the assembly into the switch case locating the narrow slots on the switch knob with the ones on the large contact ring and washer. There is only one position where the knob will fit.

The tape marks for the bezel location should be coincident and the knob should locate in the grooves when in the 'Lamps Side' position. Ease together until the bezel is firmly home and rotate it anticlockwise (viewed from the knob) until the bezel stop is reached. Remove the two clips. The knob will now be in the 'Lamps Head' position, check that the four knob positions can be achieved.

8/. Should things not work out at this stage, break for coffee and start again.

9/. Check that the flat on the ignition contacts ring are in line with that of its cover as in 6/. Insert the key in the lock barrel. Line up the flat near the end of the barrel with those of the ignition ring and its cover and insert the barrel into its housing. Slight wiggling might be necessary to achieve this. Screw on the nut (6BA) it can be soldered or locked with another nut.

With luck the lock can be rotated to complete the ignition circuit.

**Bob Butson**

October 2011

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## M.G. TC & TD Lucas PLC 5 & 6 Alternate Reassembly Method

**Note:** It's advisable to read these instructions completely before you begin disassembly. All the parts are identified in the photograph & legend below. Check to ensure that the two tabs on the Mazak lock body cover 5(b) aren't broken. Be very careful, as these two tabs are unbelievably fragile! If the tabs are at all bent over at the back of the switch, it may be possible to very gently straighten them just enough to remove the cover. Great care must be used here! With one tab broken it can still be used but if both tabs are broken, unless the lock body cover is modified, the switch is toast! A soldering iron and a 6 BA spanner are the only tools required.

Prior to assembly ensure you have noted the OFF position on the body of the switch. The first F in OFF coincides perfectly with the projection in the body beside the single grub screw near the top of the switch. If using a decal, it is necessary to complete this step before fitting the decal to ensure it is located correctly. Temporarily refitting just the face plate into its indents will ensure the decal is in the correct position. The decal supplied by "From The Frame Up" is a good reproduction of the original lettering however the artwork is fragile & the white lettering rubs off all too easily. I found it prudent to protect the lettering by spraying a coat of clear lacquer over the decal before applying it. Carefully examine the 3 tabs on the bezel face plate (12) as these are often damaged by PO's who had no idea that the bezel simply untwists!

The phenolic insulator disc (10) with the four ears (not illustrated) may or may not be fitted. Later models saw this disc relocated to the small end of the large spring. Do not omit this insulator or smoke will be released! To assist in reassembly of an earlier switch such as the PLC2 it is suggested that the phenolic disc (10) with the 4 ears be replaced with the later disc (10a) & relocated. These insulating discs can be easily made from plastic ice cream containers.

The photograph and legend follow.....



## LEGEND

1	Switch Contact Bridge or Ignition Contact Ring
1(a)	Contact Ring Insulator (Note this is glued onto the contact ring)
1(b)	Small Insulator
2	Metal Contact Cover
3	Small spring
4	Cylinder Extension or bottom half of the Lock Barrel
4(a)	Brass spring-loaded Pin & Cap
5	Cylinder or Barrel (MRN series TC & early TD only. FA series later TD)
5(b)	Hollow Lock Barrel or Mazak Lock Body Cover
8	Brass Contact Plate
10(a)	Large Insulator
12	Bezel or Face Plate (Note the bezel with the window is incorrect for T Types)
13	Knob or lever (Note horizontal black lever only. The 45-degree lever is incorrect)
14	U shaped Retainer
15	Keeper
17	Washer & 6 BA Nut (Note this has a 4 BA thread!)

**(A)** Examination of the (4) & (5) assembly will reveal a small brass button (4a) protruding from the lower part of the cylinder lock barrel (5) into a corresponding hole in the bottom half of the lock barrel (4). Depress the brass button (4a) to release the cylinder lock barrel (5) from the bottom half (4). Be careful not to lose the spring & brass pin (4a) as this is very easily done. Apply a little Vaseline internally to (4), (4a) & (5) as an aid to later reassembly.

**(B)** To reassemble the switch, first start with the key switch contact bridge, also known as the ignition contact ring (1). This is a small circular brass bridge with its arc shaped projections facing the bottom of the switch & with its axis in the one o'clock / seven o'clock position, when viewed from the front. Two insulated washers (1a) & (1b) then sit on top of it. Carefully place this assembly into the recess in the body, followed by the metal cover (2) with its projections also facing the bottom of the switch, then fit the small spring (3) large end first. Maintaining alignment, place the bottom half of the lock barrel (4), also known as the cylinder extension, into the body ensuring that the brass button recess is at 7 o'clock. Fit the fibroid fish paper & then secure it with a washer & nut (17) ensuring that it is not overtightened. This nut requires a 6BA spanner but has a 4BA thread! I made a tiny spanner from a small piece of 1/8" flat mild steel & an angle grinder. Next position the hollow lock barrel (5b), also known as the Mazak lock body cover, over the cylinder extension (4). It is essential that the deep cut out in the hollow lock barrel (5b) fits over the central moulded stop in the body (7) & ensure that it doesn't rock. Don't bend the tabs on the lock body cover as this is unnecessary & will render the switch inoperable if they were both to break!

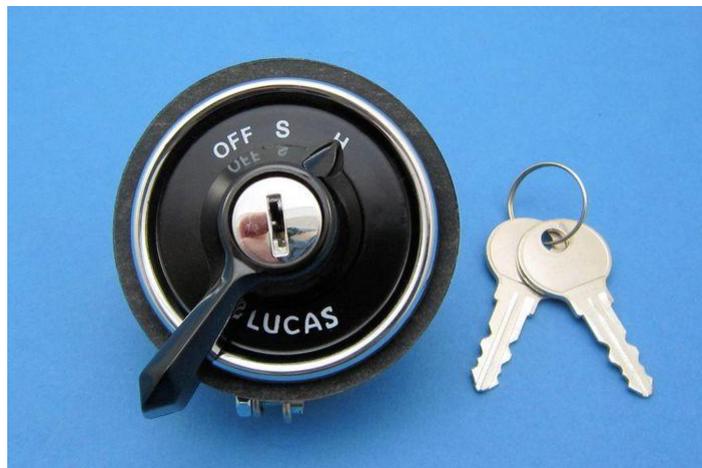
**(C)** Assemble the bezel face plate (12), the knob (13) and then the U-shaped knob retainer (14). The cupped shaped keeper (15) slips over & secures the retainer (14). Note that the retainer (14) should be fitted first. The keeper (15) will have its convex side facing the back of the switch. On some switches I've dismantled, the positions of the keeper & retainer are reversed, which seems to have no effect on the operation. Next fit the phenolic insulator disc (10a) or a suitable replacement (See note). If a decal is used it must also be applied before (12), (13), (14) & (15) are assembled. The large spring should now be compressed & held with two thin wire twist ties opposite each other. I used multi strand copper household wiring however MIG wire can also be used. Place it in position, with the small end closest to the bezel (12). Next place the brass contact plate (8) over the 4 projections on the back of the knob (13) ensuring that the bumps on the plate (8) are facing you. Line them up with the corresponding 4 cut-outs in the knob (13). It will be noted these projections & cut-outs are different sizes & they will only fit together in one position. The assembled face plate is now complete. *This method of assembly with both springs compressed is much simpler than the 2 other methods I'm aware of & ensures that the mating of the two halves is straightforward.*

**(D)** When offering the assembled face plate (12) to the switch body make sure the contact plate cut-out (9) engages with & is centred on the moulded stop in the body. This is what provides the stop for

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the 3-position lighting switch and prevents it from going too far clockwise or counter clockwise. Ensuring that the wire tails protrude from the slits in the body, gently press the two halves together. There is only one way the 3 tabs on the face plate bezel (12) will line up with the 3 notches in the rim of the switch body. *Check to ensure the lettering on the bezel face plate (12) is properly aligned with the body of the switch. As noted above the OFF position should be observed on the switch body prior to disassembly.* Take care not to rub off any of the decal lettering during reassembly. *See the note on using clear lacquer.*

**(E)** With the two halves of the whole assembly together so the 3 tabs have engaged with their notches, ensure that the face plate (12) is fully home. While maintaining slight, even pressure give the face a ½” counter clockwise twist so that the three bezel tabs now come to rest in their respective indents. *It may be necessary to apply a little Vaseline to the lip as an aid to rotation.* Place the key into the cylinder lock barrel (5) & insert the barrel into the switch *ensuring that the letters are on the right & the numbers are on the left.* Once engaged remove the key & the cylinder should remain. Gently untwist & pull on one leg of each of the two ties to remove them. This will release the tension on the large spring. Check the switch operation mechanically then secure the nut (17) with two 4 BA brass hex nuts, the second acting as a lock nut. *4 BA nuts with 6 BA bodies aren't available & the use of solder just makes subsequent disassembly much more difficult than it needs be. Ensure that the nuts are not too tight.* It is essential that some insulating material such as fibroid fish paper electrical insulation (199-9620 from Element 14) be fitted under the nut to ensure that the nut & ignition terminal post are insulated from each other. Finally test the switch with an ohmmeter before installation.



PLC 5 switch



## Repairing early PLC Switch types (e.g. PLC2)

(With acknowledgements to the wartime issue of "Automobile Electricity" 1940).  
Thanks to Kevin Wissett for sourcing this important article. (Dorset A7C)

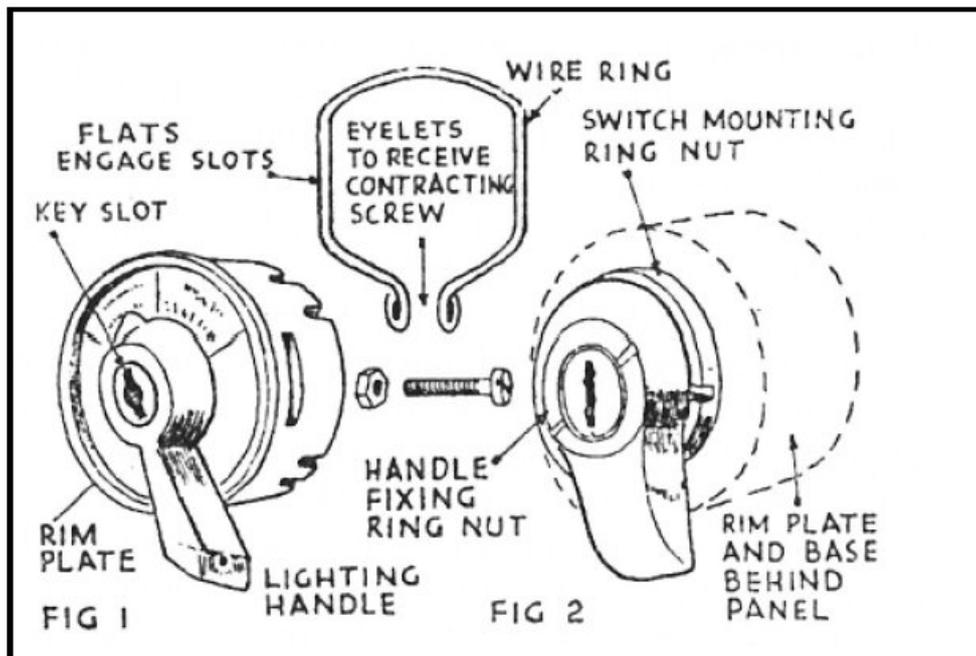
The breakdown of a PLC panel switch may be due to several possible causes, and when no replacement is immediately available, means must be sought of making a serviceable repair.

It is often possible to utilise parts of a replacement of another type when they can be interchanged, but a close comparison and inspection to ascertain the full extent of faults is first necessary.

External design varies according to type. One of the commonest types comprises a cylindrical moulded body with metal front and rim, the switch being held in position by a spring clip with eyeleted ends secured by a screw and nut.

This encircles the back of the switch body after the latter has been fitted in the panel from the front, and two flat sides of the clip engage grooves in the switch base so that the clip exerts pressure to hold the switch firmly against the panel (Fig. 1 below).

In another design, the moulded handle can be removed from the front when a slotted ring nut has been unscrewed. Beneath the handle a larger ring nut secures the switch in position. Projections on the handle engage slots formed in the metal rotor sleeve. In each of these designs the key-operated ignition switch is concentric with the lighting control handle. Where a regulator box is fitted, the normal F1 and F2 field terminals are not used and may be blank studs, but the D terminal is sometimes used as a junction point to the warning light. **Fig. 2** outlines this type of mounting.



### Testing for Defects

With the switch removed from the panel and wires uncoupled, the nature of the defect can be ascertained by simple tests. Both ignition key and lighting control action should be snappy and

decisive. Excessive stiffness or slackness indicates lack of lubrication on stud surfaces or weak springs respectively.

With the ignition and lighting switch OFF, use a multi-meter **set to OHMS on its highest range** and check there is no continuity indicated when checking between each and every terminal.

(except if your switch has two terminals marked A these should read 0 ohms (<1) as they are connected internally).

In the case of a “three-rate” switch, terminals D, F1 and F2 should be all mutually insulated in "Low" position, D and F1 should be bridged by the switch rotor contacts - **indicated by the multi-meter reading 'Inf' (analogue meter), or whatever your multi-meter reads with its probes not touching/disconnected** - in "High" and "Side" positions, and D and F2 should be similarly bridged in "Head" position.

Lighting combinations are checked in the same way, the prods being applied to A and T to give a multi-meter reading in "Side" position, and to A, T and H in the "Head" position.

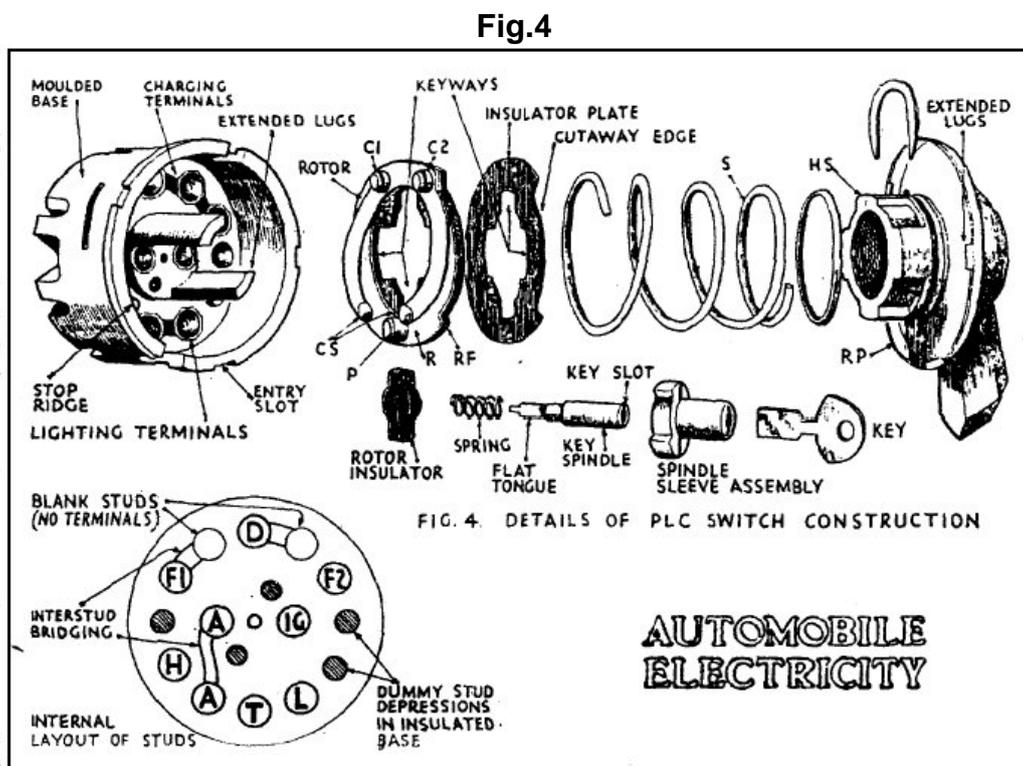
With the ignition switch on, the centre terminal A and IG should be bridged.

However, your switch may have some, all or more terminals and you will need to work out which terminals should be connected together in each switch position and check with your multi-meter the correct operation of the switch in each position.

Dismantling the moulded base from the rim plate assembly for internal inspection in case of faulty action or bridging, is achieved by lifting the locking tabs from their slots and rotating the rim plate until the three locating lugs are opposite the open slots, when spring pressure will force rim and base apart. Care is necessary to avoid loss of spring, ignition key spindle, tube, spring or rotor.

Fig. 4 shows the components in “exploded” order.

The moulded base should first be examined, the following points receiving special attention.



The three charging terminals form concave studs inside the base, these having two intermediate studs with no terminals. It should be noted that D is bridged to its right-hand neighbour - viewed from inside, as also is F1. It will also be seen that terminal A is internally bridged to central A terminal ignition switch stud. These bridging connections need checking as a break or bad connection in either of the charging bridges causes low output (Summer or Low rate only) in "Side" position when High rate (Winter) should obtain. A broken A terminal bridge will affect ignition feed and any circuit including it, as when ammeter feed is connected to central A and auxiliary or cut-out lead is wired to lighting A. When wiring up, it is best to connect all A wires to lighting A, leaving central A unconnected, when the bridge carries ignition current only.

### ***Dummy Contacts***

Between the two groups of studs are "dummies" - two concave indents in the moulding at one side. These receive rotor contact pads in off position and must be clear of metallic tracking or dust likely to cause leakage. The stop ridge, controlling the limit of rotor travel should be inspected, and the two extended lugs which carry the ignition sleeve checked for fracture - a likely occurrence when the switch has been strained or forced.

### ***The rotor and insulator plate***

The lighting section comprises a brass ring R secured to the insulated rotor frame RF surmounted by a C spring with end pads CS standing clear and embracing a fixed rivet stud or pad P, the three forming a group spaced to correspond with stud positions in the base.

Directly opposite are two other fixed studs C1, C2, acting as assembly rivets but insulated by collars from the brass ring and C spring. They are spaced two base studs apart and are bridged together by a strip at the front of the rotor frame.

Check contacts by applying prods to the two charging studs C1 and C2, when the test lamp should light, and check insulation with prods on C1 and P (no light). A cutaway sector at the edge of the rotor frame allows rotation over the stop ridge extending to four successive stud positions. Four wide "key ways" in the rotor frame engage keys on the moulded handle sleeve HS - allowing end freedom for spring pressure on rotor. Clean thoroughly and check spring tension and wear of pads. Insulator plate IP keeps spring S clear of stud rivets and bridge strip. The spring is located on the handle sleeve by a collar and the assembly is held in the rim plate RP by a circlip engaging a slot.

The switch illustrated has a flat ignition key. If a Yale lock barrel and key is fitted this must be dismantled before the switch is opened by taking off the spindle nuts and washers located on spindle end between ignition terminals, when the barrel can be withdrawn complete, leaving ignition rotor in place. In the design sketched the rotor insulator carries a contact plate located by lugs engaging slots and having two punched-out dimples which register with the two ignition studs. The rotor is held in contact by a compression spring bearing against a shoulder on the key spindle.

The flat tongue at the end of the key spindle engages a slot in the rotor insulator, and the whole is assembled in the order indicated inside the spindle sleeve. The outer end of the latter is closed except for a slot through which the key is inserted into the slot at the end of the spindle. The key can only enter when both slots coincide. Damage to the sleeve slot is caused by attempts to force the switch without the proper key.

### ***Faulty Ignition***

Faulty ignition switch action is sometimes caused by shearing of the tongue slot in the rotor so that the spindle does not rotate it sufficiently. A new or replacement rotor must be fitted unless the operator is quick and handy at small work, in which case a steel plate, slotted to fit the tongue, and

secured by 1/16 in. pins, can be located between rotor and spring. With the necessary small tools and material, the job can be done in half an hour.

When all parts are cleaned and wearing surfaces lightly coated with Vaseline, the switch can be assembled. The spring pads CS should be urged out to ensure sound contact, and the stud faces polished clean. A film of lubricant should be applied to the handle sleeve keys and a spot of oil between collar and rim plate will ensure free action. The ignition key spindle should be lubricated before assembly in the sleeve and the tongue must be a smooth easy fit in the rotor slot. If any of the internal interstud bridges are doubtful these should be re-soldered. If there is any difficulty in making a neat job on the inside of the moulding a better way is to solder short leads to each of the hollow rivet heads securing the blank stud and to bring these leads across to the terminals to which each stud is bridged. The same can be done in connecting externally the two A terminals.

Inspection of the dismantled switch will make the action quite clear. In Low or Summer position, the three lighting pads, P and CS, occupy the studs L and the two adjacent dummies, while charging pads C1 and C2 occupy the left-hand dummy and the blank stud bridged to F1.

In High position, C1 and C2 connect F1 and D, while CS and P lie on T, L and the lower right-hand dummy. Side position brings CS and P on to A, T and L, while C1 and C2 join the two blank studs - which are virtual extensions of F1 and D. Head position causes H, A and T to be bridged by CS and P, while C1 and C2 lie on studs D and F2. This will explain the interlocking combinations described earlier in this article, and emphasises the importance of good insulation between the charging pads C1 and C2, and the lighting pads CS and P.

Terminal L (Low) is very seldom used, being originally incorporated for three lamp lighting sets where head/-side lamps on the wings carried bulbs with dim and bright filaments, the former acting as side lamps. Terminal L is alive in side position only and cannot be used for normal side lamp feed as it is dead in Head position. This terminal is used on motor cycle sets where it feeds the pilot bulb in the headlamp. Another application is on cars having a separate headlamp switch, wired from terminal L, while a pass light is wired from terminal H. In this case, position of normal "Side" becomes Sides, Rear and Headlamp, while position "Head" becomes Sides, Rear and Pass light.

### ***Assembling the Switch***

Assembly of the switch is expedited by first fixing the ignition parts in place, holding these in by means of a long screwdriver, while the main rotor, insulator spring and handle sleeve are got into position and the bayonet mounting of the rim plate secured. The rotor and insulator plate should be fitted with the cutaway edge engaging the stop ridge at limit of the left--hand rotation while the handle is set to "Low". The keys and keyways will then engage without trouble, and the rim can be rotated to bring the extended lugs opposite entry slots in the base edge.

When a faulty switch occurs on a vehicle urgently wanted, a good temporary substitute comprises a standard PLC fitted with strap fixing for mounting on steering column - like a radio control dial - short cables being taken from terminals and jointed to wires removed from the vehicle switch. The latter can then be repaired at leisure, or replaced, while the vehicle can be operated normally with the service switch.

This article was originally reproduced in Seven Focus Dec 2009 pp16-19.

## Repairing early Lucas PLC Ignition Switch types

The terminology for parts is based on Fig 4 in [Repairing a PLC Switch](#) which should be referred to first (see above).

Following on from the excellent first article on the humble PLC (Spade Key) Ignition Switch, which was originally published about 10 years after the introduction of the PLC, remember that now, some 80 years later, there is wear, tear, neglect and deterioration to be considered too.



There are a couple of items that normally lead to failure, and **Photo 1** shows a typical example I get to repair:



The rotor insulator - **Photo 2** - develops a round hole 'Z#3' in the Tufnol rotor insulator holder for the small brass contact plate shown at the bottom of **Photo 3**.



One, or both the extended lugs are broken off by enthusiastic key/screwdriver turning.....**Photo 4**.

There is a third one, "It wasn't me ...", repairs that go wrong.

The first article states that a new rotor insulator can be fitted, or if you are adept at fine work, then a steel plate can be pinned to the rotor insulator to reinstate the slot – this seems a good recipe for a short circuit as the contact plate brass tags may/will touch this piece of steel and thus a short circuit will occur somehow.

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The rotor insulator is easy to replace with a piece of 2mm thick Tufnol cut and shaped to size, together with a slot to hold the flat tongue – there is also a brass pressing, the contact plate, clipped to the rotor insulator, this does the actual On/Off bit (*as photo 3*).



The extended lugs are more of a problem, they BOTH have to be there to hold the spindle sleeve as shown in *Photo 5*, I have resorted to drilling a 0.9mm dia. hole down through the moulded base in approx. the centre of the remains of the extended lug, super-gluing the broken off extended lug back on, and then turning the whole lot over, drilling the hole up into the extended lugs and then inserting a piece of 0.9mm dia. brass wire in the moulded base and up into the extended lug, coated with glue.

This has held good on three moulded bases that I have repaired so far – there's a limited supply of undamaged PLC's. The biggest problem for refurbished PLC's is the pressed metal spindle sleeve – this has a slot for the key in the top, invariably the key hole is now round from frequent use of screwdrivers etc to turn the ignition on and off (I now resort to silver soldering a cover over this area and then opening up a slot for the key) when the key is turned to the 'On' position, the rotor insulator spring holds the spade key tight up behind the spindle sleeve top.

Although the first article implies the Spade and Yale lock barrels are similar, the rotor insulator in the Yale version is completely different, there are no extended lugs, they in fact are part of the spindle sleeve extended down and through the moulded base.

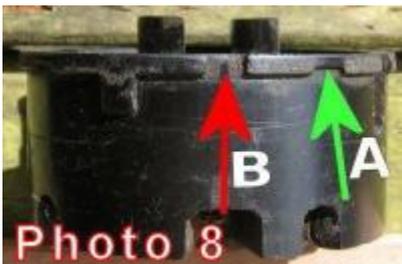
What is not made clear in the first article is that the slots in the rotor and insulator plate are asymmetric and can only be fitted over the top switch handle moulding (HS in the diagram) one way, it is this alignment of parts that seems to catch most people out, and in trying to get it together, break one of the extended lugs.



*Photo 6.* The face plate (RP in the diagram) has three lugs.



**Photo 7** - these three lugs are placed asymmetrically around the rim, they can only be fitted correctly to the moulded base one way, there are three openings in the moulded base rim (**photo 8 - arrowed B**) for these face plate lugs to be pushed down through, the face plate has to be turned anti-clockwise for about ½” were the lugs should find a ‘safe’ dip (**photo 8 - arrowed A**) to stop the face plate turning.



**Photo 8** – all held steady by the big strong spring inside the switch (S in the diagram). Of course, when dismantling you must push the faceplate towards the base and then turn clockwise – **DON'T** use a screw driver to nip the lugs outwards, they may break off and then you'll want another faceplate, or even the moulded base side wall may break – I haven't got any spares.

Note - there are some PLC's of the spade type around that do not have the link strap between the 'A' and unmarked centre terminal (The other centre terminal is 'IG'), You WILL need to connect these two together outwith the switch for normal Austin Seven use.

This article, written by Sandy Croall, originally appeared in CA7C Seven Focus in Sept 2010 pp xxx.