

# PROBLEM

## SOLVED

**QI:** I am fairly new to the Classic Car scene and have recently purchase a lovely MGB GT which came with overdrive fitted. Just recently, when switching on the overdrive it either takes a while before it engages or does not engage at all. I would not call myself a mechanic but is there anything I can do or should I entrust the repair to a specialist garage. I do most of the simple routine servicing of the car myself and once the override is repaired is there any routine servicing that should be carried out on the unit that I could do as the manual seems vague about this?

**Answer:** Generally, overdrive faults are either electrical or serious! But the first thing to check is the oil level in the gearbox since this also serves the overdrive. Lack of oil could cause the symptoms detailed; however, it could and perhaps is more likely to be electrical. On the MGB gearbox fitted with the overdrive there is a switch on the left-hand side of the remote which acts as a cut out so that the overdrive can only be operated in third or fourth gear. The action of selecting either of these gears with the gear lever to the right of the quadrant pushes the switch into contact and allows electric current to flow through to the solenoid thereby activating the overdrive. The mechanism is slightly crude and the continual action whenever third or fourth is selected of the switch being pushed in wears the operating faces. The switch is screwed into position on a taper thread with spacer washers under the head. The first thing is to verify that this is the fault. With the ignition on, select fourth and then with the overdrive selected verify whether you have current on the lead to the solenoid. If not using your assistant (fair or otherwise), pull the gearlever towards the driver (on a right-hand drive car). It's most probable that the current will then flow. It is possible to remove and adjust the packings with the gearbox in situ by dropping the gearbox crossmember and pushing the box across to one side. Access is then possible to the switch. It's certainly easier with the car on a ramp, but it is possible from underneath at ground level.

As for maintenance, the normal oil change of the gearbox should include a filter change. This is under the flat plate on the underside of the overdrive. You will need a new gasket which includes the filter.

It's worth noting that on the later V8 cars the overdrive facility on third was deleted and the gear linkage modified. It is possible that if the gearbox has been changed one of these modified units may have been fitted, hence my suggestion above to check in fourth gear!

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Questions kindly answered  
by the technical experts at  
Brown and Gammons.  
[www.ukmgparts.com](http://www.ukmgparts.com)

Please direct any technical queries through MGCC

See also V8NOTE433 on solving overdrive malfunctions.

[www.v8register.net/subpages/V8NOTE433.htm](http://www.v8register.net/subpages/V8NOTE433.htm)