

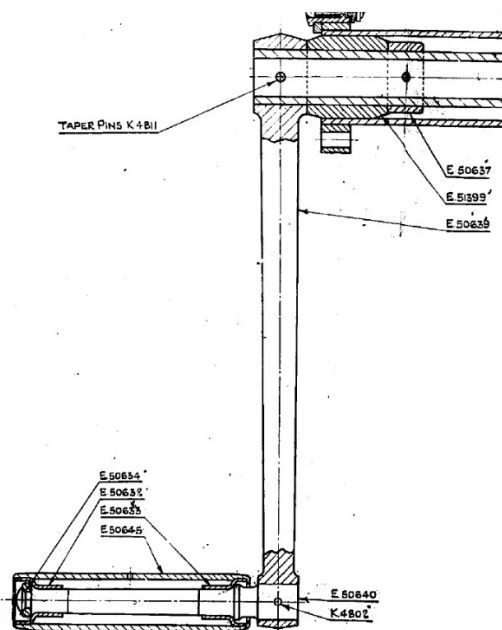
Starter Switch Rocker Arm Repair and Starting Handle Repair

“To lose one starter ... may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose both looks like carelessness”

(With apologies to Oscar Wilde)

Starting Handle Repair

As our pre-war cars get older, we see increased tendency for various components to suddenly and unexpectedly fracture. I suppose this is a result of years of accumulated stresses and, perhaps, repairs. Earlier this year I turned over the engine with the starting handle, and it promptly snapped after 84 years of faithful service (it is the original numbered handle). So I took the pieces to my local welding specialist for a “quick repair”, see photograph. After pressing out the taper pin and broken stub, he decided he couldn't effectively weld the spindle together. Instead he made a new spindle. As can be seen from the drawing, the spindle has an exceedingly complex cross section for a mere starting handle, typically Roycean, and the shaft has two tapers along its length, so it took much careful machining before he got it exactly right. Although the brass outer ferrule was good, he had to make a new inner ferrule. Note: the inner and outer ferrules are of different sizes because of the taper. The repair cost a lot of money, but less than buying second-hand: a 20hp starting handle, which appeared to me to be damaged, sold for £192 on eBay recently.



Starting Switch Rocker Arm Repair

A few weeks later, the rocker arm in my starter switch snapped - just before the car was due to perform at a wedding. Thankfully the starting handle had just been repaired, but I managed to avoid the ignominy of stalling the car and having to use it en route. I could not find a supplier of new rocker arms and, being made of cast iron, a second-hand one is hardly a reliable option. Many of us must have fragile old rockers! Off to a different workshop engineer this time. After thinking about it, he brazed a length of pipe through some steel sheet and cut it roughly to the required shape (see photograph). However he did cut accurately the length and bore of the pipe, and the overall length. I took the rough rocker home and carved it into the

final shape by using a 110mm angle grinder, finishing off with some small files. It is important to keep checking as you grind, so that the final shape allows the rocker to properly wiggle up and down within the confined space in the top of the switch. Care is needed but I was surprised how easy it is to finely carve a tiny piece of steel to the exact shape you want with an angle grinder - similar to carving Plasticine with a modelling knife. Warning - angle grind outside the house and wear proper eye protection!



Showing broken rocker arm and roughed out new rocker arm, prior to final shaping

I wonder; how long will the repaired handle, and new rocker arm, last? Another 84 years? So far (2023) they have survived 12 years of rallying and touring.