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DIFFICULTY RATING:

TIME ALLOWED: THREE HOURS

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WARNING LIGHT

THE LITTLE BLUE LIGHT

Michael Shaw restores the main beam indicator light to his Series IIA

WORDS AND PICTURES **MICHAEL SHAW**

A sunny early morning found me driving up into the Blue Ridge Mountains for a club rally in my Series IIA SWB. It started out clear, however just above 2,000ft (610m), I encountered heavy fog from lingering mountain clouds. I turned on my lights so other drivers on the narrow road could better see me, but when I tapped my foot on the dip switch my headlamps went out. I tapped the dip switch again, and the lights did not come back on, so I found a safe place to stop.

I peeled up the driver's side rubber floor mat and followed the wires north from the dip switch. They exited the firewall through a rusted hole which was missing a rubber grommet. Rain must have used the wiring as a water conduit straight down to the dip switch. I checked the spade connectors and the dip switch terminals and found all contacts corroded from the usual leaks due to time spent outside in the rain.

'It was easy for me to clean the dipper switch terminals and spade connectors'

In my compact electrical kit, I carry a gizmo which is like a portable Dremel tool. This battery-operated manicurist's tool lacks torque, but it certainly has plenty of spinning power to scrape and burnish contact points. It was easy for me to clean the dip switch terminals and spade connectors. In about two minutes' time, everything looked shiny and clean, and my headlamps worked again. But mysteriously, the little blue light on my dash remained unlit regardless of tapping the dip switch.

Returning home after the club event, I had a look at the Series II wiring chart. I also referred to a resource I've recently found helpful as a complement to the standard wiring schematic, the Land Rover Maintenance and Upgrades Manual by Richard Hall. The author provides, on page 97, a simple list explaining the wire colours.

The wires leading to the dip switch had been painted over, so I scraped off the red paint. The true wiring colours were as shown as correct per the standard wiring diagram and the Richard Hall book. I next unscrewed the metal dash and confirmed the bulb wiring colours to be correct. A continuity tester proved the switch was broken despite the clean terminals.

I ordered a replacement dip switch from Rovers North in Westford, Vermont and swapped it in.

As hoped, both my low and high beams worked perfectly, and the blue dash indicator light now flashed on and off accordingly. I swapped in an LED bulb behind the blue lens for extra brightness on the dashboard.

To protect the wiring in future, I re-installed a rubber grommet and sealed some additional rainwater entry points where rivets and bolts had gone missing.

And what better reward for all the effort than a little blue light shining brightly from a black metal dash? I'm actually looking forward to the next rainstorm.

Additional info

Rovers North, Westford Vermont
www.roversnorth.com

BITS4LANDYs
www.bits4landys.co.uk

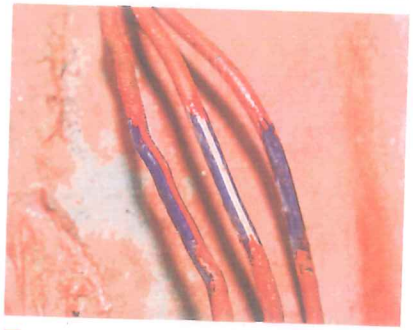
1. Defective dip switch, wires painted over in red

2. A rubber grommet is missing at the wiring hole in the firewall. A source for leaking water

3. A manicurist's tool in my electrical kit (centre). This battery-operated device is great for cleaning electrical contacts

4. Cleaning electrical contacts made easy

5. Elsa (left) arrives safely in the fog



6. After scraping the paint off the wires, true colour codes are revealed: blue-red (L), blue-white (C), solid blue (R)

7. Blue-white wire goes into the main beam indicator bulb (232590). Black wire goes to ground

8. Broken dip switch. Contacts have been cleaned, but internal workings are corroded

9. Shiny new dip switch from Rovers North installed

10. Rubber grommet replaced, wiring affixed with clip, and firewall holes sealed with silicone

11. Standard 2.2w incandescent bulb (L) is replaced by LED light (R) available from Bits4Landys

12. Blue dash indicator light is illuminated with main beams on. LED provides extra brightness