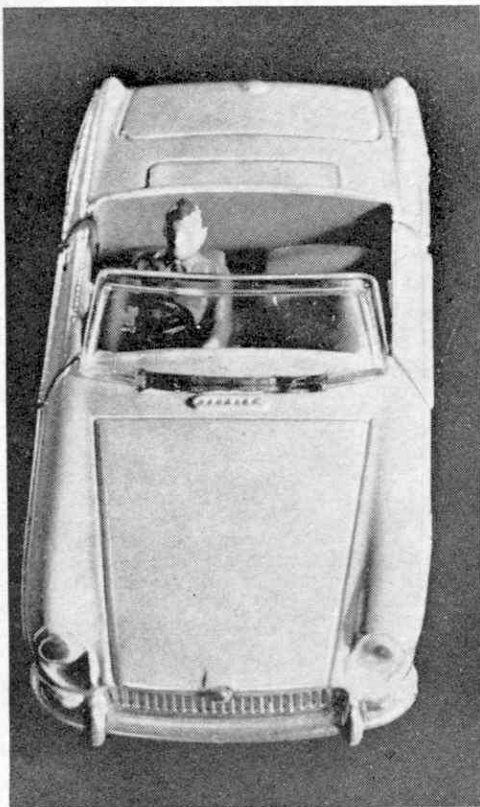


Chris Jelley

from drophead to fastback



SHORTLY after the MGB first appeared on the roads of Britain, a small-scale version of this popular sports car appeared in the range of Dinky Toys models. More recently, the M.G. Car Company introduced the MGB GT, a fastback version of the earlier drophead car. This has not, as yet, been reproduced in miniature form by Meccano, but there is no reason why Dinky Toy collectors should not add a model to their collections. By 'customization', the existing Dinky Toy MGB, No. 133, can be turned into the GT without too much trouble and, in this article, I propose to show you how it can be done.

Changing the basic Dinky Toy into the GT version is not a particularly difficult job, but it does involve the moulding of an entirely new back for the model. The process used is quite simple, but you may need a few attempts at it before obtaining a really good moulding. Materials required are a sheet of opaque Plastikard about 30 thou. thick, a sheet of similar clear plastic, a plastic solvent and a contact adhesive such as Evostik or Bostik 1. Also required are a piece of $\frac{1}{8}$ in. or $\frac{1}{4}$ in. thick plywood about 9 in. by 6 in. in dimension, and a block of hard, close-grained wood such as Parana Pine or Lime, with dimensions of $1\frac{1}{4}$ in. by $1\frac{1}{8}$ in. The length of the wood is not important, but should not be much less than an inch.

The moulding will be done

round a wooden forme, carved to shape from the block of hard wood. Before carving can begin, however, the block should be marked up with pencil so that you know exactly where to cut. Start by measuring the vertical distance between the top of the windscreen on the model and the upper edge of the door. Mark this distance on each vertical side of the wooden block and draw corresponding lines parallel with the top of the block. Now measure the width of the upper edge of the windscreen and transfer the measurement to the top of the block. This measurement will be less than the width of the block, so remember to leave an equal distance at each side. Draw two lines, separated by the upper width of the windscreen, parallel to the sides of the block. These lines are crossed at right-angles by another line, situated $\frac{1}{8}$ in. from the end of the block, which is extended diagonally backwards down the sides of the block until it meets the rearmost ends of the first horizontal lines drawn on the sides.

Having now finished all the necessary guide-lines, carve the approximate shape required, using the modelling knife, then obtain the final shape with the rough file. When completed, the forme must be smoothed to a very fine finish, which is where the smooth file proves useful, but if you don't own a smooth file, fine sandpaper will do. You will see what shape is required incidentally, from any published

photograph of the full-size car.

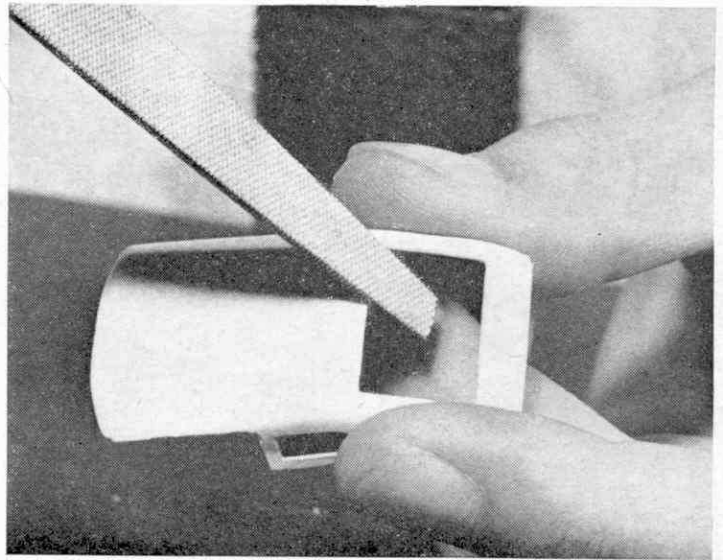
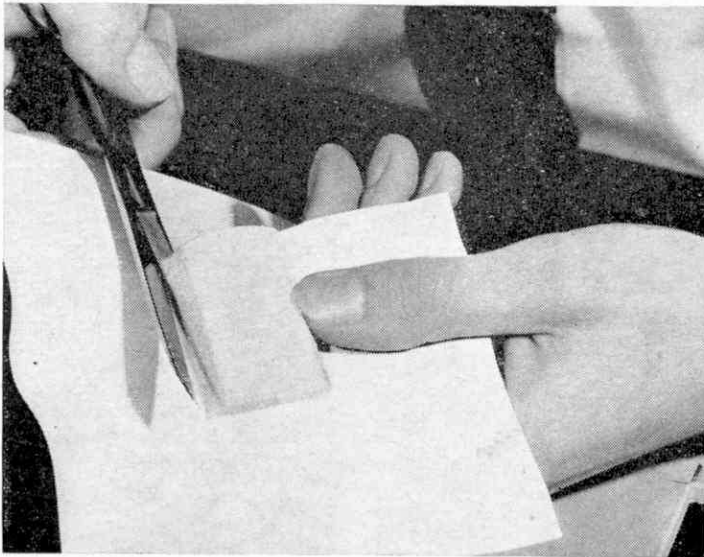
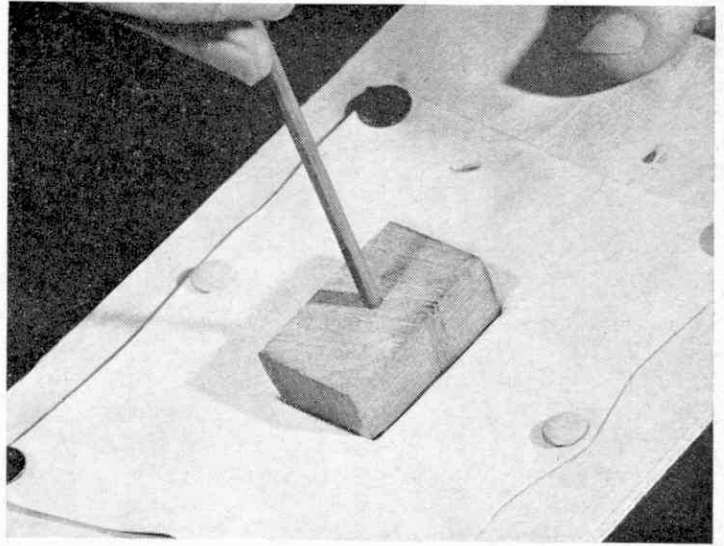
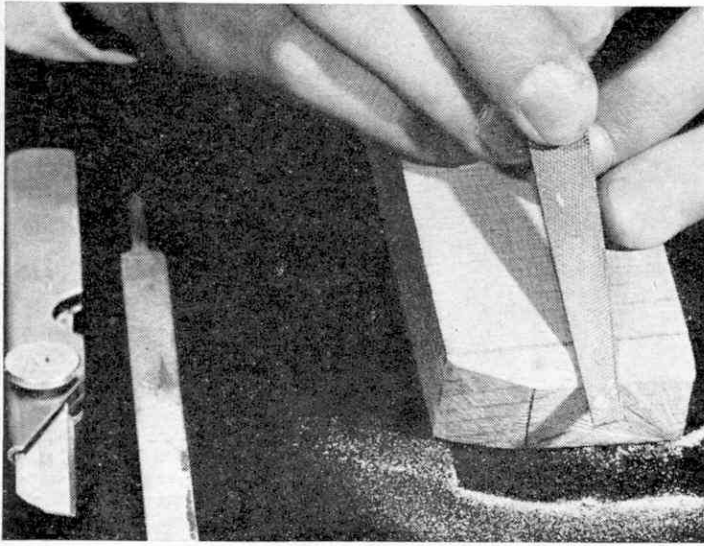
If you started with a rather long block of wood, as I did, it is advisable to saw the forme off the block, leaving perhaps three-quarters of an inch of wood below the actual shaped section of the forme. Drill a hole in the underside of the forme with a $\frac{3}{8}$ in. drill and insert a Meccano Rod or length of dowel. Now, cut a rectangular hole in the centre of the piece of plywood, slightly larger than the plan view of the forme. This can be done by drilling a series of holes in the plywood and by cutting out the wood between the holes with the modelling knife, cleaning up the edges with the rough file. Using the fine file, smooth the insides of the hole and round off all the upper edges.

Moulding can now begin. Cut a piece of Plastikard about 6 in. by 4 in. and fix this over the hole in the plywood with drawing pins. Hold the mounted Plastikard in front of an electric fire until it becomes soft and begins to smoke slightly, then quickly press the forme into the hole, which will draw the Plastikard over the block to give you a well-shaped moulding (we hope!). The Plastikard cools very quickly, so don't waste any time with this part of the operation. Also, I suggest that you wear gloves as the heat encountered during softening of the Plastikard can be fairly uncomfortable. When solid, the moulding can be trimmed to shape with a pair of scissors.

Before the moulding is fixed in position the windows must be cut in it with the modelling knife. Three windows are required, both rearmost side windows and the rear window which takes up almost the whole of the slanting portion of the back. The area normally enclosed by the forward side windows should be removed completely so as to allow the doors on the original Dinky Toy to be opened. Once cut out, the windows should be shaped with the file, after which suitable pieces of clear plastic are shaped and are fixed to the inside of the moulding with plastic solvent to provide "glazing".

At this point it is advisable to paint, in a dark colour, the section at the back of the original model which will lie beneath the moulded fastback. The reason for this will soon become obvious—it is possible to see this section of the model through the rear window of the fastback, when in position, and if allowed to remain light in colour, it looks a little out of place. After the paint has dried, the completed moulding can be mounted in position using the contact adhesive. When the adhesive, in turn, is perfectly dry—and only then—the finished model should be repainted. We recommend any of the popular modellers' enamels such as those marketed by Humbrol.

Following the methods described above, you should be able to turn out a pretty good representation of the MGB GT, but there are alternative ways of



Opposite page: before and after! On the left is Dinky Toy No. 113 MGB. On the right, an MGB GT converted from the original

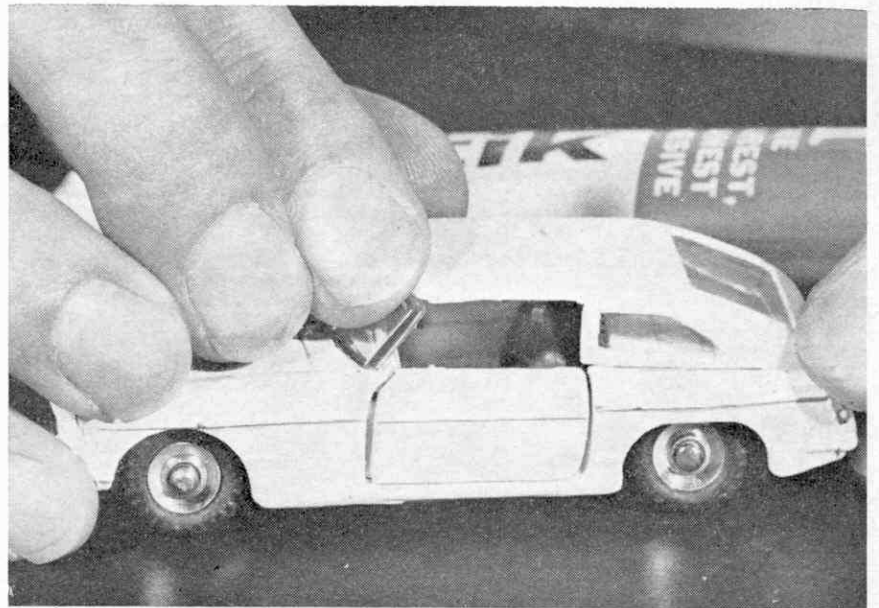
Top left: first step in moulding a completely new back for the model is to produce a wooden forme from a block of close-grained wood. This picture shows the roughly-carved shape being cleaned up with a file

Top right: most difficult part of the job is the actual moulding operation. A sheet of Plastikard is pinned over a rectangular hole in a piece of plywood. The mounted Plastikard is heated and the wooden forme is quickly forced into the hole

Bottom left: when cool the finished moulding is trimmed to shape with a pair of scissors

Bottom right: after windows have been cut in the basic moulding with the modelling knife, a file is used to obtain the correct size and shape

Right: having 'glazed' the windows with clear plastic sheet, the finished moulding is glued into position with a contact adhesive such as Bostik 1 or Evostick



obtaining the same results. By using clear Plastikard or acetate sheet, for example, the need to cut out windows is eliminated. All that need be done, in this case, is to cut pieces of adhesive

tape to the shape of the windows and to stick them in the correct positions on the moulding. The complete moulding can then be painted and, when the adhesive tape is removed, the windows

will be ready-made. Whichever method is used, however, you will find that a good deal of minute trimming and filing will be necessary before the moulding will fit exactly in place, but if

you still find that the moulding will not fit perfectly, even after hours of patient work, don't worry. Any gaps can be filled in with plastic body putty.