

Everyone likes to own a 'different' model—one that's unique to his own collection. But to be really satisfactory, you have to learn a few 'tricks of the trade'. You'll pick up lots of useful tips from these pages, as *Chris Jelley* gets down to work with a saw and file to convert the standard Dinky Toys Routemaster into a 'Front Entrance Model'.

please use the front door

CUSTOMISATION of Dinky Toys, or the modification of standard Dinky Toys models to produce different versions of the originals, was first featured in the 'M.M.' in August this year, when the Aston Martin 'Hardtop' was produced from the D.B.5 Convertible. This proved so popular, that we felt encouraged to publish this month another similar article showing how the Routemaster London Bus, No. 289, can be turned into the front entrance version.

Credit for the original customisation job must go to **Mr. Alistair Gray**, of Glasgow, who kindly supplied me with a model he had altered and provided detailed notes on how to perform the alteration, which is a fairly lengthy but satisfying operation.

Tools required are a backsaw or razor saw (the X-acto one is ideal), a coarse file and, preferably, also a fine Swiss needle file with a flat surface, a rule, a modelling knife, a pair of fine nose pliers or tweezers, a hand brace and a $\frac{1}{16}$ in. drill. Extra materials needed are an opaque plastic sheet (Plastikard) of between 30 thou. and 60 thou. thickness; a sheet of similar clear plastic and a few scraps of thin balsa wood, together with an impact adhesive, such as 'Bostik' or 'Evostik'. A plastic solvent such as Mekpak is also desirable, although not essential. This bonds plastic together very strongly indeed and is quicker to use than ordinary plastic cement. It should be applied with a fine paintbrush.

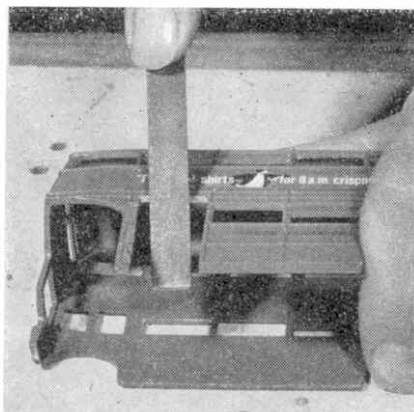
Before any modifications can be made, the bus must be dismantled by levering the small lug at the back of the model

out of its locating hole. Once this has been done the base can be pulled downwards and out, allowing the lower window moulding, the upper seats, and then the upper window moulding to be removed. These should be put in a safe place out of the way whilst alterations are carried out on the body and chassis castings. I advise you to complete the body before moving on to the chassis.

The lower deck side panels, immediately beneath the near side front window, are cut out with the saw, as also is the horizontal window stay above these. The resulting opening is extended upwards approximately $\frac{1}{8}$ in. with the rough file, after which all the edges are

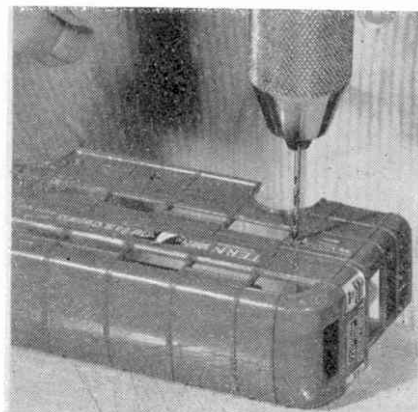
'cleaned up' with the needle file. Also remove the horizontal window stay in the front lower off-side window behind the cab windows, and smooth off the edges with the file.

A completely new window is now cut in the off-side of the body immediately behind the existing rearmost window. This is done by drilling a series of small holes with a $\frac{1}{16}$ in. drill, around the edge of the proposed window. If the holes are close enough together the surplus metal can quite easily be removed by breaking the thread of metal between the holes with a screwdriver and then filing the jagged edges to the final shape. It is advisable to place a block of wood



1

After the model has been dismantled the body panels beneath the nearside lower front window are cut away, the horizontal window stay removed and the opening extended upwards approximately $\frac{1}{8}$ in. with a rough file



2

A new window is cut in the rear offside of the body by drilling a series of small holes in the casting around the edge of the proposed window and breaking out the surplus metal with a screwdriver

behind the proposed window when breaking out the unwanted metal to avoid any danger of damaging the casting. The new window, extending backwards to the curved corner panel, is separated from the existing rear side window by a stay similar in width to the existing stays, i.e. approximately $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch.

At the back of the bus, the left-hand vertical window stay is removed, and the curved portion of the rear entrance below the side route indicator, is filed off. The small nearside panel immediately behind the rear window is filed inwards from the entrance until only a standard-sized stay remains. The resulting space will later form part of the rear nearside window.

Chassis

Basic work on the body casting having now been completed, the chassis castings can be dealt with. Cut away the complete stair unit from the bottom step upwards, leaving the bottom step, which incorporates the rear locating lug. The nearside only of the rear platform is then filed back until it is flush with the vertical pillar at the back of the left-hand rear seat. This pillar is itself sawn off level with the top of the rear seat.

At the front of the casting, the first four seats (two each side), are removed. This may sound a little difficult, but can be done by first sawing off the backs of the two front seats and then filing the remainder down, repeating this with the second two seats.

Rebuilding

Before starting to rebuild the model it is best to cut out from the plastic sheet, the various pieces that will be used in the reconstruction. When doing this it is only necessary to *score* the sheet with the modelling knife, and then break off the resulting pieces. Three pieces of Plastikard are needed, one $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $\frac{1}{2}$ in., another $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $\frac{5}{8}$ in., and the third $\frac{5}{8}$ in. by $\frac{1}{2}$ in. The first two pieces will be used to enclose the rear entrance, while the last is to fill-in the off-side front window to the rear of the driver's cab. In the case of the clear plastic, four pieces are required, the first $1\frac{3}{8}$ in. by $\frac{5}{8}$ in. in size, the second $\frac{7}{8}$ in. by $\frac{3}{8}$ in., the third $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $\frac{1}{2}$ in., and the fourth $\frac{7}{8}$ in. by $\frac{3}{8}$ in. The first will serve as the new front entrance doors, the second as a draught excluding panel immediately inside the front entrance, the third as the new near-side rear window and the fourth as the lower back window. When cutting the plastic pieces it is advisable to make them slightly oversize, so that they can be shaped exactly with the file.

Once the various plastic sections have been cut, the $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $\frac{1}{2}$ in. piece is positioned over the appropriate part of the rear entrance and the outline of the new near-side rear window marked on it. The window is then carefully cut out. This manoeuvre is repeated in the case of the rear window, using the $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $\frac{5}{8}$ in. plastic. The two pieces are then glued



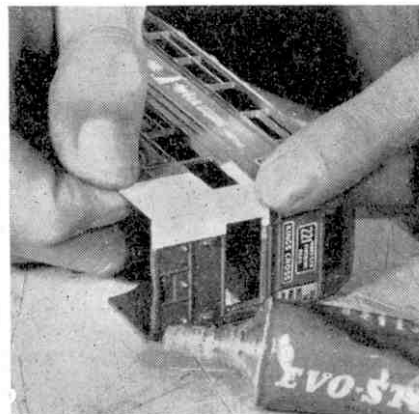
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First step in alteration of the chassis casting is to remove the stair unit from the bottom step upwards. The bottom step must remain as it incorporates the rear locating lug



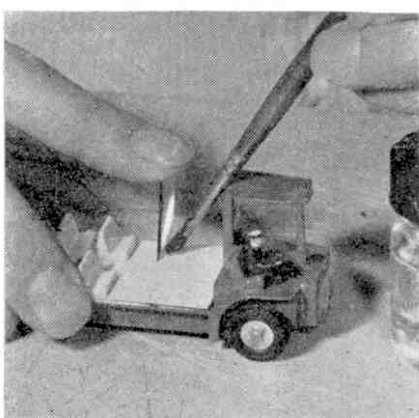
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Once all alterations have been made to the chassis casting, the space previously occupied by the four front seats is covered by a sheet of Plastikard and the rear platform is built-up, with scraps of balsa wood to the level of the bottom step



4

The rear entrance is enclosed by opaque plastic (Plastikard), cut to shape and glued into position using one of the popular impact adhesives, such as Evo-Stik or Bostik 1



6

A sheet of clear plastic $\frac{3}{8}$ in. \times $\frac{3}{8}$ in., is glued into position to represent a draught excluding screen. If available, a plastic solvent should be used for this operation

together at right angles to each other and allowed to dry. While they are drying take the $\frac{5}{8}$ in. by $\frac{1}{2}$ in. piece of plastic and fill in the off-side lower front window behind the cab, using the contact adhesive.

Moving on to the $1\frac{3}{8}$ in. by $\frac{5}{8}$ in. clear plastic; four strips of Sellotape 1 in. long by 2 mm. wide are stuck in position at $\frac{1}{16}$ in. intervals to act as masking tape while the door is painted. The Sellotape is later peeled off, leaving four clear door panels which are edged in black with three vertical black lines, one between each pair of door panels, to represent the panel edges. It is not advisable to paint the door at this stage, but having positioned the Sellotape, the door is fixed in place, again using the contact adhesive.

Turning to the base casting, build up the rear platform with scraps of balsa wood to the level of the bottom step, then overlay the whole platform with a piece of plastic sheet to bring the platform up to the level of the inside floor of the bus. The space left by the four front seats can also be covered by a sheet of plastic $1\frac{3}{8}$ in. by $1\frac{5}{8}$ in. in size. A small piece of plastic, similar in size and shape to the remaining part of the vertical pillar at the back of the left-hand

rear seat, is glued to the back of the right-hand rear seat. Finally, fit rear and new windows made with clear plastic.

Reassembly can now begin after first carefully cutting the back out of the lower window moulding. The panel is positioned so that it will lie immediately behind the front doors when the body is in place. Take this moulding and lower it carefully on to the chassis casting until it rests on the draught excluding screen to which it should be glued. Now fit the upper window and seat mouldings in place, and then rejoin the two castings, leaving off the vertical handrail.

This completes the customisation, but it will almost certainly be necessary to repaint the model. You can, of course, restore the original finish, but my own opinion is that now would be a good time to provide your own colour scheme, as was done by Mr. Gray. You could, for example, design a brand new colour scheme yourself, or perhaps reproduce the livery of your local bus company. Whatever you decide, I recommend the use of Humbrol plastic enamel which is obtainable from most model shops.

Next month I shall again be describing the new additions to the Dinky Toys range.