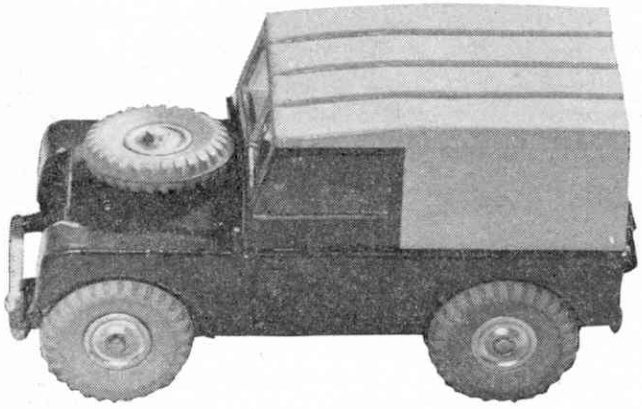
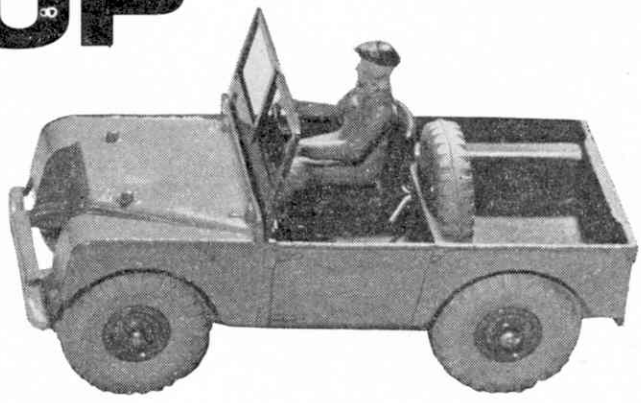
Mike Rickett shows how to make a simple yet effective hard-top for your Dinky Toy Land Rover in

OPERATION COVER UP





OF all the vehicles in the Dinky Toy range that readily lend themselves to customising, the Land Rover (Dinky Toy 340) is probably the easiest to work with. This month I am describing a simple hard-top conversion which can either be glued in position permanently, or just clipped on the model—whichever you prefer.

First of all, however, a little preparatory work must be carried out on the Land Rover itself. This merely involves the removal of the windscreen and repositioning the spare wheel (fixed behind the front seat) to a position over the bonnet. It is best to complete these two operations before beginning the construction of the hard-top itself, so that it can be checked for size against the model at every stage of the construction.

The tools required for this project are usually available to most modellers. They include a vice, modelling knife, razor saw or back saw, flat needle file, hand brace, $\frac{1}{8}$ in. and $\frac{1}{16}$ in. drills, 30 thou. Plastikard (clear and opaque), solvent, pliers, contact adhesive such as Bostik I, rule and steel straight edge.

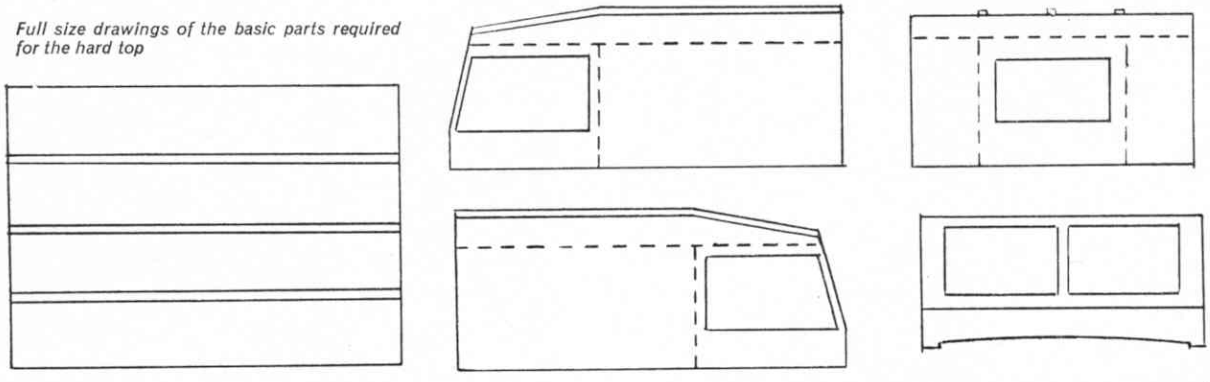
First remove the front windscreen, using for this purpose a small pair of pliers, a needle file, and a $\frac{1}{8}$ in. drill. The windscreen cannot, unfortunately, be taken out until the front wheel and axle retaining plate, immediately underneath the front end of the model, has also been removed, and it will first be necessary to drill out the rivet holding this plate to the body casting. You will find it easier to do this if the needle file is used to file a flat on the rivet, so that a 'pop' mark can be made to help avoid the drill wandering. Using the $\frac{1}{8}$ in. drill, carefully place on the rivet and drill out so that the retaining plate can be lifted off, exposing the front wheel axle which can also be removed.

Underneath the wheel assembly, you will see the lower half of the windscreen plate, bent round in a right angle to connect with the pillar supporting the wheel retaining plate. Taking a pair of pliers, bend the lower end of the windscreen as straight as possible, to allow it to be pulled upwards through the slit in front of the dashboard and discarded, since it will not be needed for the remainder of the conversion.

The spare wheel behind the driving seat, which is held on by a round spigot bent in a right angle in the front half of the jeep can next be attended to. Do not, however, try to straighten this with a pair of pliers because there is the possibility of causing damage to the body casting. Instead, twist the wheel upwards and over the top, so that it lies flat on top of the dividing partition. You will find that both wheel and rivet can then be removed and placed to one side. Do be careful not to lose the round spigot though, because this is needed to attach the wheel to the bonnet.

Taking the $\frac{1}{16}$ in. drill, find the approximate centre of the bonnet and drill a hole about $\frac{3}{16}$ in. deep. Place the round

Full size drawings of the basic parts required for the hard top



1 *Drilling out the rivet holding the wheel retaining plate in position*

2 *Bending the lower end of the windscreen plate straight to allow it to be removed*

3 *Drilling a hole in the bonnet for the spare wheel*

4 *Glueing on the roof of the hard top with Styrene solvent*

spigot in a vice, and with a razor saw cut off all except $\frac{1}{4}$ in. This can then be pressed through the wheel, and with a contact adhesive glued into the hole in the bonnet. When this has been done the front wheels can be replaced and the retaining plate glued back into position with the same contact adhesive.

The hard-top body can now be built using parts cut out from 30 thou. white Plastikard or other styrene sheet. This material incidentally, is superior to ordinary cardboard for many modelling jobs, and you will find it easier to cut and glue. It is, in addition, stronger and its greatest advantage is the cleanliness with which it can be worked. When joining two pieces together, for example, it is only necessary to place the two parts against each other, brushing the joint with the special solvent. After only a few seconds, a bond will result, which you will find quite strong. The strength of the joint continues to increase the longer it is left.

The five parts that form the hard-top are shown in the drawing, and they should be drawn out on the white plastic sheet as accurately as possible. They are 'cut out', by deeply scribing the sheet with the modelling knife and then cleanly removed by simply 'snapping' the sheet! The three parts containing windows will need more care, and I would suggest where windows are concerned that you cut them out *completely* with the modelling knife before cutting the main outline. Use a steel rule to ensure crisp, clean straight outlines.

Once all four sides have been cut out, they can be glued together with the special solvent, or a polystyrene cement, but first a word of warning. Check that the three pieces are the correct length and width before they are glued together, for the drawing makes no allowances for the thickness of the card itself. You may find it necessary to cut the equivalent thickness of the side or end for them to fit properly. Other lines on the drawing represent those that should be followed for gaps in doors and panels, and when doing this I would advise running the back of the modelling knife blade along the card to give a wider mark.

Fitting the top

Once the four parts are glued together, pieces of clear plastic can be cut for windows. If this material is of the same type of plastic as normal Plastikard, the same joining solvent can be used. The roof is the next piece to be cut from the plastic sheet, and although it is possible to glue this on in one piece, you will find it easier to cut it in two pieces, to allow for the slope of the roof from the back of the cab door to the front. As before, glue both on with a solvent, and make sure that all ends are flush with the sides of the vehicle.

Three strips of plastic 1 mm. by $\frac{1}{2}$ mm. in section will be needed for the roof, and should be spaced at equal distances apart. Allow all the joints to dry *thoroughly*, then, with a very fine grade sandpaper, smooth the edges of the roof to give a slight curve, and also smooth over the join of the two pieces near the front of the roof.

To allow the hard top to be clipped onto the jeep, it will be necessary to cut four narrow pieces of card, each of which are glued to the inside of the hard top. The size of these pieces is not really important, but they must project down about $\frac{3}{32}$ in. to allow the hard top to be clipped on. All that it is necessary to watch out for is the rear window which must not, of course, have any card projecting beyond its edges. This also applies to the windscreen should you wish to strengthen the sides. The foremost of the retaining pieces should be glued to both sides of the hard-top, and to strengthen this piece, you might find it worth while to glue an additional piece behind.

Before painting the top, check that it fits onto the body in a satisfactory way, and then paint in a colour scheme of your own choice, with the windscreen frame silver.