

Back in 2002 when we were dabbling in scratch building for our own use, everything we made was just a one off. It was only when we required a multiple of a particular item, that we made a master, then had a mould made for us, so that castings could be produced.

The first three cabs were two cab variants of the AEC MkIII and a Bedford TJ, all of which were cast in white metal. I then converted some resin military cabs produced by an acquaintance that owned Continental Model Supply. After the conversion he made the moulds and then resin castings for me.

The comparison between our three original white metal castings and the ones produced in resin was quite extreme. We realised that moulds made for resin castings were better for depicting fine detail than we were able to achieve with white metal moulds and castings, so there and then the decision was made to concentrate on resin only.

You will already be aware of the main advantages – it's easy to trim and clean up; can be cheese pared, filed or sanded easily for fitting adjustments or conversions and if a cab, chassis or body is dropped during handling, is likely to bounce undamaged, whereas white metal will probably distort.

Don't try dropping a finished model though, as white metal or resin, the result will be the same - a buggered up model!

Curing resin warp

After casting, some components may warp slightly, as is the case with timber. This is most likely to happen with chassis', platform bodies and trailers and dropside bodies.

There are two methods of rectifying this:

Immerse the component in warm/hot **but never boiling** water for up to 30 seconds.

Use a hand held hair dryer on the warm, not hot setting for 15-30 seconds (my preference).

Now flex in the opposite direction to the warp, and hold straight or preferably weigh down until cool, usually a further 30 seconds or so.

This should have cured the fault, or certainly reduced it. If necessary, repeat the process again.

If all else fails and it still resembles a banana, return it to me for exchange.

Correcting box body side warp

Due to the swirl process of casting van bodies, it is inevitable that the lower edges on both sides will distort inward, this can be overcome during assembly as follows:

Measure the external overall width of the front and rear of the body (most are 29 – 31mm wide).

For a 14 – 18ft (56-72mm) body length, one cross brace is sufficient, longer bodies will benefit from two.

Cut two strips of 2-3mm thick balsawood 5-7mm wide x 10mm long and glue to the lower inner walls on either side. Cut a cotton bud or cocktail stick tapered each end, 2mm oversize to the gap between balsa strips.

Place each end of the stick into the balsa and squeeze gently, pushing the stick into the balsa, until the external width across the centre is the same as front & rear. Glue the stick to the balsa at both ends.

Depending on the particular body style, I sometimes add a floor in .25mm styrene sheet (no thicker) then add 1x1.5mm cross bearers. This may add to the appearance, but won't influence the strength.

Reforming rear mudguards

All **RTI** chassis are of generic style for respective use with all of our cabs and all are fitted with standard rear mudguards.

Depending on the degree of authenticity you wish to achieve, these can be converted as required. It is important to check old sales brochures, Commercial Motor, Motor Transport or the many and varied editions of transport history for true detail. Any with contributions by Arthur Ingram and Peter Davies will be particularly useful. Don't rely on restored examples you may photograph at vehicle rallies.

CH7 eight wheeler chassis

Three additional styles can be achieved from the standard pair of individual mudguards over the two rear axles.

1. Straight top, often seen on mixers and powder tanks. 2. Gull wing style favoured by Foden and used on all T&L sugar tanks. 3. Straight top with centre separation, randomly seen on tandem axle vehicles.

Straight top style: Use wire snips to cut the two wings at top dead centre (12 o'clock) front edge to rear. Cut away the rear facing section of the forward wing and the forward facing section of the rear wing. Cut two sections of 1mm plasticard 22 x 8mm and lay onto the wings over the gap, mark with a pencil. Use a scalpel to form clean edges to the original cuts on top of the wings so that the 22mm strip fits tightly. Glue each into position. Use abrasive paper to smooth the top joins and radius the front edge on both sides.



Gull wing style: Snip off the rear of the first wing and front of the second wing 2mm below the moulded support brackets. Stick a piece of Tamiya masking or Sellotape to the inner side of both wings creating a loop between the join. Using your preferred filler (I use Plastic Padding car body filler), press onto the loop, supporting with your finger from underneath and forming a radius on top with a paintbrush handle. Leave to set hard, then remove the tape, smooth and paint.



Straight top with centre

separation: Using a similar method as above, this time snip off 2mm up from the bottom or the inner wing flaps. Apply tape as above, then apply filler into the gap between the wings, levelling off along the top. When dry, sand smooth on the horizontal and vertical faces, adding extra filler if indentations are still visible.



Rear wing flares

Some chassis manufacturers fitted rear wings with a flare on the rear flap: Atkinson; ERF; Foden and Bedford K; M & O types being the most common. Tractor units with Scammell automatic coupling if fitted with rubber wings, but not if fitted with steel wings. Check photos of the vehicle you are modelling. Use long nosed pliers with masking or sticky tape over the serrated grip faces. Heat the rear flap with drier or water, then turn outward the bottom 1-2mm depending on the amount of flare required. Hold in this position until the resin has cooled.

Cutting and converting standard mouldings

A number of bodies can be reduced in length to make an alternative style. B2 8 wheel dropside body can be reduced to a 16ft body to fit a 4 wheel rigid (which is described in B2 instructions). Recently I have reduced B22 powder tank to fit Leyland Comet and Dodge Kew both with Briggs cabs, as operated by Blue Circle and Rugby.

Many other bodies can be cut and shut to individual requirements but always use the rectangular slots on a good mitre block and a Pro-edge razor saw for this operation.