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41

THE ICONIC FORD FALCON XB GT

SCALE 1:8

Transmission Housing (2)

1950s British 'Specials'

Published weekly
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POST-APOCALYPTIC EDITION

THE ICONIC FORD FALCON XB GT

ISSUE 41

YOUR MODEL

You will be building a 1:8 scale replica of a customised 1973 Ford Falcon XB GT. Features include a lift-up bonnet that reveals a detailed engine, opening doors, wind-down windows and an 'active' steering wheel. A remote-control fob illuminates the main lights, brake lights and indicators.

Scale: 1:8
Length: 62cm
Width: 25cm
Height: 19cm
Weight: 7+kg

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NOT SUITABLE FOR CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 14. This product is not a toy and is not intended for use in play.

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t=top, c=centre, b=bottom, l=left, r=right, u=upper

Stage 41:
Transmission Housing (2)

More parts are fitted to the transmission housing.

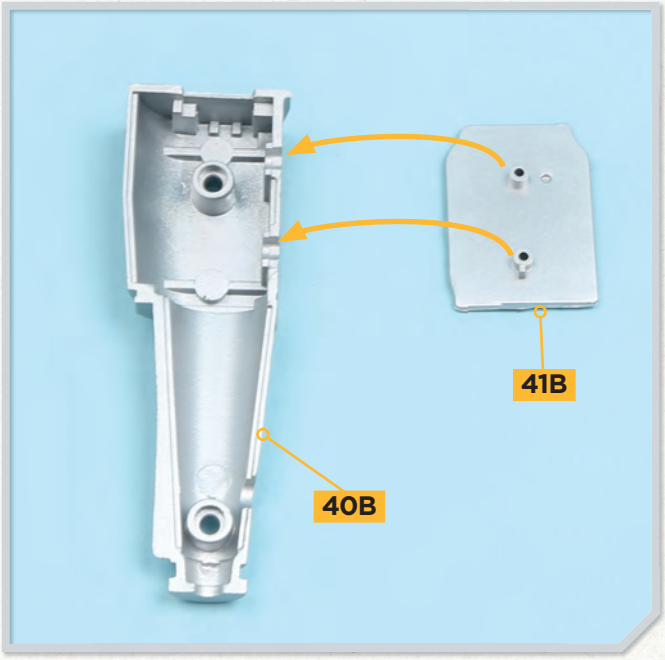
List of parts:

41A	Bell housing
41B	Plate for the transmission housing
41C	Filter
PS40	Three* 1.8 x 3.5mm PWB screws
DS01	Three* 2.3 x 4mm PM screws

*Including spare
PWB = Flange head for plastic
PM = Pan head for metal

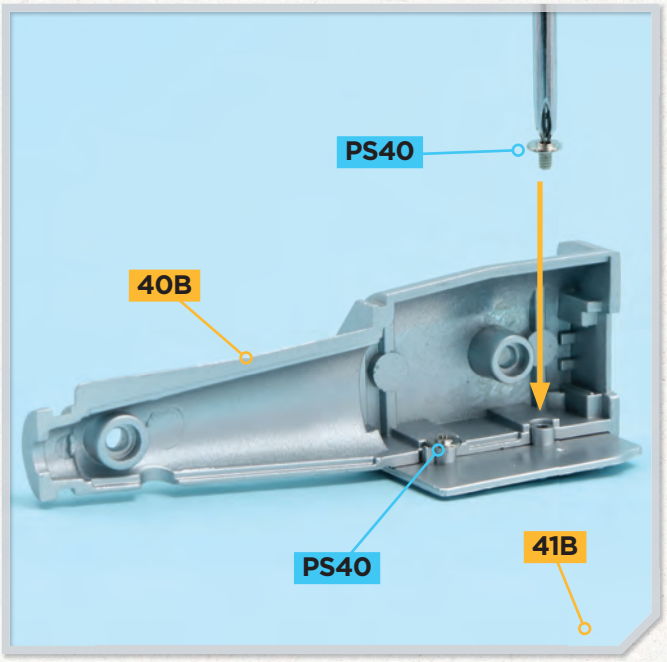
Area of assembly

Stage 41: Transmission Housing (2)



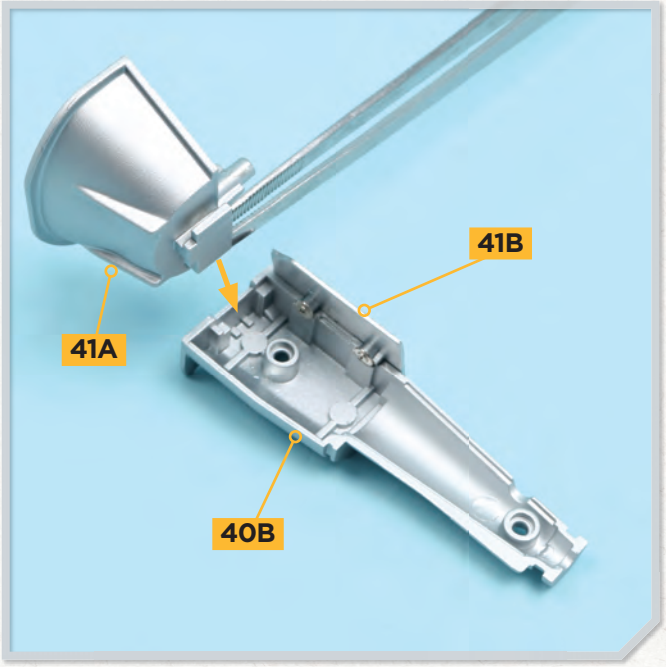
STEP 1

Take the plate **41B** and check how it fits against the wide part of the housing part **40B** supplied with the previous issue. Raised screw sockets on part **41B** fit into recesses in part **40B**.



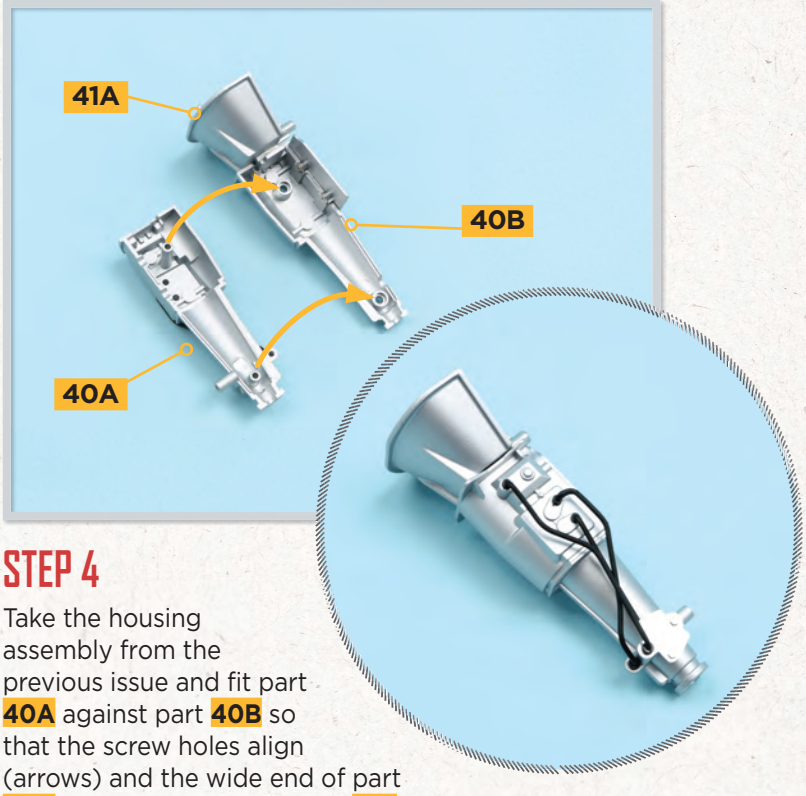
STEP 2

Fix the plate in place with two **PS40** PWB screws. NOTE: the fixture is not secure at this stage, but the plate will be held in place when part **40A** is fixed in place in step 4.



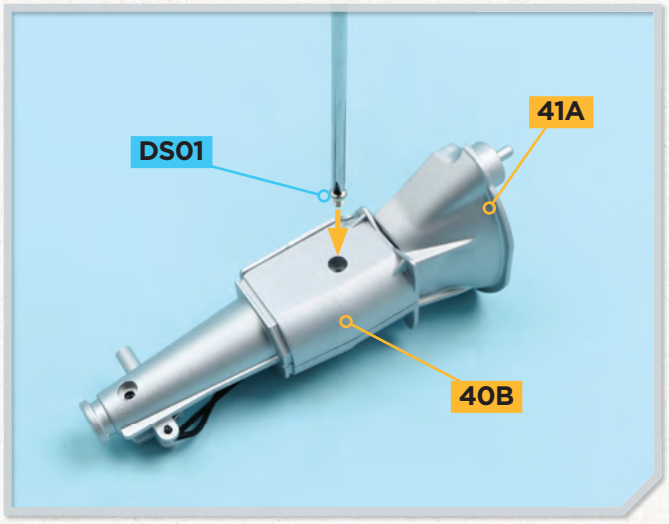
STEP 3

Take the bell housing **41A** and fit the flange into the recess in the wide end of housing part **40B**.



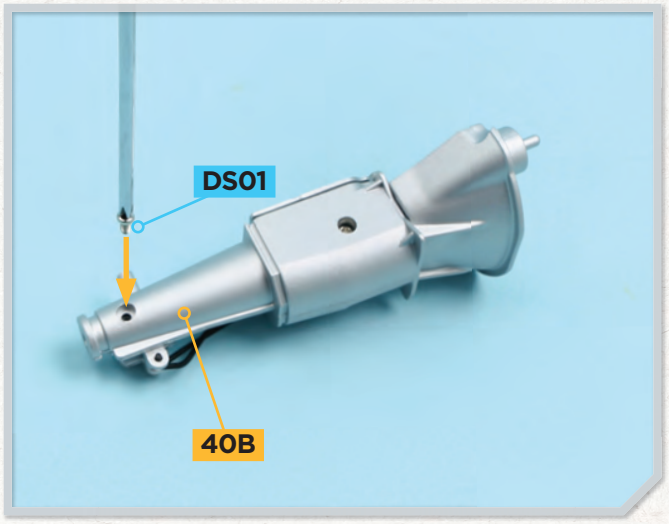
STEP 4

Take the housing assembly from the previous issue and fit part **40A** against part **40B** so that the screw holes align (arrows) and the wide end of part **40A** holds the flange on part **41A** in place. The inset shows part **40A** in place.



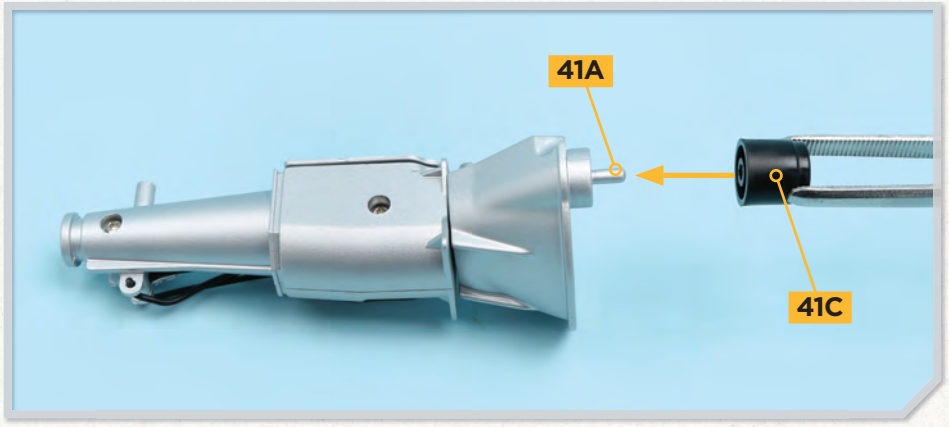
STEP 5

Fix the two parts of the housing together with two **DS01** screws: the first is fitted in the central flat section of part **40B**.



STEP 6

The second **DS01** screw is fitted near the narrow end of the assembly.

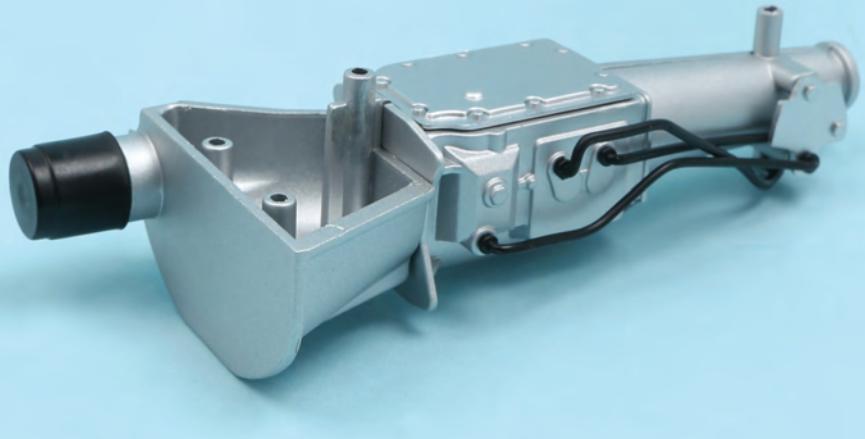


STEP 7

Fit the filter **41C** over the large peg on the wide end of the bell housing **41A**.

COMPLETED ASSEMBLY

Work has continued on the assembly of the transmission housing.



British Cars show their style

While the UK didn't have nearly as many hot rodders as the USA, there was just as much enthusiasm for customising cars, albeit on largely homegrown vehicles. In the UK the line between a custom car and a hot rod was often very blurred.

While the purpose of customising a car in the United States was often to disguise its humble origins, making a five-year-old vehicle appear newer than it actually was, the UK rarely produced cars where the styling gave away any precise year of manufacture. Take, for example, the Morris Minor, which was launched in 1948. Despite facelifts, the car was still recognisable as a Morris Minor when production ended in 1971. There was little need to disguise a car if each design lasted at least three or four years with the same recognisable lines.

Thus modifications in the UK was generally carried out for improved performance; a bigger bore exhaust, one or multiple extra carburettors and racing air filters were the most common additions. In the early days of modification, this was done with racing in mind.

FULL SPEED AHEAD

In a seven-horsepower Austin 7, just messing around with the inlet, fine tuning the carburettor and smoothing the exhaust's flow might double the horsepower. Sometimes motorcycle exhausts could be fitted in lieu of standard parts. Increasing the bore and stroke could provide a significant improvement on a car's performance, especially once heavy saloon bodywork was cut down or swapped for a lighter roadster type.

Above: An Austin 7 Special on show at the Grimsthorpe Speed Trials in Lincolnshire in August 2019.

Below: Enthusiasts inspect what is under the bonnet of a Morris Minor Classic car in May 2016.

Left: The classic lines of the Morris Minor, a car that was launched in 1948, were still recognisable when production ceased in 1971.

Fitting larger circumference rear wheels and tyres also improved acceleration, while wider tyres — if available — provided more grip.

These vehicles were not known as hot rods. They were 'specials' and were often single- or two-seater cars largely used for hill climbs and some circuit racing. Pre-war, some cars had competed at circuits such as Brooklands with lightweight aero screens and stripped off fenders and other extraneous weight in order to make their cars go faster. In the post-war years some enthusiasts took a chassis and built their own lightweight body from thin sheets of steel or aluminium, begged or borrowed from numerous discarded ambulances and army lorries left in fields. People who had worked in aircraft factories or been mechanics in the army or navy had an excellent education in mechanical engineering.

Hill climb specials might get stiffer or lowered suspension by adding or removing leaves. While similar to American hot rodding, this almost certainly pre-dates it. Indeed the sea front at Brighton had been holding speed trials since 1905. While Americans were developing their ideas of what constituted a hot rod or a custom car, things were less clear-cut in Great Britain. Most builds had elements of both. Ford's Dagenham assembly plant was churning out English Fords similar to its American counterparts, even down to their Flathead V8s. The cost of owning one, with the UK's taxation based on engine size and horsepower, meant that most cars surviving the war were likely to end their days on stock car tracks rather than being customised.

A catalyst was *Hot Rod* magazine, which arrived in Britain from America in 1948 when occasional copies made it to the UK. As home improvement and DIY became more widespread pastimes, so did tinkering with the family car at the weekend. With the construction of the new motorways there was now an opportunity to safely test the speed of your vehicle. It inspired the construction of many a performance sports car, although true hot rods were still a rarity in 1950s Britain. But this would soon change. ■

Right: The front of a 1959 Ford Consul Mk2 on display at a classic car show.

COMING IN ISSUE 42

- **ASSEMBLY GUIDE**
  The two parts of the transmission shaft are joined together and fitted to the model chassis.
- **CARS ON SCREEN**
  Transformers were toys that could be converted from an everyday vehicle into a fighting robot. They were featured in the film *Transformers* in 2007.

NEW PARTS

Two transmission shafts, support for the transmission and screws.

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