Vehicle assembly

Sheet 4

This is the method that I apply when using all RTI components.

Before the project commences, obtain clear photographs of the vehicle you wish to model. In service monochrome images of working motors will be preferable to colour shots you may have taken of restored lorries, as these can often be "as near as" due to the restorers inability to obtain exact replacement parts, or the penchant of a few to add their additional trim or decoration, detracting from the actual production model.

1. The cab, chassis, body and wheels will already have had all moulding flash removed and will be ready for assembly. **Washing these components to remove moulding solvents is not necessary as none is used originally and incidentally, I have never ever washed any other resin or white metal kits that I have purchased, prior to painting. I consider this can cause more harm than good.**

2. First establish whether the standard wheelbase is correct or a cut and shut is required (details included with chassis), and lengthen or shorten as applicable. When correct, stick both sections together.

3. Once this is complete, drill out the white metal wheels with a 1.6mm bit and fit the axle into one of each pair of wheels. Ream out the axle locators in the chassis with the 1.6mm bit to ensure the axles rotate freely. Push the axle through the locator and mark off on the free end of the axle to the length required, and then fit the second wheel. Repeat the exercise with all other axles.

4. You now have a rolling chassis; ensure that all the wheels are touching the ground and none are floating in mid air.

5. Fit the steering column (if required) and steering wheel to the cab interior.

6. Drill holes in the cab shell as necessary to take the white metal sidelights if supplied and 0.5mm holes in the appropriate positions on the side window pillars to take mirror arms.

7. Dry fit the cab interior into the shell. Now place over the front axle, to centre the wheel arches to the front wheels and ensure the ride height is correct. The correct ride height will normally allow approx. 1mm maximum between tyre and mudguard. Height can be increased by adding one or two layers of plasticard between underside of cab interior and top of chassis. Reducing the height can be achieved by sanding off some of the cab base. With most vehicles, the lower front edge of the mudguard will be parallel with the centre of the front wheel hub. When you are happy with the ride height, position the cab once more, gluing the cab interior to the chassis. Remove the outer cab shell again.

8. Now fit all ancillary equipment to the chassis, i.e. fuel tank, air tank(s), battery, spare wheel carrier and rear light and number plate brackets. This also applies to cab roof headboards and mirror arms. These can be scratch built, or use components from CH3 or CH4 as applicable.

9. The body can now be glued into position, with the exception of tanker bodies. You now have a rolling chassis complete with cab interior and bodywork in situ.

10. Regardless of finish colour, I now spray the underside of the completed chassis with Halford's matt black aerosol paint, only spraying all sides if the finished vehicle is to have black chassis and wheels. Leave to dry for a minimum of 3-4 hours until perfectly hard. Any parts that the spray has missed such as inside wheel arches can be painted in, using Humbrol matt black with either a no. 2 or 3 brush. Fit tanker bodies after this operation to avoid black over spray halfway up the tank.

11. The vehicle body and outer cab shell can now be given its first coat of finish colour. For this, I would brush on the appropriate colour or a mix of Humbrol matt paint to the correct shade, applied with a no. 5 brush. This will dry relatively quickly and once dry, I would apply a coat of Johnson's Klear to the entire vehicle, including all of the chassis previously sprayed matt black.

12. Now paint the cab interior shell in your chosen colour, plus the seats and engine cover if applicable. These can also be treated to a coat of Johnson's Klear.

13. Apply subsequent coats of Humbrol matt to cab and body exterior and each time when dry, a further coat of Johnson's Klear, until a smooth finish without any patches or streaks is achieved. This may sound very labour intensive, but because matt paints usually dry within 15 minutes or so and Johnson's Klear within a minute, it is a faster method than using gloss finishes. Matt paints have a greater opacity than gloss finishes, which are too thick and shiny for model commercial vehicles and also take much longer to dry.

14. Once you are satisfied with a smooth colour finish and have applied the final coat of Johnson's Klear, you then build up further coats of Klear until you achieve the finish required. Two coats will normally give you a satin finish. If you wish to apply transfers to the vehicle, now is the time to do so whilst the cab is still detached. Add a further coat of Klear to anchor the transfers. 3 to 4 coats are required for a gloss finish.

15. Cab glazing can now be applied, following the stepped guide, which is already in your folder. When glazing is completed, the cab can be glued in position.

16. The model is now completed, apart from any additional fine detailing you may wish to apply.

17. A full painting guide, with advice on colour shades, masking for colour separation, and silver trim detailing etc., will be issue separately.