

## Ronald McDonald and Superman

In *Telephonetalk* Chapter 14, we saw some common and rare examples of plastic telephones and where / when a successful restoration is possible and worthwhile. These two telephones are reasonably rare, consequently quite valuable and very collectable if they are in good condition. Finding one in "as new" condition isn't likely to happen very often and more often they will be found with deep scratches and very common (Nicotine) stains caused by exposure to UV light.

If we are to believe the values for these two phones quoted in the 1998 edition of "Collectible Novelty Phones", by James Davis and published in the US by Schiffer Publishing, then they deserve a restoration effort

1. Superman made in 1978, valued at USD900-1200
2. Ronald McDonald made in 1980, valued at USD400-600



*Ronald McDonald, the finished item.*

The two telephones were quite in similar condition with some deep scratches and badly stained from environmental conditions and UV light. On a positive note though, both phones were complete and the multi-coloured parts were in good condition and only required a good clean and polish. That meant that a complete restoration was restricted to the main body(s) and handset(s).

The following two pictures show the degree of staining on each phone. The white areas show where some fairly aggressive sanding has commenced using *240 grade* non-loading abrasive papers.



*Ronald McDonald*



*Superman*

In this view we can see another perspective of the partly restored Superman body that very clearly shows the improvement in the white colour of the phone.

The dial surround unfortunately has to be left in the "stained" condition because of the complexity of the moulding and also the need to protect the moulded dial numbers



In this picture we can see the marked contrast between a sanded and unsanded area of the handset from the Ronald McDonald phone. The handset at this stage had just a small part of the back "rough" sanded.



### **The Method (re-iteration)**

Dismantle the telephone as far as practicable - remember that there will be fine plastic dust from the sanding and it is best kept out of contacts and mouthpieces etc.

Transmitter and receiver elements are best removed if possible.

Then, using your own methods, and with sparing use of liquid cleansers, clean off any greasy film. This step is worthwhile because any greasy residues on the phone will quickly clog up the abrasive papers.

Sand firstly, only the damaged or discoloured area (may be just one side) with a 400-600 grade paper. Use a circular motion until the original colour is restored, or scratches are removed.

Even when significant damage has occurred, this doesn't take too much effort - even if say  $\frac{1}{2}$ mm has to be removed. After the coarse sanding, check the plastic in a good light and once the colour is acceptable, proceed to smooth sanding.

After coarse sanding, use a very fine 1200 grade paper to remove most of the sanding marks and then the plastic should be ready for polishing.

Polishing can be done by hand or with a polishing wheel.

**By hand**, I use No 2 car polishing compound, and polish in a circular motion and then remove and polish with a soft cloth. This step will remove most of the remaining sanding marks but doesn't provide a mirror finish.

To finish off, we can use Autosol Metal Polish, again polishing in a circular motion and a final polish with a soft cloth.

Carry out this step a second time if necessary, but try to match the degree of gloss on the repaired area, to the rest of the phone.

Alternatively a **polishing wheel** can be used, but caution is needed.

Only use a soft mop and **Green chrome** or other minimal cut polishing compound.

The polishing wheel will spin very fast and light pressure is needed otherwise the plastic case will melt.

Also, as with the Bakelite restoration, be very careful not to allow the mop to grab the plastic part, otherwise it may break and also cause injury.



*Superman, the finished item.*