

Handout for The Gosporters Demonstration at Fareham RailEx 2019

The team are demonstrating a number of aspects of railway modelling:

- Painting and detailing track
- Ballasting track
- Building the Engine Shed from plastic sheet
- Building the coaling stage from matchsticks and other wooden materials

The track on Gosport consists of hand-built turnouts and flexitrack, primarily from C&L Finescale. The way we build track involves the inclusion of some plastic and some copperclad sleepers, plus a mixture of brass and plastic chairs. Fairly obviously, these different components need to be made to look “consistent” – as if they were all laid at the same time and made from the materials that are used in the real world and the best way to achieve this is to paint the track before it is ballasted.

We are using a newly available range of acrylic paint, the Ammo range from Mig Jimenez, and the colour names and paint numbers quoted refer to that range, this range is primarily aimed at the Military Modeller. This is the range of paints and other materials that Elliott principally uses for his Weathering demonstration.

There are other ranges of paint available and obviously different colours too, it’s all down to personal choice. If you want rail specific ranges then Railmatch, and Phoenix Precision are recommended; the military modellers also have other suitable paint ranges (these days some of them directly aimed at the railway modeller), chief amongst these are Life Colour, and Model Colour from Vallejo.

What follows is an explanation of the way we are doing this on Gosport although it is equally applicable to any layout and any type of track – set track, streamline or hand-built. The order given is the order we have found that works best for us, you may well have other ideas or find that something else works better for you.

Painting the track

Painting the sides of the rail.

Look at a picture of a piece of real rail “in use” and then look at a piece of model rail. Probably the most noticeable difference is that the only shiny metallic-looking area on the real rail is the head or top where the wheels of the rolling stock make contact with the rail and polish it as they move along. Possibly the greatest improvement that can be made to the appearance of any track is to paint the rail webs with a dark rusty-dirty-shadowy colour because this instantly removes the stark appearance of bright metal.

We paint the rail sides with A.MIG-043, shadow rust. The best brush we have found for this is an artist’s lining brush, proper “art” name is a rigger brush.

Painting the sleepers

Sleepers are painted with A.MIG-035 (Dark Tracks) which gives a good base colour to represent creosoted wood, this can be either brush painted on or airbrushed onto the track.

If you want sleepers that look old and worn then A.MIG-033 (Rubber and Tires) is the colour to use, it leaves a slight hint of grey-white seemingly inside the surface of the sleeper.

Whilst acknowledging that airbrushing is certainly a lot quicker to execute and provides almost instant even coverage, there are safety issues surrounding the use of an airbrush “in the rough”. If you choose to go down this route do make sure the room is well ventilated and that you use an appropriate respirator/filter system. Airbrushes throw out a lot of small paint particles and – particularly if using acrylic paints – these can solidify in the air before they are attached to their intended target leaving the sort of fog in the air that, if inhaled, can lead to respiratory disease in later life.

Detailing the Chairs

Finally chairs to be picked out in A.MIG-034 (Rusty Tracks) for older track or A.MIG-041 (Dark Rust) for recently laid track (despite name Dark Rust looks very red and suggests chairs that have only recently been laid). A.MIG-042 (Old Rust) is also a suitable colour for this job.

An appropriate brush for this job is a very fine detailing brush.

Ballasting

We are using ballast from Attwood Aggregates who are attending the exhibition as a trader. We are also using the tools they supply such as spreaders and brushes (performs the same function as the plough on a SHARK brake van).

Jon Attwood is a Master Quarryman and uses his contacts in that world to provide ballast for the modeller. Among the ballast types he sells are Meldon stone – this is the ballast we are using on Gosport and was widely used on the LSWR and later the SR – and Mendip stone (represents the sort of stone found around Westbury); he also sells “cinders and Ash” and Coal and we will be using these in various mixtures in sidings and around the engine shed area.

The accepted wisdom for ballast is to use coarse ballast for O Gauge, medium for OO and fine for N Gauge. Elliott’s opinion: Ordinary fine ballast is a bit too coarse for OO Gauge but it’s a good compromise. Attwood’s ballast is somewhat finer than standard “fine” ballast you might buy from one of the major manufacturers, it is however absolutely “scale”.

Buildings

The buildings we are working on are the Engine Shed and the Coaling Stage. No detailed notes for these two aspects of the project as – with Jon Attwood at hand – we are going to be concentrating on getting as much of the track we have weathered and ballasted.

We will, however, be happy to talk about the buildings and show you some of the other buildings we have built in the recent past.