

Dave Coasby

Summertime kit building - Vans

A friend of mine was having a clear out of surplus model railway items. He knew of my interest in O gauge BR(S) and said he had 4 un-made kits that I might be interested in. These were a Parkside SR 12T non-fitted van; SR Banana Van; SR Meat Van and a Slaters BR Shocvan. Money was exchanged and kits were delivered to me via a friend.

I'm sure most of you have put either a Parkside or Slaters wagon kit together, so I don't intend to write a 'how-to-do-it' article here.

But you may be interested in a few details on the painting and weathering of these four vans. The three fitted van bodies were all sprayed with Halfords Red Oxide Primer and the unfitted van with the same brand Grey Primer. I rarely bother with the correct (and expensive) enamel BR Bauxite and BR Freight Grey paints you can buy, as by the time I have applied weathering the primer colours look more or less OK to me. Anyway, BR wagon colours varied so much during their lives depending on how long it had been since they'd seen the inside of a paint shop (in many cases not since the day they were built). The chassis on all four wagons were brush painted enamel matt black.

For the roofs on two of the vans I used Precision Paints (non maroon stock) Roof Grey straight onto the plastic roof. Incidentally all 4 vans had a little extra weight glued firmly inside using Evo-Stik before final fitting their roofs on.

On the Banana Van I worked on its roof before fitting it to the model. I first laid a thin over-sized piece of plain tissue on the roof and coated it liberally with slightly dilute PVA. Although this stuck most of the tissue firmly in place there were a few patches where it wasn't satisfactorily. Once dry a second coat of PVA was applied and this did the trick. Again, once dry, I carefully cut round the edges of the roof with a very sharp scalpel blade and removed the surplus tissue. The result was exactly as I had intended, with the tissue wrinkling up here and there. Where the wrinkles were too big, I burnished them down with the back of a teaspoon (don't tell the wife!). The end result looked just as real roofing felt does as it ages. Once again, a coat of the roof grey was applied and the roof glued in place on the model.

Possibly more interesting is the roof on the 12T un-fitted van. This is based on a photo I took in 1963 of an old van on the Isle of Wight. Some of the roofing felt had peeled away leaving part of the wooden planking that made up the roof exposed to the elements. On the model I scribed some lines on the roof to represent the planking, then painted them a sun-bleached wood grey. The wrinkled tissue method, described in the previous paragraph, was used over the remaining part of the roof and painted a dirty black.

It's almost impossible to apply transfers to matt paint. So, a light puff of Halfords Gloss Lacquer was applied anywhere the transfers were to go (yes, I'm a good customer of Halfords!)

The actual weathering is several very dilute (with White Spirit) applications of Precision Paints enamel 'Dirty Black' and 'Frame Dirt' with the odd splodge of 'Brake Dust' and 'Dark Rust' here and there on the underframes.

Weathering Powders were also lightly applied, wiping off the majority of it with a tissue, but leaving it where it had collected in the gaps of the body planking and strapping edges.

On the Gauge O Guild's website, you can download PDF's of various sets of posters seen on vans in BR days. I have used a few of these on the Meat and Banana Vans. When first printed out they look too pristine, but a light rub with very fine emery cloth or sandpaper makes them look more realistic. Mine also got weathered once applied to the vans. Finally, a couple of light coats of Halfords Matt Lacquer all over and the vans were ready to go on my layout.