

BARROWMORE

MODEL RAILWAY GROUP

"Modelling to a high standard amongst friends"



Workshop Notes: Spackle

Over past years I have been in the habit of using 'Fine surface Polyfilla' as a gap filler on models. But when I finished the packet several years ago, I went to my favourite tool shop to buy another pack. This was the branch of T.E.Hughes & Son Ltd., at 33 Old Chester Road, Great Sutton, Wirral CH66 3NZ (tel.: 0151 339 5171), and they didn't have any for sale: I'm not even sure whether or not it is still made. Incidentally, this is very much an old-style ironmongers - they will sell you three 1" no.8 woodscrews from bulk! They are also happy to order items that they do not have in stock.

Anyway, they offered me something called 'Ready patch lite spackling & patching compound'. This is made by a U.S. firm called Zinsser, and it is just like a ready-mixed super-fine grade of Polyfilla, and it is usable for similar jobs. The word 'spackle' is apparently from the German (= fill or smooth) via immigrants to the U.S.A. Talking to fellow modellers at Barrowmore recently, it became obvious that this product was new to them: so - this short article by way of explanation!

Its natural colour is white, but I overcome this by mixing-in acrylic paint - usually dark grey or rust colour, but there are no restrictions! - in a 35mm film canister. The reason for colouring the mixture is that if any damage is accidentally done to the filler, then a revealed non-white colour is so much less of an eye-sore! My impression is that the addition of paint to the mix slows drying time very slightly. You could also add other things like white wood-working glue (to add some flexibility) or some granular substance (to add some texture), but I haven't tried either of these.

I can't remember what the cost was - but it has proved to be a very successful 'buy', and if you don't let it dry out (by occasionally adding a spot of water), will last a long time.