

BARROWMORE

MODEL RAILWAY GROUP

"Modelling to a high standard amongst friends"



Workshop Notes: Files

The firm of **Shesto Ltd** was founded in 1907 under the name of 'Nathan Shestopal' by an immigrant from the Ukraine. The firm started life selling tools and materials to craftsmen in the watch- and clock-repairing trade, and expanded their market in the 1960s and 1970s to include the modelling and hobby market, as well as precision engineering, electronic, dental and optical trades. One consequence has been dealing with high-quality hand-tool manufacturers on the continent, whose products form a large part of the Shesto Ltd (as the firm is now known) catalogue.

I first came across them at a "Model Engineer" show in the 1970s, and bought several items from the stand, including spade drills and high-quality piercing saw blades. But the tool I mostly remember was a very fine **miniature all-square section needle file**. Across the flats, it varies from 0.3mm at the tip, to 0.95 at the shank. Total length (including handle) was 80mm. In other words: very thin, very breakable, expensive, but **invaluable**. I use it most for enlarging draw-hook slots in head-stocks (both etched brass draw-hook pockets, and plastic mouldings).

Eventually, after years of careful use, I managed to snap it, of course! Luckily, a few years ago, I came across the Shesto stand at another exhibition (? Warley ?), and they took a mail-order for a replacement. I can't remember the price now: I know it was expensive enough to use very carefully. But worth every penny!! An equivalent today on their web-site is 'FL1480/2/4 Vallorbe miniature file – square, 50mm, cut 4' and this costs £8.95.

They also market a similar size miniature rat-tail file. But of course this does have substitutes as long as you want a 'round' hole – small twist drills or thin broaches spring to mind. But this file can be useful for 'drifting' (= enlarging a hole on one side only) a small hole before enlarging it with a bigger drill or broach. Look at their web-site for a selection of the tools in their range - www.shesto.co.uk – or pay £5 for a copy of their "Essential tool & reference guide", which details the complete range. A big problem may be that you end up with a far larger shopping list than you started with!

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