

THE LITTLE AVIATION MUSEUM

Random Modelling Notes

MODELLING TRAYS

(keeping it all together)

(May 2017)

Here's a tool that I use every day and which I can't remember not using, although I must have. It serves two main purposes; as a base when painting something and, secondly, to give me a place to put the detailed bits on toothpicks so they don't get lost. It is also useful for many other purposes, some of which I haven't even discovered yet.

It is simplicity itself, a small sheet of corrugated cardboard with two smaller pieces glued onto it. The bottom sheet is what you sit your model on while you're working on it and the side pieces are the places where the toothpicks go. The side pieces are also a useful little fence to stop things slipping off if you lose your balance.

If memory serves me right, I began using bits of leftover cardboard as bases upon which to work on and paint models many years past and the toothpick holder addition was added because our cats really enjoyed knocking the small parts onto the floor and then hiding them. My invention stopped them from getting much pleasure out of little parts and these days you will only see me crawling around on the floor when it is my fault.



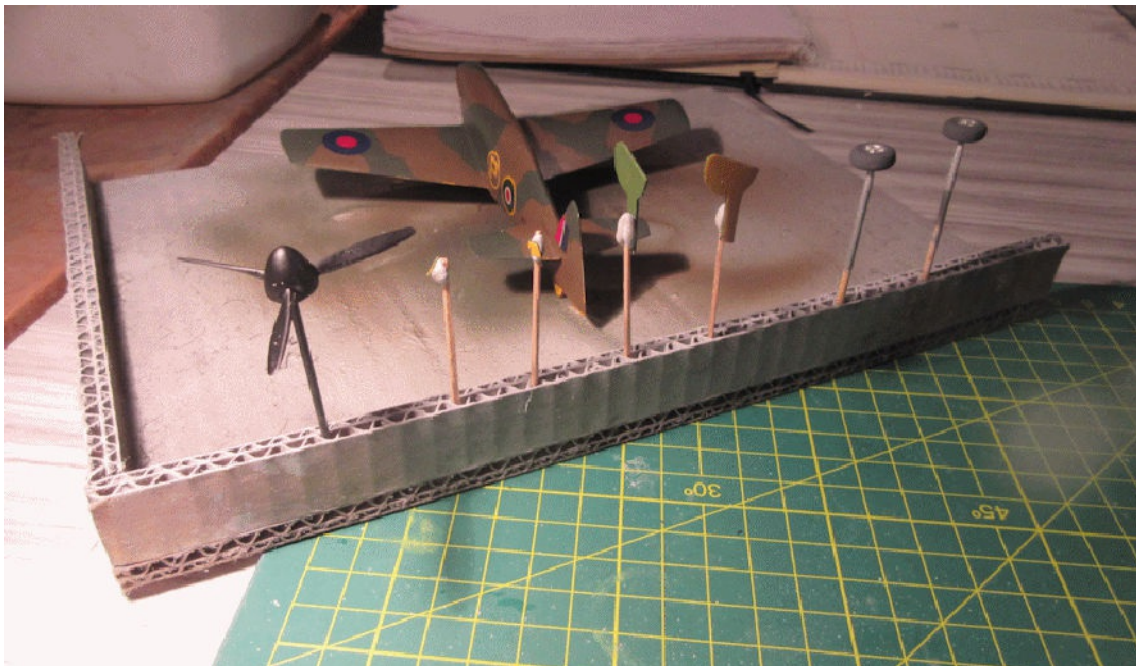
The trays shown here are second generation ones. The first generation were made out of single ply corrugated cardboard and served well, but gradually the tension created by the drying paint on the surface of the base began to curl them up. This second generation with the two corrugations is much tougher and the added weight makes for a more solid base. The side fences are 20mm high, which is a bit higher than the first version, making it harder to knock over the toothpicks stuck in them.

The size of the base is entirely a matter of personal preference. The first version ones were a bit smaller than these ones but I also discovered that ones much larger than this become unwieldy and too difficult to use. I also discovered, when I bought the painting booth, that the size I chose for this version is just small enough to fit in the booth and turn around on the little turntable without bumping the walls.

The other thing I experimented with was putting the little walls on all four sides, but that was not a good idea. Having little fences on only two sides makes it possible to put models on the tray that hang over the other two sides. Consequently it is possible to make models larger than the tray base and the only real limit to the size of a model that can fit on one of these trays is the size of the undercarriage.

I made these trays out of a moving carton and it is fairly tough cardboard. This is about the only thing that you'd have to be careful about if you wanted a tool that lasts. As it was, I had a lot of good cardboard left over after we last moved and made a batch of these trays. They've been in use now for the past seven and a half years and have shown no sign of wearing out. The other thing to watch out for, they get soggy and lose their strength if they get wet.

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