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Miss Daytona build – 17

This document was written by Paul Naylor and is published here for FMES online viewing, and was written during 2026.

Apart from the 'engine', mounting the rudder and pulleys and sorting out the RC gear, tasks are now quite small in nature, but there are a lot of them. One task to be done is the upholstery of the seat back. This is 'tuck and rolled' in real life and with some trouble, it can be replicated in miniature, so that is my target. It involves cutting strips of the leather of an appropriate size (ie the size of each 'roll' plus stitching allowance) and cutting them out to be the same so that the rolls end up undistorted. It is very fiddly and almost impossible to keep a straight stitched edge with thin leather that is unsupported, so I made up a clamp to hold the leather bits in line and to provide a guideline for stitching. Machine stitching using my wife's sewing machine is out of the question really for such small bits. This is held in my woodwork vice and is, as it 'appens', the right height to sit on a stool at (thank goodness). The first photo shows the arrangement: the masking tape is to mark where stitches should go (2mm intervals). For the record, I mimicked 'saddle stitches' by doing a run of simple 'baste' stitches then going back down them using the same holes, so each



hole has two strands in it. It took about 15 minutes per seam once I knew what I was doing!

The second photo shows the result when the first row is stitched. Only around nine more rows to go...

After this bit of breath holding, I ended up with a cover for the seat back, photos left and right show inside and outside.

The next stage was to pad the rolls to make them stand out when it is all glued up. The glue I am using for the upholstery is Evostik Impact adhesive

brushed on where required. Note that I find petrol is a good solvent for cleaning up afterwards – it is a lot cheaper than the solvent sold for this purpose, although I took care to keep glue and solvent off the leather facings. I had some 5mm thick reasonably stiff padding from somewhere (it looks like the sort of thing sold as air filters for kitchen fan filters), and this, when cut into strips the right length, was glued in place.





This was then glued in stages to the seat back, starting with the bottom edge then the main back area, this made sure the rolls looked reasonably straight and centralised. The other edges were then glued: the sides could wrap round a reasonable amount, but the top had only 4mm of wood frame to glue to. The real one has a piece of trim around the seat top, so I made one too from some bent brass superglued in place and then pinned with the thin 'hull pins' to make sure it stayed in place. After this I could then use a sharp blade to trim the excess leather. The result looks quite

convincing and even 'used' (ie 'patinated'!). The steering wheel looks a little scabby in this photo, as I have been trying to fit the drivers hands to it, it will need refinishing. The hole in the seat squab is for the drivers securing stud, there is no padding on the visible wooden square around it so he is mounted rigidly.

So far, I have varnished the 'show wood' on the deck, sides and transom with two coats, and it is shiny but not yet finished. I need to arrange for the 'B-8 Miss Daytona' nomenclature on each side of the deck. This is very prominent and needs to be of good appearance: it also needs to be not 'stuck on' so I need to get this completed before I can add more coats of varnish. For other models (locomotives as well as a boat) I have used home made water slide transfers since these are hard to get these days, and most commercial suppliers of custom designed letters use the same principle as I would at home (with some refinements). This is to use 'water slide transfer paper' to print your design on, but there are snags. I have two for this model: one is that printed colours are not very dense and applying them on a darker surface makes them hard to see, and so they are printed on a white substrate... which leaves a very thin white witness of this round all the edges (which also need to be cut out round the letters). This is unavoidable unfortunately, but my US loco name (big 3" letters on the tender) seems to be pretty much unnoticeable so I might get away with it. The second snag is that my colour inkjet printer wore out and I replaced it with a black only laser jet! This means that I will see if Ryman (a local print shop) will colour print onto my transfer paper. I will also get some printed on clear substrate paper too just to see if the deck is dark enough to cause a problem. The images on the photos I have seem to be a yellow/orange colour rather than gold metallic, so I think printing them will be OK. I have been able to fiddle with Powerpoint and Word to create an image that I was able to size by trial and error (see photo of grey scale test pieces) so the next stage is to get some printed and try it. Note that this photo shows the error I made in the front deck pinning that I mentioned earlier – see if you can spot it!

I got a copy of the transfers printed at Ryman's, on clear and white substrate papers as a comparison (it is only two or three pounds) and sealed the ink with spray on clear lacquer. The letters printed on white substrate firstly need to be cut out around the letter edges with no white background showing as a result of not clipping close enough to the edge (the letters in this case have a black surround to the letters). When applied to the deck after this, the white witness can still be seen owing to the white layer under the colour, and there is nothing I can do about it for this application. As a result, I decided that the

reward
of
nicely



coloured letters was not enough to overcome this disadvantage (to say nothing of the difficulty of cutting around the edges). The printed letters on the clear substrate however looked good on the printed sheet... but the proof is in the application. In this case, the letters need not be cut out with such high precision and there is no white witness BUT (!) whilst the black is fine and appears opaque against the deck colour, the yellow of the letters is pretty much transparent, leaving the dominant colour inside the black being that of the deck, 'screws' panel joints and all! I applied a number of letters to see the effect – removeable with water at this stage - and make a decision. After due thought, I decided to press on with this. I now have a lettered deck with slightly less obvious letters than the real thing. Heigh ho. The photo (right) shows one side after one further coat of varnish to seal them. This photo also shows the white strake and green underside, now painted and more or less finished. For comparison, the other photo (left) shows an image of the real boat deck – which is clearly different. I have no doubt with the application of much money, I could get a commercial improvement but I am too impatient, and I like the idea of 'doing it myself'. I could, I suppose, paint in the yellow bits, but the chances of me doing this without it being obvious are slim!