Number 3 in a Series

WEATHERING POWDERS

Having more or less finished the painting of the Canal Lock Basin (apart from a few minor touch ups) I am ready to start on the WEATHERING aspects.

As mentioned in the **Number 1 Segment,** you have the option of using commercial products or creating your own weathering powders. There are now many commercial products available to the modeller. We can probably thank the "War Gamers" who have been able to influence the market so much more than the earlier years of modelling, be it Railways, Planes or War vehicles and Dioramas. Yes, we have been able to weather our models, but it was usually with paint — also to achieve really good results, one also had to have expertise with an airbrush, not every one's cup of tea.

I have repeated 2 of the illustrations showing a commercial product and also the Chalk Pastels to create your own powders *(see illustrations above and below).* I am going to use predominantly 'home-made' powders on my project — I have used these before, but not on such a big project and I want to see how they hold up against the 'commercials'!

Firstly, get yourself some suitable containers to put your powders into, I have some small plastic, resealable containers that I bought from a local craft store. Size is up to you, but try for something suitable *(see below)*, remembering we don't need a great deal of the powder, it lasts a goodly length of time because we only use very small amounts.

Next is a piece of coarse sandpaper, either a 'Coarse 60' sandpaper or a '40 grit' Garnet paper, which is what I am using in the illustration *(below)*. Simply rub the pastel backwards and forwards over the sandpaper until you have produced a fair amount — you then have to give the sandpaper a really good couple of knocks, to release all that has been ingrained into the 'grit' of the sandpaper — and then shake the resulting powder onto a clean sheet of paper which has previously been folded in half and then flattened out, forming a 'channel' in the sheet of paper, which facilitates for easier 'flow' into the container.

I use an A4 size sheet, any bigger becomes too unwieldy when transferring the powder into your containers, as it is the powder wants to go everywhere else but the right place.

You will see from the next illustrations *(below)* that I have produced about half a dozen different colours for use on the Canal. Originally, I used no purple paint when first painting the 'slate' walkways, relying only on the Harpers Green as the predominant colour. I decided to bring a hint of purple back into the colour scheme — with the powder you have more control than you do with the paint — so I will use the purple powder in some areas to relieve the 'monotony' of the green!

I wanted a "slime" green colour for walls, etc and I have used a Sap Green for this, also a red; dark and light grey; brown; off-white; and a gold/yellow — try to visualise the "dirty" colours that would normally appear in whatever scene you are replicating. Because canals are usually a dirty green/brown colour my palette is reflected with those shades. No doubt as you go along you will use other colours to create the finished result that you are looking for!

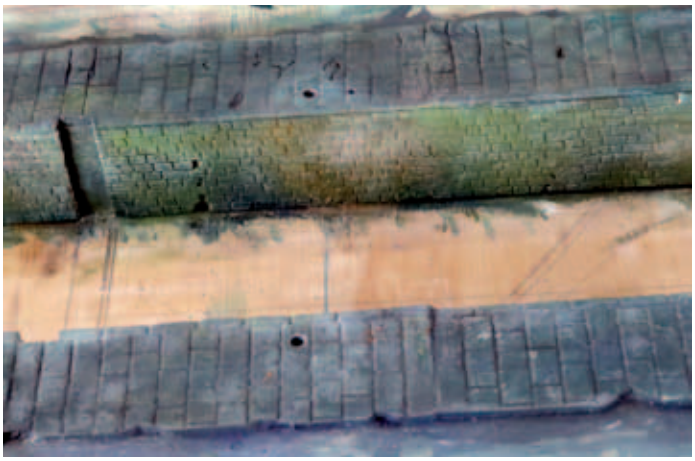
My choice of brushes are shown in the illustration, *(see illustration top of next column)* but because I am working over large areas I am using a big brush, namely the "glue brush", the next one following after the very large brush. This very large brush I am only using to clean away excess powder whilst working.

I "load" the brush by dipping it into the powder **(you will see that it readily 'sticks' to the brush)** that I want to use as my BASE colour — this could be a light or a dark colour for mortar lines or cracks and crevices in my model. Then I LIGHTLY touch it onto my surface to be weathered and move it along and over the chosen areas. What it should do is leave a 'sprinkling' of the powder in those areas — THEN… I either rub the brush in a circular or sweeping motion over a SMALL area at a time and almost "grind" the powder into the brickwork mortar lines or the slate paving crevices.

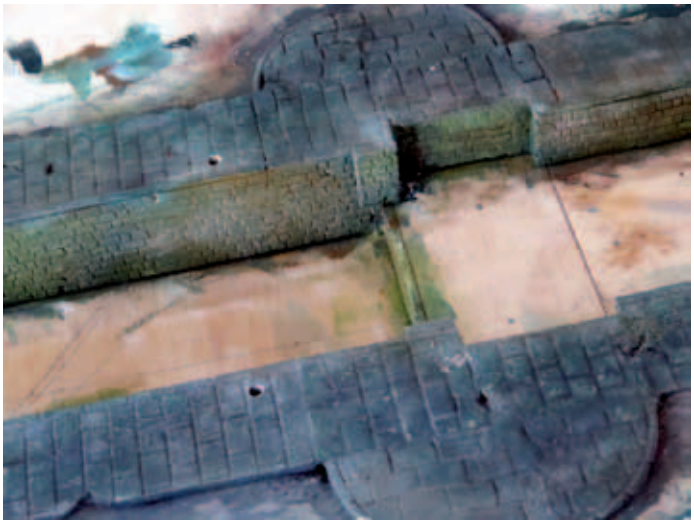
I really emphasise that you do a small area first to see if it is going to give you the result wanted! As you gain confidence and move over all of the different areas on your project you can increase the size of an area to be "weathered".

Now that I have laid down my "base" layer, I will move to a smaller brush to "highlight" areas throughout the project — in the illustration *(see below)* I am laying in the brown "dirt" in and between the slate flagging stones, again taking care to "rub" the colour into the grooves and cracks! Use a large SOFT BRUSH **(i.e. a make-up brush)** to lightly brush away any excess. The idea is that "colour" will remain in the recessed areas so I do mean LIGHTLY — too hard and you will remove colour. There will be times that you DO want to remove colour if it is too dominant, and generally a harder motion will do this!

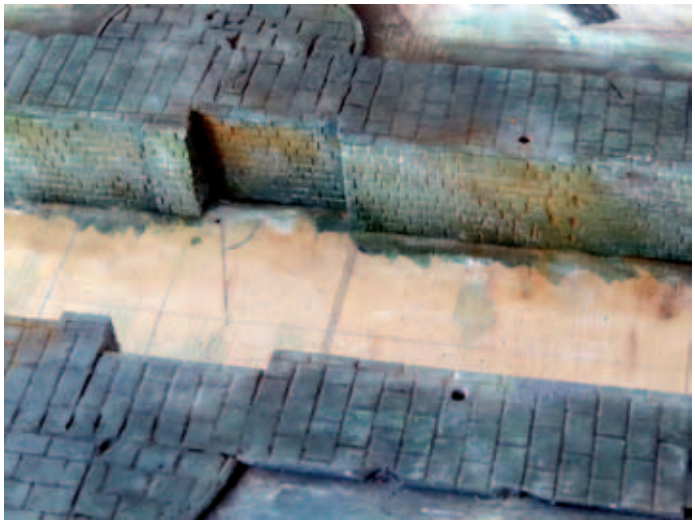
Look at areas on your model where RUST **(reds; oranges and browns)** is likely to appear from metal objects nearby or attached to walls, etc; SLIME or MOULD **(greens and browns)** from dampness or continued presence of water, such as around a tap or guttering. Water also brings in "mineral" content which also will cause discolouration — maybe colours such as oranges; yellows; greys and even almost pure whites! Bird droppings — equals whites; off-whites; creams, etc! Nature abounds in a huge gamut of colours to choose from!

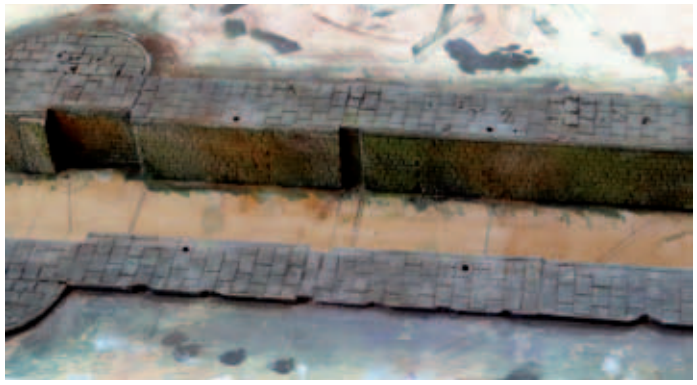


"Gone too far?" — a cotton bud comes in real handy sometimes. It can be dampened slightly with water and gently rubbed, but be careful that you don't start removing the base PAINT LAYER! Even an ordinary paint brush can be used to remove some unwanted colour.



The CARDINAL RULE is — work on SMALL AREAS and you will have complete control over the results. Try to go too fast or work on too big an area is inviting disaster. Sometimes unwanted effects do happen, but usually these can be remedied without too much difficulty.





Throughout all these steps I have been using only DRY POWDERS, no wetting has been used. Nearly always I will work this way — but some people choose to bring in a wetting agent. Being CHALK, water is the ideal medium to use.

There are many YouTube videos on weathering with liquids involved. I recommend that you have a look at some of these videos and trial them on a waste piece BEFORE applying them to the finished model. Practise makes perfect — and builds up your confidence as well!

Finally, after weathering powders have been used on a model, some modellers prefer to give a "spray over" to seal in the colour pigments. You can use a Spray Fixative for "Chalks and Pastels" available from all good art suppliers. These should give you a clear, non-shiny finish to your model if used according to the instructions on the can. But I would also suggest that you seek advice from the art supplier as to what kind of final result can be expected after spraying.

I hate to see a "shiny" surface on a model when there should be none. Avoid such things as "hair sprays", etc. as these will generally give a "wet" look. I have used these cheap hair sprays when applying foliage to a model and I have been really annoyed when I end up with that shiny wet look appearing where I don't want it. To eliminate this when it does happen, I resort to lightly "dusting" with a suitably coloured weathering powder — doing this generally rectifies the problem.

My intention is to "write-up" the final weathering of this project, once I have installed all of the "metal hardware" and other main pieces, such as the lock gates, etc. All of these will require their own special weathering techniques being applied. Also adding things like WATER (artificial) to the Lock and how to achieve a realistic looking "wet" result for my canal — along with riverside growth; weeds; grasses, etc.

In the meantime, enjoy your modelling — and until next time — we'll talk again!