

THE WITCH'S WAGON

AN ALTERNATE BLACK COACH BY STEFAN GRAMBERT

As this is October's issue we here at White Dwarf have decided to get into the spirit of things and bring you some articles that go bump in the night. To get us started Ottawa's own Stefan Grambart, shows us how to build The Witch's Wagon!

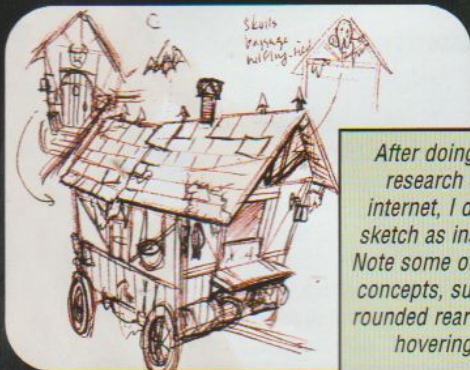


Braains! I had been a conscript in a Vampire Counts army for only a few weeks when I discovered (to my shock) that there was naught a blood-sucker among us! In truth, we were lead by an aging witch – the antithesis of the Bretonnian Damsel if you may, and this ancient crone needed a home! More than that, she needed a mobile home!

After taking a good look at the Black Coach I realize now that this "luxury model" is perhaps a bit too much for the old hag; her tastes are somewhat more... decrepit. In light of this, I've decided to build her a weathered gypsy wagon from scratch; something that can transport all her ingredients, potions and assorted items pertaining to the dark arts.

STEP 1: PLANNING & PURCHASING

Before I even pick up my modeling knife, I'm going to sit down at my computer and do some research. First I'll check the internet for any images or articles I can find regarding gypsy wagons and medieval coaches. These will help my conversion look realistic and make it easier for me to design. Haven't got internet access? The library makes an equally good resource for inspiration!



After doing a little research on the internet, I drew this sketch as inspiration. Note some of my early concepts, such as the rounded rear door and hovering bat!

After taking a few pages of notes I'm now drawing a rough sketch of my planned Witch's Wagon. It's not meant to be a formal blueprint, but rather a general idea of the style and the mood that I want the wagon to evoke. Armed with my illustration, I'm off to see the good ol' boys at Games Workshop Bayshore and peruse their ordering catalog.

The staff is gracious enough to let me browse for a while and actually have some helpful ideas to boot! I take my new ideas home and after a few

time incorporating some of the bitz I'm considering.

The wagon is going to be based around the undercarriage from the Mordheim Plague Cart, so this boxed set will be central to the conversion. A few sprues have almost all the bitz I need, including the Mordheim building sprue, Beastmen command, and some Skeletons. I'm not using all the parts; far from it - so the rest will get dumped into my bitz box for future projects. I also trade some parts with a friend for accessories found on his Bretonnian sprues.

visits to the Online Store, illustrate a new draft of my wagon, this

Other materials that I'm buying include a sturdy sheet and a tubular piece of plasticard, as well as some Balsa wood in assorted thicknesses – all available at your nearest hobby shop. I've already got the tools I'll need; including a sharp modeling knife, a few varied brushes, some very fine sandpaper, a package of Greenstuff, Citadel plastic cement, Citadel super-glue, and flock.

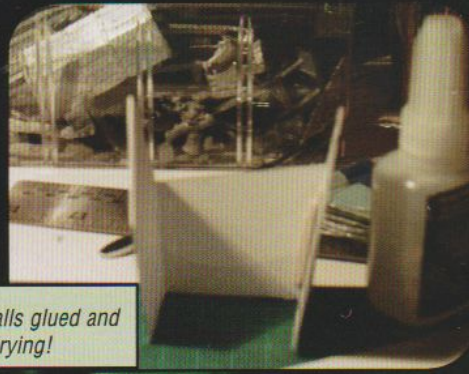
Now to enjoy some delicious brains while waiting for my bitz to arrive!

STEP 2: BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

After receiving my order, I'm eager to start work on the wagon! The first step is to build the walls and roof out of plasticard. Using the Plague Cart's floor as a guide, I pencil in a side wall onto

STEP 3: LAYING THE WOODEN "SKIN"

Well, the wagon looks quite bare at this point, but now I can start to "skin" the walls with Balsa. I use my knife to cut pieces to length and glue them in place as I go. I make sure to leave room for a window on each side, as well as a back door. I glue two pillars in place to support the driver's perch and then add some details like a frame around the doorway, and beams for the front and back of the roof. Using my modeling knife, I carefully shave the corners of each piece of Balsa at random intervals. After the glue has dried I sand down the wood ever so slightly, to make sure that there is somewhat of an even surface. These techniques create a more natural edge, and make it look less like the wood was purchased at Ye Olde Home Reno Shoppe!



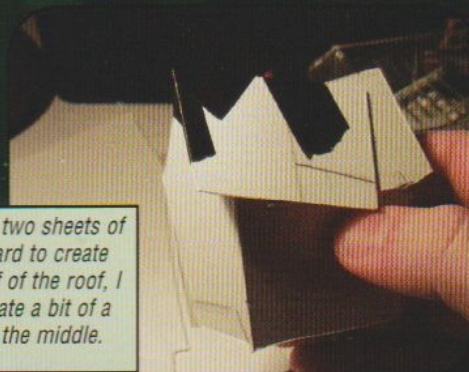
Three walls glued and drying!



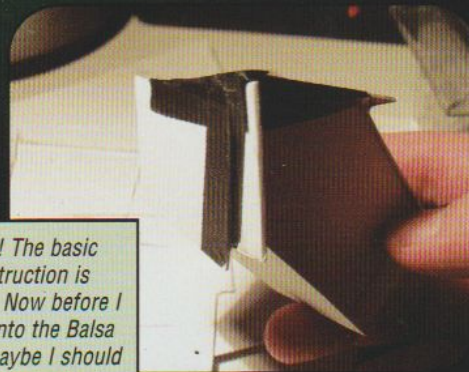
Half the roof is up. Notice how I've used matting tape to hold it in place while it dries. Regular masking tape works just as well, and is even a little less expensive!



Keeping the strips of balsa uneven and irregularly spaced will give the wagon more of a weathered look. If the "planks" extend below the bottom of the plasticard, just sand them back with some fine sandpaper, as I've already done here.



By using two sheets of plasticard to create each half of the roof, I can create a bit of a sag in the middle.



There! The basic construction is finished. Now before I move onto the Balsa wood, maybe I should "eat some brains!"

the sheet. Since the wagon needs to look rickety, exact measurements aren't needed, but I still use a ruler to pencil in the next side and both ends of the wagon. I use multiple light strokes and my ruler to cut the pieces from the plasticard – this assures a nice clean cut. Never use a plastic ruler as a cutting guide – even a modestly sharp modeling knife will cut right through it!

The walls are cautiously taped together and then glued using the plastic cement. The adhesive works a bit slower on dense plasticard than it does on miniatures, but the tape makes sure everything remains in place. Small pieces of Balsa wood can also help reinforce the corners.

The roof is actually made from four cut pieces rather than two; this allows me to position them so that the roof "sags" in the middle. This simulates the effects of aging, and helps to enhance the weathered look I'm going for. After the walls have cemented, the roof is attached in the same manner.

STEP 4: ADDING MAJOR COMPONENTS

While working on the skin, I've also added a plasticard / Balsa wood door to the back of the wagon, and even given it a bitz window I picked up at Games Day. Mordheim building sprue windows were used on the sides of the wagon and the giant ox skull came from an Orc command sprue. The driver was added, and the whole thing was mounted on the Plague Cart's undercarriage.

I am just about to start the most tedious task; the roof. I really want to make the roof look aged and in disrepair, so I've decided that each individual shingle will need to be cut separately to ensure no two shingles are exactly the same. The process is taking a lot of time, but I'm certain the end result will be worth it!



That's a lot of shingles! But those are only enough for one side of the roof!

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STEP 5: BITZ, BITZ, BITZ!

With the roof finally done, I can now start on the fun part: adding the bitz! With a bitz box that has accumulated all manner of parts over the past ten years, I found literally dozens of components I could add to all sides of the coach. I want it to look like the wagon has been lived in for decades, and that it is so full, the witch has begun to store possessions by hanging them all over the exterior. Finally, a project that made all those years of bitz collecting worthwhile!



STEP 6: THE STUFF IS GREEN...

To help the wagon look aged, I think a little mould and fungus will be required. I add some pockets of greenstuff liberally around the wagon and sculpt them to look like some kind of vegetative growth. Having not used greenstuff to any major extent before, I found Ty Finocchiaro's article on the subject (in Black Gobbo # 20) invaluable.



Top: The tape's come off the roof and I've made some holes for the Ox skull. The driver's perch and driver were added and the whole thing was mounted on the Plague Cart's undercarriage!

Left: I've started adding bitz from my collection, and a few greenstuff "growths" as well.

STEP 7: PAINTING THE WAGON

It has taken me a long time to actually start painting. I spent quite some time planning a colour scheme, but I think I am ready to put on the first coat. I've mixed most of my colours rather than use them straight out of the bottle, and everything has been diluted with water and the tiniest drop of dish soap to keep the pigment from pooling.

The roof is painted with a mixture of Red Gore / Graveyard Earth / Fortress Grey. With the paint thinned down as much as it is, I have to use multiple coats to achieve the coverage I want. Since the Balsa wood is porous, this takes considerably longer (the roof had several dozen coats alone!) than normal, but the degree of control achieved allows me to add a lot of depth to the colour. I add doses of Scorched Brown to the mix to give the roof a dirty look.

The rest of the wagon is painted in a similar fashion; multiple thin coats applied to the larger surfaces and then more detail added with each coat. I use combinations of Fortress Grey,

Shadow Grey, Graveyard Earth, Catchatan Green, and Camo Green on the structure of the wagon, and then move on to the details – starting with the mould.

The bitz receive the same treatment as the structure, only I spend a lot more time fleshing out the details. Wood grain is built up on the barrel and chests with multiple coats of browns and then some Graveyard Earth and Scorched Brown lines. If the contrast gets out of hand, I just add a thin wash of Scorched Brown to tone it back down.

I am particularly fond of the cauldron (taken from the Halfling Hot Pot), since the appearance of the goo inside turns out more unappetizing than I could have hoped for.



Hurray, finally complete! I lost track, but I must've put in at least 90 hours into this model. I'm quite happy with the results, but before I varnish it I'm going to ask for a few tips that might help in the Warpstone Competitions!



The horses and base were added, though I could have kept them separate during the painting process... Note how the chest and barrel weren't just glued onto the side of the wagon, but I used wire and thread to make it look like they're actually tied on.



Here's the final conversion. Now all that's left is priming and a good paint job. But before I get out my brushes, I'm going to contemplate a suitable colour scheme!



The cauldron was a nice surprise; it turned out more disgusting than I'd hoped! What started out as a mistake turned out to be a convincing splatter on the side of the wagon.



A grotesque beastman skull hangs above the witch's door. We can also see a few of her victims: a skull, a cadaverous torso, and a doomed Halfling!



I used multiple thin layers of paint to create a cracked bone look to the skull.



The witch must command some potent magic indeed! Here we see that she's taken out at least two Orcs and an Ogre!



Oh how cruel the witch can be! Even cute woodland creatures aren't beyond her reach - a red cardinal, white rabbit and sad little Halfling hang from hooks, ready to be used in some horrible spell... or eaten!

CONCLUSION

It's been a long process, but I think the wagon is nearly done. I've decided to add some more details to the base, and perhaps go over any finer points that may benefit from a little highlighting. The plan is to enter the model in the Warpstone painting competitions this fall (which, by the time you read this, will already be over!), but win or lose - I'm proud of the work I put into this model! Hopefully I'll be rewarded with some tasty brains!

For all of you out there who wish to follow in Stefan's footsteps and submit an article for White Dwarf send an article idea to WhiteD@games-workshop.ca. Maybe you will see your name in print all across Canada.



Another view of the beastman skull and the vulture that guards the witch's wagon!

Here is Stefan's completed model, keep an eye on the Warpstone painting Competition at the eastern Conflicts to see if it claims victory!

