

BARROWMORE

MODEL RAILWAY GROUP

"Modelling to a high standard amongst friends"



Workshop notes: Solder resist

When soldering etched brass items, there are frequently parts of the etch that you don't want solder to spread onto. Mineral oil/grease can be used, but they spread uncontrollably when heat is applied – don't risk them! In the past, I have used the corner of a tablet of toilet soap – rubbed onto the relevant part of the etch – to resist the flow of the solder. But I found that, although theoretically easily washed away, soap often tended to burn onto the surface of the brass with the heat of the soldering, and became difficult to remove.

There are of course various proprietary products on the market: 'Carr's Solder Mask' is a well-known one, and costs £3 for 15ml. I'm told that you can use another Carr's product to do the same job: 'Carr's Metal Black for Brass' is said to stop solder working where it has been applied; £4 for 50ml – but I have never tried this method.

But then I thought to try another water-soluble medium: 'KY Jelly' which is used as a medical skin/tissue lubricant, and in practice it worked better than household soap. I'm sure many modellers will have a tube somewhere in their houses, so give it a try! There are other similar proprietary lubricants available from your local pharmacist; a tube will cost £2 to £5. The important quality is for it to be soluble in water.