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How to apply varnish fixing transfers

I have applied several transfers myself, successfully, but always find it to be a nerve wracking experience.

You will notice that your transfer appears to be printed backwards. This is because the transfer is printed so that the face is against the backing paper.

Most varnish fix transfers used to be printed on 'duplex' paper, but this is no longer manufactured and so these transfers are printed on 'simplex' paper. The difference is that the duplex papers consisted of two sheets bonded together: a tissue sheet on which the transfer was printed and a stiff backing sheet. With 'duplex' paper after the transfer had been fixed in position the backing sheet was peeled away and the tissue was removed by soaking it with water after the varnish had dried. With 'simplex' paper the transfer is printed directly onto a stiff paper, which is highly absorbent, and it is this paper that is removed by soaking with water before the varnish has set.

- a) The recommended way of fixing the transfer is to obtain the services of a signwriter experienced in this type of work to fix it for you.
- b) If you wish to fix the transfer yourself be very careful it is fragile.
- c) Do not fold or crease the transfer as this may cause the transfer to break up when it is applied.

Materials: Good quality clear varnish, paintbrush, cotton wool pads (or clean soft cloth), white spirit, sponge and water.

Suggested Method:

- a) Ensure that the surface onto which you are applying the transfer is clean and free from oil and grease.
- b) To assist in locating the transfer put some alignment marks on the back of the paper to correspond with the centreline marks on the transfer side. Do not draw over the back of the transfer. Then put some corresponding marks on the surface where the transfer is to be fixed.
- c) Ensure that the transfer is clean and free from dust.
- d) Lightly and evenly coat the printed area on the back of the transfer with varnish. When the varnish is extremely tacky the transfer is ready to apply. If the varnish is too wet the transfer may crack and move on the surface to which it is being applied. It should be possible to pick up the transfer paper by touching the varnish with a fingertip.
- e) With the aid of the guidelines on the backing paper, position the transfer on the surface. Starting from one end, press the transfer onto the surface and work along it, pressing evenly and ensuring that all air bubbles have been removed. Then, using a roller or squeegee give the transfer a final smoothing.
- f) Soak the backing paper using the sponge and plenty of water till it is completely saturated. The backing paper should then either fall away or be carefully peeled from the transfer.
- g) Carefully wash the surface of the transfer with clean water to remove the glue from the backing paper.
- h) Excess varnish around the perimeter of the transfer can be removed using cotton wool pads or soft cloth dabbed in white spirit.
- i) Any air bubbles remaining under the transfer can be removed by pricking each one with a pin and pressing out the air. Very small bubbles might stretch out as the transfer dries.
- j) Allow the transfer to dry for at least 24 hours before handling it and then apply a final coat of good quality clear varnish to protect it.