

## Introduction

One of the hardest tasks when making model buildings is to get the surfaces right. Stone work and other construction types provide real challenges. A few basic techniques can help here. I have included some sample pictures to give you an idea.

## Wood planking

This can be anything from the deck of ship, building walls, doors or American style sidewalks for a wild west town. The basic technique is very simple - scored balsa wood. Take some thin balsa sheet and glue the it onto a strong backing for strength. I would use plywood or MDF for structural work - balsa is not strong enough. To score I use a very sharp pencil and ruler and scribe the planks (going with the grain of the wood). To



mark the ends of the plank use a sharp craft knife to cut rather than score, to avoid tearing the wood. To make the surface a little more distressed attack with very coarse sandpaper and a modelling knife. Putting a paint wash straight onto wood does soak in to a certain extent. If you want to avoid this then undercoat with a spray paint.

## Wattle and Daub

This method of construction was used extensively from ancient to Tudor Britain. The wattle is basically a basket weave of sticks around uprights to form walls (low load-bearing as the building's roof was supported by internal posts) To make the weave wind and weather proof daub was applied to the weave. The daub was usually a mixture of earth, straw and dung which dried to a pretty solid surface.



Modelling this is pretty easy. Once you have made the building apply household filler or tile adhesive (this is tougher) and spread on the wall. It doesn't have to be too even. Although this is

fine for most buildings I sometimes like to add extra detail. One tip is show some of the wattle through the wall to look like some of the daub has fallen off. To make the weave push some 5 or 6 dress making pins into a board about 5mm apart and weave thick thread between them. Then I spray undercoat (in black for this) and when dry the whole piece can be removed from the board and trimmed with wire clippers. The undercoat binds the whole thing together. Glue this onto the wall before adding the filler and allow some of the wattle to show through.

## Cobbles

You can by ready made cobble sheets but I find you can make your own by spreading tile adhesive on the road and pushing small red lentils into it curve side up. This is a little bit fiddly but gives a good result. You may want to "grout" the lentils in place with dilute filler brushed over the road once it has dried.

## Flint and Mortar

I am not sure of the technical name for this type of construction but it was used a lot for early Norman stone buildings. It used large chunks of flint bedded in mortar to build the wall. To model this I use the same method as the cobbles but I mix the slightly bigger split peas in with the lentils to give a more uneven look (you can also add some builders course sand to the mix). You should have a reasonable thickness of tile adhesive and really pat the "stones" into the surface.



## Dressed stone

Slightly more sophisticated buildings used dressed stones (i.e. stones that have been shaped into regular blocks) to build the wall. In reality a lot of buildings only the used expensive dressed stone as a smooth skin to a regular core of mortar and flint. To represent this use tile adhesive and spread on the wall. Wait for it to set slightly (20 minutes or so) and then use thin card to push into the adhesive to mark out the stone work. It is important to allow the adhesive to dry a bit first or it closes up your marks while drying. You can vary the finished result with different thicknesses of adhesive and by smoothing the surface or leaving it rough (To smooth use a wet plastic strip). A very thin skim of adhesive gives a good concrete look. Thicker coverings look more like dressed stone blocks. Although this sounds fiddly it really doesn't take that much time once you have mastered the technique and is much faster than sticking card stones to the wall.

