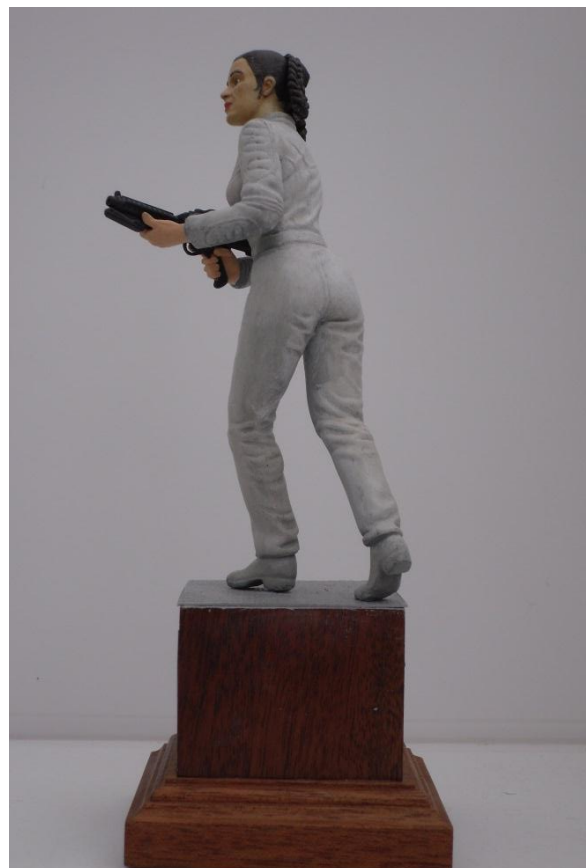


Toys to Models

As younger versions of ourselves, most of us will have played with toy figures, vehicles and planes. Compared to models, they will have been able to be used straight from the box, been robust enough for play and made of a material either hard enough or flexible enough not to break. In general they will have been less detailed than a plastic/resin/metal construction kit. The exception to this would be items designed for collectors as display pieces.

Looking for presents for young male members of my family always gave a good excuse for a nostalgic visit to the local toy shops. In doing so I have picked up some items they have been of good enough quality that with a little work to be used as models. Some required re-aligning and/or re-definition of parts/clean-up, a new paint job and a new base for display.



My best buy was a 150mm figure of Princess Leia at the grand sum of £2.99. The pose of the Princess was a bit static and the body joints did not align. Stripping down the figure, she was rebuilt with a less static pose with the body and head looking to the left rather than straight forward. The face was repainted along with the white clothing which proved a good challenge to keep it subtle enough to remove the toy like appearance.

Sold from the toy shop chain *The Entertainer*, I picked up a £5 boxed set of Batman and Catwoman figures scaling out at around 70mm based on the recent Dark Knight film. Again repainted and mounted they made an interesting vignette.



Also scaling out at 70mm the next figure is a character from the *Tron Legacy* film. The appearance was changed by repainting the clothing and hair with the addition of weaponry and equipment added from Warhammer to provide the figure with a more aggressive appearance.



The stance simply said "feline" to me. Two of William Britain's zoo animals (20 years vintage) were retrieved from the loft, repainted and added in as companions. The scene was to be set in in a "light-hearted over the top way" where the Neighbourhood Watch *really* takes their responsibilities seriously.

The telephone box came a part of a set with a post box for less than £5 and the dogs trying to become invisible were raided from the spares box.



At the time of their original release, *Airfix* produced a wide range of 54mm toy figures with a reasonably good a level of detail. The drawback with them was the prominent mould lines which were difficult to remove from the soft polythene figure. Also enamel paint did not adhere well and the detail on the faces was a bit flat. Now the series of figures are being released in a hard plastic that can be worked much more easily.

In addition to the above, the figures were not always well defined and gaps between the limbs/equipment/weapons tend to be “wrapped” onto the body. Figures that have closed gaps between limbs and body can be opened up with the use of a sharp blade, definition improved or equipment added or replaced from the spares box.

Nearly all will benefit from a replacement head to give a good level of definition to the figure. Having a set of American Civil War heads from *Sovereign 2000*, a new head was selected and is seen on the photo on the right.



Another example is shown below where a “Modern British Infantry” figure had a new head and additional equipment added to represent the Falklands Marine shown below.



The last of the *Airfix* examples is from the SAS set on current release. The pistol holster was removed and the area of the leg between this and the gas mask satchel tidied up to remove excess plastic and the holster replaced with one from the spares box. Other than this the figure was straight from the box. The example below is still in the old soft plastic primed with *Games Workshop* Chaos Black undercoat then painted in acrylics.



Bought at Asda for under £2 each were a set of 70mm scale figures of characters from the film "*The Hobbit*". When buying there is no indication on the packaging of which figure you will get but out of seven bought each were different. Three figures were of particular interest: Gollum, Kili the Dwarf and Turiel.



The figure was cleaned up, a bow string added, primed with Chaos White and then finished by painting as a generic “*Elven Archer*”.



Moving away from figures, vehicles offer a similar opportunity to make improvements. At under £7, the recently released model with magazine combination (produced by *Eagle Moss Ltd (Batman Automobilia)*) included a model of the Tumbler within its range of Batman cars.



Designed as a display model rather than a toy it was full of detail. To ring the changes, raiding the spares box, a Verlinden turret from a V100 armoured car was added. The black paint work of the Tumbler replaced with a more appropriate camouflage pattern.

In a similar vein die-cast models of AFVs with accompanying magazine in 1/72nd scale are on release. These and other die-cast models are seldom “weathered” and are fitted with over-scale aerials. A little effort on the paintwork and replacing the aerials can vastly improve their appearance. The two photos below show the untouched Warrior APC and the accompanying Challenger part way through being weathered.



The photograph below shows the fully weathered vehicles with replacement aerials set on a scenic base. It is difficult to tell the final result from that that would be produced from a good quality plastic kit. The benefit of re-working die-cast kits is that for a similar price there is minimal build element.



The Stryker ICV is another vehicle in the series that has been reworked and is alongside a copy of its accompanying magazine.



Hopefully the examples shown will encourage you to have a closer look when shopping in toy shops for opportunities to expand your modelling opportunities.