

# Name & number plates

Some hints on filing and fitting by Robbo Ormiston-Chant

THE following routine may appeal to those who have a vice fitted with "blind jaws" that are absolutely spot on, blind means no big teeth; this type of jaw may be obtained to order for all good quality vices of the mechanics pattern, the jaws are used by toolmakers as they offer more friction for a lighter "hold" and do not mark the job.

Clean the legend of the plate with an ink eraser so it is nice and bright; if you like mark round the waste metal with a dark-colour fibre pen.

Trap the plate in the vice so that the legend and any border is *just* out of sight in the jaws; you can do this by setting the plate a little high and gently tapping the exposed upper edge down whilst the jaws are just holding the plate, when it is set, harden the jaws well; you will

not damage the plate, on the contrary it's important part is now out of harm's way.

The waste may now be removed in a few seconds with a piercing saw or jeweller's saw used at a very flat angle, about 15° to the line of the plate. The saw blade runs just clear of the vice jaws. After cutting, rub down with a smooth needle file, at least No. 2 cut, preferably No. 4 cut.

Do the long edges this way and then clip off the ends with sharp side-cutters.

For curved plates, set in the vice with one end as described. If you have a ticket nipper or a nibbler tool, you can then chop out down to the jaws, shifting the plate round in them as you go, finally finishing with a smooth needle file with plate between finger and thumb. Whatever method you use, curved plates take a long time anyway, that is why I prefer B.R. ones!

Painting is also made an easier task if the plates are mounted for the job. Buy a reel of Sellotape double-sided tape and lay it onto a handy piece of flat material, a scrap of hard-board or sheet metal is convenient. Peel the backing and lay the plates on the upper sticky surface. Painting can now proceed at leisure in comfort, right up to the final polishing and varnishing. Remove the plates with a modelling knife, do not just drag them off or you will bend them.

I always fit my plates to the model when the final varnish is still slightly tacky; I use a thin wipe of Bostik Clear applied with a cocktail stick (wood) and park the plate on smartly, dead in place.

Should the model ever need a repaint the plates can then be eased off with a modelling knife and stowed somewhere safe during the upheaval.