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moulded kit as one then has a lot of separate parts to fit together. Cutting out the parts is no problem at all. A sharp knife with a firm blade is all that is needed to run round the edge of the part concerned and then just snap the scrap plastic away. It is sometimes best to do preliminary work on the fuselage before cutting this shape out as can be seen from the C-123B Provider kit I was working on recently. Here I removed the cabin windows before taking the next step, as the fuselage was firmer to work on and I could cut away the surplus without the part whipping about under the drill.

With all the parts removed, the job of sanding down the edges can begin. A large sheet of wet and dry paper, fairly coarse grained, and plenty of water should be used here. This can make a mess and the modeller working on the dining room table has plenty of reasons why he should not go in for vacuforms! But these problems can be overcome by a few sheets of newspaper and a square of hardboard if you really want to try your hand. By using a circular motion and taking care to remove only the necessary 0.8 mm allowed by most of the manufacturers you should be left with a perfectly flat and smooth edge on which the other half can ädhere.

Most vacuform kits these days have overcome their earlier drawbacks by using plastic thick enough to provide a useful edge on both fuselage and wing joints. Thinner parts will occur due to high parts being raised too much and this action results in very poor edges on which to work.

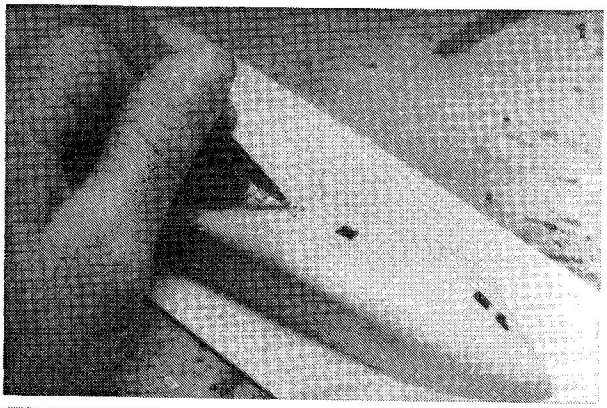
Where large size aircraft are concerned it will be necessary to add supports down the fuselage length to prevent warping and also to ensure the correct final shape to the model. These strengthening ribs can be made from scrap plastic. Kits such as those from Sutcliffe and Airmodel always provide enough scrap plastic to do this. In fact Sutcliffe goes one further and provides the formers marked out on the sheet so that it is a simple job to cut them out and glue in place. With other kits it will be necessary to roughcut the shape and then by knife and sandpaper get the cross section correct. This can be a time-consuming job but is nevertheless very important. In some cases the work can be allied to interior detail, certainly around the cockpit area. A cabin floor can also help to support the formers but in the case of large transport aircraft, the centre of the cross sectional shape will have to be removed so that the appearance of the cabin interior is not marred.

Another method I have heard about, though not tried, for the reinforcing of large fuselage shapes, is to add a thin layer of a material like Araldite which can be poured or smoothed on to keep the contours rigid. Obviously the idea is a good one for certain circumstances and I intend to try the method in future work.

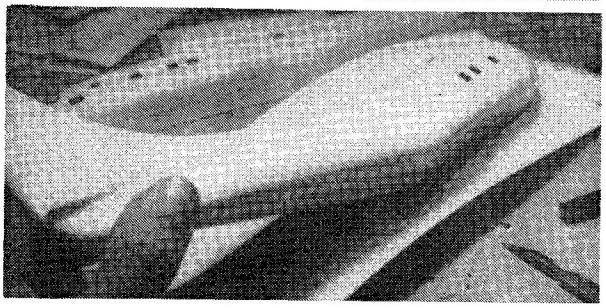
The use of adhesives in vacuform modelling has given rise to a number of questions from modellers and is worthy of discussion at this stage because joining the fuselage halves and wing sections is the next logical step in construction.

Polystyrene cement from the tube is not

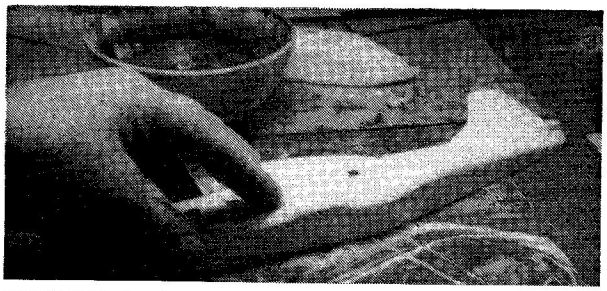
In these photos Alan Hall shows the assembly sequence for a 1:72 scale kit of the Fairchild C-123B Provider, manufactured by Airmodel of Karlsruhe, Germany. The kit is not available in the UK but will be marketed by the Squadron Shop, Cleveland, Ohio, USA, who can accept orders.



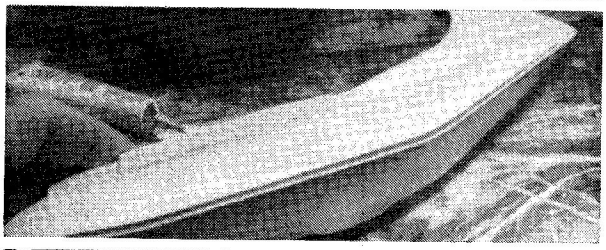
1 *preliminary work on the fuselage is necessary before cutting from the sheet polystyrene. Here, the cabin windows are being cut out and replaced by clear sheet plastic using a contact adhesive.*



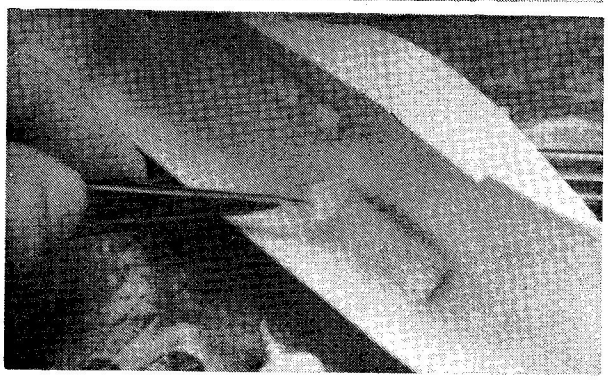
2 *cutting the fuselage from the sheet. Simply score round the outside with a sharp knife and snap off the surplus plastic.*



3 *rubbing down the fuselage ready for assembly. 0.8 mm has to be removed and the edges of the joint flattened sufficiently for correct adhesion. A circular motion is recommended using plenty of water on wet and dry paper.*



4 *reinforcing the edges. The large kit needs thin strips of scrap plastic stuck round the fuselage join line to reinforce it. Note that the rear part of the fuselage has not been done but a strip running from nose to tail has been provided on the ventral side.*



5 *making the undercarriage wells. These are formed from scrap plastic before the fuselage halves are joined.*