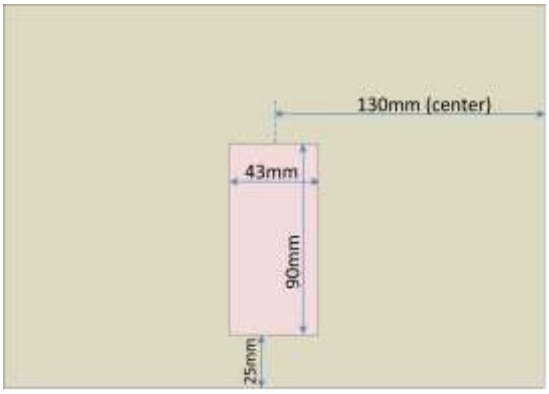
Nige's 'Matt Board' Proof Printer

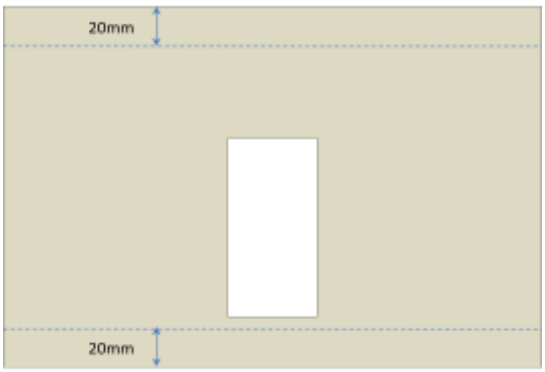
I made this Proof Printer in matt board (which was inspired by Ralph Lambrecht's) as a prototype before attempting a wood version. Probably will never do that but have been using the prototype and have found it to be a useful tool and easy to operate. Sometimes a print has a single area that you want to get the exposure correct for, but a regular style test print doesn't work as only one section will cover the area. This lets you do 5 different exposures (you can vary the paper grade with suitable enlarger) on the same area by moving the paper under a window.

1. Cut following pieces from matt board
    a. 6 pieces 120mm x 260mm (Base). 6 pieces almost exactly matched the thickness of my paper easels but check what suits yours.
    b. 1 piece 162mm x 260 (Cover)
    c. 1 piece 118mm x 320mm (Tray)
    d. 1 wooden dowel or similar
2. Glue base pieces together. Align pieces, place some weight on them and allow to dry. Try to get some glue around the area where the hole will be drilled later.

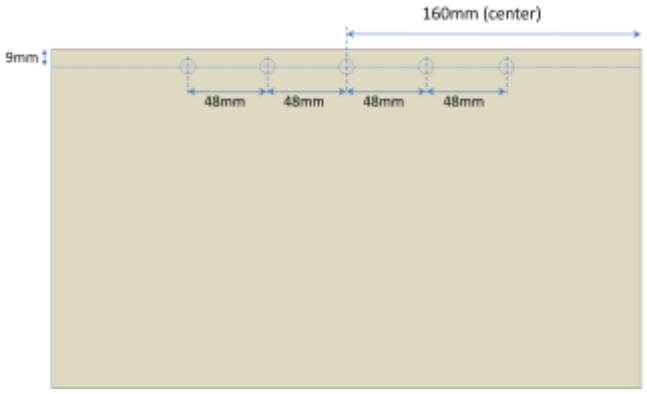
3. Cut out the window in the Cover.



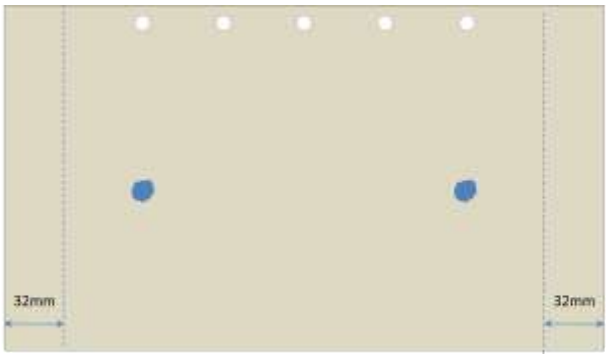
4. Fold cover edges. Make a light cut on the top surface along the fold line to allow the matt board to bend



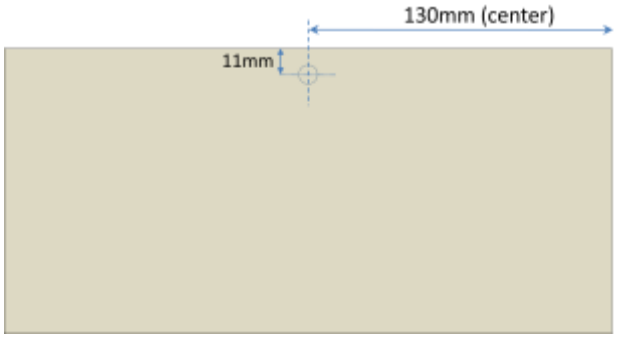
5. Mark the hole positions in the paper Tray. Punch out with hole punch or drill (approx 6mm) slightly larger than your dowel.



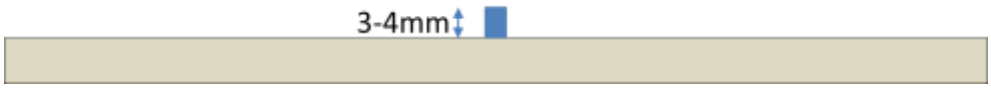
6. Draw paper alignment lines. These indicate where to affix your paper. I use two small, squashed flat, blobs of Blu-tack to hold the photo paper in position



7. Mark hole position in Base and drill into base using a drill the same diameter as a dowel.



8. Cut off dowel so that once fitted in the hole it pokes out about 3-4mm above the base surface. Round the end to allow it to find the hole in the tray easier.



9. Check operation of paper tray. Hold cover in place an ensure when the paper tray is moved along (lift, push, drop in next hole) it falls into the next hole easily. The holes may need a bit of enlarging to make it work smoothly.
10. Install cover. The Window should be further away from the dowel. Either glue in place if your confident of paper tray operation or for a temporary solution hold in place with two rubber bands while you test it the darkroom.
11. To use, cut a 8x10 piece of photographic paper in half (lengthways, see right) and stick it to the paper tray within your alignment marks. Select an area on your print you wish to proof and position the window at that area. Slide the paper tray into the 'base unit' and raise the edge with the holes slightly so it goes over the dowel. Push in until the 1st hole locates the dowel. Expose paper, adjust timer to new time and move paper tray on to next notch.