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Cambrian Large Horsebox of 1903

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A Pair of Horseboxes.

These are to be part of an NPC train for a client. There are two more (small Cambrian) horseboxes, a GW Fruit Van and 70' newspaper Van to add to it. Each kit came as a flat pack, which includes everything here save for the wheels and couplings.

There are three sheets of instructions printed both sides; mostly captioned photographs of the vehicle under construction. There was also an over scale, dimensioned, drawing that proved most useful in identifying some parts and how it

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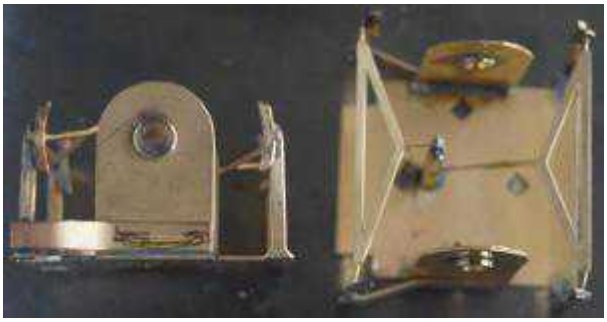
all fits together and especially so for the roof, see later, but that drawing may have been provided by my client.

Following my normal procedure, I assembled as many parts as possible 'in the flat' and here can be seen all the components for one vehicle ready for assembly. There are holes in the non-step end for handrails but I elected to bend them up with flats and soldered them over the holes.

The rain strip on the roof is fitted in an etched groove, which needs to be opened out with a scrawker a little to make a good fit. It is easy and effective.

I elected to take the option mentioned in the instructions and make the body a separate unit to which the under frame is bolted. Provision is made in the etches for holes over which one can solder nuts on the folded up edge of each end. However, the suspension units then need considerable modification to enable the bolts to be fitted.



The outer corners of the base plate on each unit need a square cutting out to give room for a bolt head. The brakes therefore need to be altered; I did this by fitting supports of scrap brass fixed to the brake rigging and the wheel bearing plate.

It's a little fiddly but, I think, worth the effort to avoid arranging for a removable roof or fitting the internal partition, seats and glass would be impossible. However, the supports do need to be on the *inside* of the wheel support struts or they foul the wheels. Result? More alterations. The resultant chassis runs well and modifications are invisible.

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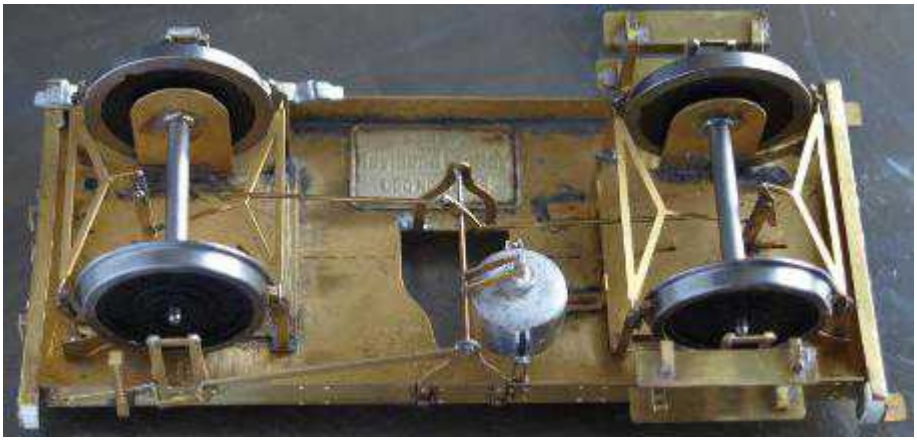

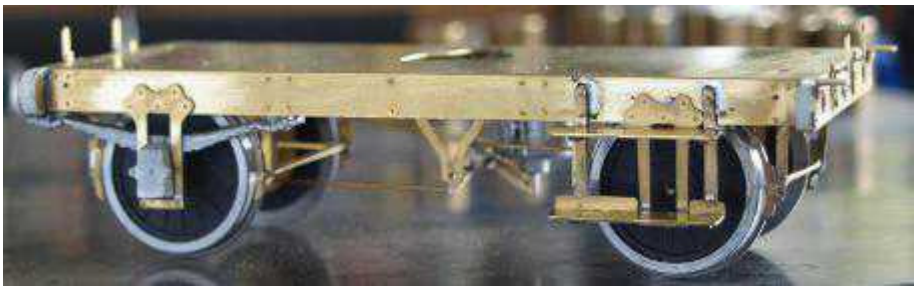

Here is the under frame almost complete, it all fits quite well and the compensation works well. The buffer housings were very poor castings so I sent them back for replacement. The springs are not very good castings either but I persevered with them, a shame really, since the other castings were of good quality, rather spoils a quite good kit.

The sides and ends were soldered up first as a pair comprising one side and one end and then the two parts joined together.

They all fit well, it just requires some care to ensure good joints. I strengthened the joint with some scraps of angle where the side meets the turn under from the end that holds the fixing nuts.

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Here then is the body largely complete, the soldered roof gives it a good deal of rigidity however, there is an error in the roof itself. I comes with etched holes for the ventilators, lamp and pot holder. That for the lamp is too close to the pot holder, as the drawing clearly shewed. The lamp centre should be 4' from the end but it is etched at 4' 9". I filled the hole and measured up for a new one at the correct spacing.

The buffers provided are white metal castings (on the left of the picture) with turned steel shank/heads and springs.

The replacement castings were not bad but the holes through the centres were almost solid with a small, irregular hole that would act as an excellent guide for a wandering drill bit; so drilling them out at two different sizes would be have been difficult. A set from Roxey had quite nice lost wax castings but the external springing system would be impossible to fit in the restricted space under the floor and anyway, I dislike the method.

Firstly, I cut off about half of the base, which fits in the buffer beam, opened out the hole at that end to 2mm and then soldered in a short length of brass tube to act as the stop for the spring, shewn on the right. The result was two sets of brass-based buffers with integral springing like that in the third picture.

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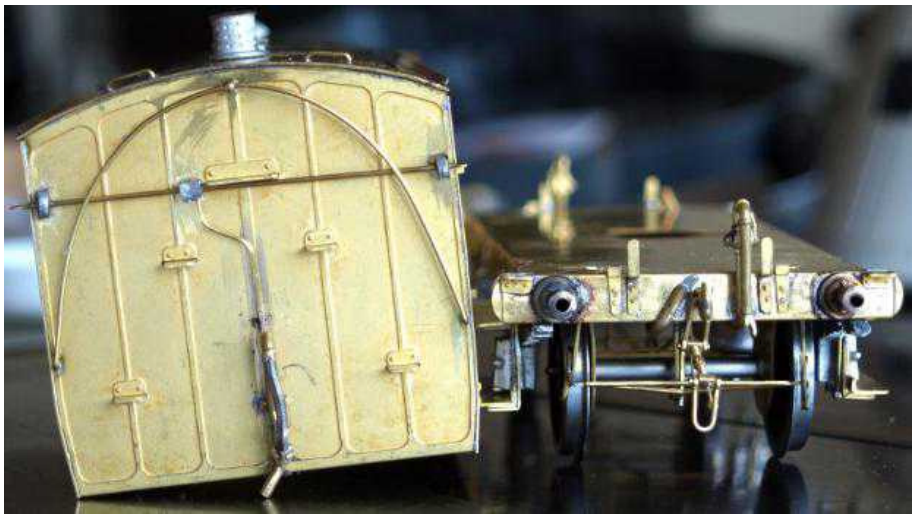
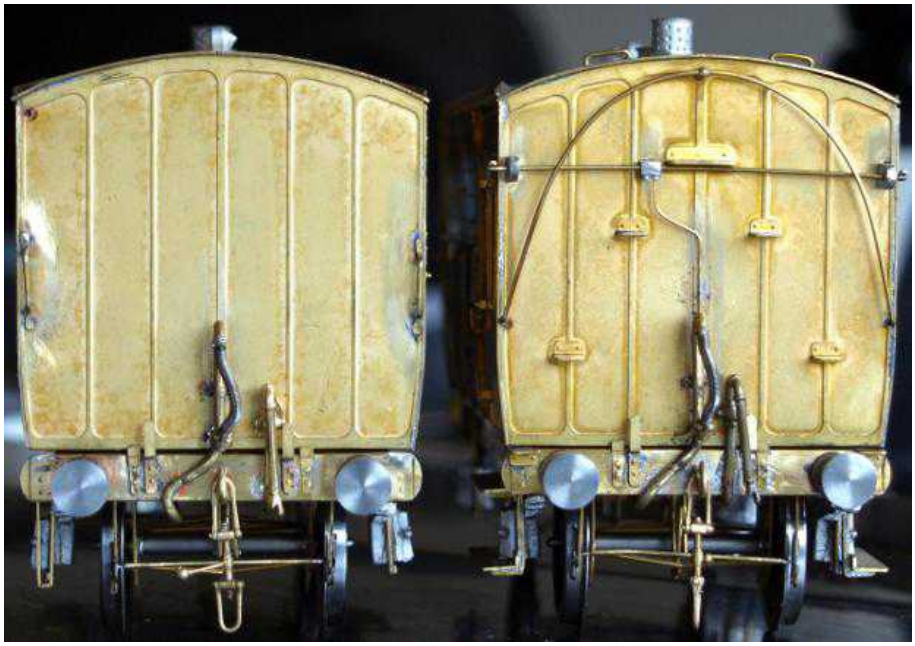


The vacuum and Westinghouse pipes were white metal and considered vulnerable, so they were changed for Slater's vacuum pipes with the base bent at about 40° to centre the pipe on the van body, and Laurie Griffin Westinghouse pipes. No steam pipes are indicated so the poor old Groom must have suffered somewhat in winter.

There is little, if any, room for sprung fitted couplings so the hook is soldered solid since the CPL couplings can be removed from the hook as per the real thing.

Another feature of these vehicles was the vacuum pipe being on the centre line of the ends with a dog's leg curve as it goes under the buffer beam. The Slater's units were not long enough to do this without fouling the coupling hook, which would have prevented the coupling being fitted. After some thought it occurred to me that one way out of this was to sever the pipe from the curved ends, Solder it to the body and then solder a piece of 1.6mm rod onto the buffer beam to represent the pipe disappearing under the beam as in the following pictures.



Here are the two vehicles completed, now it remains only to put together the interior, which is based, I think, in Slater's parts. Some planked siding and a third class seat. There is no compartment partition on the etch and the

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planked siding must needs serve for that purpose. It is very flimsy so I welded it to a piece 40 thou plasticard, which will make it easier to glue in place after painting.
Not an easy kit to build but an interesting prototype. Were I to build more I would go for the removable roof and fix the chassis to the body. It would be an easier build.

Chris Basten's response.
Dear Raymond,
Many thanks for the opportunity to see your comments on the Cambrian Horsebox kit. I find it very difficult to offer my opinion on any review as the author is by definition being very subjective. The builder of any kit is influenced by several factors, e.g. as a commercial builder I want a kit to go together quickly and without having to spend any time fettling parts to get a good fit. (I need to finish it and get paid!!!!) As a builder for pleasure, which the vast majority of modellers are, what I am looking for is something I can enjoy in my leisure time, which looks good and which runs well. My time is unlimited, which is not the case when I am building for a customer.

Equally as a purchaser of a kit, I want value for money. To some people this is reflected in the price paid, to others the price is not as important as having castings in brass or nickel silver rather than white metal. It is difficult to reconcile both and stay in business!!!! This is why one pays £500 plus for some loco kits, which are available for 40% of the cost from other manufacturers. Therefore I accept that what you have written is how you found the kit, and I take on board the comments made. I have taken up the matter of the buffer housings with Dave Ellis, who does most of my casting work, and we have resolved to keep a careful check in future. Beyond this, I can only say that the finished model looks really good and I hope your customer is pleased with the result.
Best wishes Chris.

Raymond Walley January 2013, Bexhill.