

MR Meat Van

Manufactured by: S M Models, 46 Barrows Hill Lane, WESTWOOD, NG16 5HJ.

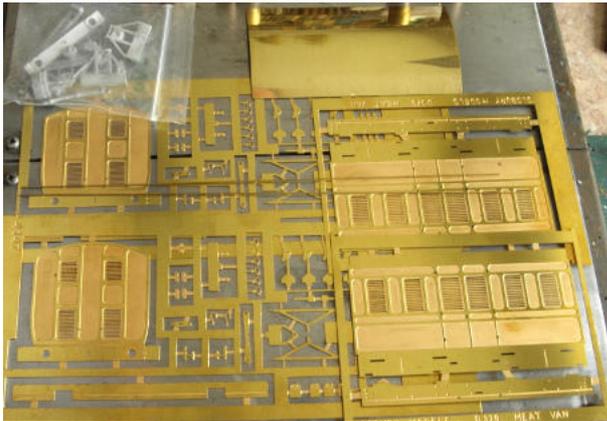
Tel: 01773 782 848. <http://www.smmmodels.webeden.co.uk>

I rate this kit as: 2-3-4

MR Diagram D379.



This is to be part of a rake of, largely, NPCS vehicles for a client. The others will appear in due course and be linked together. There are two kits to build from SM Models, this meat van and the Corpse Van.



Since the construction of each is very similar with only detail differences, this description will serve to cover both vehicles.

So what's in the box?, which will not hold the finished model, but is very robust and a useful box for storing materials in.



Four sheets of etch, a ready rolled roof, some white metal castings and a couple of lengths of 0.7mm wire. The instructions, on both sides of a folded A4 sheet are adequate for a builder

with some experience of etched kits but might prove a challenge for a beginner. Also included are extracts from the relevant HMRS publication, which includes a dimensioned line drawing. There was also a set of instructions headed "51L Chowbent 4mm" and tailed "Wizard Models" (but not for the Corpse Van), which suggest that the underframe is a separate unit - it's not -; while the etches are marked "Oldbury Models". This suggests a somewhat chequered history.

There is also a coloured picture of a finished model taken from SM's website. A number of other parts were provided by my client to complete the box. Slater's wheels and vacuum pipes, Prestige buffers and Exactoscale couplings, to which I have also added a set of WEP compensation units.

As usual, I read through the instructions and then altered some things as I went. As much work as possible was done "in the flat". Things like the lower lamp irons, that would be awkward to do once assembled and the door hinges.

The buffers beams can be replaced with cast white metal units but I stuck with the etched brass. The ends fold over and one can either fill them with solder or, as I did, solder in some scrap brass and file it down to give a nice strong and square shape.

The wheels were cleaned up, chemically blackened and fitted to the compensating units ready for fitting after the body was assembled. It is necessary to cut off the axles ends almost completely to fit between the axle guards.

The compensation units are simple to construct but usually require a 5BA washer or two to take up the lateral slack on the axles or the vehicle will 'hunt' from side-to-side.



The sides have their turn-under shaped before the top and bottom are folded over at 90°. A job that takes some care as the half etched panelling is thin and easily dented. I started it off on a piece of tube and then used fingers to tweak it until the curve fitted well with the end.



Assembling the body is a little fiddly using edge soldering and so I made things easier by soldering some short lengths of brass angle on the sides a thickness of brass from the edge. I found this necessary because the natural place for the ends, against the protruding top and bottom folds, is too deep.

It just takes a little care but, once tack soldered up square, each joint was seamed, checking all the while for square. On reflection, a better way would have been to solder some brass

strip to the ends, thick enough for the end to sit on the folder over at top and bottom.

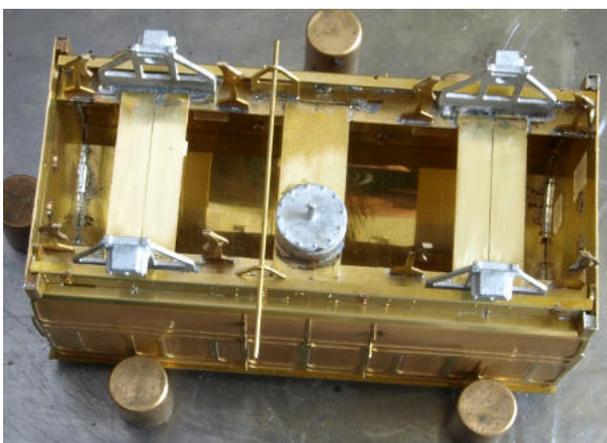
Then the rains strips were soldered in place before the roof was fitted, there are no lamps to fit to this vehicle.

Fitting the roof at this stage helps to make a strong box.

Here is the largely completed body, a strong, square box on which to work to fit the entire underframe parts.



The kit is designed to have the wheels running in the white metal axle boxes, which then need drilling out for the bearings.



I simply soldered the axle guards in place and then followed this with four strips of scrap. Two between each pair to preserve the centre line for lining up the wheels sets later.

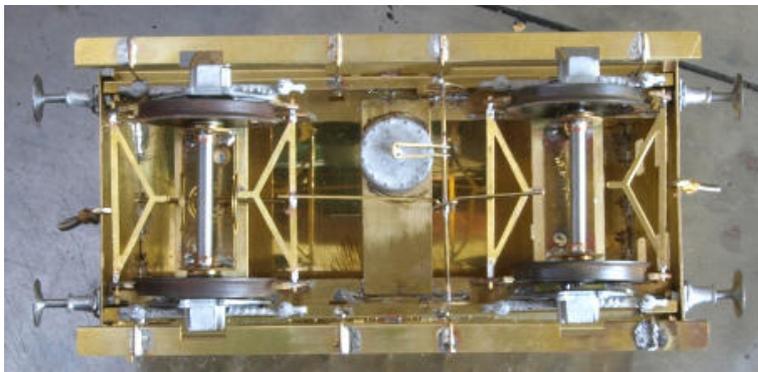
The vacuum cylinder was soldered to another strip of brass and then the strip was soldered into position using the cross shaft as a datum to get the position right. The instructions make

reference to 0.9mm wire for the cross shaft but there was none provided with either kit.

The springs come as separate units and will be glued on later with Loctite 408.



The step boards are simply folded up and soldered together as a pair with wire for the supports using the measurements provided in the instructions. Once the wires are cut in half, the support struts simply push into etched holes in the sole bar.



It is worth checking these before starting assembly as some of mine were not etched through and needed attention with a 0.7mm drill, easier to do that in the flat.

Here all the under gear is fitted and the compensation works fine.

There was no need of any packing as the units fitted exactly. No couplings have



yet been fitted but will be once the type the client wants has been clarified.

The van is virtually finished so now simply awaits those couplings and good clean up before a trip to Dennis's paint shop.



A well designed kit of an interesting prototype that goes together well with no real problems.

This review was passed to the manufacturer, who thought it a fair assessment.