CAMBRIAN 'SHORT' HORSEBOXES

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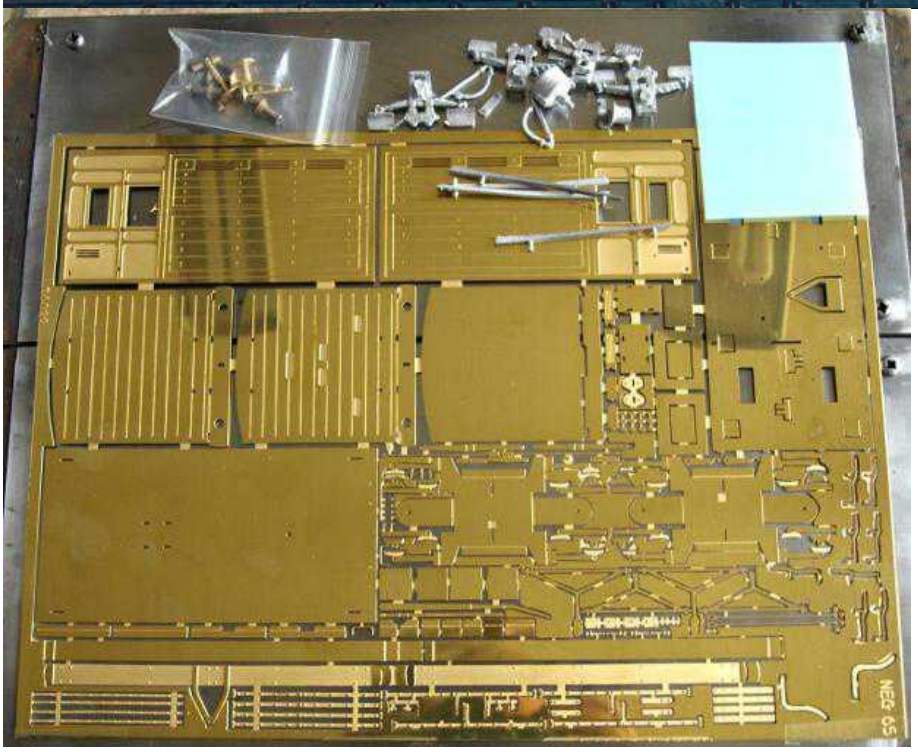
A VERY EARLY EXAMPLE OF THE ETCHER'S ART.



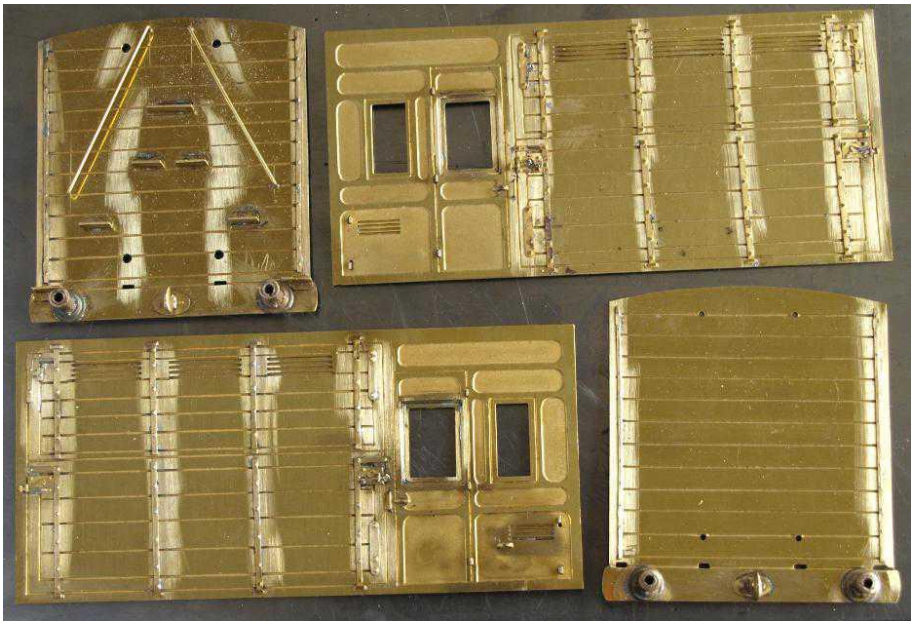
The kit, which used to be sold by MSC, arrives as a flat pack containing a sheet of hard, bright, etch attached to sheet of stout card, various castings in white metal and a set of Roxey lost wax buffers. These have brass shanks and heads so must be from an early production run since later sets (obtained for a pair of large Cambrian horseboxes) contain steel shanks and heads. Fortunately, I have two full sets of steel buffer heads left over from that build to use instead.

The quality of etching is good; particularly considering it is based on hand-drawn masters so there are inevitable minor inaccuracies. It may well be one of the oldest etched kits produced, being the work of the late Peter Korrison, a skilled scratch builder, whom I understand predates even Colin Waite. The sheets are marked 'NEG 65', which suggests they may have been drawn in 1965. I am told that it was originally produced as an aid to scratch building but it

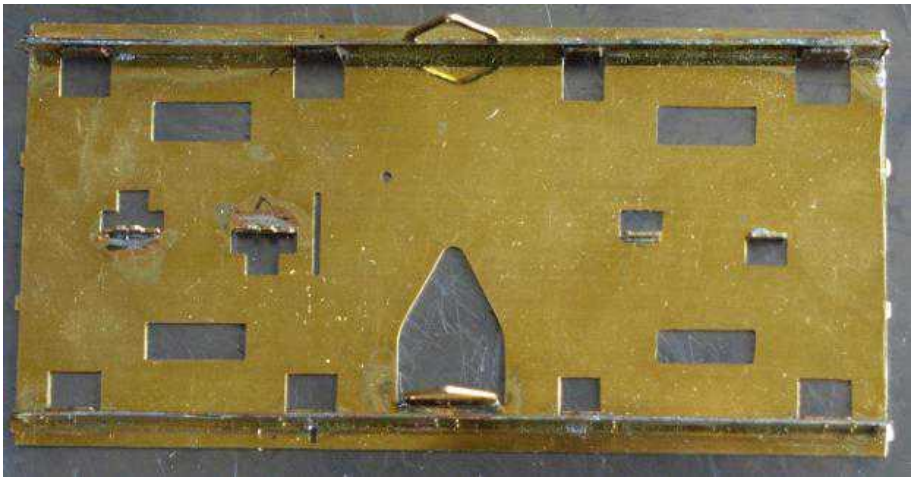
holds up reasonably well as a kit. Included also is an eight page set of instructions, which include a parts list and a list of etched components. The last two pages contain isometric drawings of seven figures referred to in the instructions, except for figure 5. It looks as though it refers to the vacuum cylinder so perhaps originally no casting was provided. There is also a large, scaled, drawing marked 'not 7mm scale'. These vehicles are to form part of an NPC train that includes the Cambrian large horseboxes, a GW Fish-van and 70' Newspaper van.

The standard of the white metal castings appears good, particularly the complex part for the springs and axle boxes. The strapping is, naturally, delicate but is easily fitted with a little care. However, great care is needed while removing fine and delicate parts from the frets. The tabs are quite thick and the gaps sometimes very narrow between parts. The white metal stanchions that fit on the ends come as two pairs with differently spaced pegs and lengths; neither of them fits the holes etched in the ends. Never the less, they will be easy enough to fit by eye with the pegs removed.

There are etched parts for the hinges but they are tiny, with no portion to bend at right angles to make soldering easier. However, suitable etch from the scrap box was forthcoming to make up a set of hinges that could be soldered in from the rear.

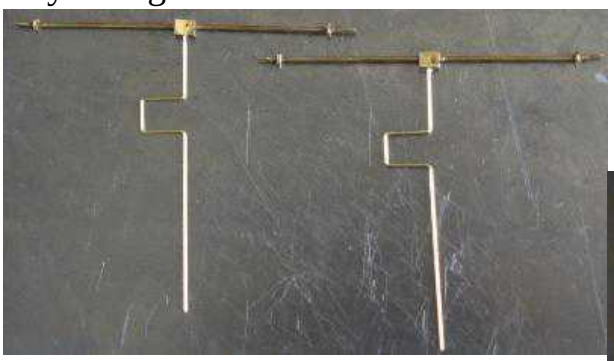


As is my usual practice, I fitted as many parts as possible while the sides and ends were still flat. The door handles came from a set of Slater's lost wax castings. The handrails on the step end were measured from the drawing and suitable holes drilled. Still to be fitted are the white metal stanchions. There is no provision for control gear at the step end and so, since it is a prominent feature and fitted to the large horseboxes, some will be scratched up from brass and wire.

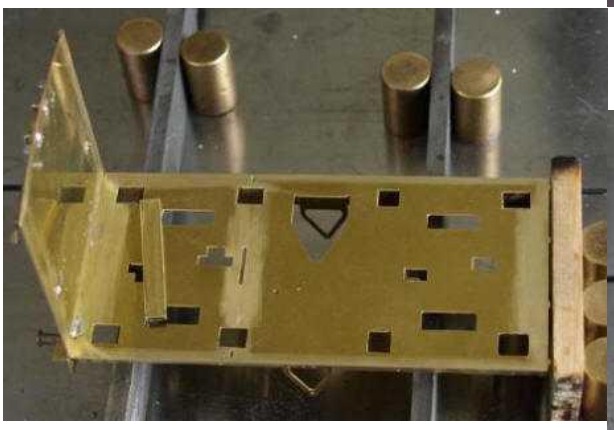


The floor with parts fitted for the solebars. These have small ninety-degree turnovers at each end however; they need to be removed, as they will foul the buffer body shanks, which are quite meaty. There are tabs at each end to fit matching slots in the body ends; they are a reasonably good fit requiring little fettling.

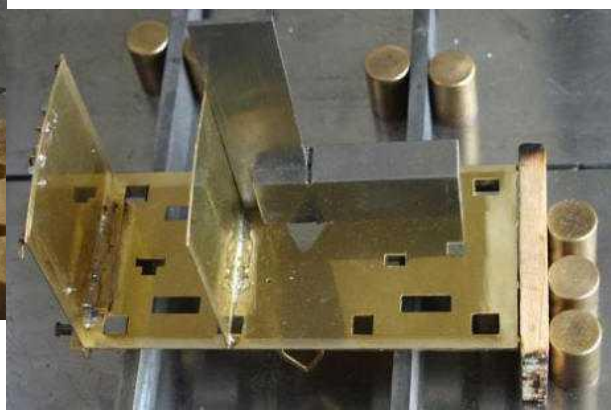
Some of the etched parts are extremely fine and there are parts provided for the grab handles by the doors and on the roof however, I elected not to use them in favour of 0.5mm wire instead; it is stronger and looks better too. The handrails at the step end need to be measured up and appropriate holes drilled as no anchoring points have not been etched in. The dimensioned drawing made that easy enough.

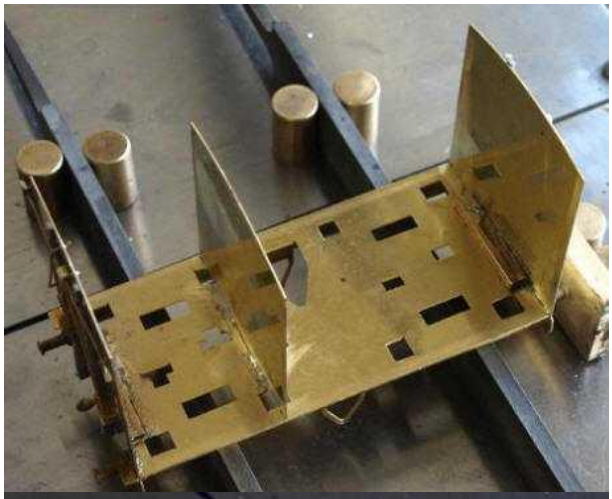


The alarm gear was made using some small scraps of brass and wire. The wings on the ends of the rod are made by heating the end of the wire to dull red when, once cooled, it is flattened hard in the vice.

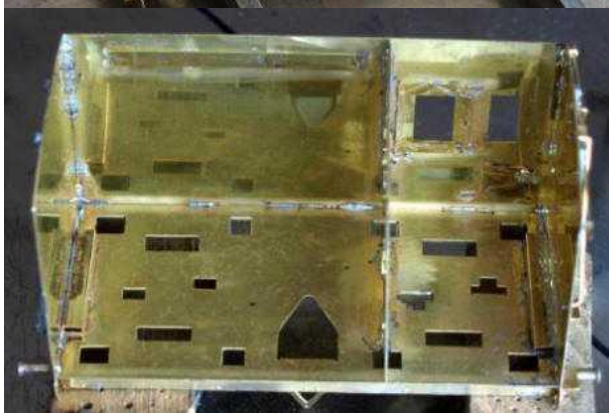


The completed ends how ready for fitting to the floor.



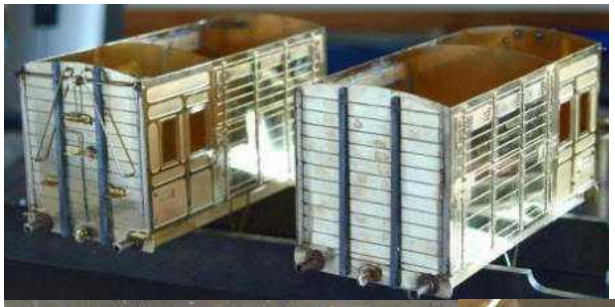


To fit the ends and compartment partition required a jig so that the floor could rest on its solebars. Some magnets and a couple of files on the steel plate did the trick. The one at the step was fitted first, then the partition and lastly the other end, that way there is always space to hold a small engineer's square to ensure a right angle.



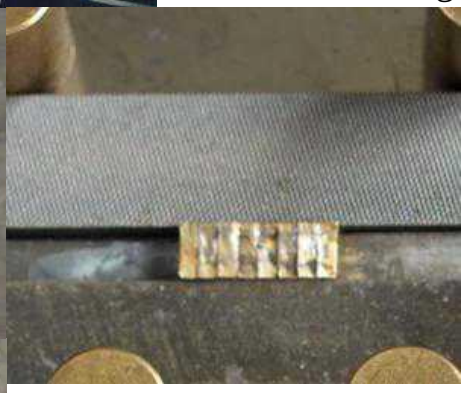
Once the ends were tacked in place and checked a substantial piece of rectangular brass tube was soldered into the join to strengthen it.

Once happy that the joints are solid and square, work can commence on fitting the sides, which requires care, as they are an exact fit. I used the corner jig to start the first corner of (see Siphon for details of this tool).



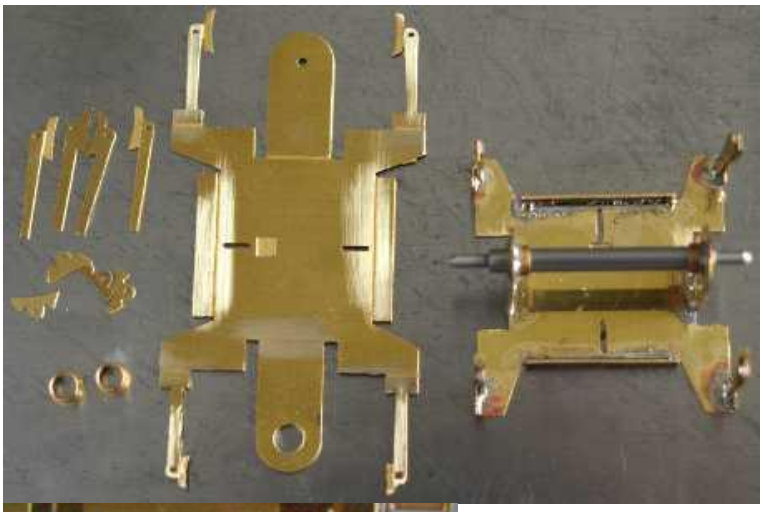
Finally, two bodies ready for fitting the underframe and roof.

The original buffer beams were made of wood and the suggested method of making them correct thickness is to use Milliput; I do not like the stuff and think it fiddlier than making some brass inserts. I cut eight pieces of 2x6mm brass rod long enough to fit behind the beam, realigning the base of each to a good right angle after each saw cut. These were set up in a jig on the steel plate and soldered together. The block was marked up and filed to shape;

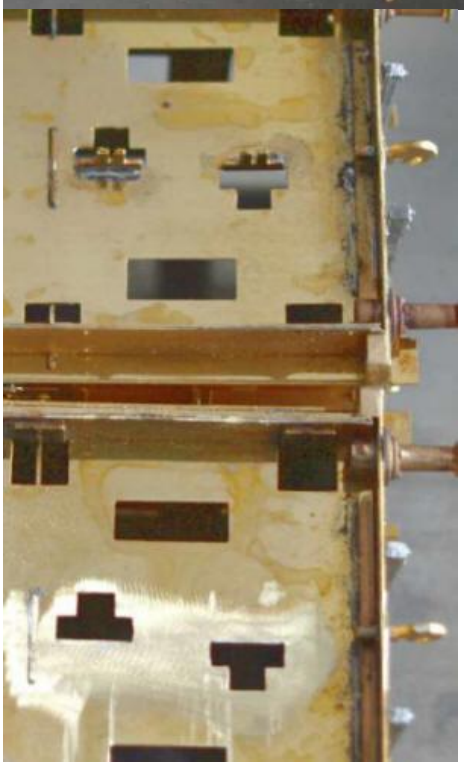


finally, they were unsoldered and cleaned up ready for fitting.

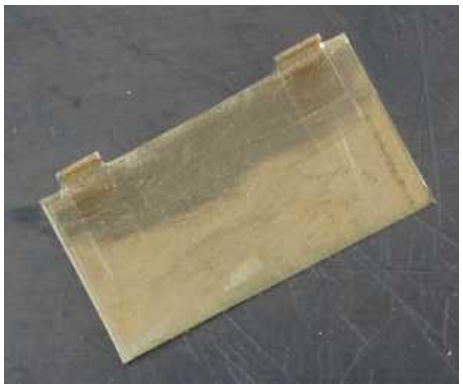
It was then a simple matter of soldering the parts in situ. A little fettling ensured they fitted the shape of each beam end correctly. It took a couple of hours but avoided messy fillers and the dusty process of cleaning them up once dry.

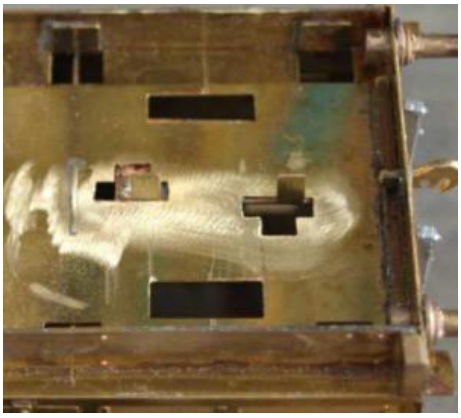


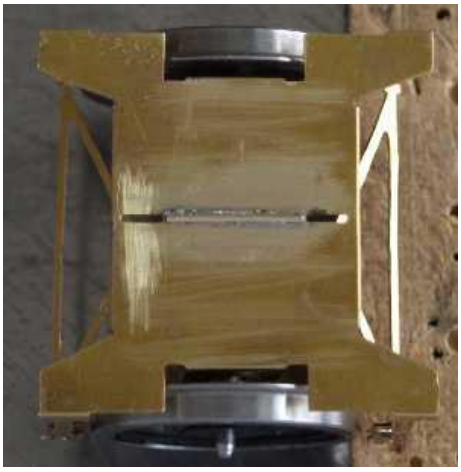
The time came to begin fitting the wheel sets, one of which is a rocking set to compensate the vehicle. The trucks go together quite well the only difficult bit being opening out the tiny holes in the wheel bearing supports, a longish job with broaches. The compensated truck is designed with two slots in the housing to fit over fold up tabs under the floor. Unfortunately, these tabs stand out so far from the floor that the wheels would be several millimetres too far from the floor and the vehicle would slope dramatically from the groom's end downward.



I thought about this for a while since, it is now all but impossible to modify the pivot tabs without taking at least the sole bars off. Eventually, I came up with the following method.



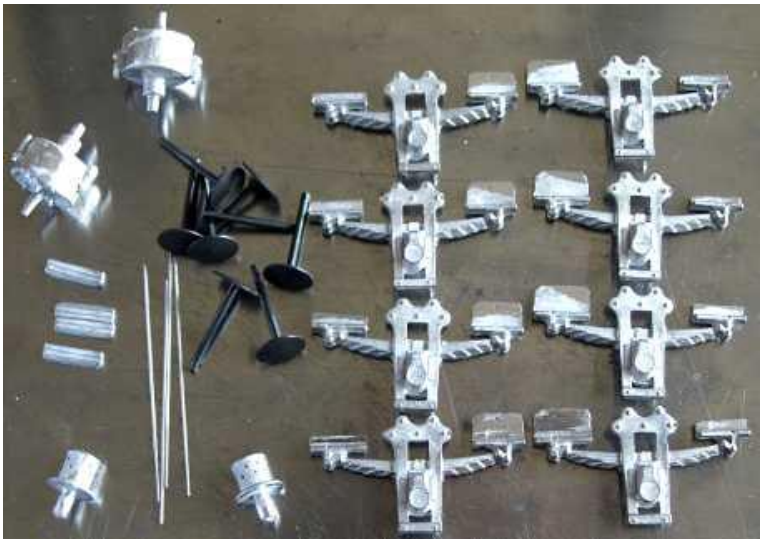




I removed the pivots as in the picture above right and filed the edges where they had been to line up on the centre line of the floor. Then made a new pair of pivots to be soldered inside on the floor. These were made using measurements from the wheel truck and then soldered in place on the floor inside, ensuring that the wheels lined up correctly down the centre line and across in line with the axle.

Very little movement is needed on the rocking truck to effect compensation. All that was required was a short length of 0.7mm wire soldering on the centre line of the truck.

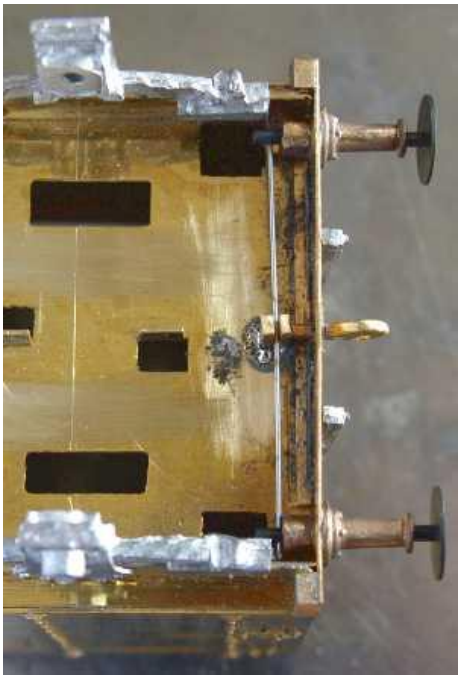
On probable advantage I thought might be that the trucks could be made removable, which would have made painting that much easier. Sadly, it proved not to be, see later.
Had I not already built the body, it would probably have been possible to modify the pivot tabs.



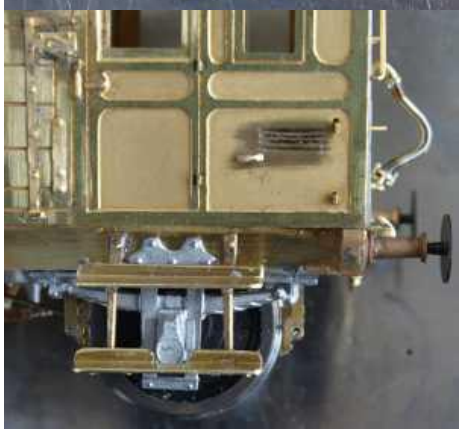
White metal parts ready now for fitting. The axle boxes and springs are interesting in that they slot over the edge of the solebar. Here they are cleaned up with part of the fixing flange cut away for the buffer shanks to operate.

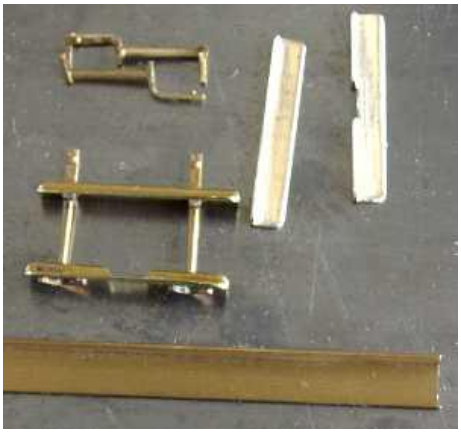
The buffers are left over from the large Cambrian horsebox, used in lieu of the brass set provided in the kit. They have been blackened because it is unlikely they can easily be removed for painting. However, I did come up with a method that may allow removal. A piece of brass with a slot cut in

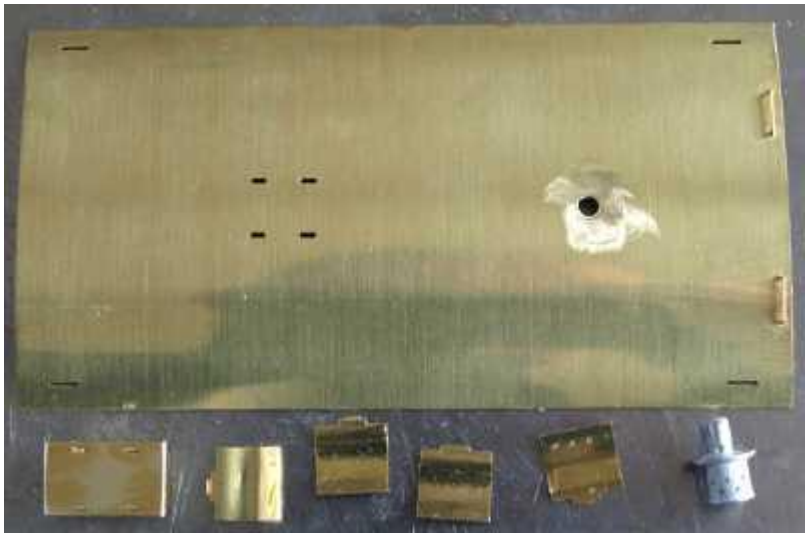
it to take the steel spring wire. Once the buffers are fitted together with the spring, the brass anchor is fitted and soldered in place thus. With care, it is possible to remove them.



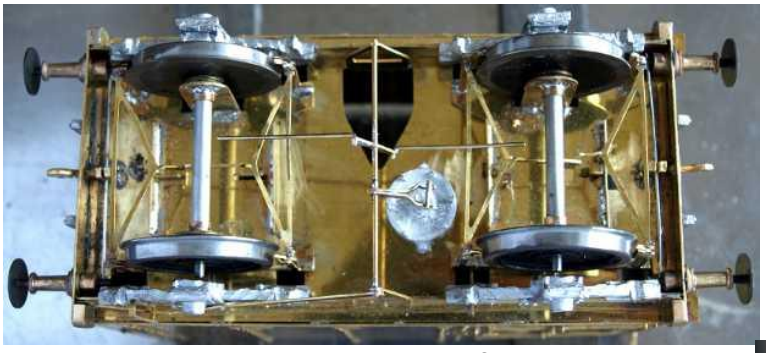
The steps proved to be 'interesting', the etch includes parts for the step supports as shewn here. They are designed to be laminated in pairs but in my opinion, would be far too fragile. Further investigation revealed that the flat of the step boards were a scale 4" wide while the drawing indicated they should be 8" and, as a single layer, I deemed them far too thin. I scrapped them and decided to scratch some up from brass angle and Slater's step board supports, which gave a more robust unit. The supports needed modifying to allow for narrower step boards and the removal of the fixing pins; the steps were then soldered in place on the solebar where they look like the thick, rounded edged, planks that would have been used on the real thing.





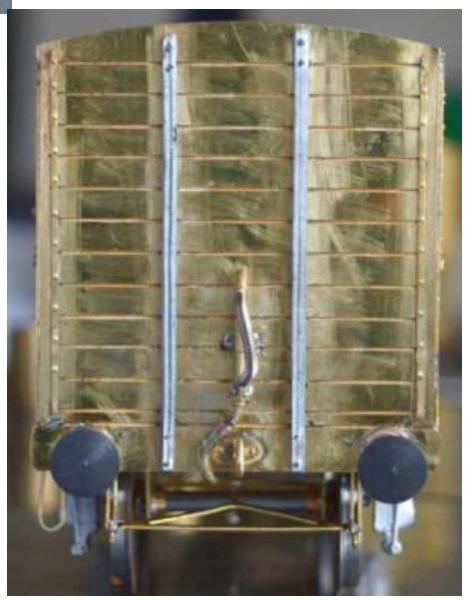


The roof is designed to be removable with tabs provided that are soldered into slots in the roof corners. They work well though I had to cut a few corners out to allow for the strengthening parts I had fitted in the body corners. The ventilator is made up from five parts that fit well and makes a good representation. It is important to get the parts the right way up and then file a slight inner curve in the base of the ends so that the whole thing fits snugly into the slots in the roof.



Meanwhile I have completed the underframe details, which are simple. Again, as for the large horseboxes, I omitted the details behind the wheels, as they are invisible in normal use.

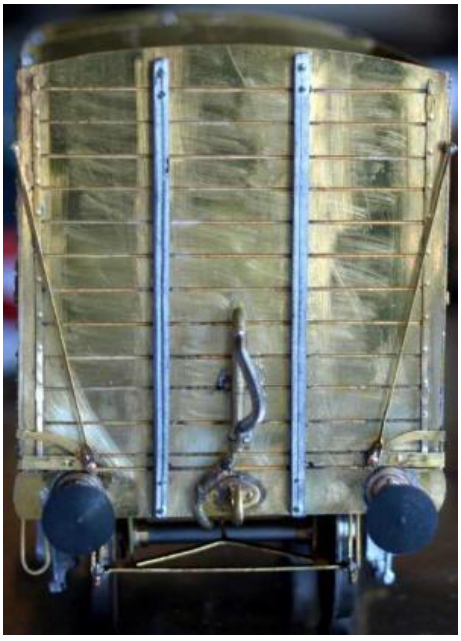
The vacuum pipes needed modifying similarly to those on the large horseboxes but this time I joined the two parts together with some brass tube.



The final hurdle is the pair of long door hinges on the end opposite the groom's compartment. The parts are very fine and delicate; great care is needed removing them from the fret and cleaning up the tabs. I drilled out the holes 0.5mm before removing them from the fret. Parts not needed immediately should be left on the fret; there are no spares so losing any is not an option.

There is a clear drawing on how these parts go together so they were easy enough to fit, despite their delicate nature. I hope that they will survive painting and handling in the future.

A final view of the pair ready for the paint shop, which the customer is doing himself. I hope to get some pictures in due course of them in service.



The kit has proved most interesting and something of a challenge but only, because we fortunate modellers of today have access to modern CAD designed kits. This is more akin to a very good aid to scratch building. However, I think that any modeller with a modicum of experience could build it.

This review was sent to the manufacturer who has so far declined to comment.