

January 2017

Hello and a very happy New Year to you all. This is the first newsletter for some time, partly due to other commitments and partly due to a lack of material. However, Bournemouth is just around the corner so I thought I'd better get something together.

In this issue the main items are details of a special offer from Russ Kaufman and a very ingenious passenger car conversion from Ali Smith. So with no further ado – onwards.

From Russ Kaufman (The N-Scale Architect)

A Happy New Year to you! I trust that the holidays were happy and healthy for you and yours.

With the New Year at hand, we are starting to think more seriously about preparations of this year's NTRAK-UK convention. To that end, we are soliciting pre-orders for items to be delivered at the convention. As an added incentive, we will provide a 10% discount on all pre-orders with an added 5% for individual orders over \$50.00 USD (15% total discount) and another 5% for orders over \$100.00 USD (20% total discount). These discounts apply to all products listed on our website (THENARCH.COM) excluding 'Web Specials'. All prices are

inclusive of VAT and shipping charges.

To receive these special discounts, members will need to place their orders by February 1, 2017 in order to ensure timely delivery for the convention. Members are welcomed to contact me directly with their needs and wants. No deposit is required.

Russ' latest kit The Elkton Smelter is shown below.



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13¼"l x 8"w
x 5½"h

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\$145.95

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LASER-CUT MICRO-PLYWOOD KIT WITH SELF STICK STONEMWORK
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Tales from The Coach Yard by Ali Smith

Last year I hinted that I might write about making a Norfolk and Western D1 diner from a Kato lightweight diner. I've finally got around to it. The plan is to build a complete set of the 1949 Powhatan Arrow in original condition with underbody skirts and no head-end cars. Luckily it was quite a short train...

My main source of information was "Norfolk & Western's Powhatan Arrow" by Thomas W. Dixon, Jr., TLC Publishing Inc. 2009. This includes drawings of all the cars from the 1949 train. Any photos I could find in other books and magazines were also referred to.



This picture shows diners from both sides and a Kato observation car to show the kind of skirts I want to add to the other cars in the consist. Not only are skirts to be added, but the roof details ought to be altered and some re-organisation of windows is required. The side displayed by the N&W diner needs no changes, but the Great Northern one needs the far right window blanked off. The central door shouldn't be there, but we need a window in its place. By great good fortune it is the same size as the one that needs blanking off, so we can use the glazing from that one.

Also fortunate is that the edge of the door is delineated by a ridge. A groove would be more realistic, but not so easy to remove.

The first step is to dismantle the model. The roof and body need to be stripped down to their component parts; the underframe, trucks and interior can be left as an assembly.



Here we see the parts to be worked on; the others can be put away safely. The roof fittings won't be needed again.



The glazing on the side to be altered needs to be cut up thus, then put away for safe keeping until reassembly time. The little window in the middle is now surplus.

The unwanted window can be blanked by cutting a piece of 0.030" plastic to fit the hole and backing it with a larger piece for strength. Some filling is bound to be needed. The small window is filed out until the redundant glazing from the

blanked window fits. As the original window was taller, the top part of it needs blanking off in a similar way to before.

One thing that puzzled me for a long time about these Kato cars is the beading above and below the windows. More recently, I noticed the Walthers smoothsides are the same. I had never come across a prototype car with this feature. Eventually it dawned on me that they are not a representation of a real life feature at all, but a guide to apply the lining, which is OK if you model a road that lined its cars in those locations. As the N&W didn't, they had to come off. I tried one of those little brass block planes you sometimes see in sets of three at shows, but found that the straight portion of a Swann Morton no. 10 blade, in a handle of course, was better. I've since obtained a Trumpeter "model chisel" for subsequent cars but haven't had a chance to try it yet.

The next step is to add the skirts. First, though, we need to eliminate the notch above each truck which I did by rubbing the bottom of the body on a 12" fine-cut flat file laid on the bench.

On measuring the observation car in the first picture, I found that Evergreen 0.030 x 0.156" styrene strip was just the right material for the skirts. I was concerned that I wouldn't be able to keep the three sections of each skirt in line or file them evenly, so I elected to add them in one piece and cut away at the truck locations later. To ensure the skirt was flush with the outer surface of the car, I laid a steel rule on the outside and held it all together with toolmaker's clamps.

Unfortunately you can't add reinforcing pieces on the inside otherwise it won't fit over the underframe.



Short pieces of the skirt material are added at the ends to give some reinforcement (you can just see them in the next photo), then it's time to profile the skirts. This is done by rubbing them along a large flat file (the same one used to level the bottom of the original body in fact). The problem with this is that the sides are quite flexible, so a block of wood had to be cut to fill the body.



The strange white thing to the right of the picture is a gauge made to fit the skirt of the observation car in the first picture so that the profile of this one can be checked. The procedure is rub a bit, check with the gauge and also view along the length of the car to ensure everything is even, rub a bit more, check again, rub a bit more etc etc until you get it right. Some would call this an iterative process. Tedious sums it up rather more

succinctly, I feel. The strip may well come adrift here and there; you just have to re-glue and let it set.

Once the profile is correct and the adhesive is fully set, it is time to cut the skirts away where the trucks go. This needs great care to get the cut-outs exactly central over the trucks, the angles and radii are, in my view, less important but they do need to be consistent. Use an engineer's protractor to mark the angles. Once the cuts have been made, the excess pieces should just snap off and the radii can be filed.

This completes the body modifications. The next photo shows it primed then rubbed down and filled where it wasn't quite good enough. You would think that after another coat of primer we would be ready for a coat or two of colour, transfers and varnish to complete the body shell. Plain sailing after all the foregoing fiddly stuff, surely.



Well, I thought that too!

When we started modelling Norfolk and Western, we chose Vauxhall Mexico Red in a Halfords aerosol as our passenger car colour. So off I went to the shed to find the tin, give it a good shake and spray away. What I had overlooked was that the can probably dated from

the last century and it splattered horribly over my handiwork. There is a sensible course of action to take in these circumstances.

Remarkably that is the one I chose. I put the car body down carefully to dry and threw the can away. When the paint was good and hard I rubbed it down ready for another attempt. I visited Halfords to get another can, only to discover that car colours don't stay in production for 15-20 years. I sort of knew this but hadn't really considered it as I wasn't repainting Luton's finest from the 1990's.

It is often stated when discussing the colour of historic trains that people can't remember colours with any accuracy. So here I was trying to decide which of numerous dark reds most closely resembled something I last saw two or three weeks ago that I wanted to use to make a replica of something I'd never seen at all. I couldn't retrieve the cap of the old can as the dustmen had made off with it, so I just had to guess. I guessed Mercedes-Benz Jupiter Red. It isn't a perfect match for the Vauxhall colour by any means but it looks quite convincing to me and as the whole train will be the same colour (assuming I don't take another 20 years over it) it should be just fine.

Whilst I was mucking about with paint I also made a start on a P3 coach for the same train. This is made from a Walthers coach, but it is constructed in a similar manner to the Kato, with full length glazing mouldings with raised panels to match the window apertures in the body moulding. Thus we can use a similar technique to reorganise the windows. The only limitation is you

can't have more windows of a given size than there are windows of that size in the donor model unless you can steal some from another conversion that needs fewer of that size. This being the case, I shan't bore you with a detailed description of the body alterations except to mention that this one didn't have the notches above the trucks so I didn't need to file them away. I did, however find it best to cut away the vestigial skirts at the ends and make complete new skirts as before. Here's a picture of work in progress. Apologies for any distress caused to UP fans.



Naturally the underframe, interior and trucks would not normally be in place whilst this work was going on. The interior needed to be cut and shut to match the new window arrangement then stuck back onto the underframe. When all this was completed to a satisfactory level, the body was painted to match the diner, after which it was transfer time.

Like most people, I expect, I usually use Microscale decals as they are easily obtained and go on well with little visible film. Their N&W sheet does leave something to be desired. The road name is too compressed (see the first picture), the lining is short so that it needs two and a bit pieces to do each line

and there is no Powhatan Arrow branding.

I obtained some Shellscale decals from the Norfolk and Western Historical Society. These had a correctly spaced road name and the train branding. The lining was in very short pieces like the Microscale and I found it almost impossible to apply to my satisfaction, but I got there in the end. Then I put the road name on and the lining moved.

At this point I discovered that Fox offer yellow lines of a suitable width and nearly a foot long! Not quite long enough to get two lines on the model out of one line on the sheet, but after my previous struggles I'm not complaining. The offcuts will do for a West Country I'm repainting.

The rest of the lettering was done with the Shellscale decals which I found looked good but had more visible film than Microscale. Once varnished, however, it largely disappeared. On the subject of varnish, Fox state that you should only use Railmatch or Phoenix Precision varnish. I had a tin of Railmatch satin varnish (I prefer satin for passenger cars and matt for freight) but it went on with a bit of a splutter so when it had dried, and it had flowed out by then, I used Citadel Purity Shield which I prefer anyway and everything was fine.

To finish the bodies they now needed the glazing replaced in their new order. The Kato cars have a "chrome" trim on the window glazing, but sadly the Walthers cars don't. What they do have is a barely perceptible beading around the edge of the

outer face. If you paint a piece of plasticard or some other firm, smooth material silver, place the window face down in it (be brave!) and perhaps move it sideways a little, it will pick up the paint on the beading. It isn't as bright or as even as the Kato plating and some might get rubbed off during assembly, but it does give more of a family look. What the Kato car doesn't have is handrails, whereas the Walthers product does. These were added from 0.3mm nickel silver wire, again to improve the family resemblance.

This leaves us with two complete bodies, so the next step is to paint the interiors and if necessary underframes and re-fit them to the bodies. Now would be a good time to add figures but for various reasons I decided not to.

That just leaves the roofs. The diner's roof needs to be completely "shaved" except for the vents on the side. Then it's time to add the ventilators over the kitchen. Being on the top of the car they are not very clear in photos and no two pictures seem to be quite the same. In the end I decided to go with the drawings I had, on the grounds that they probably represented original condition, whereas most of the photos that showed any detail were from the sixties. I also discovered that one of these cars (there were only four) survives on a preserved line in New England. Pictures were found on the internet but it seems to have lost its ventilators altogether. I made them from 8BA cheesehead screws with bits of brass fret waste soldered into the slots then filed to improve the shape.

Both cars also needed a cinder deflector at each end. This is a triangular section ridge intended to deflect cinders away from the train by creating an upward draught. I made them by laminating .010 x .020" strips of plastic (four layers if I remember correctly) onto the roof then filing to shape once set hard. Only N&W seem to have found this feature necessary which is good news for modellers of other roads as they will be saved a considerable fuff. Here's a view of the diner's roof.



All that remained now was to paint the roofs and fit them. I may do a small amount of light weathering, but not until the whole train is completed.

Here are the finished cars.





I really should use a tripod to keep the images level. At least all the wheels are on the track; even commercial magazines sometimes slip up on that one.

I have the donor cars for the observation car and the locker coach, but still need to get another coach to make the partition car and one or two more P3s would not go amiss so if anyone has one or more Walthers smoothside lightweight coaches they wish to dispose of please email me at ASmith3005@aol.com, stating price required.

(Editor's note: - Reducing this article into our normal format does not do justice to the photographs. If you would like a copy of the article with full size pictures please email me at ralph.snelling@googlemail.com and I'll send you the original word document as a .PDF)

New to You

Have you seen the new Woodland Scenics street and external building lamps? They're designed to work with Woodland's existing 'plug and play' lighting system and come in some very useful styles, including a very rustic wooden style post and some nice gooseneck lamps. They use LEDs rather than filament

bulbs so life expectancy shouldn't be a major issue and the fitted wires should reach just about anywhere! They're not cheap but seem a very high quality product.

I understand that a series of lighted road vehicles will soon be added to the range which will make life interesting!