

# On the wagon

by Alan Lancaster

With the accent put mainly on locomotives within the railway modelling fraternity usually nice green passenger types, there is a yawning gap still to be filled on the bookshelves.

Little is written about wagons, come on, lets face it, who wants to get their mitts dirtied up and brushes manked up with making wagons look the part !

Wrong! on all fronts.....

Even the best layouts I have seen at exhibitions and I have seen a few or permanent displays, such as those at the N.R.M, the wagon fleets have made their presence felt. Being something of a fetishist in that direction, I always look closer at wagons represented on layouts.

Whenever I visit the N. R. M, I make a beeline for the main hall to visit Heckmondwyke even if I never seem to see it in working order to get an eyeful of the wagon outlay. Compared with its 7mm scale neighbour, "next door", with its outstanding scenics and variety, this 4mm scale layout is "it". True, it's a P4 layout, I've been a member of the Scalefour Society as well, but that's not the point, it's a good example of what you can do in the smaller scales.

The period setting of "Heckmondwyke" is pregrouping, you are left in no doubt about that. The locomotives are Midland, the yard represented shows it in its true Midland guise, with loose coupled wagons in the process of being unloaded or ready to take away, having been unloaded. The mineral train that stands in the through roads, or main line, is made up of N E R 20t wagons of circa 1905 vintage. The locomotive is in mixed/mineral traffic grey livery, a Midland engine of I think 0-8-0 configuration.

The painting of all the vehicles is first class, the livery is authentic for the period setting, in the dark grey of the time. Individual wagon detailing is picked out by the dry brush technique, as I remember and the surrounding architecture etcetera, suits.

My own chosen period is post-nationalisation up to 1960's. The choice of wagon kits is larger, but I stick with plastic kits as the medium is easier for me to get along with. I can always add weight to make up, if I need to. Having mixed with some of the most pernickety and fussy modellers, I forge alone on a middle road between them and the "out of the box brigade". What I endeavour to achieve is a realistic image, using sprung couplings and buffers if humanly possible.

I have a large choice of wagon including departmental types to choose from: Parkside produce the best range of BR and prenationalisation revenue earning vehicles (REV's) and departmental stock, followed by Cambrian. What I can't find in kit form I refurbish: Dapol LNER steelbuilt mineral hoppers can be bought unpainted direct from Dapol by your own stockist, or sometimes even found in boxes or mixed up with some less well modelled marquees. It may be worthwhile buying Parkside underframe kits to fit under Hornby bodies, as the later ones were quite well detailed. Some of the Dapol kits go nicely with Gibson OR Romford wheels. I have a preference for Gibson's as they're finer. The wheels provided with Parkside kits are just about acceptable. Kean Maygib are good though!. Parkside will replace wheels provided with their kits with Maygib's, for a price. The service used to be free, but it seems the good old world of economics has caught up with them. The price of Maygib wheels has to be weighed against their availability and good overall quality. You can buy Gibson wheels loose at my local modelling shop, The Engine Shed at Leytonstone. However, it's worth looking in on the Booking Hall every now and then, because the owner, Nigel Downend, sometimes has some gems amongst the piled parts below the shelves at the back of the shop. A couple of packets of Maygib wheels for the price of one, for example.

Coopercraft produce exclusively GW kits. I tend to overlook the range largely because I model post nationalisation LNER area with mostly mineral and industrial traffic. HOWEVER, I bought one

Coopercraft cattle wagon recently and the thing went together like a dream! I'm tempted to buy one or two more to give the projected layout a wider horizon, say open wagons and a van or two. Slater kits are largely Midland/LNWR oriented, with a couple of interesting exceptions. I have amassed a couple of dozen of their exNER wooden 20t hoppers see notes on Heckmondwyke

for later finishing, to go with my Dapol hoppers on the same workings to and from the ironstone mines and the loading hopper I expect to construct sometime towards one end of my own layout. They have a nice kit for an NER 'Birdcage' brake if you're modelling the pregrouping or early 1920's era. They were still standing around as tool sheds in sidings in the late 1940's, I'm led to believe. As an exercise you could always model an extremely 'distressed' version for an early 1950's layout, painted to look as if it's hardly worth moving away because it's going to fall apart with old age anyway! That's an idea for any relics you may come across in your searches, no matter what period you're modelling.

Ratio produces some very nice plastic kits, alas not for an LNER/BR(E) modeller like me, but then again the odd exLMS van or wagon strayed into our area.... In their 1000's! By British Railways days no main line station did not see a real mixture of stock on our side of the country. The further off the main line you got, relatively though, the less you saw of 'foreigners'. On block trains of mineral wagons you saw a fair number of the 16t BR mineral wagons, depending on the mineral. Some traffics saw exclusively NER/LNER stock, such as ironstone in the 1950's/1960's. When that traffic ceased in the mid 1960's generated from within the former NER area, a little later for traffic generated from Whitehaven across the Pennine's to Teeside or to Humberside/Corby most of the wagons were transferred into NCB ownership and circulated around County Durham/Northumberland. The 16 tonners were used by scrap merchants, as were some of the 21 t steel LNER hoppers, some transferred into limestone carrying traffic, others for carrying ballast. For a fuller picture refer to Peter Tatiow's LNER Wagons (OPC).

As a boy I was privileged (?) to live on Teeside's fringe. At Eston, where a former station lay behind our house, used by the Coop Society as a coal depot, where a daily movement of these steel built hoppers woke everything up within half a mile. On the same branch, a couple of miles beyond Flatts Lane Jct., a brickwork's stored their bogie bolster wagons on one road of a double track leg of what was once the Cleveland Railway. About two miles away in the other direction the steelworks and ICI Wilton owned a mass of sidings littered with odd cripples, empty wagons and a variety of bogie bolsters, hoppers and assorted flat vehicles. The probability of having your having a mine of information or memories stored on film is undoubted. Instead of paying attention to the locomotives alone on these pictures, get the magnifier out and comb the images for freight stock.

Watch this space.....

*This Article first appeared in the Summer 1997 issue of the DOGA Journal.*

*Heckmondwyke has now been removed from the NRM*

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