

Now you see me – now you don't!

My latest project has been to upgrade the ex GW Lima Parcels railcar for High Wycombe. These were in frequent use in the 50s running out of the parcels depot at Paddington, mostly to Ealing, but every day there was at least one trip out to Wycombe.

The model was acquired second hand for a modest fiver as the motor was shot. Fortunately, Holt Models were offering replacement pancake motors and this was duly installed. The model is dimensionally accurate and the mouldings capture the chisel image well.

Cosmetically, there were a few things to be done. I removed the moulded plastic radiator grills and replaced them with some very fine mesh from a redundant cafetière. The glazing was junked and Shawplan Extreme Etchings Laserglaze used instead. Unfortunately, this pack is designed for the passenger version so I could only use the cab elements. I hand cut the side windows to be a close fit to give the flush glazing effect. I achieved this by holding a label behind the window, pencilling round the aperture with a very sharp H pencil and then sticking the label to some Perspex. Cutting and filing it to shape was relatively easy. All windows were attached with a very thin bead of pressure sensitive adhesive and then varnished in with some Klear. Security bars behind the side windows are a Blacksmith's etch acquired on a second hand stall some years ago. On the bogies, the lay shaft between the wheels was removed.



Lettering is from the Cambridge Customs Transfer range and the lining is from Fox transfers. The latter are more reliable. The CCT transfers are very fragile, need to go on a very gloss surface and then need protecting with a layer of matt varnish otherwise they easily wash off when using dilute weathering washes (how do I know this?). I had been using Testors Dullcote to protect the transfers, but this is not good enough and I now use Ronsal matt varnish – better but takes longer to dry. New buffers, couplings and hoses complete the job.

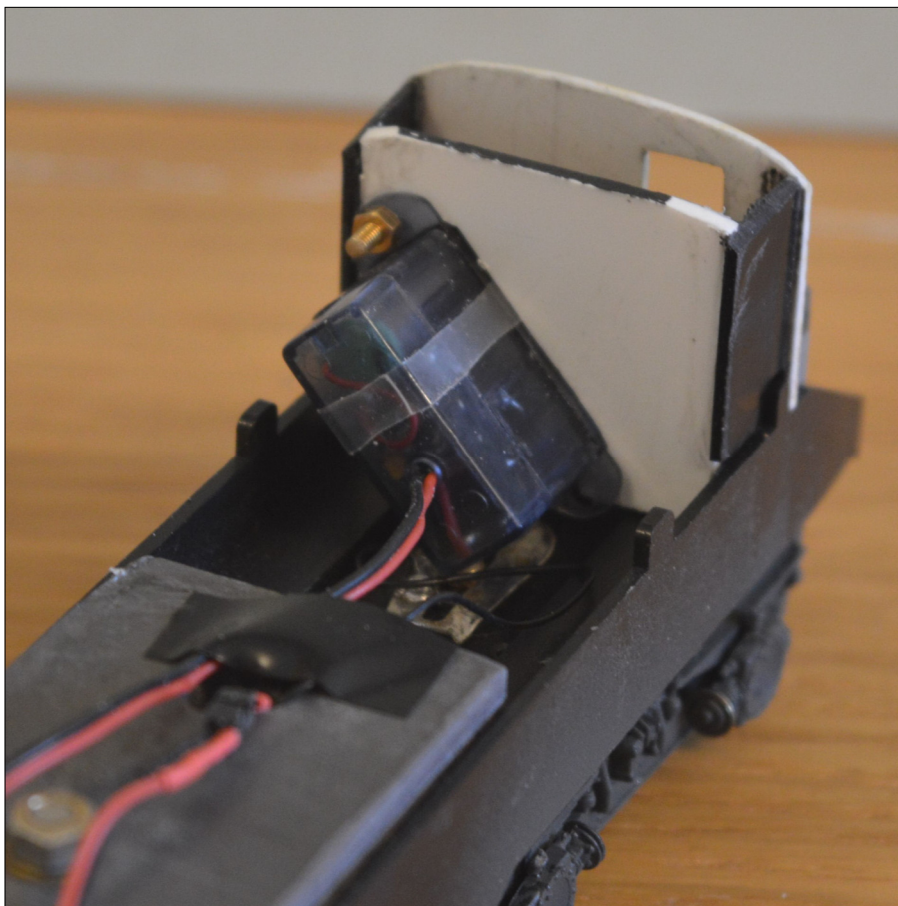
I haven't installed working lights (just my personal preference) but I do paint the model light lenses with a mixture of gloss red (19) and gunmetal (53).

Now to the mechanism and the subject title of the article. It seems strange to have a driver in both cabs, so I wanted to make the trailing driver disappear when the vehicle is in motion. I had various thoughts about using a servo to pull one driver out of one cab, at the same time as the driver at the other end would be pushed into place. The other option considered was to rotate the drivers in and out of view.

In the end this scheme proved unworkable because of the close proximity of the motor bogie and its large pancake motor to the cab bulkhead. I did briefly consider replacing the bogie with something like a Beetle but decided this was a step too far.

In the end I have compromised and the cab at the end that approaches Wycombe has a moving driver (the non-motor bogie end) and the driver at the other end stays in situ – he becomes the guard when the railcar is travelling to





Wycombe. Mick Moignard provided the mechanical solution with an Uhlenbrock digital servo 81310. I contrived a mount behind the cab and the driver is glued to the operating arm which fits over the splines of the servo drive.

Mick helped me configure the servo. The address is the same as the loco (34). One can alter the speed of motion – we have it on maximum; and the start and stop points up to a maximum of 180° . We have set it to 90° and mapped the action to a function button on the controller. It would have been nice to map it to the forward/reverse control, but this didn't seem to be an option. Anyway, on arrival in the bay, simply hit the chosen function and the driver disappears; hit it again and hey presto, he reappears. Silly, I know, but rather fun and an interesting challenge to achieve. Hopefully, the photos give a good impression of what happens.

Tim