



## G. W. Autocoaches in card

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FOR nearly forty years the mainstay of GWR branch line motive power was the familiar 0-4-2T and autococh, a feature of nearly every GW layout. From the appearance of most OO gauge layouts one could believe that the Great Western only possessed one type of autococh—the prototype of the K's model. In fact, the number of different vehicles was considerable, for even within the various distinct types there were detail differences in panelling, seating arrangements and liveries.

Broadly speaking the autocochs can be classified into two categories, suburban and branch, the main difference being the provision of luggage space in the vehicles built for branch line service. The early vehicles were mostly rebuilt from steam rail motors with the small integral steam locomotive removed. Later coaches were however based on new designs in keeping with the main line coaching stock of the period and it is on one of these prototypes that the model is based. The vehicle in question is No. 187, a Collett-designed vehicle with flush steel sides.

The basis of the model is laminated card with a wooden floor and roof, and K's bogies. Working from Skinley blueprint No. P117H, construction commenced with the underframe using a Model Railway (Manufacturing) Co floor and solebar strip. The ends of the floor were angled as shown on the Skinley drawing and the solebar strip was added. This is nickel silver channel and is soldered to half a dozen equal spaced pins hammered into the wooden floor on each side. The buffer beams are strips of thin nickel-silver sheet cut and bent to shape and drilled to accept the K's angled oval buffers which were secured with Evo-stik and soldered from behind.

The bogies are K's 9ft American equalised pattern and these are supplied in kit form to enable the fitting of OO or EM gauge wheels. The truss rods are soldered up from scale bullhead rail lying horizontally and secured to the inside of the solebars. The brake cylinders and battery boxes are filed up from thin oak off-cuts and 1/4in dowel, with the V hangers, steps and brake rodding from copper sheet and wire respectively.

The sides are built up from three layers of card cut on a sheet of

glass in order to obtain a really clean cut. The outer layer is good quality thin card, with the windows and doors marked out as per the Skinley drawing. The windows are then cut out and the lower part of the sides is flexed slightly to introduce the curve of the tumblehome. The sides are then painted with two coats of Humbrol chocolate and cream paint making sure that all the window edges are painted. When the paint is dry a thin strip of glazing material is added behind the windows and a curved card strip of similar thickness is glued to the lower part of the sides. Behind this the final layer of thicker card is added with the window areas cut away. The whole unit is assembled with Evo-Stik and the finished side is about 1/16in thick which is enough to withstand any temptations towards warping. The ends were manufactured in a similar fashion and bent to the angle of the floor.

Lining and lettering was carried out before the body was assembled using Indian ink and gold paint. The interior is mounted on a dummy floor of 1/16in card with seats and partitions made from thin card. The centre door on each side is recessed and this was cut out next. The sides and ends are then mounted on the floor with the recessed doors omitted. The doors are then fitted with a thin card spacer to set them back from the sides and this is then painted to match the sides. Handrails, grab handles and piping are from copper wire inserted in small holes in the appropriate places. The characteristic gong is produced from thin card, as were the footboards and end steps.

The roof is planed and sanded from a strip of 3/4in seasoned oak, which is not such a long job as it sounds, and when correctly shaped is covered with a strip of thin card which overlaps the ends. The roof is drilled to accept the K's torpedo vents which are glued in place, and it should now sit on top of the sides and between the ends. The overlapping card is now trimmed flush with the coach ends. The chocolate painted rain strip is produced from thin card covering the join between the roof and sides. The roof ribbing is also from thin card. The roof is painted white and the underframe and bogies black. The whole vehicle is then given a protective coat of polyurethane glaze. Anybody got a spare class 1400 0-4-2T?

*The branch autotrain at Fowey, on the branch line from Lostwithiel. The first coach in the train is a Collett auto-trailer similar to the model, while the second vehicle is a later Hawksworth design built by BR. Photograph by M. Pope.*

