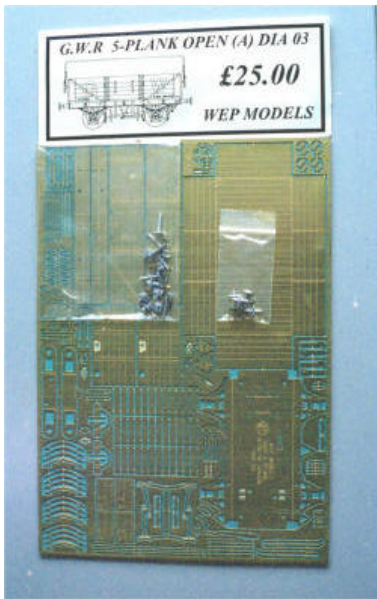


## WEP GWR 5-Plank Open (A) wagon Dia 03

I finally succumbed to temptation at the Halifax show to buy one of Bill Parker's 5 plank opens and justified it on the grounds that my period is 1895 to 1905ish. The first of these wagons were not built until 1904 (though there were some interim wagons with slightly smaller top planks while Swindon experimented with the design); so one or two in near pristine condition in grey would not be too incongruous. Most of my Great Western wagon stock is in various shades of faded red so it will contrast well.

If this is your first etched wagon kit then admire the exquisite etches, read the instructions and then, put it away and buy a beginner's kit from Jim McGeown. Not that this is a difficult kit but some experience with etched brass is, I think, essential. It is complex rather than complicated or difficult. The instructions in WEP kits state *"...you are using many of the skills used in scratch building with the exception that the parts are already cut out for you..."* The parts in this case however are cut out with far greater accuracy and fidelity than most scratch builders could hope to achieve.



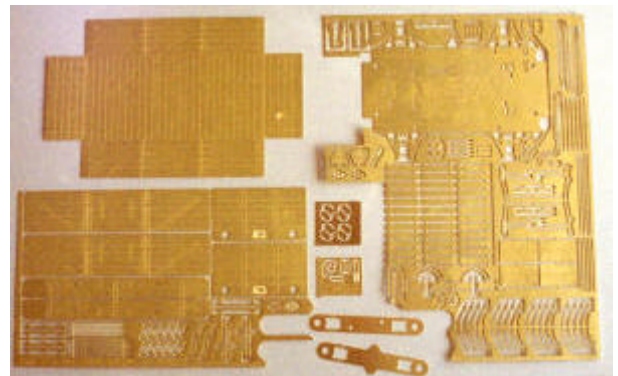
The kit arrives as a flat pack containing an etched sheet, tightly packed with a plethora of parts (Photo 1); seven sheets of instructions including a scale drawing, exploded views of body and chassis and detailed livery information; a small bag with castings and bearings and various pieces of assorted wire.

You will need a set of 3ft 1½in, 8 spoke wheels; paint; transfers and, in my case, some different buffers but more of that anon. It is dimensionally correct as per the drawing in Atkins, Beard & Turret.

Having already built twenty-one 4 plank opens and have developed a somewhat different method to the order in the instructions and used a similar method for this kit.

The first thing to do is press out all the rivets/bolt heads - of which there are 684. I found this easy to do with a Leaky rivet press. Separate out the major components first (photo 2).

Next score the major fold lines until a "witness" mark appears on the reverse, particularly those on the sides and ends and the sole bars, to aid bending. Now, press out all the rivets/bolt heads.



Cut out the spacers (part 6) in pairs, fold them and flatten with pliers; while the inner walls of the body (part 1) are in the flat, solder the spacers into their allotted places. I like to fit as many parts as possible while etched components are in the flat.

## Ends

These (part 3) have stanchions fitted (part 4). Simply insert part 4 into the slots in part 3 and then carefully holding in place; use fine, flat nosed pliers to twist the tabs about 25° in opposite directions. No solder is required and the parts will be firm and stable. File the tabs down so that they do not foul part 1. Fit the coupling plate (part 5) and, if fitting the tarpaulin rail, parts 41 & 42. Remove 42 and solder it to 41 while still on the etch and then detach and clean up the whole item; it is easier to handle that way. Now bend the top and bottom edges of the ends over at 90°. I used my bending bars to start the bend and a small vice to finish off. Care needs to be taken, especially with the top edge, as it is very visible in the finished model.

## Sides

The same procedure of twisting tabs is used for the bottom door strip (part 13). Fit the door bangers (part 14) and bend the top strip over at 90°.

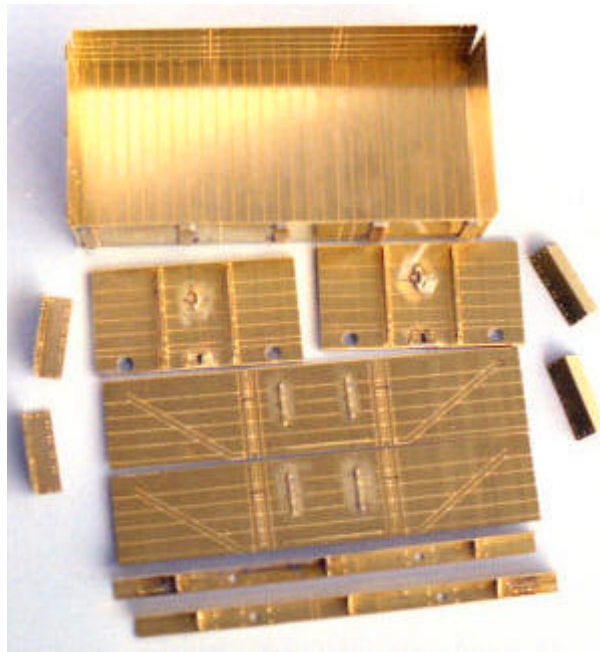
## Sole bars

Fit the label holders (part 20) and then fold up the channel. I left off the GWR plate since my photo does not show one fitted. Now fit the angle brackets (part 16) with the long tab at the top. I found it easier to twist the small tab to hold it in place and then solder up; filing both tabs flush afterwards.

## The Body

Photo 3 shows the main parts of the body ready for final assembly.

Fold up the inner walls of the body (part 1) with the ends inside the sides. To do this fold up the sides first very slightly past being square and then ease them back. Now fold up the ends, again going past the upright and ease back. Make sure that they are at 90°. Use a marker pen on the side (part 2) to indicate where the spacers will be, line up one side ensuring that the etched door lines match up with the doors in the side and solder in place, do the same to the other side. Solder the centre spacers first and then check that all is square before continuing. Do take care to align the sides accurately or the ends will not fit properly. The ends can now be fitted similarly.



Bend up at right angles the corner plates (part 7) and solder in place; they are handed and have a “right way up”. You now have the basic body completed. If you have used an acid based solder (I do not, generally, use acid based solder or flux) then now is the time to give the whole thing a good wash in Viakal to neutralise the acid inside the body walls. Dry it carefully using

a hairdryer (get the permission of the domestic authorities first!) and then fit the sole bars. This is shewn in photo 4.



Now is the time to fit the remainder of the parts not done while in the flat. Start with the door strapping, locks and hinges but fold all the parts up first to ensure uniformity. It is also very important to file the cusp of all parts whose edges will be seen in the finished model; this includes all the strapping. Not the easiest of jobs but essential to get the crisp edges that the real thing had.

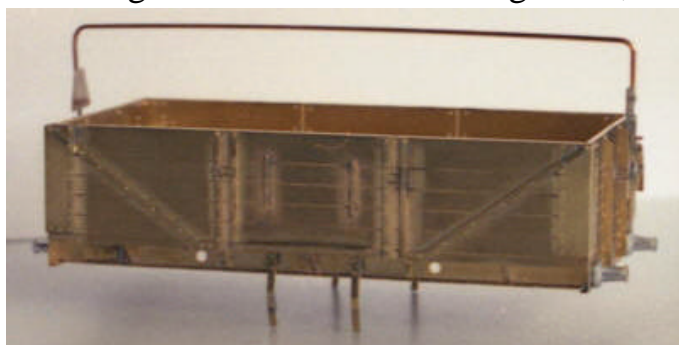
The etching is very accurate and the holes in part 10 match the holes in the side. Fit this part first with some .7mm wire in the hole and then the door strapping (P 8) after fitting the hinge. Joggle the hasp by pressing it to shape over a piece of scrap etch and it may be necessary to open out the hole a little to fit over the peg. If you are using ordinary solder then you will need to coat the parts and sweat them in place. If, on the other hand, you are using solder cream (a la Carrs) then simply deposit minute spots on the parts, offer up and solder them in place.

The door springs (P 19) need careful bending to achieve the right shape. Bend up all four of them first so that you can match all their curves before fitting. The diagonal strapping (P 11) needs joggling and again, is best done over a piece of scrap etch.

### Tarpaulin Bar

The tarpaulin bar could be seen as fiddly but worth the effort to make it work (however, not all 5 plank wagons had them). Part 38, which has the representation of the wooden blocks holding the radius plate needs great care in bending up. Even then it will have large gaps (these parts must be close to the limits of etching technology) so fill them with high temperature solder. I used 227° wire solder with 2% silver and 12% phosphoric acid. It runs well and will not melt when the part is soldered to the body using a lower temperature solder, 179° in this case. Use the measurements shewn in the livery sheet to get this and parts 41 & 42 fitted. They *must* be central and square. Once these parts are fitted, give the body another clean in Viakal, dry it and put on one side.

Using the livery diagrams as a guide, bend up some wire for the bar. The instructions say .9mm brass but I used 1mm nickel silver instead on the grounds it would be stronger and, when the paint inevitably gets damaged, will look more like raw steel than would brass. Photo 5 shews the completed body with the tarpaulin bar attached. It simply springs into place.

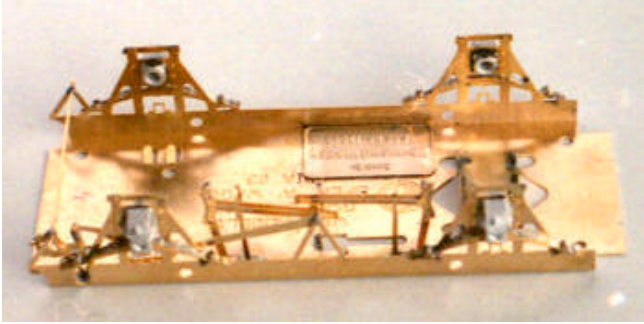


### Buffers.

Those provided need the body drilling and have white metal heads and

shanks. I dislike them intensely and replaced them with Hayward self-contained spring buffers. However, the moulds are obviously past their best since I had a great deal of cleaning up to do. Time to look for a better supply I think.

### The Underframe.

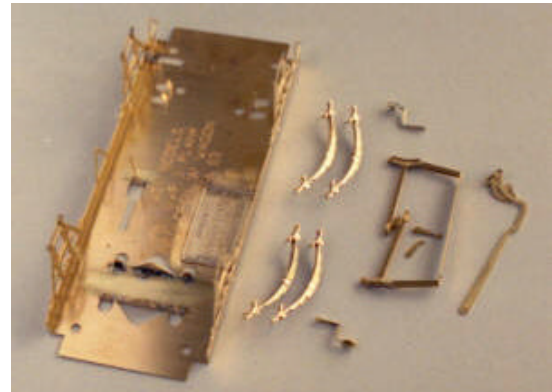


This is straightforward, particularly if one has built a WEP wagon before. Fold up all the various protrusions in the underarm base. Make sure that they are all at 90° and run some solder in the bend lines of the more delicate items. The brakes (one side only) are simple to fold up but solder the brake block laminates in before you clean them up, then carefully file up the whole block to get a nice solid look. It is important to

file off the cusps to keep the delicate nature of the brake rigging or, once painted they will look over scale.

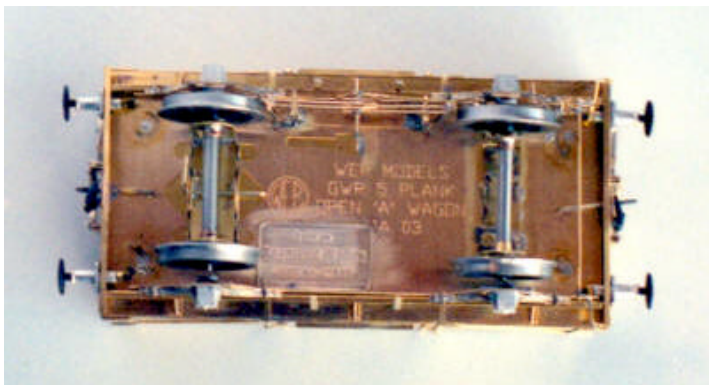
### Springs.

These, together with their hangers, are made up from several laminates. This is a neat way to make structurally strong, accurate, springs and hangers.



These can be put together and fixed to the axle guards before folding up the under frame itself. Clamp the etches together with Lady Jane clips and use some .5mm wire through the holes below the hangers. Ensure that you keep the laminates

square. Lace pins are useful but file the heads down first or they will be too prominent for these springs. With everything held in place solder from the rear. Solder cream and an RSU makes this job remarkably easy. The same pins were then used to help fix the spring to the axle guards and again, soldered from the rear. Photo 6 shews all these parts ready for assembly, photo 7 shews them assembled.



underframe fitted along with buffers and hooks (already chemically blackened).

### Painting.

The axles were well grease up and the Halford's undercoat sprayed on followed, when dry, with Precision GW wagon grey. Then off it went to Ian Hopkins paint shop for the inside, the lettering and weathering. The finish is consistent with a new wagon in traffic for a couple of weeks. All it now needs is a folded wagon sheet inside and some ropes, Photo 9.

Photo 10 sees it as part of a goods train in service, so it must be 1904.

#### Conclusion.

A satisfying kit to build of a prototype that lasted many years. How long did it take? About 15 hours spread over a week. Price, £25 plus wheels, paint and transfers.

#### Bill Parker's response:

I have read your review and once again found it to be a fair assessment of the kit, also many thanks for the couple of tips that you included regarding the build up. I'm sure that they will be of assistance to anyone else building the kit. The photographs were very helpful as well.