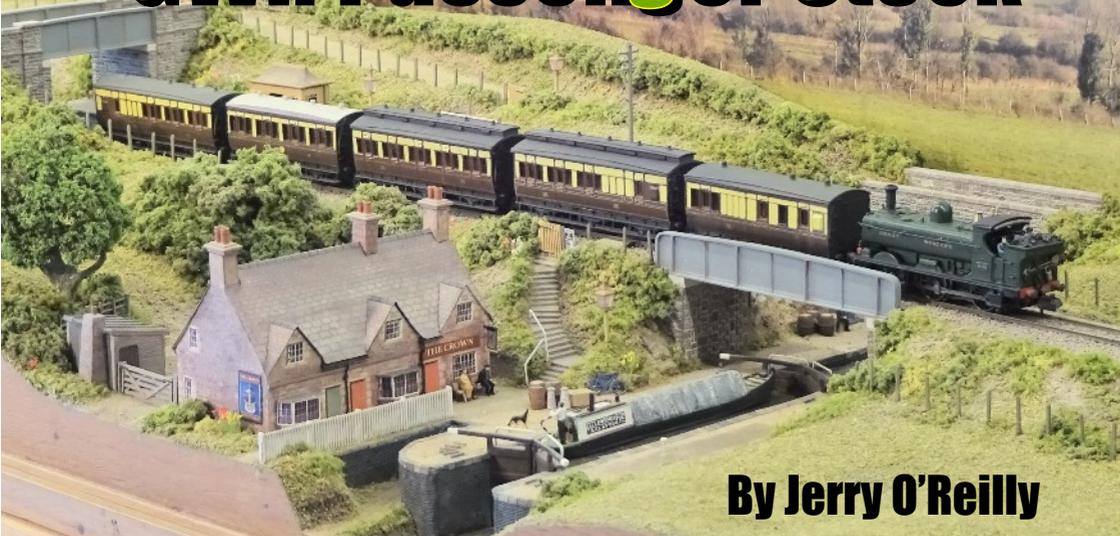


Modelling Pre-Grouping GWR Passenger Stock



By Jerry O'Reilly

Jerry O'Reilly describes how he produced a variety of GWR passenger stock in pre-grouping panelled livery, including 4 and 6-wheel coaches. The modelling approach was developed from a previously established process, using modified early Farish coach bodies running on replacement chassis from Peco and Dapol, combined with improved roof detailing.

About five years ago I built what I felt was a reasonable representation of a 50ft Dean Clerestory coach, in GWR pre-grouping panelled livery. The model was made using the chassis, body ends and roof of a Dapol Siphon G. With the Siphon also being 50ft in length, and having a three arc roof similar to the lower roof deck of many clerestory coaches, it made a logical choice for the donor vehicle. The Siphon sides were cut out and replaced by shortened sides from an early Farish 'suburban' coach in GWR panelled livery to form a new body shell, which was topped with a clerestory upper roof deck made from an etched brass kit from Ultima/Etched Pixels. A detailed account of the model's construction appeared in Issue 12 of *N'Spirations* magazine (copies of which can be obtained from the NGS Shop or Display Stand).

This initial project led me to think about what else could be done using some of the other early Farish bodies in the same GWR panelled livery, eg: their 4-wheel coaches and associated bogie coaches of several types, which were

produced in Poole. Although the detail of the chassis and roofs of these old models is fairly crude in comparison with present day standards, the printed body sides still have a crisp and presentable quality. Despite the design of the coach bodies being generic, their panelled livery 'looks the part' in my view, and I felt they could definitely form the starting point to model some additional pre-grouping passenger vehicles to go with the Dean clerestory.

The Farish models required for these conversions can still be obtained second hand from traders at shows, although the '4-wheelers' are harder to find. However, if you already own some, and fancy offering them up as donor vehicles along the lines of what follows, then you are ready to make a start.

Generic Designs vs Prototype Accuracy

The early Farish coaches that provide the donor vehicles are all of generic design, and do not therefore represent specific prototypes. It follows that conversions incorporating these coach bodies will also be of generic design when



completed. This has not bothered me unduly, because the aim has been to concentrate on capturing the distinctive appearance and characteristics of the many vehicles of this type which were once commonplace on the Great Western Railway, rather than being overly concerned about high levels of authenticity. A compensating factor regarding limitations of accuracy is that the prototypes themselves, particularly the GWR's large number of 4 and 6-wheel coaches, were built with so many variants that this conveniently blurs the edges of what is generic and what is not. Once again, Modeller's Licence has proved to be helpful.

Having said that, some effort was nevertheless made to identify prototype examples that were a fairly good fit with the design of the Farish bodies, whilst also researching appropriate roof profiles and clerestory details. To this end, JH Russell's excellent 'A Pictorial Record of Great Western Coaches (Part One 1838-1913)', Oxford Publishing Co. 1972, has been an invaluable reference source.

The Stock List

The coaches that have been produced so far, all of which are illustrated in this article, are as follows:

- 25ft 4-wheel brake third
- 25ft 4-wheel, four compartment
- 31ft 6-wheel, brake third, with clerestory roof
- 31ft 6-wheel, five compartment, with clerestory roof
- 31ft 6-wheel, brake third, with single arc low roof
- 31ft 6-wheel, five compartment, with single arc low roof
- 50ft Dean clerestory composite
- 57ft 'notional Churchward' brake composite



4-Wheel Coaches

The bodies of the two short wheelbase 4-wheel vehicles are made from the two ends of a Farish brake end 'suburban'/ non-gangway coach. The mid-point compartment was cut out, leaving two equal lengths of body shell. One has formed a brake third, the other a four compartment coach. Each short body shell required an additional end, which was taken from another donor coach.

Careful work was required with a razor saw to produce mitred junctions for these new ends, which were bonded in place with EMA's Plastic Weld. Some filler and a little repair of the paintwork around the joints was needed to provide a neat job, and a finishing touch to the completed body was to pick out the drop-light frames in Indian Red.

The short 4-wheel coaches each have a new chassis, made from a Peco 15ft wheelbase goods brake chassis kit (ref NR-122B). This was used unmodified, as it very conveniently matches the lengths of the new bodies, as cut from the donor coach. A key aspect of the chassis is its double running boards, which represent this distinctive feature of GWR short wheelbase coaches.

The roofs for the new 4-wheel coaches were made from the original plastic coach roof. Lengths were cut to suit the short bodies, the Farish ventilators and rain strip mouldings having been removed with a chisel blade. New rain strips were made from Slater's microstrip fixed with Mek-Pak, and replacement ventilators were made using turned brass 'top hat' wheel bearings, fixed with superglue. The roofs were spray painted with Halfords grey car primer, one roof





being finished with spray applied Rail Match 'Roof Dirt' (ref 1403) which gives a suitable dark weathered look, the other in white with added light weathering.

6-Wheel Coaches

Four variants have been made. Each uses a largely unmodified body from the Farish 4-wheel coaches – both the brake end and the five compartment types - as the starting point. Each body type has two roof variants, producing four different vehicles in all.

In each case, the Farish 4-wheel chassis was discarded and replaced with a new 6-wheel chassis, built from two Peco 15ft goods brake chassis kits. One Peco chassis is cut in half with a razor saw and the middle axle, which is cut from the second kit, is then added so that the combined length of the chassis components matches the overall length of the Farish body. Judging the correct places to make the cuts takes some care. Everything was bonded together with Plastic Weld, and the joints in the running boards were masked with a little filler, and lightly rubbed down with emery paper to give clean lines before painting.

As far as I am aware, this process is a fairly established way of creating a reasonably convincing 'period' 6-wheel chassis, but I do not recall seeing it recently described in the model press. The result is certainly worth the effort, as the Peco chassis has much finer detail than the

old Farish chassis, and the double running boards in particular look very good after everything has been assembled. Also, the tops of the sole-bars of the Peco chassis sit at the correct height above rail level, unlike the Farish chassis which are too high.

For the roofs, two variants were made for each body type, one being a single arc low roof, the other a clerestory upper roof deck. Both retain the original Farish plastic roof as the base. For the single arc low roofs, the moulded ventilators were removed, and rain strips and replacement 'top hat' ventilators then added, as described above for the shorter 4-wheel coaches.

The clerestory upper decks were scratch built from plasticard, with the finished assembly bonded direct to the Farish roof with Mek-Pak. Painting and weathering were carried out as for the new 4-wheel vehicles.

50ft Dean Clerestory

The principles of this conversion are covered in this article's opening paragraph and, as noted, a detailed account of its construction appeared in N'Spirations issue #12. No additional description is therefore provided here, other than to say that in the interim, the model's original white roof has been re-sprayed dark grey, to provide a more appropriate heavily weathered appearance.

57ft 'notional Churchward' Brake Composite

Although this last coach in the series comprises a virtually unaltered Farish gangwayed coach body and chassis, it has a heavily modified roof. This greatly improves the overall appearance, giving a decidedly 'Churchwardesque' feel to the model. Modified gangway connectors are also incorporated, and turned brass GWR pattern buffers have been added.

The roof alterations have been modelled using an Ultima/Etched Pixels roof conversion kit (ref UMC2007). The kit includes correct pattern shell ventilators with a template to locate them accurately, etched water tank covers, and cast white metal gangway extensions. The kit is also supplied with a replacement plastic roof moulding, but I chose to re-use the Farish roof as the base, to ensure a good fit with the coach sides and ends. The Farish ventilator mouldings were removed, but the original rain strips were retained. To these were added an upper rain strip – a distinctive feature of these vehicles - made with microstrip and fixed with Mek-Pak.

The white metal gangway connectors were bonded on top of the rather inadequate Farish mouldings with Araldite, giving a much improved extended profile. A finishing touch was the addition of a pair of handrails at each end. These

were formed from 0.25mm wire, bent to the required shape so that the top ends curve onto the roof top, where they are let into pre-drilled locating holes. The equivalent wire handrails on Dapol's Collett coaches were used as templates. Priming and painting of the roof followed as before, and once again, the drop-light frames were picked out in Indian Red. Lastly, the Farish chassis and under-frame were given a coat of matt varnish, to mask the original shiny plastic finish.

Summary

The completed fleet of coaches numbers eight in all, and each is different. The GWR was renowned for many of its passenger trains being comprised of random types of coach in a single formation, seemingly made up from whatever vehicles were available at the time. This was particularly so on secondary lines, as old photographs of the period show.

When arranged into trains on the layout, the variety of coach types therefore creates a very satisfying prototypical look. Although the coaches are distinctly varied, they are unified by the consistent colours, lining quality and finish on each of the Farish bodies, which visually ties everything together. The end result makes a pleasing spectacle as the train travels along the line.

