

Dave Round

A Diary of kit building...

The on-going story of building my 7F in lockdown.... A not so 'Just Magic' kit....

The following text is taken from notes I made whilst in the Covid-19 lockdown during the winter and spring 2021.

The cab detail is coming along nicely and only a few small bits to add before painting inside the cavernous footplate and then re-instating all the detail. This is what I call the interesting stage. Does it all fit back the same, once removed? If past experiences are anything to go by, probably not! If this weather clears up, I will give inside the cab some primer, as it's not far off completion. I think the hard work is now done in this area, just odds and ends left to do.

Nothing else to do at present! Options for travel limited... farthest I've been today, out to the garage, to put the tumble dryer on... Becoming a sad old git. My usual routine's have totally melted away. I am really looking forward to joining a club meet again. It's the interaction that is important. Watched a documentary on The S & D on YouTube this afternoon. It passed the time.

I have been doing a bit more to the cab. This afternoon I (almost) made the handle for the whistle. It needs polishing down to final size. It will be fixed once the loco body is painted. Incidentally out of the whole kit, the whistle is pure quality!... Shame about the rest of it.

I spent this morning and bit off this afternoon, fitting bushes to the valve rod gland, to reduce the slop. When I measured the steel valve rod it was .10mm oval! I polished it out! I've got to make two expansion links to upper footplate rods, as the one I have is too short! Its brother has done a runner. I also painted the lubricators, so they can be completed. Yesterday morning the challenge was to find and fit the firebox to the cab cladding band material. It's only 0.2 mm thick and just fits under the cab windows. These are all piddly little jobs that take time and enhance the model. Still looking at angles on the valve gear, as I am not sure they are 100% correct. More photos to check and research. All good fun.

Well, after a couple of days repositioning the valve guides to give a greater clearance above the slide bars for the radius rod, the loco valve gear was reassembled (loosely in its sub assembly form). It moves very nicely. Got to reposition the valve rod end dummies, as they are now too high! Fortunately, Araldite melts when heated with a soldering iron, so you can undo things. Nearly at the stage of chassis painting. Wow now that will be progress! Had our jabs yesterday. No problems so far. Did the virtual AGM and posted off a cheque for membership renewal too. As we are heading for mid February, it is very noticeable how the days are spanning out. A good sign. Spring flowers waking up too!

I might complete the cabs obvious fittings today. Most prominent are the water valve pickup handles. I filed the handles out of square bar and made a couple of brackets out of thick angle, along with the square raised bit that is part of the underside of the handles. This lot is topped off by a 16 BA nut. All put together with a drop of supaglu! It's all starting to take shape now. At the moment these bits are removable to aid painting.

I've got the bottom ½ done pretty well, apart from finally fixing the cranks in position. Had to shorten the reach rods by 2 mm. The vertical rod I made last night, unfortunately picked up some solder on the screw and wouldn't come apart, despite some heat. It fractured the end off one side. So back to square one on that one.... Usual rule applies, 1 step forward, 3 back! So, I decided to finish the square footplate holes, to accept the new forked rods, once I've made them. Chassis will soon be ready to paint. Got to contact Ragstone, as I need a couple of injectors. I think these are better chassis mounted, hanging on the pipe work. That should be that then.

The 1st side motion in position. I can't drill the holes for the crossbeam mountings in the footplate, until both are in position. There are no witness marks on the footplate either! Modern etching would have taken care of that!

I've managed to strip and paint the chassis. It needs a 2nd coat, as I hung it on a wire vertically to get the majority of it done. I pulled the cross head backplate off in stripping out the wheel sets, so not all rosy in the garden! One step forward several back! I found the missing lubricator pipe mounting plate too (after making another one!). I'll be pleased to get the chassis back together and motor fitted for testing. Then it's the final push to complete the loco body. I can see the end is very near.

The chassis is almost finished with the paint going on. I need to let this dry for a couple of days, before a little weathering. Plenty to be going on with. Making the lubricator pipe work today and tomorrow (hopefully). Still one step forward and 2 back! It should hopefully be finished around Easter.

Have spent the morning test fitting lubricator and associated pipe work. Some remedial stuff to do on the length of pipes and turn down against the frames. But it's heading in the right direction. Next week I might give the body a rest and start the motion re-instatement.

As you know by now, one step forward, two back is my motto! I've got to the stage where the final straight is in view and hopefully, I will test run the chassis shortly. (Not on DCC... Chips are too expensive!) This loco has an 8 ohm speaker in the smoke box ready for fitting a sound chip. If it runs nicely and proves to be ok, then I will take the plunge. Repaired the X head that I damaged, getting the front axle out and reset the slide bars on that side. The lubricators are in place and need final fitting (a case of cutting back the extra length of the pipes to fit nicely inside the chassis). Pickups next and hopefully we will be able to fit the coupling rods and run it. By the end of next week, I might have a working model of a 7F!

Well, I got it painted, put the rods on and with the motor fitted, did some testing... isn't it funny how when you strip, paint and rebuild something, how 'Sod' decides to step in and cause chaos. I had run this chassis prior to stripping, with no tight spots or brakes rubbing... I've had the front driver's off twice to remove said brake block tight spot. This is why I "run in" on DC!... Urgh.... Motor gearbox being run in, disconnected from motion.

I've filed the front brake blocks and burnt off any high spots almost completely! That's achieved by pushing the loco up and down a yard of reverse curve track for an hour!

A powered run of the 7F took place. It runs better in reverse. There is a slight tight spot knock going forwards. It's still quite tight. Oh for the club test track!

Just undercoated the 7F inside / outside of cab and firebox, with the underneath footplate, so I can move the beast on! I will get it finished, hopefully before Easter!

Whether it will be in the crusher or on a test track, I'm not certain! Funny how when you strip and paint a chassis, your clearances disappear! It's so close, but Brutus is having it's last say in proceedings. Just really the motion cross bar to fit and the lamp irons. The sandbox lids I've still to make, but it can be painted 1st. Spent some time erasing slight blemishes on the cab and firebox. Will give the tender a fresh top coat too.

Moving onwards over the last few days, all building work is completed. The weather has turned cold again, so will have to wait to finish adding paint to the loco body. Looking for the transfers and lamps. Phew what a marathon. I acquired this kit at Wimrail 2017 and looking at it, I never envisaged the amount of work required to get it up to a reasonable standard. Scratch building to complete a kit, takes a lot of time....

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