

Scammell Mechanical Horse

By Dave Coasby

I purchased a partly built model of a Scammell lorry and trailer (possibly a Roxey kit) at a CSGOG exhibitions bring-&-buy stall. It's a model of the early 3-wheel 'Scammell Mechanical Horse' with the flat bonnet, built from 1934, with a few still chugging around in service into the early 1960's. By the 1950's this type of Scammell was being replaced with the more familiar rounded bonnet 'Scammell Scarab', with other types being introduced even later. The final version, the 'Scammell Townsman', finally ceased production in 1968 when Scammell was absorbed into British Leyland.

There were obviously a few bits missing from the kit and the original owner had painted it GW brown and cream. As I model BR Southern Region in the late 1950's this would have to change, but firstly I had to undertake some research, particularly regarding the colour scheme. I thought perhaps Southern Region lorries would be painted green, but this guess was to be proved incorrect.

After lying dormant in my 'to do' box my interest in the project was rekindled when I obtained a copy of 'A Pictorial Parade of Southern Region Road Vehicles'. A most interesting book, with lots of detail pics of Scammell tractors and their trailers. It would seem that there was a huge variation in their details (ie: window frame, mirrors, lights, horn etc.), but the photograph on the back cover was more or less spot on for what I wanted my model to look like and confirmed to me the livery at that time (even for the Southern Region) was indeed BR maroon and cream.

I obtained some replacement wheels, as some were missing from the kit and managed to prise off the roof, so that I would be able to add some detail inside the cab and be able to glaze the windscreen and add a couple of tax discs (always at least 2 on commercial vehicles). Apparently, the prototypes didn't have side glazing on their doors (brrrrr!).

The colour scheme was changed to BR maroon and cream and I prepared some artwork on my computer for custom transfers, obtained from Precision Labels. (<http://www.precisionlabels.com>) I made a crank handle and the rather unique Scammell front bumper from scrap bits and pieces. The single headlamp and two side lights were scavenged from an old Lesney Models of Yesteryear car, together with the steering wheel. 'Fred the driver' was found in yet another of my scrap boxes and was glued in place, like all the other bits and pieces, with Gorilla Super Glue. At the time of photography, I am still trying to source a windscreen wiper (they only had one), horn and driver's mirror.

The trailer gave me great fun in my attempt to 'bring it to life'. Costa Coffee stirring sticks were cut to size and glued with fast setting PVA on to the flat bed to form a convincing wooden floor. Then, from that magical scrap box of mine, I found a suitable resin casting for a load of wooden crates (Skytrex – I think). Fred's mate, the loader, was also to be found there, together with an old wagon buffer which was used for the 20mph limit sign at the rear of the trailer, together with the number plate cut from styrene sheet, with both glued to suitably bent pieces of thin brass strip. The folded-up tarpaulin was a scan I took from the front cover of the book, printed out, cut to size, folded up and glued in place with PVA. Finally, I wanted some coiled rope on the trailer. A raid on my wife's sewing box proved unsuccessful, but fortunately I was able to buy some model ship rigging rope from Active Scale Models (<http://www.activescalemodels.co.uk>). I cut a short length and wound it around my finger, then ran it under the tap to make it more pliable before smearing a little PVA over it. I laid it on a hard surface (so it wouldn't stick) and let it partially dry. I was then able to mould it into a suitable shape and glued it in position with PVA to the trailer floor.

The whole model was given a light dusting of Halfords Matt Lacquer (to fix the transfers) before being brushed with some very dilute dirty colours to give it a well-used appearance. My model looks like it is just about hanging on in revenue earning service of the Southern Region or British Railways. I'm sure it will fit in very well once I place it in my layout's goods yard.

Postscript: *Following comments from several modellers it was said that the BR Maroon paint I'd used looked too dark. So, I have since over-painted this using Humbrol Crimson, which looks much better.*