

Rob Nesbitt's Freelance 009 Fowler-type Loco

by Rob Nesbitt

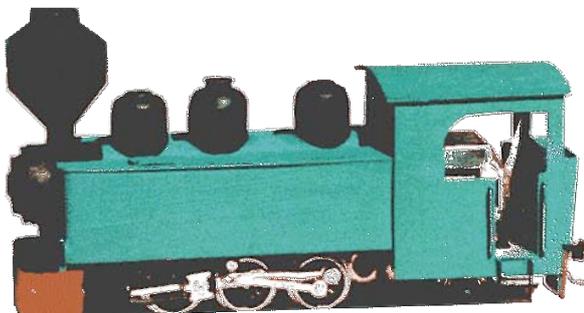
You could call it a New Year's resolution. I made up my mind to finish, repair, or otherwise complete a good percentage of the models I had in various states of disassembly. Most of these I had acquired from modellers (and I use the term loosely), who had embarked on a project, but for one term or another, failed to achieve the desired outcome, threw the resulting bits into a box, and waited for some sucker (ie me) to pay money for them.

The idea of the Fowler came as a coincidence. I was browsing the CaneSIG site for inspiration on how to use an N scale Prairie mechanism, that resided in one the boxes, along with a 'Puffing Billy Models' freelanced white metal cab, boiler, domes, smokestack, assorted white metal boiler fittings, lost wax brass parts, and heavy white-metal tender. Putting the cab on the rear of the Prairie chassis convinced me of the futility of continuing this approach, as the chassis tipped rearwards.

Anyway, what should I come across: Bob Dow's 'Project # 4', a free lanced 0-6-2 Fowler. Hey, I thought, that would suit me just fine. Little did I suspect on starting on the body, was that Bob's mechanism was the same as the one I had.

I guess some things were just fated!

Constructing the body



Being a 2 bit snob, I thought I would construct the body from brass. After-all, I am handy with a soldering iron, had lots of K&S brass sheets and shapes lying around, and didn't want to spend time going to the hobbyshop. Well, it was a 'Public Holiday' and the shops weren't open -- that's my excuse.

Bob Dow has provided his article with some brief but adequate instructions: (<http://members.ozemail.com.au/~ozbob/Projects.html>). I will not repeat those, but identify where I differed.

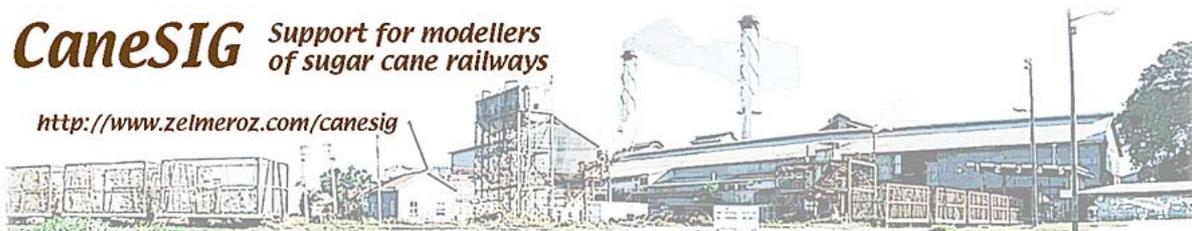
Using Bob's plans, I cut out 4 cab sides, but selected the best 2 sides. Handrail holes were drilled. The side tanks were made slightly overlength, and the extra length, was bent to make the tank width. The 'footplate' shape was cut out, and checked to fit the chassis. The other shapes roughly according to Bob's plans.

Where I differed from Bob, was that I wanted to use the plastic smokebox casting from the Prairie loco, and selected a 12mm diameter brass tube, which was almost perfect for the task. Another, slightly smaller brass tube would be used for the boiler, and this would slide into the smokebox.

With care, tack solder the side tanks onto the footplate. Note, that the footplate fits

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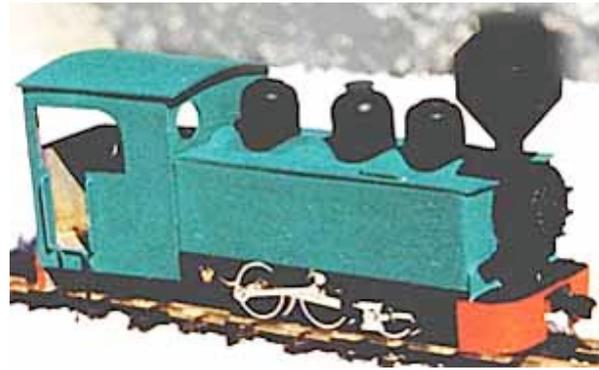


INSIDE the tanks, and if you have used Bob's dimensions, then the tanks end up too far forward. You will probably have to reduce the forward measurement somewhat. Match the assembly to the chassis. Confirm the tanks' side are square above the chassis, and just above the cylinder on the chassis. Assuming you have this right (and I had 3 attempts before I was happy), complete the soldering.

Next comes the smokebox. Firstly, determine how far forward of the tanks the smokebox will stick out. (Check Bob's photos!) Then, I cut two grooves into the tube to accommodate the edge of the brass tanks, and slid the smokebox down into position, leaving it higher than the tanks. Once happy, it was soldered into position. The smaller tube was then sectioned lengthwise, and one half soldered on the inside of the smokebox, and parallel with the tanks. Solder the front of the cab to the boiler, and footplate, attach the tank tops, and continue with the rest of the cab.

The Fowler has a smokebox support, which needs to be simulated. It is best to make this up out of brass, suitably bent, and shaped to fit the curve at the base of the smokebox. Solder to the sidetanks, and smokebox. Fit the bottom plate below the smokebox support. The rest of the assembly is straight forward, and I am indebted to Bob for his pictures.

Remember those white-metal boiler fittings? Well, when the soldering was finished, I attached these to the boiler with screws from below, which was easier than trying to solder them. The smokestack was attached with a 10BA screw for strength.



Painting

After a good clean (particularly when using acid type fluxes), the body was then soaked in pickling bath of warm vinegar for 30 minutes. Rinse with water, and dry. Fit the plastic smokebox front. Spray an etch grey primer, and allow to dry. Follow with this with whatever colours, and paint you desire. Floquil colours worked for me.

Conclusion

This has been a very satisfying scratchbuild. I still have couplers, tank filler covers and a suitable nameplate to be fitted. But, showing the model to members of the local clubs, and the NMRA, has given me much pride, and might have spurred on a few to also take the scratchbuilding plunge.

Thanks must go to Bob Dow for the idea, and Lynn for hosting the website, and prompting me to write this article.

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