

Freelance Caribbean Cane Wagons for 009

by Paul Catchpole, adapted from his article for the 009 Society



The wagons in the photo (left) are likely somewhat larger than life size on your screen display and, as Paul notes in the article below, he has changed the material used for his wholestick cane wagon loads to be more realistic.

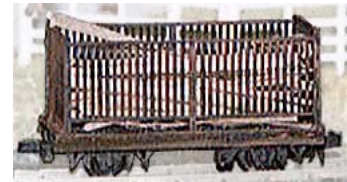
When Jim Horsford showed me some 0-16.5 sugar cane wagons he was making for his St Kitts/Barbados style railway it struck me that his construction methods

could be adapted for a 009 addition to a Caribbean railway that I was building at the time. It turned out to be a simple, cheap, and fairly quick task to make a rake of freelance 4-wheel wagons.

The basis of the wagons shown here is a Peco N gauge 15 chassis, some Knightwing 00 scale spear-point railings and a bit of plastic card. As the wagons were to run as a rake the N gauge couplings were retained. I discovered that telephone cards, credit cards, etc., are similar in width to the length of the wagon base, and cutting them up not only saves buying plasticard but enables other economies to be made. (Check that you are using a card without a laminated surface, however, otherwise some glues might not stick to the card, as I found out the hard way).

The railings are cut so that each section has a post at each end (and one in the middle). The posts are filed square at the top and the spear points are removed along with the protruding part of the centre post. A piece of plastic card is used for each wagon end, cut to the height of the railing and to fit whatever width is chosen, according to your loading gauge. It will be roughly square.

Sides and ends are glued to the floor and the assembly is then glued to the wagon base. Feeling that the N scale wagon chassis sides still looked a bit obvious, some lengths of plastic girder were glued along the underside of the telephone card floors (Prague Telecom), much improving the appearance. New wagons would have been painted black but weathering with dark browns, greys and rust effects adds to realism. Wagon ends and posts might have splashed of brighter colours and could carry serial numbers.



For the sugar cane loads, stalks of dried grass were cut, but I felt they were too coarse, an impression confirmed when the railway was shown in public at St Blazey and the wagon load was mistaken for wood. An exterior decorating brush with bristles of a suitable colour has since been destroyed to create some more realistic cane loads!

The keen modeller could refine this basic construction methods to make more sophisticated wagons. Equally it might be adapted for shorter wagon bases or used for bogie vehicles such as those operated in Cuba.

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of sugar cane railways

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