Queensland Railways HWO End Gates by CGL Models. HO Scale. Price $15.00/pair.
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The 1970s brought a whole new era to Queensland Railways (QR). With the locomotive fleet dieselised, attention shifted to new, modern rolling stock. Locally manufactured 'new generation' steel general freight wagons commenced entering service. Steel body wagons on cast-steel bogies were able to run at express freight speeds (80 km/h) and carry maximum loads to 'A' class track standards (15.75t axle load).

The HWO open wagons entered service in 1977–78, being a 50ft. wagon fitted with all side drop doors, six per side, with a part wooden floor, a bulkhead at each end – capable of a payload of 42t and with a maximum speed of 80km/h, were something not seen before. Instructions were issued that these wagons were to be supplied to customers who could use them to their maximum advantage, i.e. full loads on express freight trains. Mostly, this could only be achieved on the North Coast and Mt Isa Lines.

Queensland Railways, being a common carrier, didn't have much work for these wagons. However, freight forwarding and transport companies did. A large number (125 wagons) were allocated to the various companies, some adding their company logo to the sides.

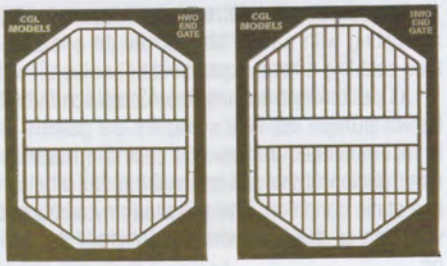
With the doors down, forklifts made short work loading palletised loads into the wagon. Few products made a floor load that reached the maximum carrying capacity of the wagon. With general freight, additional loading was required on top of the floor load – no two loads were the same – loads above the doors needed to be secured. Adding end and side gates similar to semi-trailers of the day solved the issue.

Manufacturers of the wagons made provision in the bulkhead for end gates to drop in. I am not aware of any drawings for the gates. Photos suggest they all were made to a similar pattern conforming to the Loading Gauge; the material used did differ as well as the height and construction methods. Side gates, one per door, were of similar type construction but they were not secured to the door, only sat on top of the doors using 'C' channel. Side gates were latched together with chain or catches to each other and the end gates. Roof bows kept the gates upright once both sides were up and loading was complete. Two tarpaulins were used to protect the load from the weather in transit. One tarp was clipped to the top of the side gates and secured to the bottom of the wagon while, a second tarp covered the top section, being secured to the

bottom of the wagon. In most cases, tarpaulins in company colours were used.

In 1992, HWOs were allocated to Q-Link Bundaberg, Brambles, U.T.O., Hiles Transport, QRX, TTS and Mt Isa Mines. Gates were generally painted in company colours for identification: Brambles (red), U.T.O. (light green), QRX (orange), while others were dark green, silver, Killrust primer.

With the load being covered with tarpaulins, gates were not visible on the forward/outward journey away from coastal city depots. Returning, the wagons were mainly empty or carried empty pallets, drums, cubes, kegs, cylinders etc. End gates remained fixed to the bulkhead, side gates were down on the floor or in with other loading. Some could be found stacked on their sides on top of empty pallets, secured by rope to latching points on the wagon side. It was not uncommon to see a wagon with just one end gate fitted. In the mid to late 1990s, when containers became the preferred method of transporting freight, the HWO wagons came back into QR traffic; most did so without the gates. I am surmising that the gates belonged to the freight forwarder.



The product for review

The two nickel silver frets are packed in a clear plastic bag, making them visible to the purchaser. A colourful card-header folds over the top and forms the back which details the instructions. The instructions are straight forward, explaining the etch is designed to be folded up and either soldered or glued to create one end-gate.

Five easy steps and the model is complete.

1. The end gate etch is removed from the fret. The etch at this stage is very fine and care is required to ensure they are not bent out of shape. I left any fret clean up or filing until after the two sections were fixed together (See Step 3).
2. Fold the two halves together away from the half etched line in the middle.
3. Solder or glue the two halves together. I chose to solder the gates, starting from the bottom. The edge to be soldered was placed between two wooden blocks held tightly. A small amount of flux was applied to the joint and a bead of solder was run along. Sides and then the top were soldered. Once all sides were soldered, a jeweller's file was used to clean up and to make an invisible joint.
4. Paint the gates in your chosen colour. I used SMS acrylic lacquer paints, first using a metal etch before applying colour with a portable air brush. One gate I left unpainted, to model a silver one.
5. Fixing the completed gate to a CGL Models HWO wagon was straight forward. The wagon has detail in the end bulkhead at the fixing point in the form of a raised moulding. The moulding was removed with a sharp modelling knife. Using the gate end as a guide, a 0.5mm drill bit was used to make a secure point for the gate. I found the gate a tight fit, so I used the drill to ream out the hole by moving it up and down in the hole a few times. The instructions suggest a drop of super-glue to secure the gate to the wagon. I was happy with a press fit, which allows me to remove the gate if so desired at a later date.

The etches are very fine, 0.2mm thick and when folded 0.4mm wide. They were clean with very minimal clean-up required, mainly filing the securing tabs down flat to the sides. Assembly was straight forward and easy, which only required a few minutes for each. Upon completion they are quite robust. When fixed to the wagon, the gate fits within the loading gauge outline and looks the same as the prototype photos.

Overall, the gates are a magic little item of enhancement for your HWO wagons. It allows the modeller to add additional prototype detail. It's the small detail that takes an item of rolling stock up to the next level in detail. They will make a great addition to the range of accessories for the QR modeller looking to raise the standard of his rolling stock and layout.

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