

# A Red Herring (well olive green actually)!

Never having built a Genesis kit **Jim Smith-Wright** chose the humble Herring ballast hopper to find out what they are like. Photographs by **Jim Smith-Wright** (unless stated)



Just what is it about 4 wheel ballast hoppers? It seems just about every layout you see has at least one of them. Usually a Catfish or Dogfish from the Cambrian kit.

Looking down a line of these hoppers in photographs of the prototype occasionally the line of uniformity is broken by something looking like a catfish but with large ribs down the side of it. These were the earlier Herring or slightly smaller Mackerel hoppers. Based on an even earlier LMS design (known as Trout under the fishkind names) the Mackerels were built first from 1951 to 1952. One lot, diagram 1/583, of 134 wagons were built by Metro Cammel (DB992247 - DB992380). They had a capacity of just 17 tons and were fitted with vacuum brakes. The 20 ton Herring design followed from 1953 to 1954 and again consisted of 1 lot (diagram 1/584) of 100 wagons (DB992381 - DB992480). Metro Camel then moved production to the familiar Catfish hopper.

All 3 designs were the same on a basic level. All 4 wheeled, vac braked hoppers designed to discharge ballast onto the centre of the track through a single door operated by a large control wheel. This is situated at one end of the

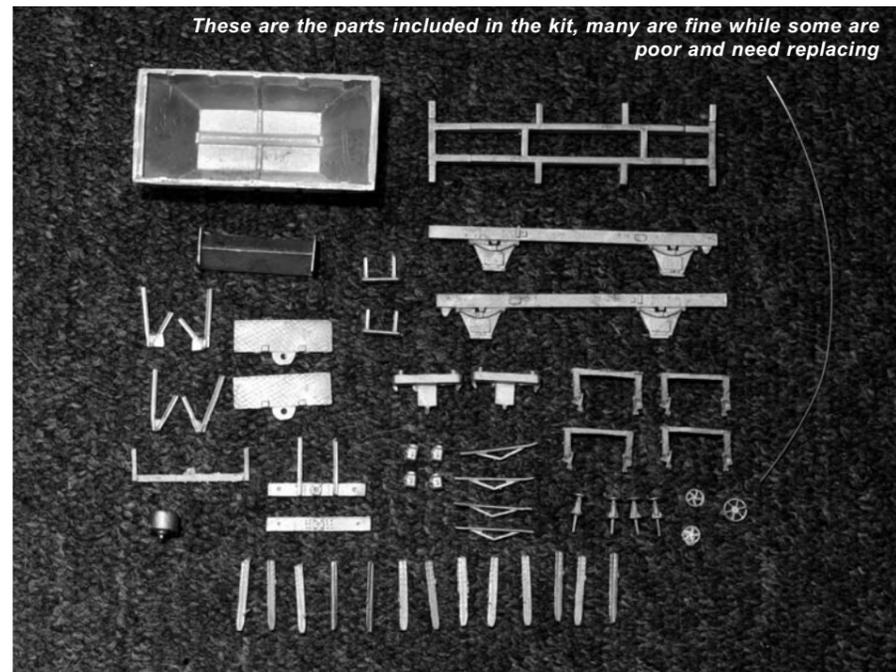
hopper above a platform for the track gang to work from. I am not sure when the Herring ballast hopper became extinct on our railways but I have seen pictures of them in the midlands in the late 80's so that's good enough for me!

## The Kit

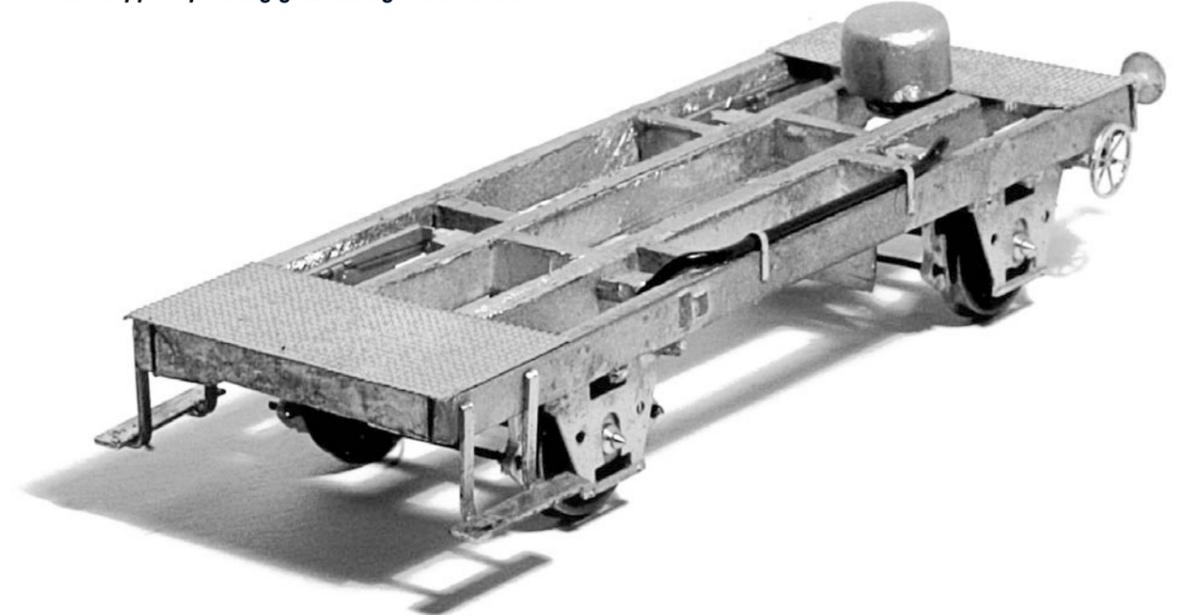
I have known about the Genesis kit for a good few years and always intended

to get one. Finally I got round to sending my check off and waited to see what I would get for my money.

First impressions were that the kit was better than I had expected. The hopper is one piece and was nice and square. Pretty much everything you need except wheels is included but some of the smaller parts were pretty poorly cast. A decision needed to be made on what to



**The rolling chassis. The near end head-stock is left off to provide better access to the hopper operating gear during construction**



keep and what not to.

The hopper and its supports, solebars, headstocks and buffers were all good. Also the separate axleboxes. The handwheels, walkways, steps and brake shoes all had to go.

## The Chassis

The wheelbase is reasonably long and my own preference is to fit sprung suspension. I use Bill Bedfords units as standard and the ones described as BR plate in this case. The Unit folds up in one piece but as the Herring has no floor I separated the W irons into 2 pieces. The cast W irons were removed from the solebars as were the springs due to them being quite poor castings. These were replaced with ones from MJT. The W-irons were soldered in place to the back of the solebars and the chassis assembled. The castings for the walkways are somewhat crude and far too thick so these were replaced with some etched non slip material from Inter-City Models. The headstock for the non platform end was attached but the one for the other end was left off, the reason being that it allowed easier access to the handwheel area of the wagon.

The casting for the Vacuum cylinder looked fine and was used as intended. There is no provision for the Vacuum pipe that runs down one side of the wagon and I used florists wire secured with 2 thin strips of brass as per prototype photos. The supplied steps looked too thick to my eyes so they were replaced with brass strip.

Brake shoes came from Wizard models as those supplied were, quite frankly, pretty bad. These were joined with scraps of wire along with 0.3mm handrail wire for the safety loops. The wheels are from Intercity models (can we please have them without the 'rust' applied as it takes ages to remove it from the wheel treads?)

## The Hopper

As mentioned the hopper is one piece. I used a mini-drill with a dental burr to open out the slots for the side sanctions a bit. The side sanctions were tidied up with files and the whole thing assembled, pretty much as per instructions. The hopper is a pretty solid fit on the chassis but, strangely, it seemed to slope when fitted one way around but not the other. I marked the handwheel end with a pen to ensure I didn't make a daft mistake when it came to securing it proper. The hopper has a square base which means its location to the floor is very positive. An area where perhaps the Genesis kit is slightly better than the Cambrian kit for the later Catfish hopper.

Hand-wheels came from Colin Craig using his wheels for the Catfish. I could only find pictures of Herrings with straight spoke brake wheels not the curly ones as per the Catfish so I used those from Colin's Air braked wagons originally. These proved too big (as can be seen in the unpainted pictures) and were later replaced with the handbrake wheels from Colin's Sealion etch - much better.

Once all of the platform detail was completed I fitted the headstocks with wire handrails.

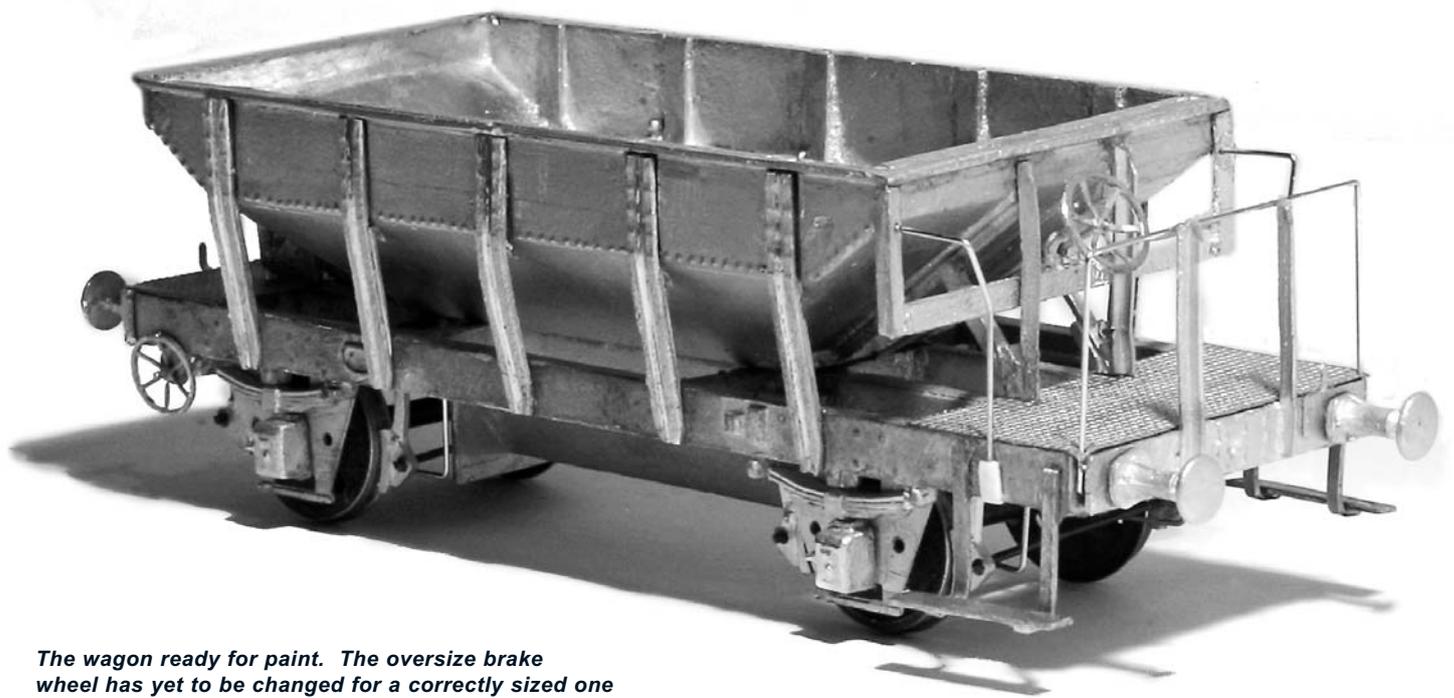
## Livery

It seems Herrings only ever carried 3 liveries, Black, Red and Olive Green. I cant find any evidence of any receiving dutch livery bit would be interested to know if they did. The most common livery, as with most wagons of this type, seems to be rust!

Resisting the urge to go for the obvious pun I chose green as I had found several pictures of green herrings in the Birmingham area during 1986. I wanted to try a few new ideas with the weathering for this wagon so once it was painted and lettered I preceded to set about ruining a perfectly good paint job.

Method 1 was to mix a kind of dirty rusty steel colour consisting of mostly gunmetal - not the metalcote version. Its important to leave the mix pretty much un-mixed - you can even mix it on the sides of the wagon if you want to. The sides were coated in what can best be described as sludge and then a clean, screwed up piece of kitchen roll was used to dab it cab off straight away. The more you dab away the cleaner the wagon gets!

Next was a method inherited from reading military modelling books and magazines. You need to be sure the wagon is completely dry for this bit. Best wait a week or so. Neat Humbrol 62 was brushed into all of the areas



***The wagon ready for paint. The oversize brake wheel has yet to be changed for a correctly sized one***

where rust might form with a fine brush (using a photo for reference - naturally). Then using another, clean, brush and thinner (in my case turps substitute) the 'rust' lines were blended into the wagon side. This method works well for scrapes too by painting your scrape and then using thinner to pull it downwards to produce streaks. It is important to be sparing with the thinner and work a few panels at a time. You need just enough thinner to blend the paint but not so much that you flood it. The wagon was loaded with Carrs ash ballast on a bed of polystyrene. The ballast doesn't give that really clean, brand new ballast look so once dry it was dry brushed with light grey paint.

The final touches were to add couplings (Smiths) and working brake pipes (see Update 42).

## **Conclusion**

An interesting little project. Quite a lot of additional work and parts go into making what (in my opinion) results in a nice little wagon. Plus its something that little bit different from the usual Dogfish and Catfish ballast hoppers which, as you will recall, was the prime reason for building the wagon in the first place. The finished wagon is very heavy - the odd one or 2 in a train would be fine (and prototypical) but a whole train-load could be a problem. If you are looking for something a little different but want the kit to build itself then this kit isn't for you. If you want something a bit more of a challenge give one of these a try.



***Mark Franklin found Herring db992419 on blocks at Sandown, Isle of Wight. The date was 25th September 1993. Photos of these wagons seem very scarce***