

Some modellers might prefer to use one standard hook shape for all stock so they can ignore the following remarks. Each etching uses two slightly different designs from the same era and is now standardised on providing for 12 wagons from every etching.

RCH is the Railway Clearing House set up to help standardise wagon design for repair, and movement for economy.

# CH12 etching

This is for wagons produced during the RCH era from 1907 until after 1923 for loose coupled stock, mainly for private owner mineral wagons and unfitted company rolling stock.

# CH22 etching

These shapes originate from around the BR era again mainly for loose coupled rolling stock. The mainstay of fitted wagons and coach development during this time usually had screw couplings fitted – see CH52 etches. However for some ex-LNER, SR coaches and some BR Mk.1 corridor coach sets used buckeye automatic couplings. These couplings were shackled to a draw hook and maybe dropped out of use to enable non automatic coupling to be used such as a locomotive. However an exception to this is corridor tender fitted LNER A4 engines that also had buckeye couplings and there might have been other engines so equipped.

# CH32 etching

Next we go back to the pre-RCH era for hook shapes common to Victorian era loose coupled wagons.

# CH42 etching

This uses the UIC specification for fittings to stock, UIC being an agreed European standard for the interchange of stock between countries. In this era the loose coupled wagon was probably regarded as an anachronism and screw couplings regarded as a basic coupling mechanism as freight train movement was diminishing in favour of block trains and sets and a train was no longer loose coupled and could utilise automatic brakes being rigidly joined together to minimise wagon buffeting.

These hooks are significantly bigger than most hook designs and appear quite common fittings to BR era diesels.

# CH52 etching

These hooks are for screw coupled stock, including locomotives. It is also likely that locomotives not equipped with automatic train brakes would use the coupling with a hole for shackling a top "U" link to the hook. Most stock with a screw coupling would use the slotted hook so the top "U" link of the coupling could be fed through the hook. Some railways adopted the loose top "U" link whereas many railways used a shackled coupling particularly on locomotives and these would use the hole version hook.

# CH62 etching

We identified that some LMSR stock largely fitted vans were fitted with a cast hook with relieved sides so this etching was produced to mimic that coupling hook design.

# CH72 etching

During trips and research into different designs and standards we became aware that older coaches as they became fitted with automatic brakes (c.1880's) required a rigid coupling to make the train brakes effective. The hook designs used were probably based on the loose coupled hook shape. It appears as draw hooks were fitted to stock the chain slot was quite angled probably to reduce the possibility the chain link could work free following buffeting within the train in motion. Initial screw coupling hooks probably carried this detail forward until it was realised that by tightening the coupling up to reduce buffeting also reduced the risk of the coupling links working free. These more angled hooks probably lasted until about WW1 when revitalisation in railway businesses started to take place – we are none too sure when the CH52 designs became widely adopted.

# **Revised Wagon Screw Coupling etch**

This is available with either CH5 or CH7 hooks. There are twelve extended screw links and 12 retracted screw link etches plus a series of links, potentially making 24 screw couplings. For motive power screw couplings there is a greater choice of design by using a hook etching (CH5 or CH7) plus the CC4 etching. Standard hook etches use 15 thou' material whereas the wagon etching sets use 12 thou' material.

The thinner metal enables finer details to be created, such as hole diameters. The wagon screw coupling appears somewhat thinner and to a more standard design than do couplings used on locomotives so only one shape is etched on the wagon/coach coupling.

There is a variety of different length top and bottom links included. This is to try to meet a variety of length requirements for modellers whose needs can vary considerably depending on buffer and wagon length and track curve radii that the couplings are needed to work with.

# Wagon Screw Links c.2024

### **Revised Draw Bar Plates**

To match the changes made to coupling hooks the draw bar plates/coupling pockets have been redrawn creating a greater yield per etching with a number of new shapes. These form the series Cp2 items, Cp1 etches will be sold to exhaustion. The new iron frame plates based upon GWR patterns is included in this series as Cp2C.

### Cp2 – Mixed set

This is a mixed set of shapes for wooden headstock wagons. There are now 90 plates or 45 wagons worth of draw bar plates, 6 pairs for end door wagons the remainder primarily rectangular plates. The end door wagon plates were used to stop the wagon floor from falling out as a wagon was tipped, this practice being most common for loading ships – known as bunkering – using steam power or for transport by ship of canal barge.

# Cp2A – Rectangular plates

Possibly the most common shape for wooden headstock wagons this etching is now 100 plates or 50 wagons worth. The four bolt fixing pattern is most common and a standard for RCH designs, while some wagon builders, notably early Victorian or railway company designs only used 2 bolt fixings.

# Cp2B – End door wagon plates

End door wagons were often used by high volume users of coal, to enable wagon emptying to be efficient. It appears many larger factories are more likely to use side tipping to empty a wagon while ports and harbours favoured the end door wagon system. At the end door the raised plates were used to prevent movement of a wagon floor, though sometimes straps were used instead.

There are 36 pairs of plates and seven narrow rectangular plates on this etching.

Cp2C – draw plates for iron headstocks.

The main difference between wood and iron headstocks is that the draw plate is bolted on wood wagons and riveted on iron framed wagons. Some railways – such as the GWR – commonly used iron frames and these draw bar plates are based on designs used in the GWR wagon book by Aitken, Beard and Tourret.

There are 6 pairs of 6 designs – that is 36 wagons – on this etching.

Drawbar Plates Mixed Code CP2
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