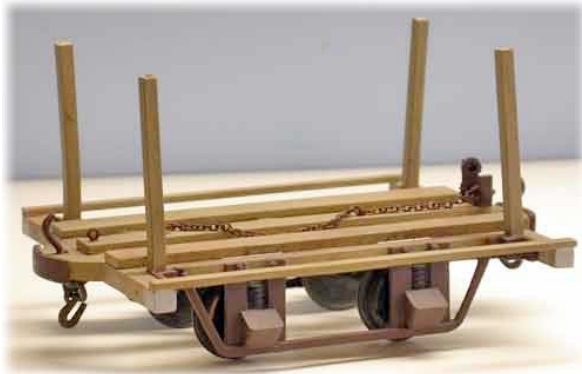


Review: Tootle Engineering's SM32 Moreton Mill wholestick sugar cane truck



This 16mm=1' (SM32) kit is available from Tootle Engineering (www.tootleng.com) to run on either 32 mm (2') or 45mm (common garden railway) track. The 32mm gauge version is shown above.

The kit contains cast metal side and end panels, lengths of pre-cut timber pieces to represent the deck and several small detail parts, brass bearings, etc.. The model was built as recommended in the kit instructions, with minor flash removed and the components painted prior to assembly.

Assembly was straightforward with no major problems. The axle boxes did need drilling out to fit the brass bearings and the stakes needed [careful] adjustment to overcome bends presumably received in shipping but this was easily done. The only difficulty encountered was in drilling out holes and cleaning flash in the laser-cut gear assembly for the chain tensioner due to the hardness of the steel.

Given that I'm more used to building in HOn30 or On30 this is a very large model (~10cm x ~8cm and 175gm) so I'll be interested to see just how the SuperGlue Gel I used stands up to tropical Queensland conditions. I've had problems in the past with 'blooming' and joints separating in humid summer conditions.

Metal surfaces to be joined were masked with tape and/or BluTac, then painted with an enamel undercoat. Timber components were painted with Tamiya Buff Acrylic Paint (a flat paint), the same paint that was used on the 'timber' parts of the metal castings following assembly.

Metal fittings were painted with Tamiya Flat Brown Acrylic. Highlights were done with Tamiya's flat black and white. Weathering was done with matte powder blushes (carbon and coppertone) from Make-up Art Cosmetics (MAC of Canada).

I haven't checked dimensions against Moreton Mill plans but the model has a good general appearance and details appear substantial enough to withstand handling provided the SuperGlue holds. The next kit I put together I'll add simulated nail holes and perhaps even drill through the assembled frame to pin the corners together. There's already a small depression in the frame at an appropriate point to drill for a pin through the corner bracket. Filing the pin head appropriately and adding a nut/bolt/washer casting to the cut-off end would add detail as well as strength.

Scale modellers will also want to modify the wheelsets. A model which will be examined closely needs to have parting lines from the castings completely removed and both metal and timber components 'distressed' prior to painting to more resemble timber. That having been said, the weathered model withstands the 'arm's length' test very well and it is difficult at that distance to tell that the model isn't built completely from timber with metal fittings only.

Lynn Zelmer, August 2005

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