



**On30 STEAM RAILCARS – IXION Model Railways**

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IOS-CP1 and IS-CP2 (with driving end)

Price; £199.50 (either model) - plus £5.00 P&P in the UK only.



Photo: Ixion Model Railways

These fine new 'ready to run' models from Ixion are close copies of the two 'steam motor coaches' made in the UK for the 3ft 6inch gauge South Australian Railways. Built in 1905, the steam unit was the product of Kitson & Company of Leeds, while the coach unit was made by the Metropolitan RCW Co., of Birmingham. Numbered 1 and 2, they entered service in 1906 and soon No.1 earned the nickname 'the Coffee Pot'. Later, in 1921, it was transferred to Commonwealth Railways being withdrawn in 1932. No.1 is now preserved on the Pichi Pichi railway, South Australia (see photo, right). No.2 was identical apart from a rear extension of the coach, which provided a driver's cabin, allowing the railmotor to run in either direction. Communication with the fireman on the loco unit was made using bells in much the same way as some UK auto-trains.

The models arrive in card boxes, which contain a stout foam inner. After removing the inset foam lid, the model is revealed, and can easily be lifted out by gently pulling it up using

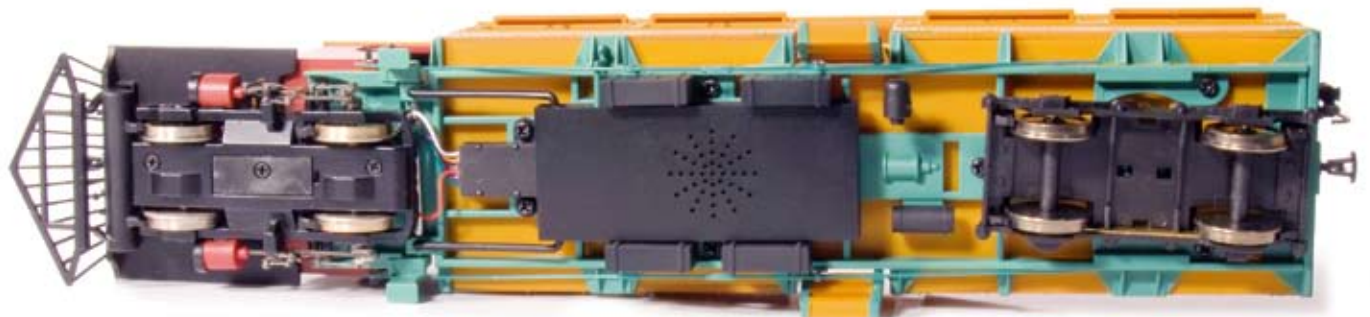
the clear plastic wrapped around it. There is a plastic 'protector' at one end that fits on the smokebox end – keep this safe, along with the plastic film. The models are fully assembled, though there is a small bag which contains opened versions of the lattice gates, enabling the coach access to be modelled open or closed (as supplied) by swapping the mouldings over. Apart from these, the only other inclusion is a well illustrated printed sheet showing how to fit a DCC decoder unit and sound.

Despite being to 1:48 rather than 1:43.5 (UK 'O' scale), these are still large models, being 260mm long, 57mm wide (over coach steps) and 70mm high. Even in 7mm scale, that is an impressive 37 foot long, 8ft wide and 10 foot tall. The unit with the driving end is longer, some 286mm overall. These would be big units for 30inch gauge, let alone 2ft 4ins and reflect the fact that the real things ran on 42inch gauge track. The design of the chassis makes conversion to the prototype

scale gauge difficult, likewise down to anything smaller.

Most of the construction is in self coloured plastic, with some diecast parts for weight and mechanical reasons, plus a turned brass whistle on the cab roof. The motion is stamped metal, with a dull finish, though the crosshead is black plastic. Outside cranks are fitted to the inner loco unit axle only, as per the prototype. Lettering is very neatly applied and the colouring of the plastic would easily tone in realistically using 'weathering' paints. The coach has full interior detail and the loco unit has a detailed backhead with fittings.

Performance of both units was good, even straight out of the box. On pure DC the models ran smoothly, with only a little noise from the flywheel fitted five pole motor. There is no jerk at starting and the models run at a scale walking pace with ease. Unlike the real thing, both loco axles are driven. Top speed is not too high and the models are readily controlled over the whole speed range.



Photos: REVIEW Studio

If the coach roof is gently squeezed along its edges, it can be lifted away (see photo below). Inside can be found wiring and connectors for fitting DCC using an 8 pin socket. Just remove the DC 'jumper' plug currently in the socket. Provision is also made for sound. A perforated box, representing the water tank, under the coach floor can be unscrewed to hold a speaker if required (see below). There are two yellow LEDs in the coach, one in each compartment, and the head and tail lamps also light up depending on direction. If using DCC the headlights and interior lighting are controllable.

Current is collected by all eight wheels, the articulation of the engine unit being sufficient for curves down to 18 inches (450mm) according to the manufacturer. Wheels are all metal and to RP25 profile and it is possible to replace the very neat 'chopper' couplings fitted with those of the 'Kadee' pattern, though the latter are not included. Although the individual wheels are not equalised as such, the loco unit pivots not only sideways but also up and down so, given that the coach bogie floats around its centre pivot, a very effective version of three point suspension is provided, which should assure good performance. In operation, the model could easily haul a free running wagon or a trailer car as long as your gradients are not too steep.

The detailing is crisp and fine, with plenty of separately added mouldings and wire handrails etc., matched by very good slow speed performance. Effectively, you get a complete passenger train in one piece – ideal for the space-starved modeller.

As noted, the slightly 'plastic' appearance is easily removed by careful use of weathering paints and your reviewer is looking forward to seeing examples in due course. It is the intention of Ixion to introduce versions painted in 'Commonwealth green' livery with the second run of these models. Also, provided sales targets are met, further non American prototypes are under consideration.



IOS-CP1 Coffee Pot No.1 (preserved livery)



IOS-CP2 Coffee Pot No.2 (preserved livery)



Photos: REVIEW Studio

