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Hose and chain for road locomotive

This document was written by Dereck Langridge and was originally published by Worthing and District SME in their newsletter in the Spring of 2016.

As I mentioned last time, my compound Fowler Road Loco is currently being overhauled having been stored for several years in far from ideal conditions. As you can see above it is not scrubbing up too badly. I am now also finally getting around to completing some of the little detail jobs that I had left outstanding, such as the water filler hose. The water lifter was already completed and in place on the belly tank having been fabricated with bits from the scrap box. An ancient brass plumbing fitting had yielded short lengths of coarse threads giving just the right scale appearance for the female hose coupling and its mating part on the lifter. (With no suitable taps or die, tedious screw-cutting would have otherwise have been needed, and I always like an easy way out!)

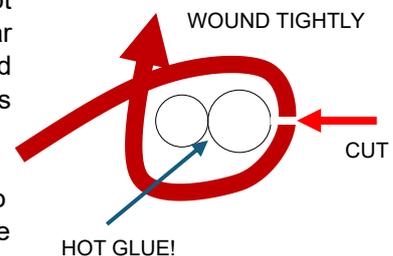


Finding a method of making an armoured flexible suction hose has still eluded me though, so for the time being a length of cheap plastic with a couple of coats of matt black paint is just about passable when lashed to the tank. It's a pity the moulded pipe does not have a spiral groove; I could then wrap tinned soft copper wire around to simulate the armouring. The strainer was made in the last week or so, and although I had no drawing, a trawl through old photographs delivered enough clues to make a reasonable fitting, again using odd off-cuts of brass.

While cleaning accumulated grease and grot from the steering chains, I thought I might pen a few words about them. No suitable commercially available chain had fitted the bill, all I found being either brass or crudely made mild steel. I needed three inch links (half an inch in my scale), looking as if they had been forged in the 'proper' manner. I wanted them 'slightly oval'. My solution was to tightly wind red-hot one sixteenth mild steel around a former made from two lengths of round bar which had been silver soldered together. A few quick clicks on my abacus had indicated the bars needed to be three sixteenths and five thirty seconds diameter for my idea to work. Then, if a one thirty second slitting saw was passed through the embryonic links on the larger diameter, they could be prised off of the former, (they shrank on of course). A quick squeeze or two (not with serrated pliers) until the tips met would not only partially 'flatten' the sides, but leave a wedge shaped gap ready for a nice fillet of silver solder. (Links threaded together before soldering of course!).



A touch or two with needle files and I was ready for the process to remove not only the rest of the scale, but twenty thou of skin from each of my fingertips! The dreaded rotary wire brush mounted in the bench drill! (I will wear gloves next time!) Finally, after making the smaller transverse restraining chain in a similar fashion to the others, I chemically blacked them, together with their end fixings and bolts.



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