## How do I ... start making a Society plastic van or open wagon kit?

As a generalisation, most wagons are just boxes on wheels.

Here's a Society GWR box van, all laid out ready to go



With most of the Society plastic van wagon kits the usual method is to stick an end to a side, ensuring it is square. Do the same with the other end and side.





Match the two bits together and stick them together, still ensuring everything is square.

Allow the solvent to harden a little for a few minutes, then drop the floor in, with the two parallel bars (cast on underside of the floor) facing downwards. Before you fit the floor, you might want to drill a few holes in it to allow fumes from solvent to escape when you fit the roof (not done in this example).



Apply solvent to secure the floor. There is your box.



The same technique applies to open wagons.

Building a wagon like the Conflat may need a different approach – in this case, you start off with one headstock/buffer beam attached to one end of the floor, and then the other buffer beam at the other end of the floor. The bottom of the floor sits on top of the ledge at the back of the headstock/bufferbeam moulding. The sides then fit between the ends.

Now for the chassis/underframe. You will have to remove the parting line on the top of the solebar so it fits flat on the wagon floor. Use an emery/nail board (see your local chemist) or a flat file. For this wagon the representation of a steel channel solebar on the sprue was used.





This can be done before separating the solebars from the sprue.

If you are going to use Society Rowan Precision bearings (catalogue reference RP003, as here) you will need to open out the axle holes to fit. For other bearings such as Society pinpoint bearings (catalogue reference SD091) you may not need to open out the axle holes at all. A cutting broach is useful for this purpose.



Secure the bearings in place with a tiny drop of superglue, applied with the end of a cocktail stick.





Then you stick the solebars to the floor, butted up against the parallel bars (on the outside!) and ensure they are at right angles to the floor.



It may help to temporarily insert one axle with its wheels to check that the axles will be at right-angles to the body.





Allow an hour for the solvent to "cure" before springing the wheels in.

After that you will need to know what type of underframe you want - was the prototype wagon fitted with hand or vacuum brakes (research)? - to fit the buffers, axleboxes, brake gear mouldings and brake levers. In this example, we're using the ones from the sprue supplied with the kit.

The shanks for the metal buffer turnings may need a little enlarging with a drill. They can be secured in place with a drop of superglue.





Next, the axleboxes: these are carefully removed from the sprue with a sharp knife.



They will need a little opening out to slip over the wheel bearings.



And then they can be glued in place carefully, again using a tiny drop of superglue in the axlebox hole, and a dab of solvent where the plastic parts meet.

Now for the brake gear. Remove the two sets of brake gear from the sprue. Note that these are in the case of this wagon handed. One has the rod pushing the left-hand brake shoe below the one on the right, the other has the rod pushing the left-hand brake shoe above the one on the right.



Glue these in place, to align with the wheels.





Now cut the brake levers from the sprue. Again, for this particluar wagon there is a brake lever each side (Morton brake) and the two brake levers are different.



The brake levers are fitted thus: the plain lever (the top one in the photo above) goes on the side where the rod pushing the left-hand brake shoe is below the one on the right:-

and the other one on the other side:-





Add weight as necessary and in the case of a box van attach the roof.

Your wagon is made!

Paint and add transfers and couplings to taste.

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June 2023