The Trolleyville Times

October 2011

The first production HO scale Bowser PCC cars with Tsunami sound are du

Kitbashing A Short Interurban!

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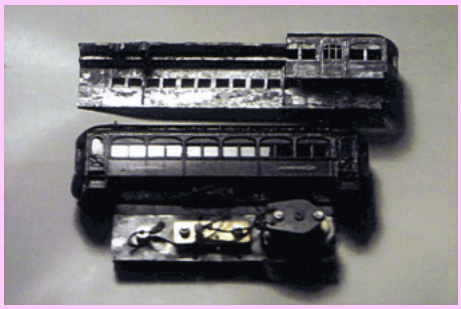
by Dave Klein

Over the years I've collected lots of trolley modeling stuff (probably too much) in just about all of the popular scales. In HO it's been mainly city equipment with the exception of some of those IRR cars from PSM/Bowser.

At a past train show, I purchased one of those Jewett cars from Bowser, thinking I can use it as a New England interurban if painted accordingly. Then I realized that it was too long for my use and that it was also “wrong” for the Lehigh Valley Transit. (To give Bowser some credit, they later came out with a more “correct' model for the LVT.) Maybe I could shorten mine. After looking at lots of photos, this was put on the back burner. At a later train show I purchased a “correct' Jewett for a potential kitbash with the other unit, but the seller had another of the generic units at an excellent price. Now I had three. Some photos of the car are below as I constructed it: Decals from Custom Traxx were ordered when they became available. (Note that no harm has come to the “correct” LVT 800 class car in making this kitbash.)



While researching the “correct” LVT cars in the DeGraw and Volkmer books on the Red Arrow, I came upon the plans and photos of the Philadelphia & West Chester (later Philadelphia Suburban/Red Arrow) 40 class cars. (The fact that both the Philadelphia and Western and the Philadelphia & West Chester Traction Co. (P&WC) had similar cars with overlapping numbers had me confused for a while.) Could I cut apart the generic cars to make a model of the P&WC 40 class? A study of the cars resulted in cutting the Zamac just behind the people door on the right side (the lavatory side) to the middle of the roof and then down the middle until I cleared three sets of double windows on the left side and then out to the left side. I now had two “backward 'L' sections” that I epoxied together. Some body filling and filing resulted in a car body that has people doors at both ends, no baggage doors and is about six inches long. This car now matched the “as delivered” status of the P&WC 40 class, but I wanted the more modern version without the couplers or else I'd be tempted to do this all over again for a two car train! (And I just found out that KND Enterprises will be making resin bodies of the cars after I did all of this!)

First of Two New Streetcar Kits from the Custom Traxx / Miniatures by Eric Team!

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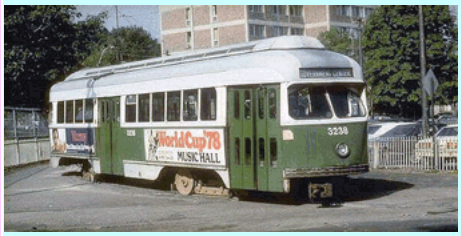
The Trolleyville Times recently learned the identity of the first of two HO scale models to be released by the Custom Traxx / Miniatures by Eric team.

The first model will be the Boston air-electric Pullman-built PCC and will represent the 75 cars of the 3172-3196 and 3222-3271 series. These cars were delivered to Boston between August 1945 and April 1946. Most were equipped will full-length roof fans. All cars were equipped with couplers for multiple unit (MU) service. These cars were in service until replaced by the Boeing Light Rail Vehicles in the late 1970s.

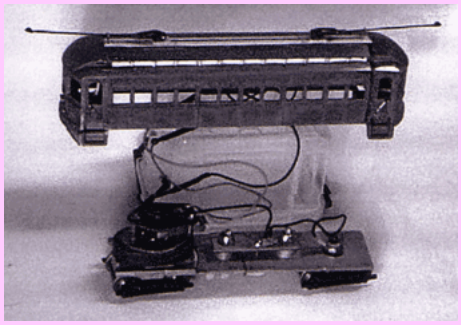


The cars will use the proven Bowser 125141 mechanism with floor and the Bowser 12600 trolley pole. Decals from Custom Traxx will be included. Cars are assembled and tested when ordered. Total price should be less than $200.00!

Just before the end of last month, the following photos were obtained from Eric of the car in development:

The splice is obvious in the above photo. I should have used more filler in that area. The holes have been drilled for the flashers and you can see the styrene inlay for the clerestory. Anti-climbers have been increased in depth to model those added to the cars after the 1932 Brill Master Units were received. The train door has been squared off and a lower sill has been fabricated and the area of the headlight has been filed away.

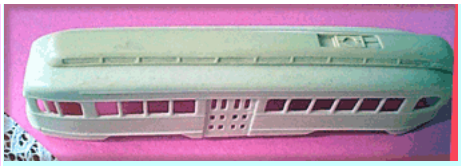
The motor from one of the generic units was then protected from further machining. The platform/step area and one and a half inches was cut out of the chassis' middle; a strip of brass is screwed to each half and holds the chassis together. I did this so the mounting of the trailing truck was made easier. Note the shortened body and shortened chassis



From the remains of the second chassis, I cut off the second pair of steps and the anticlimbers. (The Red Arrow removed the couplers and added to the cars' bumpers when their new lightweight equipment was delivered.) I glued the bumpers and steps after filing a bit off of the bottom of the doors. The body ends were rounded as best as I could to eliminate the train doors; a line of epoxy under the squared-off train door window is close enough; the headlight hides most of the door panel detail. Holes were drilled for the markers and door handrails. To support the chassis, some brass bars were glued to the insides, then drilled and tapped to hold the floor.

The clerestory area required the removal of the small arch windows; I used a Dremel steel cutter to remove/shave them (from both sides), resulting in a flat channel area. Thin strips of styrene, one tenth of an inch high, was marked and small vertical styrene pieces glued onto it. After trimming the vertical pieces, the strips were glued into the clerestory channels. More styrene was applied for the trolley boards, and with the pole sockets, effectively hides the joint in the roof. Over the window pairs were “art glass” arches. I was later told that when the cars were “modernized”, this glass was removed and plywood panels (painted black) were installed; I just painted this area black.

To mount the markers on the front window posts, I used the milling vise on my lathe to hold the body steady and drilled the holes into the posts. For the front dasher lamps, vertical lines were marked under the left and right front windows; 2-56 nuts were Superglued on the lines, their flat sides against the bumper, thus allowing me to use the nuts as drill guides. Pilot holes were drilled through the nuts using a flex-shaft adapter on my Dremel and then the nuts were pried off leaving four holes, each centered under its window and at the same height above the bumper. The holes were then redrilled to accept some red Plastruct 1/16" rods.



These photos do not necessarily represent the final product as there are changes continuously being made as the shells are reviewed. If you have comments or observations, please do not hesitate to contact the team. They want to hear what you think as they are about to enter the production phase of the kit.

We will report on the second car when more information in available!

A Sneak Peek at the Next Bowser PCCs!

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In early September, the first shell samples of the second group of five Bowser PCCs arrived at Montoursville for evaluation. They were sent immediately to Custom Traxx for review by the Southern California Traction Club. This was fortunate because just after they were sent. Montoursville was almost isolated due to flooding from the Loyalsock Creek. The next photo shows the main street of town, Broad Street, on September 8th.

Anyway, Custom Traxx received the models on Thursday, September 8th and carefully examined them. Four changes were made to three of the five cars prior to production and the supplier was notified to proceed. Shown below are the Cleveland, Toronto and SEPTA cars:

When the Red Arrow modernized the cars, Brill high-speed trucks were attached; I just screwed on some trimmed Brill sideframes from a PSM semi-convertible that I had. (I told you I had too much of this stuff!) The motor unit is one of the older vertical armature types that I reworked a bit to lower the current draw from almost an amp to one-third amp. Headlight bulbs and pole reverse wiring has been installed.

George Huckaby of Custom Traxx said that the closest color he found was Lehigh Valley Cornell Red, but just about any dark red could do and because of color fading; even Pennsy Tuscan Red has been known to have been used. George also said that the red dasher lamps alternately flashed like school bus lights on the prototype (and seen in a U-Tube clip), but I didn't add that feature; a DCC decoder with ditch lights could simulate that. Maybe next time.

The body was painted with the LV red and a clear gloss, I added the decals from Custom Traxx. (Thanks, George!) After spraying a matte finish, the glazing was glued into place (using canopy glue from the model aircraft side of the hobby shop). After that, I used a Sharpie silver paint pen to simulate the chrome bezels around the red dasher lamps. Putting the pen point into the hole and twisting it left a silver ring on the dash after which a short piece of the Plastruct red rod was inserted. A short piece of clear rod was used for the headlight lens. The top vents of the markers were filed off as the prototype had electric, not oil, units and due to their potential for being damaged, were installed last.

So now I have a short interurban and enough pieces left over for a trolley freight motor, plus I still have the LVT 800 car to work on and this doesn't include any O-gauge or 1/2-inch projects still on the “back burner”!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Dave is a retired Lockheed-Martin Field Engineer and living in Florida since 1983. He has always liked streetcars and has been building trolley models for years, starting with the PSM PCC's. He "graduated" to O-scale when he lived in New Hampshire and after seeing what was available in that scale. (The fact that a nearby hobby shop - Win Nowell's "Bay State Models"- carried Wagner and Q-Car castings didn't hurt, either.) The lack of basements down here caused him to join the Electric Railway Clubs of Florida, where East Penn modules are the norm. (That's also where he met the late Jim Richards; He maintains some of his 1/2-inch stuff for his widow, Janet.) He models in both HO and O so as to operate on various members' layouts. As for his workbench, any flat surface seems to be suitable and test loops with overhead compensates for the shortage of space in his condo.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Do you have an opinion on a traction-related matter or information that would be useful to the traction community? Submit your article in electronic format to the trolleyville times. The Trolleyville Times editorial staff will consider all articles submitted for publication.*

Modeler's Product Review,
The San Francisco "Torpedo" Streetcar from Imperial Hobby Productions!
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by Richard Vible

The Minneapolis/St.Paul and Detroit cars have not been shown here. Windshield wipers had not yet been installed on these test shells. Some of the first group sold out before getting to the U.S. so a word to the wise should be sufficient.

Orange Empire Railway Fall Swap Meet!
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Every year, the Orange Empire Railway Museum (OERM) hosts two Swap Meets, one in the spring (March) and another in the fall (September). These are always fun to attend. the weather is usually pleasant and you get to watch the museum bring out the Los Angeles narrow gauge trolleys from their resting place in Barn 1. This Fall Swap meet was no exception. It is a good place to find that model or structure that you could not locate any other place. Here are some photos of the activity on September 10, 2011.

A refreshment stand is always on hand.

In May 2011, I saw one of these models at the East Penn Meet. I had other plans for my funds at the time so I passed it by. I figured that I could get one later. Of course I read the article in the July 2011 Trolleyville Times so by the time that I decided to pursue the acquisition of one of these cars, I was told that an announcement of their discontinuance had already been made *(post 11454, June 13, 2011, hotractionmodeling yahoo group)*. So you can bet how surprised I was to find them for sale at an East Penn Traction Club monthly meeting in Bryn Mawr Hospital, Clothier Auditorium on September 2, 2011.

While it has never been communicated by Imperial Hobby Productions (IHP) why this model was canceled in June 2011 then appeared again in September 2011 for sale without announcement, IHP really drove the point home that there were no San Francisco decals available for this car. Again, the IHP representative at the show did not point out the reason for this, but I already knew that their rather 'pigheaded' refusal to provide a shell to Custom Traxx last May for final measurements was the only reason for this. I remember being told that someone had offered to pay for the shell to be sent to Custom Traxx to do the measurements ***(post 11316, May 3, 2011 hotractionmodeling yahoo group)***. But that offer was ignored, despite that fact that the Custom Traxx set of decals proposed for this car were about 90% completed at the time. I had been shown the artwork at the same East Penn Meet.

The fact that I was willing to pay $275.00 for a model without decals shows just how much I wanted one of them. I just can't believe that any HO scale resin model even with a Bowser drive but without any finishing decals is worth more than $195.00.

When I opened the box, I found a very complete set of instructions. In addition to the instructions, IHP provided their super resilient wheel covers, Bowser part 12509 trolley poles, Bowser 1270 PCC track brakes, two trolley pole hooks and clear flush-mounted window castings as shown in the next illustration:

The shell seemed to be the same shell examined at the May 2011 East Penn Meet and appeared superior to the casting of the Illinois Terminal PCC that IHP was selling previously. The shell is attached to a plastic floor, made for this car and powered with a Bowser 125100 mechanism with the Bowser 12508 trolley pole brass mounts already inserted in the proper places in the roof walk. The roof is thicker than the length of the brass pivots and this is acknowledged in the instructions.

Bowser part 1283, B-2 truck sideframes are provided on the car but these are incorrect for the Torpedo since the cars came with B-3 trucks, so IHP did provide the original generic PCC track brakes. The plastic floor secures to the body by two mounts located one inch from either end and has two ¼ ounce weights cemented to the underside of the floor, bringing the entire car weight to only 4.4 ounces. Most modelers will want to replace this with something more realistic and add more weight to get the car weight up to 6 - 7 ounces for best operation. The floor has a rather crude impression of a fender trip bar at each end. This is probably the most negative impression of the model next to the light weight. I obtained some dimensions of similar models and compared those dimensions to this model and a PCC Plan Book.

TORPEDO MODEL COMPARISON

	Length (ft)	**Width (ft)**

Mark your calendar for March 3, 2012! If you are anywhere near Perris, CA, you will be glad you did!

[**Muni Torpedo**, from Column 1]

Overall, the model runs well and quiet. As is, it will handle nine-inch radius curves. Anything less than that will require modifications.

The method specified by IHP should produce some results but it is unclear at this time whether those modifications would enable the car to handle 6" radius curves at this time. The super resilient wheel covers provided by IHP would only make the curve situation worse and IHP acknowledges that in their instructions but modelers can get super resilient wheel decals from Custom Traxx and can also get the new Bowser #1382 wheels with the super resilient wheel detail also from Custom Traxx. After testing on my modules, I will send this model to the Southern California Traction Club test track for further evaluation before painting.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Richard was born on January 20, 1941 in West Philadelphia and lived until age six on South 13th Street in South Philadelphia when the family moved to Mount Airy just one block from Germantown Avenue, and three blocks from Germantown Depot. Between the 13th Street address and living in Mt. Airy he was fully immersed in "traction action." Being a family without an automobile, they rode the Philadelphia Transportation Company (PTC) wherever they went. By age eight he was riding alone on route 23 with a transfer at Allegheny Avenue to route 20 for week end visits with his grandparents in South Philadelphia. When he was in high school he used car routes 23 (Germantown Avenue) and 52 (Midvale Avenue) to and from school. He guesses that riding all the trolleys in his early years is when the "bug" bit, and the rest is history.

At age six he got his first set of American Flyer electric trains. In 1954 at Christmas he was given a Pennsylvania Scale Models Brill car, and has been modeling ever since.

He has been a life long resident of Philadelphia except for two years in Key West, Florida with the U.S. Army. After leaving the Army in December, 1965 he went to work for PTC on February 22, 1966 driving buses from Germantown Depot. In May, 1966 he transferred to the streetcars at Germantown, and did two years on Route 23. In May, 1968 he transferred to Luzerne Depot and worked routes 6, 47, 50, 53, 56 and 60. While at Luzerne he worked air-electric and all electric cars on all the lines. He even got to operate the ex-Toronto cars, which were originally from Kansas City, Missouri and Birmingham, Alabama.

In February, 1994 he was transferred "with work" to Elmwood Depot. While there he worked routes 11 (Woodland Ave), 13 (Chester Ave) and 36 (Elmwood Ave) using Kawasaki cars. He never had a run on either routes 10 (Lancaster Ave) or 34 (Baltimore Ave). Often times he

BRASS MODEL (GHB-1986)	51.127	9.215 (110 in)
CONVERTED IHP IT PCC*	51.946	9.766 (117 in)
IHP TORPEDO	51.765	9.026 (108.3 in)
PLAN BOOK	50.417	9.000 (108.0 in)

**Note – Dimensions from Torpedo made from IHP Illinois Terminal PCC as described in August 2010 Trolleyville Times.*

I noticed that the 50.417 ft length dimension in the plan book, PCC Cars Of The United States by Joseph S. Zen-Ruffinen, does not include the large tow bar attachment later added by San Francisco and included on all three models. This would add another 8 inches to the dimensions in the plan book. Comparing the revised dimension 51.084 ft to the other models makes the IHP model dimensions very acceptable.

Originally, there were only ten of these cars, ordered in June 1946 and delivered in July/August 1948. They were numbered from 1006 to 1015 and were the first PCC cars in San Francisco. Except for 1012 and 1013, which were scrapped, and 1014 which is at a museum in Australia, the remaining seven cars still exist and could all be on the streets of San Francisco in a few years.

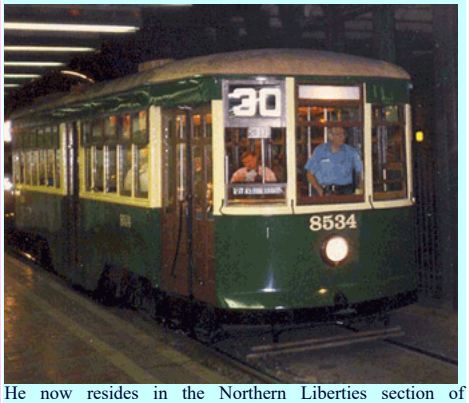
I attached the trolley pole hooks, facing to the left, and inserted the trolley poles. Two words to the wise on the hooks. They are molded with a thin backing and are somewhat fragile so be careful in removing that backing or the hook can be damaged. I was fortunate on one and not so fortunate on the other. But I attached the pole hooks only to find out that the roof walk should be fastened better. So I did that using some ACC. How these plastic hooks will hold up remains to be seen. In the future the hooks will be replaced by metal hooks for pole reverse. Also do not try to remove the Bowser pole bushings, part 12508. They are in there for good. Attaching a wire to these will have to be made by cutting material away from them from the underside of the roof, using a sharp Exacto #11 blade.

On a whim, I called Custom Traxx to see what the story was on the decals. I found out exactly what has been published previously. IHP refused to lend a shell to Custom Traxx to make final measurements but what I did not know is that at the same East Penn Meet IHP had volunteered a shell to Shoreline Models (Paul Mayer) to ask them to make decals. It appears that when Shoreline declined, the car was 'officially' cancelled. The car that I acquired must have been one of the twelve made before the 'cancellation'. I sometimes wish that I could finish this car in the original San Francisco scheme as shown in the next photo.

While I love the Muni scheme, the lack of Muni decals ultimately was not that important because I can still use this product to model Muni Red Arrow car 1007 as shown in the next photo. Custom Traxx already had decals that I could use to finish that car. I had one of those sets and knew that they would work.

[See **Muni Torpedo**, Column 2]

operated 1926 Brill-built Peter Witt car 8534 which was on loan from the Buckingham Valley Trolley Association museum for charters. In February 24, 2002, Richard retired after 36 years of service with PTC and SEPTA operating car 8534 on a charter put together by friends. The charter finished in late afternoon with he literally "riding the dusty tail into the purple sunset," westbound on Woodland Avenue in a 76 year old streetcar!



He now resides in the Northern Liberties section of Philadelphia with his dog and cat building HO modules. In the next photo, Richard is shown in the first photo below at right with Chet Moore and Larry Loyko holding the award that all three were awarded for their modular layout at the 2011 East Penn Traction Club Meet and is shown at his workbench in the second photo:

Richard Vible has been a streetcar/trolley fan for most of his life. As an avid modeler, knowledgeable about prototype streetcars, he is always willing to share knowledge with other modelers but hates to get into arguments with modelers with other ideas. So you won't see Richard on the yahoo groups as some of the questions and discussions make "...his head explode...".