

Subject: Re: Coupling problems?

Date: Tuesday, 8 January 2013

Hi David,

Many thanks for taking the trouble to point this out. There is only all small undercut on the chopper which engages with a similarly small lip on the buffer - if these were any bigger then uncoupling would become quite difficult. This is all fine assuming the stock all runs smoothly (as it should), however something that makes the stock catch or jolt significantly could easily cause this type of problem.

Regards
John

Hi John

I have just solved a 'coupling problem' and thought I should flag it up to you in case anyone gets trouble with something similar.

I have a model of Ffestiniog coach 17 in its 2000 restored livery. It is made from an up-scaled 009 Langley kit, much upgraded. It is the heaviest piece of non-powered stock on the line by far. Naturally it has Zamzoodled couplers at both ends.

I am exhibiting in Glasgow in six weeks time so I am methodically cleaning wheels & pick-ups of all stock (boring!). As a bit of light relief I run trains of stock as it is put back into service. (It is what passes for excitement this far north!). No 17 kept uncoupling ... randomly. It would uncouple at certain spots on its way on to the layout and at different spot on leaving. I tried it coupled to different vehicles but it still uncoupled. I inspected the couplings and all seemed fine, compared it to the height gauge and again all was well.

In desperation I turned it round and the same thing happened but in different places! I was stumped. So, doing what I usually do in such circumstances I gave up, sat down and had a beer.

The situation persisted and I was thinking of changing both the couplers. I didn't honestly see how this would help but what else could I do?

I am building a new rake of VoR coaches and the brake van is approaching completion. I was regauging the wheels and had the back-to-back gauge in my hand. No17 was also on the workbench so, for no real reason, I checked the back-to-back on that.

One wheel-set was out of gauge, perhaps a tad under 1mm. Corrected that and ... perfect problem solved.

I can only surmise that the out of gauge wheelset acted as a 'brake' when passing through a point in the trailing direction and, obviously, only when being pulled. Turing the vehicle round did not solve anything just moved the breaking point further along the coach. The coupling, the weakest point of the train even in full size, couldn't cope and sprang apart.

So checking the b-to-b will become part of the maintenance schedule. Otherwise all is well. The couplings seem to be 'bedding in' and it is a delight to gently nudge up to the train and see the chopper slowly rise and then drop into place. Lovely.

Happy New Year from a still satisfied customer

Regards
David