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Editorial

Time to say thanks! I often think, 'How lucky I am to have the greatest team in the world around me'!

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'Aren't we happy? Summer is barely over, and the hobby season is beginning, along with the most wonderful time of the year. I look forward to accompanying you a little along the way...'

That's how I greeted readers of our new newsletter two weeks ago! Sound familiar? Wonderful – you're already a subscriber and got a sneak preview of this issue before everyone else. The newsletter shortens the wait, gets you in the mood for the new issue, informs and entertains – sometimes with unexpected extras or surprises that make hobby life more exciting. The newsletter is free, open to everyone and can be ordered on our website under 'Newsletter' (use the QR code on the left).

I would like to recommend another subscription – subscribe to Laster & Bagger! Why? So you never have to remember to buy the new issue again – instead, you'll find it in your letterbox. You'll also benefit from a price advantage over individual purchases and free classified ads if you're looking for or want to sell a model.

But most importantly, you'll be supporting us in publishing the only collector's magazine in German, as well as in our independent and unbiased reporting. This means we can offer much more than just presentations of new models: collector profiles, dioramas, model building and much more. With a subscription, you are ensuring our survival, because it's a fact that magazines like Laster & Bagger only really make money from subscriptions. We operate in a small but select niche where every subscription counts – and that's for no more than the price of a cup of coffee a week.

I hope you enjoy reading and wish you a great start to the hobby season!

Daniel Wietlisbach

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Tom Blase collects classics from his childhood

From Siku to Tekno

by Tom Blase
and Daniel Wietlisbach

Tom Blase is well known to many readers as the author of the drivers logbook and diorama builder. But his collection is also very interesting – and quite unique in its choice of themes ...

Tom Blase was born in Mainz in 1968 and grew up as an only child in a village in the Rhine-Hesse region, where he still lives today with his family. His father was a trained car mechanic and worked as a truck driver from the age of 18 until his retirement. His mother was a housewife who took care of the house and garden and raised little Thomas.

His parents sparked his passion for small trucks and construction machinery at an early age. Various excavators, wheel loaders and track chain vehicles from Gama and other manufacturers were Tom‘s toys, as was a wide range of Matchbox vehicles from the early 1970s. From the mid-1970s onwards, Siku models were added to his collection – most of which Tom received as Christmas and birthday presents.

He has fond memories of the rare trips to Mainz with his mother. For a child from the countryside, visiting the city was something special. Although the new clothes and the obligatory visit to the hairdresser were seen more as a necessary evil, once everything was over ‘without complaint’, he was often allowed to take a new Siku truck or construction machine home with him. These moments are still among his fondest childhood memories.

At around the age of four, Tom Blase was allowed to accompany his father to work on Saturdays, either to the company or to the Weisenau cement factory. This brought him into contact with silo trucks, dump trucks, cable excavators and heavy wheel loaders at an early age. These experiences were soon reflected in his Christmas wish lists.

Until he was 15, he spent all his holidays in the co-driver seat next to his father. On these trips, little Tom saw silo trucks and container trains at home and abroad – in Hamburg, Bremerhaven, Rotterdam and numerous US depots and airports in Germany.

In the 1960s, his parents‘ house stood almost alone in the middle of nowhere; it was only later that a new housing development sprang up around it. As a kindergarten child, little Tom was therefore able to watch construction scenes right in front of his house every day. Cubic Mercedes trucks, Magirus torpedo round nose trucks with their characteristic air horn sound, Atlas excavators of types 1200 and 1302, heavy crawler excavators and mobile cranes for the emerging prefabricated houses were all there to admire. The neighbourhood was a paradise for young construction machine fans – especially since they were regularly allowed to play on the construction sites and in the pits (albeit without permission).

A steady stream of Lego gifts from the family meant that what they saw could be recreated at home. Loading tracks, halls and even a gantry crane with a functioning trolley were constructed from the colourful bricks to ‘professionally’ handle the containers. When Matchbox began producing increasingly brightly coloured fantasy models in the 1970s, the more realistic Siku range came to the fore – especially Henschel, the Mercedes 2232 and the 12-series Volvos, which his father also drove. After homework, the favourite models were unpacked and used to create a little world of country roads and transport adventures with friends.

With the blue Menck cable excavator and the Henschel tractor and semi trailers (Aral diesel fuel tanker, garage low loader, container trains), the Siku V series finally found its way into the children‘s room. Models such as the impressive airfield fire engine and the famous blue and orange Mercedes Eurotransport trac-

tor and semi trailer from the 1000 series rounded off the collection. These models looked particularly authentic and high-quality, especially during the first broadcast of the TV series 'Auf Achse' (On the Road).

At the age of eleven, Tom asked for his first AMT model kit in 1:25 scale – the beginning of a new passion. The first Mack Cruiseliner was assembled without paint, but with each subsequent model, his experience grew. Later, well-known kits from Italeri and Heller were added.

A model-building competition at a trucker meet in Mainz became a personal test. Four self-built tractor and semi trailers had to be transported undamaged in his father's car boot – with success: the models took 2nd, 3rd and 4th place, which was rewarded with great pride and two AMT kits as prizes. Over time, there was no longer enough space on the shelves and the hobby gradually fell by the wayside. The moped era began, followed shortly afterwards by an apprenticeship – there was no time for model making for the time being.

School and training

The school internship in the ninth grade was to bring a decisive turning point in his later career. The original tarpaulin was to do the internship at the neighbour's locksmith's shop – good preparation for the desired training as a truck mechanic and a later career as a driver. But two weeks before it was due to start, it was announced that the locksmith's shop had to file for bankruptcy. An alternative had to be found at short notice.

In desperation, a place was offered at the carpentry workshop where his grandfather worked. He already had an affinity for wood as a material and regularly achieved top marks in woodwork at school. Despite the freezing temperatures, the two-week internship in January 1983 was a wonderful experience.

On the recommendation of his boss at the time, Tom then began an apprenticeship as a carpenter, hoping to find a fulfilling job in this trade. But the reality was sobering: two bad-tempered bosses made for four difficult years, marked by morning stomach aches. Nevertheless, he passed his final exam.

A new opportunity arose at a retirement home in Mainz, where he had regularly installed and maintained windows during his apprenticeship. As the young man had no desire to do military service, he sought a position in the civil service. He was lucky enough to secure a position as a carpenter in the maintenance department of the retirement home.

After a short training period, Tom was allowed to work independently as a carpenter. He also took on porter duties, and the elderly residents greatly appreciated the contact with the 'civilian'. It was a time of blossoming – a phase that felt like personal 'heaven on earth'.

During his community service, Tom obtained his licence for heavy trucks, and after leaving the retirement home – with high praise and thanks – he took up his first job as a driver. (This can be read in one of the drivers logbooks.)

His first truck, a Mercedes NG 1632, was very reminiscent of the vehicle driven by Franz in the television series 'Auf Axle' – a special detail that made his entry into the profession even more memorable. After five years, however, tensions with his boss grew and, following a heated argument, his employment was terminated.

As luck would have it, a friend who was a haulage contractor was looking for a driver at the same time. After a quick phone call, he got the job – and has now been loyal to Erlenbach for almost 29 years.

The collector

If you disregard the Matchbox and Siku models from childhood, his actual collecting can be traced back to his first 1:24 and 1:25 scale model kits. Six of the trucks he built back then are still in his basement today, albeit a little dusty.

The first 'real' 1:50 model was a Mercedes 2626 all-wheel drive tipper from Conrad, which his father brought him when he was nine years old. The model impressed with its til-

The collector

Tom Blase (56) trained as a carpenter and has been a truck driver for 35 years. In addition to collecting and converting models, he is passionate about building dioramas. He is also involved in the classic car scene and regularly attends meetings throughout the year. Tom has been an enthusiastic motorcyclist since the age of 18 and has been riding a trusty old BMW Boxer for 25 years: 'I'm happy with this old lady.'

Tom is married and has a daughter. The family lives in the heart of Rheinhessen. If you would like to visit him and his collection, please contact him at tom.nocke@web.de

ting cab and what were then very fine details – and it is still in the collector's possession. The other trucks from his childhood were passed on to younger cousins or other children, as is common in many households.

During his apprenticeship and early years as a driver, he devoted little time to collecting. Long working hours and a new hobby, motorcycling, demanded his attention. It was only about 25 years ago that the collector in Tom Blase was reawakened. The trigger came from his partner at the time, who showed him the internet when they first met. Because he occasionally mentioned toys from his childhood in conversation, she showed him eBay one evening. And what Tom discovered on the screen was like travelling back in time: he marvelled at Matchbox and Siku models, sighing and commenting – often with the words: 'I had that one too... it was beautiful... and that one there...'

At the same time, occasional night shifts were paid in cash – the cash was declared personal 'eBay pocket money'. Before starting his shift, he would ask his partner: 'Honey, can you bid on this truck for me? I'll give you my night shift wages tomorrow morning.'

This is how the current collection of Siku and Matchbox models began to grow about 25 years ago. Special attention was paid to the advertising models from Lüdenscheid, which unfortunately reached astronomical prices over the years. Even a specialist dealer in historic Siku models shook his head in disbelief at this price development. Tom treated himself to a few pieces, but at some point he reached the point where he said to himself: 'I don't want to be part of this anymore.'

Conversions

The collection was beautiful and complete enough – there was no point in continuing to support this financial madness. One day, a converted Volvo concrete mixer tractor and semi trailer was auctioned on eBay and made a big impression. The model had been professionally refurbished: the roof rack, a well-known weak point with Siku, had been removed, the drill holes expertly sealed and the entire model repainted with a clean coat of paint. The admiration was great – and questions arose: 'How did he do that? How on earth did he manage it?'

An intensive phase of reading and learning in various model-making forums followed. Notes were taken, materials and colours researched, and sources tracked down. A report on the restoration of old Siku models opened up a new world for Tom – a world that some collectors considered sacrilegious. Models were drilled open, dismantled and rebuilt – an absolute no-go for purists. But for Tom, that was exactly what he wanted.

From then on, he searched specifically for 'Siku scrap', dismantled models into their individual parts and rebuilt them. At first, there were the usual setbacks: broken drill bits, botched paint jobs, ruined vehicles. But eventually, the first conversion based on a Lüdenscheid model was presented on the Sikumania platform – and the response was overwhelmingly positive. Like-minded people were found, and even though there were 'hardcore collectors' in the community, there was mutual tolerance.

The conversions became more daring and sophisticated – and eventually, the first collectors even started talking about 'Tom's building style'. Tom Blase had arrived on the conversion scene and was accepted by the hardcore hobbyists as one of their own. After around a hundred conversions, however, a certain saturation point was reached. Many ideas had already been realised, and the desire for new projects waned. The models were perfected with decals from Decalprint, and were often better than the expensive advertising models from Siku. There were even price offers for certain conversions that were almost absurdly high. Finally, the hobby was discontinued from one day to the next.

It was not until early 2024 that Tom rediscovered a Siku group on Facebook, reigniting his old passion for models from Lüdenscheid. This time, he also added models from Tekno and NZG cable excavators to his collection. New conversions were also put on the wheels again, albeit not with the same effort as before – but still in a quality that brings joy.

By chance, he discovered a beautiful Volvo F12 on the profile of a Swiss classic car enthusiast with whom he had already exchanged models. Upon enquiry, Tom learned that it was a new release from Tekno. A visit to their website shocked him because of the prices – but his resistance only lasted a week. Finally, Tom ordered the first model from De Lier. Since a tractor unit without a semi trailer makes little sense, a matching chassis with two containers soon followed.

And so his new passion for collecting took off – an expensive hobby, but one that was financed by selling his own Siku conversions. With each sale, he was able to purchase a new model from Tekno or WSI – a classic win-win situation. Even with a limited budget, Tom was able to build up

a small but fine collection. Extreme price developments are now also evident in this area – especially for certain transport models, such as the 'Schubert' series. But Tom doesn't have to follow every trend, especially as the focus of his collection is deliberately on the 1970s and 1980s. His love of old construction machinery could also be indulged on a 1:50 scale. Many childhood heroes were discovered at NZG and Conrad: the Atlas Maikäfer, the 1302, Hanomag wheel loaders, Fuchs cable excavators – exactly the machines that had once been admired on neighbourhood construction sites.

The collection itself is not exceptionally large – his wife and daughter make sure of that. Around 15 years ago, a fixed amount of display space was 'approved' in the hallway – a compromise that both sides can live with (albeit with varying degrees of enthusiasm). Since Tom does not collect models to hide them in a cupboard or in the attic, the motto is clear: when the display case is full and something new is to be added, another model has to go – usually by being sold. A very sensible solution.

Anyone who enters his 'reading room' in the basement will quickly realise that he has collected almost as many books as models – with the difference, of course, that he has read them all. For him, reading is 'food and drink for the mind and spirit' – and when his mind is full enough, it inspires new articles for Laster & Bagger. Next to the reading room is the workshop, which Tom likes to describe as 'my workshop is my castle!'

Remo's Old Iron

by Remo Stoll

Do you know these? Identify the machine and win the model ...

These photos are already 18 years old, and back then the dozer was still in daily use, as you can easily see. It must have been quite a rumble when the old-timer, weighing 17.6 tonnes and powered by Henschel's inline six-cylinder engine, dug its way through the earth.

It is questionable whether the machine has survived to this day, as it would now be at least 51 years old.

Recognise the machine? Send us the exact name by 10 October 2025. If there are several correct entries, the winner will be decided by lottery. Only participants with a complete address can be considered so that we can send the models.

This time, you can win the Vögele Super 1803-5 X paver from NZG, the Mack MD with open body and red cab from Conrad, and the Komatsu SK820-8 compact loader in 1:25 scale from Universal Hobbies.

Solution from Laster & Bagger 4-2025

The classic truck was a legendary Volvo F16. That meant that a random draw had to decide between the many correct answers: Robin Menzi wins the new Cat 950 from DM, Etienne Romy wins the Hamm HD+ 120i VIO-2 HF tandem roller from NZG, and Philipp Engel wins the Mack MD with box body from Conrad.

Congratulations to all the winners!

From disappointment to top model

Volvo FH12 'Sties'

by Daniel Wietlisbach

Sties Termo Transport A/S from Norway is still one of the most popular transport companies today. This is partly due to the original vehicles that have been preserved – and, of course, the numerous 1:50 scale models, even if they sometimes need a little work …

In autumn 1993, Volvo unveiled the new FH. Equipped with the legendary Globetrotter cab, it quickly became the preferred choice for international long-haul transport. The series, simply named FH, replaced the F series and set new standards in comfort, safety and economy.

Technically, the FH12 was based on a newly developed ladder frame made of high-strength steel. This basic structure was significantly stiffer than its predecessor and allowed for a wide variety of wheelbases and axle configurations, including for demanding applications such as construction sites or heavy transport. The front axle could carry up to 7.5 tonnes, while the driven rear axles could carry up to 11.5 tonnes. Robust parabolic suspension was fitted as standard, with more comfortable air suspension available on request.

At the heart of the flagship model was the newly designed D12A inline six-cylinder turbo diesel engine with a displacement of 12.1 litres. This engine impressed with its smooth running and powerful torque, which was available even at low engine speeds. Depending on the version, it delivered between 340 and 420 hp. The engine was coupled to a manual 12-speed gear box, which was characterised by precise shifting. Towards the end of the first series, the automated I-Shift gear box was available as a particularly comfortable alternative. The FH12 could also be equipped with an engine brake and retarder as an option.

However, the cab, which Volvo had redesigned from the ground up, had a particularly significant impact on the driving experience. The design followed aerodynamic principles, which not only reduced fuel consumption but also wind noise. With a standing height of almost two metres and two full-size beds, the Globetrotter version offered considerable comfort for long journeys. Numerous storage compartments, a large refrigerator and optional air conditioner and leather seats made the cab shell a home away from home. The workplace was ergonomically designed with optimally positioned instruments and low noise levels. Passive safety was also a priority: the cab shell was crash-optimised, and driver airbags were even available after the facelift.

The FH12 really came into its own on long-haul routes. Drivers appreciated its combination of pulling power, quietness and comfort on the long journeys between Scandinavia and southern Europe or on British and Eastern European transit routes. With more than 400,000 units produced in its first generation, the FH12 became one of the most successful trucks of its time. It played a decisive role in consolidating Volvo's position in many European markets and even taking the top spot in the long-haul segment in some cases. The FH12 successfully held its own against its fiercest competitor, the Scania 4 series, particularly in Scandinavia, Benelux, the United Kingdom and Eastern Europe.

Sties

Sties Termo Transport A/S was founded in 1957 by Øystein Stie, and the first truck was a 1956 Scania Vabis L71 Regent with a trailer. The truck had insulated superstructures for transporting frozen spinach on behalf of Frionor. Dry ice was used for cooling at that time.

A Scania 75 Super was the first truck with a refrigerated body to enter service in 1961. It was the first

truck and trailer in the familiar blue and white colours and the largest refrigerated truck built in Norway at that time. It attracted a great deal of attention when it was delivered and enabled refrigerated and frozen goods to be transported over long distances. This enabled Sties to successfully distribute Frionor's refrigerated products throughout Europe, which is why more Scania 75s soon followed. Suitable goods were also found for the return journeys: the first import delivery was bananas from Hamburg, followed shortly afterwards by vegetables from the Netherlands and fruit from Spain and Italy to Norway.

In the 1970s, demand for meat and fish transport increased and Sties developed into Norway's largest refrigerated transport company with a fleet of trucks that were no more than three years old. At the same time, Sties also acted as an importer for Mack in Norway and owned three F700 truck and trailers.

In the 1980s, the company began transporting goods to Russia, which at that time was a closed country with very strict restrictions. Russia wanted to keep transport for itself and allowed hardly any foreign drivers into the country. Only 20 Sties drivers were granted a permit, and they remained at the Finnish-Russian border, spending as little time as possible on the Russian side. Sties handled 200 meat transports to Moscow and St. Petersburg (then Leningrad).

In 1983, the appearance of the truck was modernised without changing its popular colours. In 1986, new buildings were acquired in Lysaker, outside Oslo. In addition to warehouses and loading facilities for frozen products, new offices were also moved into. In the same year, Øystein Stie retired from the business and sold the company to A/S Kosmos. By 1991, the fleet had grown to over 100 vehicles. Due to increasing transport demand, Sties found itself facing growing competition from newly established companies in the thermal market. Sties was eventually sold to Nor-Cargo AS, but remained within the company as 'Sties' and took over complementary services. In 1992, the first foreign branch was established: Sties Termo-Transport Denmark, with a seat in Haderslev, Denmark. In 1994, another move was on the cards, and Sties Termo-Transport A/S relocated to Skårer outside Oslo, where the new headquarters were set up with a fish terminal, rooms for frozen and refrigerated goods, and an office building. Two years later, Sties Termo-Transport A/S was renamed Nor-Cargo Thermo AS. In 2004, Nor-Cargo was sold to Posten Norge and in 2008 the company became part of Bring, the logistics division of the Norwegian postal service, and the vehicles were painted green.

Model by Tekno

Patrick Kyburz has always been fascinated by trucks from Scandinavia, and he attributes the invention of the truly beautiful colour schemes to the Danes, for example, and not to the Dutch, as is often mistakenly assumed. When Sties' Volvo FH12s were fairly new, they regularly drove from Norway to Birsfelden in the duty-free zone near Basel. There, the powerful six-axle 40-tonne trucks were reloaded, as at that time there was still a weight limit of 28 tonnes for truck and trailer and tractor and semi trailer in Switzerland.

The model builder was able to observe Sties' truck and trailer regularly during his early years as a long-distance driver, so he was delighted when Tekno announced the release of an identical model a few years ago. The greater the joy, the greater the disappointment, because unfortunately the model did not live up to expectations at all. It did not correspond to the original, which was all the more annoying because Tekno actually had all the correct parts in its mould collection at the time. The frustration was so great that the model was put aside in its packaging.

When Sties' love for the Volvo FH12 gradually grew stronger than his disappointment with the inaccurate model, the model builder's ambition was reawakened to build a true-to-life truck and trailer – after all, 'all the parts were available from Tekno'.

Almost all of them, because when a model builder with the 'right eye' starts a conversion, things can get fiddly – in the best sense of the word, according to the motto 'if you're going to do it, do it right!'

Everything simply had to be as accurate as possible, so right at the start of the work, the chassis of the Volvo was sawn through in front of the double axle suspension and shortened by X.0 mm to ensure that the wheelbase was correct. The chassis was glued in place using two brass U-profiles, which form the subframe, ensuring that the correct wheelbase was maintained. The rear beam was rebuilt and detailed using plastic profiles in line with the Scandinavian original. The large storage box on the left-hand side was given a customised cover, which was cut from a plastic sheet. And, of course, the mudguards between the twin axles were also shortened. The rims of the FH12 were the only parts sourced from competitor WSI.

The corrections to the cab were complex, as it had to be adjusted in the area of the bunk so that the cooling unit could be positioned true to the original. To do this, the rear half of the roof was sawn out and the new roof edge was created from plastic sheets. Tekno got around this problem by installing a superstructure that was significantly over four metres high so that the cooling unit could be fitted above the cab. Patrick therefore ordered a new superstructure with the correct dimensions from Tekno's parts service. He chose a slightly older superstructure to make the truck and trailer more interesting. At Sties, superstructures that were still in good condition were sometimes mounted on new vehicles.

To ensure that the trailer had the same height on the model (converted to 4.30 m), Tekno placed the body on a chassis with standard wheels. However, the original was equipped with a jumbo trailer with small wheels. At least the body could be used, it was only supplemented at the front with two fine U-profiles, which extend downwards as cable ducts from the cooling unit. The trailer chassis, on the other hand, had to be lowered by 5.0 mm and prepared to accommodate the small jumbo wheels. To do this, the axle holders were removed, shortened at the top and glued back in place, partly by gluing plastic profiles underneath. A large diesel fuel tank was installed on the right-hand side, which also comes from the range of parts and was supplemented with plastic profiles to match the original. The diesel fuel tank stored the fuel for the cooling unit. On the left side, there is a storage box that has also been modified. Another one is located between the rear axles, transverse to the chassis. The new jumbo wheels with matching mudguards were also sourced from Tekno Parts. The rear beam could be taken from the original model, but the underrun bumper for the jumbo trailer had to be shortened.

Finally, both chassis, the new body of the FH12 and the modified area of the cab were repainted. The decals were once again provided by René Kohli (truck-modelle.ch). No weathering was applied to the colourful model.

Compact excavator from TMC in 1:50 scale

Hitachi ZX95US-7

by Daniel Wietlisbach

The presentation of Hitachi's highly detailed models is a real treat. TMC also puts a lot of effort into small machines – we also present suitable tools ...

The Hitachi ZX95 is available in two versions, the US-7 and USB-7, the former being the short tail version, which is only available with a monoblock boom. With an operating weight of 8.32 to 9.37 tonnes, the excavator offers a bucket volume of 0.28 m^3. The 4TNV98CT four-cylinder engine delivers 50.4 kW of engine output and meets the requirements of emission stage V. According to the brochure, the ZX95US-7 offers the most sensitive control system currently available in the industry.

The TMC model is delivered well protected in a box with a viewing window and was available for the first time in a limited edition at Bauma. It can be removed from the packaging fully assembled, is surprisingly heavy for its size and exudes quality. The model is true to scale in all dimensions and can reach all maximum working ranges and transport positions.

Like the entire model, the undercarriage is also delicately crafted. The crawler frames are detailed and finely engraved with separately mounted footboards. The running

and support rollers are indicated as dummies, the drive and idler wheels are detailed true to the original and can be rotated, the latter also being spring-actuated. This means that the individual metal links are nicely tensioned and still easy to move. The blade works true to the original via a hydraulic cylinder with replica hydraulic hoses.

The upper structure invites you to take a tour of discovery, as it not only reproduces the mold correctly, but also numerous details. For example, the two fan guards on the left-hand side are made of finely etched sheet metal!

As is usual with Hitachi models, but not necessarily expected with an excavator of this size, the hood can be opened. This reveals a finely detailed, multi-coloured four-cylinder engine. The cab is also a gem in its own right and can be studied in detail thanks to the doors that open 180°.

The windows are very precisely fitted and fitted with rubber seals. The operator‘s workplace features all the instruments, levers and pedale and is painted in multiple colours. On the outside, a handrail with rear-view mirror, windschield whipper, antenna and work light complete the details.

The boom and stick are made from accurately reproduced solid castings. Six hydraulic lines run from the upper structure to the boom; they are detailed with hydraulic hose connections to the hydraulic cylinders, and the hose protection between the boom and stick is particularly attractive. An additional circuit for alternative tools has not been forgotten either. The bucket is made from a metal casting and is finely crafted.

The paintwork is flawless and the printing is flawless, sharp and opaque. We took the opportunity to further refine this charming little model with alternative tools from a new manufacturer.

Attachments from HPM

Behind the abbreviation HPM (High Performance Modellbau) are Danny and Jennifer Lahr, who offer personalised models of the highest standard. They build machines and trucks to order, faithfully reproducing even the smallest details; repainting, weathering and small dioramas are also part of the service. If details are not available off the shelf, they are built or printed in-house. And this is where it gets interesting for all collectors, because the parts from the 3D printer can also be purchased by other collectors and model builders.

To match the Hitachi ZX95US-7, we were provided with a quick coupler and four buckets of different widths. The parts are impressive: even under a magnifying glass, no print layers are visible, the molds are extremely precise and the contours are sharp and very detailed. The quick coupler from HPM is easy to install because the pins used to attach the bucket to the excavator model can be easily removed with a toothpick, for example. It is delicate and swivelling, very cleanly painted and decorated with tiny decals. Even a lifting hook has not been forgotten. The quick coupler also fits other small excavators, such as those from NZG, with a mounting width of 5.0 mm.

The buckets all bear the embossed ‘HPM’ logo, which not only looks good but also rules out any licensing issues. The digging and humus buckets allow digging widths of 0.25 to 80.0 cm, covering a wide range of applications. The range of tools is constantly being stretched and now includes a pallet fork, an asphalt cutting roller and a hammer with three different interchangeable chisels.

All parts will soon be available to order individually on the website (hpm-modellbau.de), which is currently under construction. There are also plans to offer different qualities, which will relate to the complex colouring and lettering, but not to the print quality of the parts.

Liebherr short-tail excavator from NZG

A 918 Compact

by Daniel Wietlisbach

The 918 is a classic at both Liebherr and NZG. The last 1:50 model was released in 2012, which is why the decision to release an updated version was a worthwhile one ...

Mobile excavators are generalists, and the short-tail version is also ideally suited for confined inner-city construction sites.

The Liebherr A 918 Compact can also be configured from various components in the current Version 6 and optimised for the intended applications. Monoblock or adjustable booms are available, as are blades and/or claws, not to mention various backhoe buckets, grabs and other tools. With an operating weight of 17.50 to 19.60 tonnes, it offers bucket capacities from 0.17 to 1.05 m3. The four-cylinder D924 from FPT (Fiat Powertrain Technologies) delivers 115 kW (156 hp) and complies with EU Stage V and Tier 4 final emissions regulations.

The model is delivered in a transparent box and is well protected between a polystyrene and a transparent thermoformed tray. It can be removed from the packaging with all details already assembled. A narrow adhesive tape protects the two pins on the quick coupler from falling out. If one is lost later, two replacement pins are included in a plastic bag.

The model is true to scale in all dimensions and the attachment is 100% functional, reaching all maximum positions and also the transport dimensions of the original. The undercarriage is worth a look from below, as the gear box and drive train have been reproduced. The front axle is suspended and the twin wheels are steerable.

The axle beam is just as impressive as the movable blade. The upper structure accurately reflects the mold of the original, and the metal parts feature fine engraving with joints, locks and handrails.

The engine cover has a very fine grid structure and is mounted as a separate part, as are the hydraulic oil tank and the distribution block for the hydraulic circuits. The upper structure is complemented by work lights, cameras, rear-view mirrors, handrails, exhaust tube and air intake.

The cab impresses not least with its precisely fitted windows, which also correctly reproduce all the rubber seals. The cab interior is multicoloured and finely detailed. On the outside, individually mounted details such as handrails, rear-view mirrors, sunvisors with recognisable LED headlamps, an antenna and the very finely etched windschield whipper are a delight.

The model is attached with a 5.05 m adjustable boom and a 2.45 m stick, all of which are made of finely engraved metal U-profiles and are closed from below by precisely fitting parts. No fewer than eight hydraulic lines can be traced from the distribution valve to the cylinders. The latter are well shaped and show hydraulic hose connections, but no screw connections. Fortunately, the hydraulic circuit for the swivel bucket or alternative tools has not been forgotten. The pins at the pivot points are barely visible and easy to push out on the quick coupler. The swivel bucket is made of a metal casting, reproduces the mold correctly and also allows the swivel cylinders to be easily recognised.

As usual, the colour scheme is impeccable and the printing is flawless and opaque; the printed honeycomb grilles on the sides give a very good impression of the ventilation openings.

Small wheel loaders from DM in 1:50

Cat 938 & 930

by Daniel Wietlisbach

The two very similar wheel loaders offer a total of four tools that provide real added value ...

Even the original models of the two wheel loaders are virtually identical in appearance. They are designed as universal machines and can be individually configured by the buyer. There are also numerous technical similarities, such as the Cat C7.1 engine and the hydrostatic drive train.

The engine output is 143 kW (191 hp) or a restricted 127 kW (170 hp) in the smaller wheel loader. The GVW is 16,115 and 14,117 tonnes respectively. The application-specific equipment includes different tyres and various tools, so that the machine can be used not only in construction, but also in waste management, as a machine for material handling and even in agriculture.

This versatility is also reflected in the two DM models, which are delivered well protected between foam shells in the familiar tin box. Despite their compact dimensions, they feel pleasantly heavy in the hand, as they are largely made of die-cast metal. They are skilfully designed, resulting in two truly individual versions. They have been reproduced to scale and also differ in the relevant dimensions, such as the vehicle width measured across the tyres. The axle beams are precisely reproduced and the rear one is mounted on a swing axle. The wheels are the first distinguishing feature: while the 930 rolls on standard tyres, the 938 is attached with studded tyres for reduced ground pressure, which make it appear wider. The wheels are finely engraved and the screw heads are highlighted in silver.

The rear wagon and cab are identical on both models and beautifully designed. The simple hood has correct joints and finely engraved honeycomb grilles on both sides; the exhaust tube and air intake are separately mounted. The rear end is beautifully executed with a detailed bumper, counterweights and grill. The cab is accessed via four steps with anti-skid surfaces. The glazing consists of a cleverly designed clear section that shows the most important windows flush with the exterior and with correctly depicted rubber seals. The handrails are made of sturdy wire, and the rear-view mirrors and windschield whipper are made of plastic. The roof can be easily removed, and the single-colour black cab interior is very finely detailed. The Cat logo is not only found on the seat backrest, but also on the steering wheel – tiny, but still legible! Unfortunately, we didn‘t dare to put the driver in, as the space between the steering wheel and the seat is very tight.

As is usual with this manufacturer, the articulated joint is reproduced with the hydraulic cylinder, but no further details. The front frame differs in the separately mounted mudguards, which are naturally wider on the 938. Otherwise, they are identical and have been reproduced accurately. All parts of the lifting frame and Z-kinematics have been correctly reproduced; the hydraulic cylinders are simple and functional, and the hydraulic hoses have been omitted. The maximum tipping height is not reached by 10 mm. The quick coupler offers a clever and faithful-to-the-original solution: the tools are hooked in at the top and lock into place at the bottom with a slight push, and can also be easily released again. The Cat 930 comes with a humus bucket with cutting blade and a pallet fork optimised for construction work. The Cat 938 impresses with its voluminous light material bucket and telescopic load arm, which is the only tool made of plastic. The buckets are finely engraved cast metal parts, as is the pallet fork with adjustable tines. As mentioned, the tools can be exchanged between the two models!

The colour scheme and printing are flawlessly executed, and warning stickers can be found in the area of the articulated joint.

Revision of a legend by Conrad

Sennebogen 5500G

by Carsten Bengs

The Sennebogen 5500 from Conrad first appeared in 2002 and can almost be considered a legend – high time for a comprehensive update ...

The 5500 from Conrad was the first standard model of a crawler crane and continues to impress today with its functionality. The model has been available almost unchanged since then, so it was time for an update. The completely redesigned model of this 200-tonne crawler crane was finally unveiled at Bauma 2025, impressing visitors with its functionality and new details. Conrad has produced it in its usual solid and true-to-scale manner – so it can definitely be described as a completely new basic model.

The crane comes well protected in a significantly larger and sturdy box for collectors. The model is delivered without the pre-assembled boom base, which would weigh 36.1 tonnes on the original. This makes it easy to recreate the self-assembly system. The small support feet are mounted in the small swivel arms, allowing the base machine to be lifted off the flatbed trailer. Next, the linkages are mounted through the A-frame. A small hydraulic cylinder on the linkage piece would then take over the assembly of the two 17.4-tonne crawler frames. They have indicated running and support rollers; the plastic tracks from the previous model have been retained and correspond to the original width of 1000 mm. Small steps are integrated into the crawler frames.

The next step is to mount the two central ballast blocks. These were not present on the previous model and would weigh 13.0 tonnes each on the prototype. Small ladders at the front allow access to the machine. To do this, the small support feet on the model must first be mounted in the holes on the undercarriage frame; this is, in a sense, the parking position of the support plates during operation. The small support arms are then folded into the centre section of the undercarriage. The model already weighs an impressive amount at this stage. We are also very pleased with the new catwalks between the central ballast blocks; they are made of cast metal and have a ribbed surface.

In the next step, the individual ballast plates can be lifted off the low loader and stacked on the base plate. The model is ballasted with a total of six 5.6-tonne plates and two 7.5-tonne plates, giving the original a ballast weight of 60 tonnes. In the SX version, two additional segments weighing 7.5 tonnes can be added for a total of 75 tonnes. The model features ballast plates that are filled; in the original, cast ballast plates can also be used – this would then correspond to the previous model. The stacked ballast is picked up by the two vertical hydraulic cylinders with the chains. Conrad has beautifully recreated the ballast plates‘ fastening with small plastic straps in a chain design; this is also completely new.

In the original, a 283 kW Cummins diesel engine would provide sufficient engine output; the exhaust tube and engine cooler at the rear of the upper carriage are finely recreated.

The model‘s cab can be swivelled outwards for transport next to the base and for use. In addition, it can be tilted backwards by 20° to prevent a ‘stiff neck’. The interior is finely detailed.

New here is the side footboard made of die-cast zinc with a ribbed surface. Also new are the detailed railings on the upper structure, which are all made of metal. They surround the entire upper structure, and a small ladder would allow access to the upper structure. They are included with the model and must be assembled; they are not assembled during transport due to the transport height.

Whereas on the previous model the adjustable winch was located at the rear of the upper structure, it is now integrated into the boom base. A small guide roller has also been added there. The base also features many new details. Fine hydraulic

hoses run along the segment to the winch, where the winch drive is also nicely indicated.

The model will continue to be delivered with two different boom systems, known as 'SH Type 2027' and 'LH Type 1608' in the prototype. The two types differ in their cross-section. This allows a wide variety of equipment configurations to be simulated on the model. A total of five intermediate pieces (two more than in the previous model) of both boom types are included with the model. The intermediate pieces correspond to the 5.6 m segments of the original and are securely fixed in place using the small, tried-and-tested plastic bolts. The sideways superlift made from the familiar elements can also be easily mounted using the bolts. The two boom systems thus combine to form the 'SHLH' version. On the model, the roller head of the SH boom head piece must be bolted to the smaller 'LH' intermediate pieces.

With the luffing tip ('SHWS') and all segments, the model has a maximum roller height of 1.6 m or 82.0 m on the prototype. The load capacity is then still an impressive 19.5 t at a reach of 17.0 m. Additional guide rollers ensure that the hoisting ropes and the rope of the rocker tip run smoothly.

The model is delivered with a single-roller hook block designed for a load capacity of 40 tonnes. All sheaves on the model are made of metal and rotate smoothly without resistance. This is particularly important on the A-frame to ensure that the rope runs smoothly on the pulleys. The hook also lowers smoothly.

The new assembly instructions are also worth mentioning. Conrad uses numerous CAD-based drawings to explain the assembly of this impressive crane in a simple and understandable way, even for inexperienced collectors. Overall, the new Sennebogen 5500G model from Conrad impresses with its usual solid construction and numerous new details, and its proven functionality leaves nothing to be desired. In particular, the new central ballast, the railings and the ballast securing device significantly enhance the previous model.

Surprise from Holland Oto in 1:50

DAF XD 6x4

by Pascal Gerrits

Holland Oto is best known for its 1:50 scale models as a distribution partner of Universal Hobbies, as well as a few trucks in 1:87 scale. However, the company is now breaking new ground with its first truck in our scale ...

Not entirely coincidentally, this is a DAF XD tipper, which is more or less identical to its 1:87 scale counterpart. To be completely accurate, this is the XDc, the construction version of the DAF XD. The difference that immediately catches the eye in the construction compared to the normal XD is the differently shaped steel bumper. The new tipper from Holland Oto is delivered in elaborate packaging – the box is reminiscent of a treasure chest – and is well protected.

The model is screwed to the track shoe and can be easily removed. The interior of the box is decorated with photos depicting a pit, and both the model and the packaging exude quality. The first impression of the XD is very good. The design is spot on, and the quality of the printing and paintwork is also of a high standard. The model features many details and has been reproduced to scale. Looking at the cab more closely, we see detailed headlamps, windschield whippers, mirror cameras and an accurately engraved grill. The glazing fits very precisely and the striking window in the right-hand side door has also been included. The cab interior is rather

simple but correctly implemented and consists of a plastic part. On the roof of the cab, we see a roof hatch, rotating beacons and an antenna.

Details such as work lights at the rear of the cab have not been forgotten either.

Unlike most of its competitors' models, the cab cannot be tilted and, consequently, no engine has been reproduced.

One minor criticism is the rather large strut under the front bumper. We normally only find these on XD models for road use and not on off-road models such as tippers. This difference can be explained by the reduced approach angle. However, it should be mentioned that DAF has used a demo model with exactly these specifications, which probably served as a template for the manufacturer. We cannot fault Holland Oto, but the decision is nevertheless striking.

Numerous details stand out on the chassis; nothing has been forgotten. The front axle is steerable, although the steering angle is rather small. The wheels and tyres are accurately reproduced; the tread is identical on all tyres and the hubs of the drive axles are true to the original.

Detailed tanks, compressed air tanks and the exhaust cleaner are mounted on the chassis. Wheel chocks, battery box and hydraulic oil tank for the tipping cylinder are also included, and the mudguards are made of very finely engraved chequered plate.

Viewed from below, the drive train and the precisely detailed air suspension can be seen.

The subframe and body form a three-way tipper, which can only be tipped at the rear. Although the body does not quite reach the maximum tipping height, the tipping cylinder is beautifully designed and the tailgate can be opened.

Holland Oto has produced an impressive 1:50 scale model of the XDc demo model.

Compared to its competitors, it lacks some functionality due to the fixed cab, but in terms of detail, it is in no way inferior. Added to this is a relatively low price, so the model has everything it needs to be a success.

We are excited to see what else this Dutch brand will release in the future.

compact loader in 1:25

Komatsu SK820-8

by Daniel Wietlisbach

In colloquial language, the term 'Bobcat' is often used, and in fact, machines of this type are very similar across all manufacturers. This is because there is not much freedom in the design of a compact loader ...

Depending on the attachment, the Komatsu SK820-8 has a GVW of around three tonnes. The bucket capacity is specified as a 'payload' of 950 kg, which makes perfect sense, as skid steer loaders are not only loaders but also transport vehicles – for example, with forklift forks.

The built-in Komatsu S4D86E-7MFD four-cylinder engine delivers 37.9 kW (51.5 hp) engine output and complies with current emissions regulations.

The model has been scaled down by UH, but still achieves the maximum dumping height and the original tipping angle of the bucket. However, it cannot be folded down completely. The skid steer loader is largely made of metal. The mold is well done and the wheels look harmonious and have rubber tyres with the correct tread pattern. The hood is well done, and the finely etched honeycomb grill is particularly appealing. Three weight plates are shown on both sides at the rear, which are firmly glued in place. The lifting frame with its special and functional kinematics is very well reproduced. Tiny crosshead screws have been used at the pivot points, which interestingly come very close to the original. The hydraulic cylinders are well done and the hydraulic hoses are also correctly routed. A f

orklift fork is included as an alternative to the bucket; changing it is very easy, as the tool can be clicked out at the bottom and unhooked at the top – and vice versa when reassembling, of course.The cab consists of a simple plastic part that is true to the original and is complemented by work lights, handrails and windschield whippers. As usual, the colour scheme and lettering are impeccable.

Tom's driving log

by Tom Blase

Hans the Flexer – or 'I'm building my own Volvo'

Hans Brachmann is no stranger to the Volvo classic car scene and a true expert when it comes to the F88/89 models from Gothenburg. He ran a transport company for many years and his combinations stood out thanks to their striking, unmistakable appearance.

However, Hans delivered his masterpiece when stricter emissions regulations made the use of his Volvo F12 tipper truck unprofitable in the city. He inquired about the cost of selling the F12 and purchasing an equivalent FH model. The result was quite sobering, as Hans would have had to pay almost £15,000 extra.

The resourceful driver from Hünxe was not willing to accept this and took matters into his own hands, or rather his angle grinder and welding equipment. There was a Volvo FH flatbed truck in mint condition in the yard that was to be converted into a tractor unit.

He bought U-brackets from the Volvo dealer, as required for wheelbase modifications, purchased a used fifth wheel plate and still had a vertical exhaust system from a Volvo F1220 lying around at home. With this collection of materials and the necessary tools, Hans got to work.

The superfluous frame section was quickly cut out and shortly afterwards the front and rear sections were standing on pallet stacks in the yard. Electrical and air lines hung in their original length in between – Hans left them as they were and later laid them in an elegant loop in the frame. Anyone watching him at work quickly began to fear the worst: „Now Hans has really messed up. Now he's cutting everything up."

But Master Brachmann was far from doing that. With his little electric forklift, he carefully pushed the two truck fragments together, aligned them meticulously and welded them back together with great care. He did the same with the FH's fuel tank, by the way. What sounds so easy was, in addition to his day job, almost six months of Saturday work.

Then one day, the moment of truth arrived – the conversion finally had to be approved and registered at the local TÜV office. It seemed like an eternity to Hans as he stood waiting next to the pit where the inspector was examining the conversion from below. Eventually, he got tired of waiting and called down: 'Well? What's the verdict?' The inspector grinned at him and simply said, 'You did a great job. It'll never break apart at your weld.'

And now it was official – Brachmann Transporte owned an FH12 tractor unit (which had only cost Hans a thousand euros to convert).

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Models by Peter Veicht

O&K Type T16

by Robert Bretscher

Thirty years ago, the author messed up the original on behalf of Peter Veicht ...

We often spend our annual autumn holidays on the beautiful German North Sea coast.

The journey there takes us along the A7 motorway into the hilly landscape of Kassel, where large quantities of material are extracted from numerous quarries and sand pits. I have fond memories of visiting a gravel pit, even though it was a good thirty years ago: the pit where the large O&K T16 electric high-reach excavator was working. Leo Schön, better known as a living excavator encyclopaedia, was also there at the time, but Peter Veicht himself was unfortunately unavailable. However, he urgently needed a few external dimensions of the T16 so that he could build a 1:50 scale model to exhibit at the Bauma trade fair in Munich.

So we set off for Kassel to measure the T16. Our somewhat spontaneous visit to the mine management cheered up the morning break atmosphere with coffee and cake. The coffee break with the staff was doubly worthwhile, as we heard quite a few stories about the T16. Armed with information, a tape measure and a ladder, we set off for O&K on that cold April morning. We stood in awe before the imposing behemoth (built in 1939), which weighed 115 tonnes when it left the factory. Modifications made later by the mine owner required additional ballast, which ultimately added 10 to 15 tonnes to the weight of the T16. The base plate of the approximately seven-metre-long and over four-metre-wide machine housing is almost three metres high. The upper edge of the cab is over six metres high. The one-metre-wide and almost six-metre-long crawler tracks ensure good stability. The total width of the undercarriage is approximately 4.7 metres. The dimensions mentioned above are not guaranteed, especially as the coffee break with the mine management beforehand may have had a certain influence on our measurements.

With our measurements and detailed photographs, Peter Veicht has created a truly unique showpiece. The heavy model, made of brass and copper plates, impresses with its massive appearance and accurately depicts the historic excavator. The beautifully designed patina with a pale red colour and white stripe decoration further emphasises the appearance of an old excavator that has seen a lot of use. The roof section of the driver‘s cab is equipped with a solid roller block and four fans at the rear. Veicht also mounted two headlamps at the front. Various windows all around provide a glimpse into the gloomy interior, which is painted in plain grey. The driver‘s cab is accessible via two doors that can be opened, giving the driver a clear view of the work area. Another movable door is located at the rear of the engine room, where Veicht added a ladder and a matching handrail to the model. To enable any repairs to be carried out on the large cable winches, the roof section above the sheaves can be completely removed. Collectors will appreciate such fine details. The impeccably manufactured movable crawler frame with its self-cast metal track plates and four pendulum rollers is also impressive. The separately mounted outer coupling links round off the model. Of course, an electric excavator needs a power supply, which is provided by a black cable in the mold on the side of the crawler frame. The high-lift bucket with its distinctive feed drive consisting of several gear wheels and a simulated electric motor is a masterpiece. The small service platforms soldered on both sides with brass and metal wire safety railings are a perfect match. The front shovel, which has a capacity of 2.6 m^3 on the original, is equipped with a functioning adjustable pendulum slide on the 1:50 model. The powerful roller block on the shovel is impossible to miss. The T16 model is fully movable and is operated by the two rotary knobs visible on the side panel, which control the cable winches for the boom and bucket. The bucket feed is positioned manually.

Even after 30 years, this attractive model still adorns the hobby room.

Model building from scratch in 1:25

Krupp-Dolberg D 300-2

by Holdi Langendorf

When it comes to building models entirely from scratch, the hobby sector becomes very limited. This is not the first time we have been able to showcase a piece by Holdi Langendorf – and we are also changing the scale to 1:25 for this project.

Since the Menck SR85 scraper crawler was presented in issue 3-2023, Holdi Langendorf has created further construction machines: „I consider myself an "old-school model builder" because I work without a 3D printer, CNC milling machine or spray gun. I only use Evergreen profiles, cutters, steel rulers, glue, files and brushes. When it comes to model making, I'm not looking for the absolute precision that a 3D printer or milling machine would deliver. For me, the overall visual impression, details and functionality are what matter.

Since I usually only have rudimentary data and illustrations available for such old vehicles, the model can only ever be an approximation of the original. As I also collect smaller scales, I was fascinated by the outstanding model of the Krupp-Dolberg D300-2 from Artitec in 1:87 scale. I chose the model with a backhoe as the template for my own 1:25 scale model.

The original

After the Second World War, there was a great need for excavators due to the mountains of rubble. After taking over Dolberg-Glaser & Pflaum, Krupp was able to offer its own small excavators. The D200 with four bottom rollers marked the beginning in 1955. Its successor, the D300-2 with five bottom rollers, was built from 1958 to 1969 and was the most successful German mini excavator of its time. With a total height of only 2.55 metres, it can truly be called a mini excavator. It could even be transported on a normal loading floor of a truck. It weighed 9.1 tonnes, had a 36 hp engine and a backhoe bucket with a capacity of 0.37 cubic metres. As was customary at the time, it was offered with three different attachments: with a high or low backhoe bucket and a lattice boom with a grapple. In addition to house demolition, it could also be used in clay pits and quarries.

'Scratch building'

I started with the undercarriage because the crawler frames seemed the most difficult part to me. If I could manage that, the rest shouldn't be too hard. As I mentioned before, functionality is very important to me, so I spent a long time thinking about how I could build functional crawler frames from plastic profiles. I opted for the original width of 550 mm. Because I didn't want to use brass and the details were more important to me than mobility, I decided on a static crawler frame, i.e. without any function. Nevertheless, manufacturing the chain links was a Sisyphean task. To ensure flexibility at the ends, I jointed the links on the inside with a 0.3 mm thin Evergreen strip. Precise work was important to ensure that the teeth of the sprocket meshed with those of the chain. Building the ten wheels of the tractor chassis was the next painstaking task. Finally, I built the central frame of the undercarriage with the ring gear, which I weighted with iron balls on the inside to ensure stability and the right feel.

The upper structure was quite easy to replicate. However, this is where the biggest problem arose, because I wanted to replicate the cab interior. Unfortunately, photos of the interior were not very helpful. So I had to improvise as best I could, but this only affected the details. Since I planned to replicate the function of the cables, I had to figure out a way to make the three cable winches movable. I built the two large winches on a common axle rod on the left and right.

They were given slots on both sides so that they could be moved with a screwdriver. This allowed each rope winch to be controlled individually. The smaller winch at the front right is used to move the bucket and is mounted separately. Overall, I am satisfied with the details in the engine bay, as not much can be seen from the outside and only a few details can be checked anyway; nevertheless, I designed the roof to be removable. Incidentally, the only part of the vehicle that I did not build myself is the drivers seat, which is located in the interior. The engine bay was decorated with various details. There are oil canisters and buckets from the grab box, a scratch-built vintage fire extinguisher and a work jacket made from a paper tissue.

Attachment and paintwork

The most difficult part of building the boom and stick was the sheaves and the bottle for the stick. Careful work was required here to ensure that everything functioned properly. In the end, however, the work paid off and every step can be reproduced on the model.

The final step was the paint job. Since I build all my construction machine models in used condition, only matt colours were allowed here. After a light grey primer coat, the excavator was given a coat of rust paint. I then covered the machine housing with wafer-thin 'bare metal foil', which is actually intended to represent chrome parts on models. This was followed by the medium blue paint. I had to mix this from Revell colours 56 and 5, as no manufacturer offers the right shade. Finally, I washed and dusted the model with colour pigments. To show signs of wear, I sanded down areas that looked well-used. In some places, I lifted the foil to imitate flaking paint. I created the lettering using rub-on letters that I still had in my collection.

The diorama

I have always placed my previous models in small dioramas. The basic structure consists entirely of Kapaline panels, coated with plaster and sprinkled with real earth. I wanted to add some details to the diorama to make it more interesting. First, I built an IBC container (liquid tank), followed by railway sleepers and paving stones. Since I live near Kassel, I wanted to include a local reference. Next to the tree stump is a basalt stone stuck in the ground, made from soapstone, like the 7,000 copies created by artist Joseph Beuys for Documenta 7 in Kassel in 1982. And since we're in Kassel, raccoons are a must, although these are 3D products. The whole thing was to be rounded off with metal mesh fences, as found on all construction sites today. However, this created a temporal contradiction: an excavator from the 1960s standing next to features from the present day! In addition, the excavator arm and shovel were heavily rusted, which did not look like they had been in active use.

So I invented a joint story: a blade for a museum construction site is displayed on the fence. Such facilities have been around since 1997, where visitors can try their hand at various old construction machines. My construction site is fictitiously only open once a month and has not been in operation since the coronavirus pandemic began due to a lack of supervision. This also explains the heavy rust on the shovel, which has been unused for a long time. It also explains the presence of the newer equipment. Fortunately, a new supervisor has now been found, who stands in the background armed with a broom.

Actually, the work should be finished here. But in the reference photos, there was one in which the excavator was loading a car transporter. The small excavator fits quite well with the not-so-huge O&K Motrak S18. Coincidentally, the medium-sized car dumper was also available from Artitec. So the 1:87 model was quickly purchased and scratch-built in 1:25 – but that's another story!

Simple modifications for more variety – Part I

Turn two into one

by Wilfried Schreiber

Every now and then, a model gets damaged or parts of a model are found. In such cases, two original models can be combined to create a new one. Here are a few examples of such conversions...

A very simple conversion, for example, involved placing a Liebherr A 921 upper structure on a suitable Joal crawler chassis – from the Åkerman H7. This resulted in the LH 921 crawler version model. The special feature of this 1970s excavator was that it belonged to the last LH excavator series, which only had one lift cylinder. All subsequent series were equipped with two lift cylinders and, from then on, white cabs, as can be seen in the next conversion of an LH 912 from the 1980s. The author equipped this with a Delmag drilling rig – actually in 1:87 scale from Kibri – to create a small drilling rig that was quite common at the time. The Liebherr A 921, which had a backhoe, was the first mobile excavator model from Gescha. The A 912, which was available with a grapple or backhoe, comes from Conrad.

Trucks are also very well suited for conversions, as demonstrated by the two Henschel models from GMTS made of resin. The HS 22 F was converted from a three-axle tipper to a mixer – thanks to a superstructure from Conrad. The Henschel H 261 AK was converted into the two-axle tipper HS 14. The author carried out this conversion twice. Once using the rear chassis section with tipper bridge (made of wood on the original) from the Mercedes Langhauber model L 3500 from Minichamps (1:43) as an older version. For the second conversion, the rear chassis section with tipper bridge from the two-axle MAN DHAK 26.240 from Conrad was used. These trucks were a common sight on many construction sites in the 1960s and 70s until Henschel ceased truck production in Kassel in the 1980s. Henschel also built tanks and locomotives. The factory was taken over by TKTR (Thyssen-Krupp-Transrapid) and closed in 2010.A

simpler type of truck conversion is the MAN DHAK 26.240 three-axle tipper into a mixer, as here too only the tipper body was replaced with a mixer body (Stetter) – all from Conrad. This conversion was carried out by the late Rainer Markgraf, while all other conversions were carried out by the author.

Conversion to CCM basis

Caterpillar 988 Waste compactor

by Urs Peyer

It certainly takes a little courage to declare a CCM model a conversion project. Nevertheless, this conversion is also suitable for beginners ...

When it was launched in 1963, the 988 was Caterpillar's first articulated wheel loader. The 834 wheel dozer, based on the 988, also came onto the market in 1963. Seven years passed before the first soil compactor, the 835, was launched in 1970.

Caterpillar's first official refuse compactor was the 816 in 1972. As a variant of the refuse compactor with dozer blade, there is also a version with a lifting frame and bucket. The steel wheels with tooth tips crush and compact the refuse in a single operation. The bucket with a large spill guard is used to distribute the tipped refuse piles.

The 988 wheel loader from CCM served as the basis for the conversion. The waste wheels come from the Cat 836H waste compactor from Norscot. The compactor wheels from Hanomag CL310, Komatsu WF450 or Fiat-Allis FR20B would also be suitable.

Disassembly

Unlike most other wheel loader models, the wheels on the CCM Cat 988 are individually inserted into the axle beams. The front axle is mounted with a bolt and can be easily removed. After removing the tyres, the rims can be dismantled into two parts.

The bolt can be pulled out of the axle beam by pulling firmly. The front and rear axle beams must then be stretched to ø 2.0 mm (Fig. 1).

The compactor wheels from the 836H can be removed from the axle rod by turning them in opposite directions and pulling them at the same time. The wheels can be dismantled into their individual parts by loosening three screws each. As the axle rod has a diameter of more than 2.0 mm, the opening in the rim had to be drilled out to 3.0 mm. An ABS tube with a diameter of 3.0/2.0 mm was then glued into the drill hole (Fig. 2).

Assembly

As the front axle beam could no longer be screwed on due to the now continuous axle rod, it had to be glued with two-component adhesive. Brass or aluminium rods with a diameter of 2.0 mm were suitable as new running gear, to which the wheels could be glued.

To remove the shovel, the four bolts had to be carefully pushed out from the inside to the outside using a fine pin punch. The new spill guard was made from plastic profiles. Its width corresponds to the shovel, it is 25 mm high on the outside and 1.5 mm thick. The lower edge was adapted to the mold of the existing spill guard. The white frame was made from various plastic profiles according to the list of materials. The fine black viewing openings were made from front protective grilles from excavator cabins, which were found in the scrap box (pictures 3 and 4).

Demolition as a diorama theme – Part II

A lost place disappears

by Markus Lindner

As is easy to see, the vacant iron foundry we featured in the last issue is facing closure. But how did this beautiful hall actually come into being ...?

Large parts of the impressive building complex have already been razed to the ground, with excavators steadily working their way through the halls. As a result, the characteristic concrete beam construction in the two-aisled main hall is now also visible from the outside. The mighty cupola furnace is still standing.

In the last issue, the fully equipped Kobelco SK1300DLC-10 with a three-part demolition arm could already be seen in front of the hall; now the machine can be observed demolishing the hall structure. It is supported by other Kobelco machines, including an SK400DLC with long front attachment (engine type) and an SK500LC-10 (Conrad). The models are equipped with appropriate attachments, most of which are homemade. In the next instalments, completely different models will be seen on the diorama.

But let's turn our attention back to the construction of the diorama. After planning and dividing the individual structures on the floor plan, the first thing to be built was the double-aisled central hall, which is already in the middle of demolition, as all other components will be attached to it.

Two hall aisles, each 34.0 cm wide and with an eaves height of 26.5 cm, were depicted so that the technical equipment of the casting hall and the moulding sand preparation equipment could be accommodated underneath, leaving sufficient space above for the bridge cranes. The latter were used to move both the casting ladles with the molten iron and the moulding boxes and finished castings to their respective destinations.

The arched roof construction resulted in a total height of 34.5 cm for the hall structure (38.0 cm including the skylights), which was just right for the effective use of demolition machines such as the Kobelco SK1300DLC-10 and similar equipment. To ensure that the demolition tools attached to them have enough 'feed', the halls should have as solid a concrete construction as possible, as mentioned in the previous issue. The choice therefore fell on a skeleton construction with a support grid of 12.0 cm, which is infilled with masonry.

The roof construction required more in-depth consideration: the choice was between a steel girder construction – visually very appealing – or the more common construction variant with a prestressed concrete arch element and a tie rod. Images from a Belgian steelworks brought an even better alternative into play: solid prestressed concrete girder structures, similar in principle to so-called 'Vierendeel girders', which add a considerable amount of additional demolition material to the hall roof. Due to the size of the structure and the stability required in the model – especially if it is to be transported regularly for outdoor photography – the choice of materials played an important role in the implementation.

Lightweight hard foam material, which would have been ideal for depicting the demolition marks, was therefore ruled out, at least for structural components.

Instead, the base material used was readily available, thin MDF (medium-density fibreboard) with a thickness of 6.0 mm, which can be easily milled using a CNC milling machine, corresponds to a material thickness of approx. 30.0 cm in the original and was then partially doubled to achieve a thickness of 12.0, 18.0 or even 24.0 mm thickness for certain components.

The wall structure is therefore multi-layered and usually consists of three layers. In the middle is a milled MDF part, which represents the plane of the masonry, on top of which there is another milled MDF part on both the outside and the inside, which represents the load-bearing elements of the reinforced concrete structure. Glued together with standard white

glue, this resulted in an extremely stable basic structure, which was screwed to the hard foam base plate from below with long wood screws at the thick support positions.

All visible concrete surfaces, and thus a large part of the construction, were given a concrete-grey base coat in binder paint. The entire interior of the hall was then painted in a slightly lighter shade of grey. Leftover facade paint was used for this to suggest the interior paintwork of the hall.

The wall surfaces between the supports were to show red exposed brickwork. Here, the choice fell on embossed 'brick' wall panels from Noch (57550), which are recommended by the manufacturer for scales of 1:87 and even 1:120, but are much better suited to our scale of 1:50 due to the stone mass used. These are the latest generation of textured cardboard panels with embossed stone structures and masonry joints, which look much more realistic than the cardboard panels commonly used in the past. The sheets could be easily fixed to the MDF base using contact adhesive. However, one disadvantage of the embossed cardboard sheets should not be overlooked: after a relatively short time, the brick-red colour fades under UV radiation, which is why the diorama should not be placed directly behind a window.

The windows are also worth a second look: Since the hall can be viewed from both the outside and the inside, and the wall structure is realistically thick, the window construction method commonly used in building model construction, with a glued-on frame and transparent film, is not an option. Instead, the windows consist of three parts: an inner and an outer window frame and a transparent polycarbonate film glued between them. The two frames were painted before being glued together and then inserted into the window openings and glued in place. It took several tests to determine the exact window dimensions so that they could be inserted into the openings with sufficient clearance without creating unsightly gaps.

The process was simplified for the large window areas in the arched gables. Here, an open gap was left at the top of the MDF construction through which the finished window construction could be inserted in one piece. The open gap was covered by the roof on the finished model.

The roof itself consists of wooden formwork with corrugated iron sheets on top. For the wooden formwork, narrow strips of 1.0 mm thick balsa wood were cut, stained dark brown with dark brown wood stain and then glued crosswise to the concrete beams. The individual corrugated iron sheets on top were cut out of craft corrugated cardboard, the backing cardboard was carefully removed with a pointed object and the remaining corrugated cardboard was painted dark grey. Noch's road construction structural paint asphalt was ideal for this; this was followed by slight ageing. The individual corrugated iron sheets could be easily adapted to the curve of the roof and glued to the wooden formwork in the direction of installation using white glue.

The next instalment will show in detail how the hall was extended with additional structures on the left and right.

Our partner page

Runway renovation in Australia

The renovation solution using Q-FLASH rapid-setting cement has also proven itself in Australia! Following an initial renovation at Melbourne Airport in spring 2023, our partner company Fulton Hogan received the green light in April for a further renovation in Melbourne. Concretum Construction Science AG, a subsidiary of Eberhard Unternehmungen, supplied around 800 tonnes of cement for the project. Fulton Hogan and Eifers installed up to 33.0 m^3 of Q-FLASH rapid-hardening concrete per night. The project involved 55 night shifts. The slabs to be replaced were a maximum of 56.0 m^2 in size and 580 mm thick. Work began at 11 p.m., and it took around an hour to dismantle each slab. From 1:30 a.m., five volumetric concrete mixers produced the concrete directly on site. Installation, compaction and finishing took another hour. At 4:45 a.m. each morning, the taxiway was reopened to air traffic. Thanks to Q-FLASH, the nighttime closures were short and no longer posed a problem!

New on the market

NZG 1:18

The impressive model of the Actros L has been revised and enhanced with a few small but subtle details. In addition to the newly printed 'L' logo, the mirror positions have been adjusted and the mirror cams slightly reduced in size. There is now also a side exhaust tube, only one wheel chock, revised steps and an additional storage compartment in the door trim. This brings the unique model back up to date with the original.

HPM Model Building 1:50

If you like to take detailing to the extreme, HPM is the place to go. Not only because they have parts that were previously impossible to find, but also because these parts are extremely finely crafted (see also the report on the attachment tools for the Hitachi ZX95US-7 in this issue). There is a thermos flask with a cup as a lid, which has a free-standing replica handle. Or the grease gun, which even shows the connection for the grease nipple at the end of the hose. All parts come from the 3D printer and impressively demonstrate what is possible with this technology today. The picture also shows: universal GPS receivers and LED work lights, a fire extinguisher, a petrol can and a mortar bucket. The details are enlarged by more than twice their actual size, which impressively highlights the print quality.

Thanks to the expertise it has acquired, HPM also offers a 3D printing service, which includes printing parts to order. There is also a printing service for the production of wet decals, which have particularly good coverage. The website with shop is currently still under construction (www.hpm-modellbau.de); until it goes online, enquiries can be made via email or Facebook (service@hpm-modellbau.de / Facebook HPM – High Performance Modellbau).

MSM 1:50

The Liechtenstein-based company also uses 3D printers continuously, and creative mind Andreas Eberle seems to have an endless supply of ideas. His latest creations are three grapples that fit truck cranes from all well-known manufacturers such as Conrad, WSI and Tekno. As usual, they are fully movable and stable in design – however, the print layers are slightly visible. There is a digging grab, a bulk material grab and a universal grab with two open shells. All grabs are available in the three colours shown.

News in brief

Tata acquires Iveco

Iveco recently celebrated its 50th anniversary – now the group has been sold. After Magirus was spun off from the group, Indian company Tata Motors is now taking over the Italian truck manufacturer. Tata is paying $3.8 billion for the deal. However, the group is not getting everything; the defence division (IDV) is going to Italian defence company Leonardo, together with Astra. According to a press release, the aim is to create a strong platform for sustainable growth by combining complementary skills, global reach and shared strategic visions. Tata Motors emphasises that the acquisition will strengthen Iveco‘s existing strategy and advance the long-term interests of all stakeholders, including employees, suppliers and customers. (eu)

DAF introduces car transport chassis

DAF has adapted its chassis to the requirements of the car transport industry. When transporting cars, the driver is always a little uncomfortable, as the already cramped cab is made even smaller. After all, the aim is to transport as many cars as possible, and this is usually achieved by placing one vehicle above the cab. DAF has now adapted the chassis and cabs of the XD, XF, XG and XG+ series, although it is not possible to place a car above all cabs. The chassis have been lowered by four centimetres and are also fitted with low-profile tyres. If necessary, the cab can also be delivered ex-works with a sloping roof. (eu)

Caterpillar 980 GC

The new Cat 980 GC, powered by a Stage V-compliant C13 engine with 313 kW, complements the extensive range of medium-sized wheel loaders. Thanks to its straightforward operation and cost-effective running, this loader in the 30-tonne class is an economical solution for a wide range of applications. The easy-to-fill performance buckets offer capacities between 4.3 and 5.8 m^3. Universal, flat-bottom, rock, coal and light material buckets are also available. When loading trucks, the optional Cat Payload continuously weighs the material. (up)

MAN Commander GT

MAN Truck and Bus Nederland has launched two special models exclusively for the Netherlands. The MAN TGX and MAN TGE are now available in Commander GT versions. The models were inspired by the Porsche Mobil 1 Super Cup. Porsche and MAN are part of the same group and stand for outstanding quality. The Commander GT version combines a racing atmosphere with robustness, passion and perfection. The TGX has been given a tailor-made design with a customised sunvisor and integrated light strip, as well as a front lip with LED light strip. In addition, there is a customised rear bumper from Rensoude and customised side skirts. The chassis is completely covered with a wooden deck and the rear wall has an illuminated ‘Commander GT’ logo, framed by two standing exhaust pipes. The special equipment is rounded off by a high-quality interior. (eu)

Hitachi ZX890LCR-7

The Carrières de la Loire quarry, located in south-eastern France and owned by the Delage Group, extracts around one million tonnes of rock per year, mainly for track ballast and road gravel. After around 11,100 operating hours, the old Hitachi ZX-890LCR-6 was replaced by a new ZX890LCR-7. It consumes around 5% less fuel than its predecessor. The excavator is equipped with a 7.10 m long boom, a 2.95 m stick and a 5.0 m3 rock bucket. Its operating weight is around 86.8 t. The responsible dealer, Teramat, has signed a full service contract for five years. (up)

Liebherr R 980 Demolition

The Barcelona-based company Hercal Diggers SL is investing in a Liebherr R 980 Demolition. Weighing a maximum of 197.5 tonnes, this demolition excavator is the largest on the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal). Equipped with a telescopic boom (telescopic from 19.5 to 35.7 m), a 2.8 m long intermediate boom and a 13.5 m demolition stick, the excavator reaches a maximum working height of 60.0 m. The attachment weight is then 2500 kg. The R 980 Demolition is making its debut on a construction site in Barcelona‘s Zona Franca: demolition of a reinforced concrete building consisting of 20 silos with a height of up to 40 metres. (up)