

What's *in the* shops



Eight N gauge pick-rollers means that a large steam locomotive such as the Graham Farish GWR Castle Class or similar can be tested and run in.

Flexible rolling road

An essential part of fine tuning and maintaining a collection of locomotives is a rolling road. **Nigel Burkin** looks at the KPF Zeller rolling roads available in the UK from Ten Commandments Models

A ROLLING ROAD IS A STATIC TEST unit for model locomotives and multiple unit testing and running-in and has proven to be a very useful piece of equipment to have on my workbench. Setting up the layout just to test a locomotive or to run a new locomotive in after purchase, something that is strongly recommended by the manufacturers, can be a bit of a chore. A rolling road is a quicker and often better way of achieving the same end.

Experienced modellers, particularly those who build locomotive kits or spend time undertaking modifications to ready-to-run models will routinely use a rolling road for testing models. Testing can be done conveniently at the workbench, under very controlled conditions, and without having to follow a model around a layout. The dust sheets and covers can remain over the layout while the rolling road is used with a controller.

A great deal of fine-tuning can be achieved by watching how a model runs on a rolling road and fine adjustments can be made accordingly. The manner in which the motion of steam locomotives is working can be observed for tight spots or binding, which is easier to detect including the point at which it happens. Less-than-concentric wheels may be identified, together with a whole host of other small defects that would be harder to see when testing on a layout.

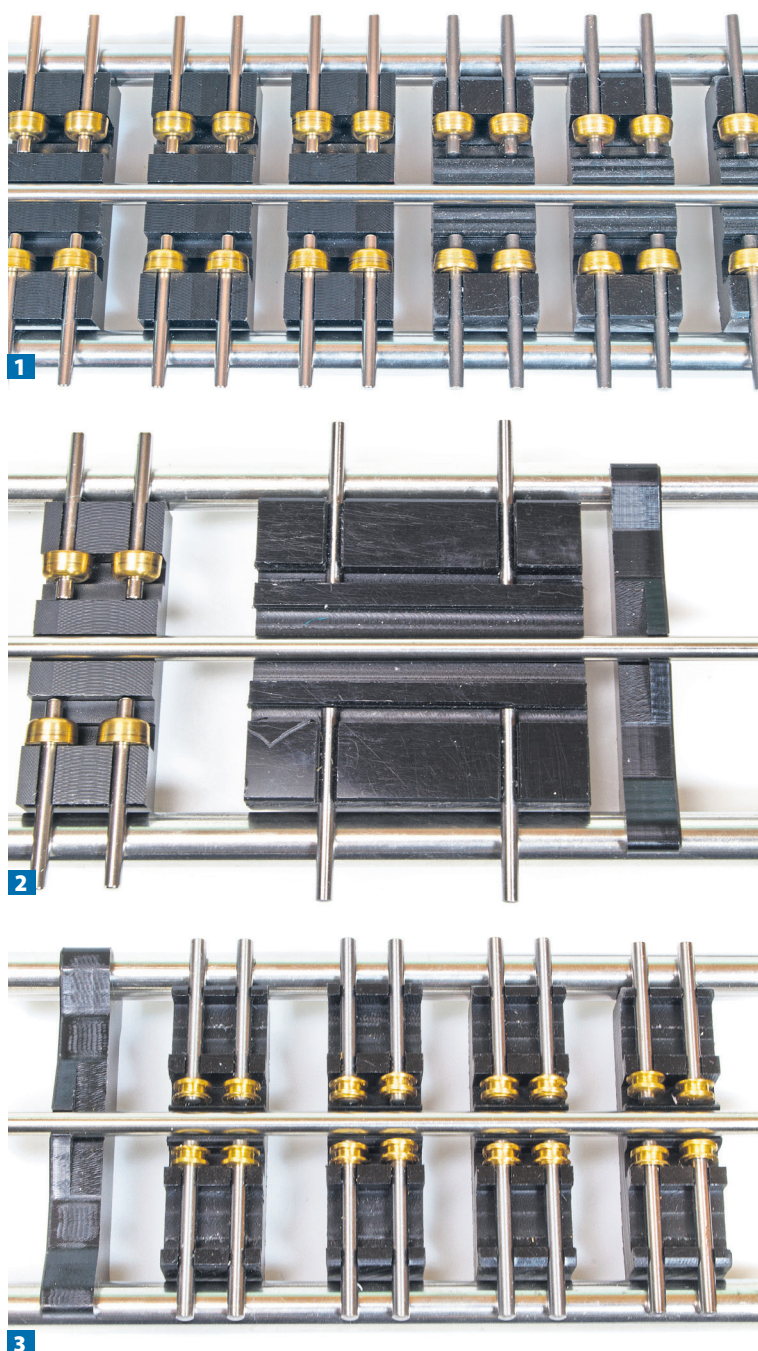
In addition to test running and running in, rolling roads allow those modellers without a layout (possibly owing to space constraints) to give their models a good run and to appreciate the sophistication of modern mechanisms and high-fidelity digital sound too. I have frequently tested new decoder and digital-sound decoder installations using a rolling road and have picked up problems at an early stage before damage could occur.

Introducing the KPF Zeller rolling roads

High-quality finishing is a feature of the KPF Zeller rolling roads being offered by Ten Commandments Models in the UK. Not only are they well engineered, there is a version that will suit most modellers and each design has the flexibility to accommodate a wide range of models in its own right. They are available in two different lengths for each scale except O gauge (which has an intermediate length) to suit mainline steam locomotives (400mm long for OO/HO) or, if you are modelling a branch line theme with short tank engines and shunting locomotives (300mm long for OO/HO for example). The model described in this article is the 'Professional Standard' rolling road, which is 600mm in length, and has pick-up rollers for OO/HO and N gauge. Such a model would suit professional builders; those modellers with a foot in both the OO and N gauge camps together with decoder installation experts, to mention a few.

The design of all the rolling roads is based on two strong side bars secured parallel to each other with special insulating brackets. The bars are very neatly finished, allowing the various tight-fitting spacer brackets to slide along them; they are also bevelled at the ends to prevent snagging. The various pick-up roller units sit on the bars and are secured in place with a thinner centre bar. The pick-up rollers slide along the bars so the correct position for the driving and bogie wheels of a locomotive can be selected.

The pick-up roller units are beautifully engineered with metal rollers that are conical in shape to match the profile of model locomotive wheels. This ensures good electrical contact and keeps the model steady on the rollers during testing. The N gauge rollers are different in design and have a groove to accommodate the wheel flange that allows the wheel tread to run on the outer par of the roller. The inner flange acts like a check rail, keeping even the lightest N gauge model running well and without falling off.



Product details:
Rolling roads in all popular gauges (N, TT, OO/HO and O gauge).

Manufacturer:
KPF Zeller.

UK sales:
Ten Commandments Models.

Scale:
Reviewed model is fitted with pick-up roller units for both N and OO/HO gauge. Also available for O and TT gauge.

Sample prices:
OO and N gauge 'Professional Standard' model: £130.
OO gauge standard model: £75.
N gauge 'Mini': £55.
Additional OO and N gauge pick-up roller units are £7 each.
Additional O gauge pick-up roller units are £12 each.
Driving wheel cleaning attachment is £18 including cleaning fluid.

Web:
tencommandmentsmodels.co.uk
<http://tencommandmentsmodels.co.uk/product-category/miscellaneous/rolling-roads/>

1. The OO/HO gauge pick-up rollers are shown in this picture. There are four rollers per unit and power is transmitted from the side bars to the rollers through the extended axles.

2. The idler or static unit for supporting the front bogie of larger steam locomotives.

3. The N gauge rollers are grooved to ensure that even the lightest model remains safely mounted on them when in operation.