

## Atlantic 5 ins. gauge Locomotive No. 3279 – The Ash Pan

In my last update I mentioned that I was starting on the ash pan and grate. Very problematical. There are no suitable drawings for the ash pan. The Clarkson drawings don't help as its ash pan is fixed in position and ash has to be raked out via an opening at the rear of the pan and the grate itself is in several pieces which have to be wrestled out through the firebox door. No good. I wanted a one piece grate and pan which could be 'dropped' out from beneath the loco.

The first thing to do was to modify the brake linkages and cross beam beneath the firebox. I then made an ash pan from Plasticard to prove that it was possible to put it in and pull it out without a problem. (What was that!) The ash pan has to be narrower than the width of the firebox because the loco has double frames at the rear and the inner frames are actually underneath the firebox. In order to collect ash from the sides and direct it into the ash pan 'side skirts' were made to bridge the inner and outer frames at each side to act as collecting chutes. The skirts need to be tapered as the frames are not parallel.

The ash pan itself was made from 18g stainless steel sheet. I had two offcuts to use up which turned out to be very different types of stainless steel. One sheet proved very difficult to drill holes in. Stainless steel always generates a lot of heat but one of the pieces I was using up was ridiculous. I really should have TIG welded the pan but I don't have the gear so I bolted it together. The pan rests on a ledge at the rear and is held in place at the front with a stainless steel pin which goes through the pan and both sets of double frames. In the base of the pan is a trap door to empty out the ash without removing the pan. In the front and rear faces of the pan are air holes. The ash pan top edge is level with the bottom of the firebox to minimise tramp air and there are 'upstands' which raise the grate up a short distance into the bottom of the boiler. The grate itself is one piece of stainless steel and is much wider than the ash pan but it can be removed by tilting it at the right angle. One day I'll find out how easy (or difficult) it is to remove it whilst lying on ones back underneath a steaming bay! Incidentally it took 48 hours to sort the ash pan and grate and I forgot to mention in my last report that the cab took 76 hours.

After hacking away at stainless steel for a few days I decided upon a bit of R and R and made the loco front vacuum hose thingy and the coupling hook and links.









