

Handrail Stanchions

The cladding is progressing well on the 5 ins. Gauge Atlantic No. 3279 and I've now put in the handrail mounts. Ever thought about handrail stanchions and how to mount them securely? If the locomotive smokebox is 10 gauge material you can drill it and tap it directly or simply drill a hole and put a nut on the back but the 22 gauge cladding on the boiler is too thin for that! The stanchions (knobs?) need something substantial to screw into otherwise if they get knock at a later date and come loose you'll have a real problem. The mount obviously has to go beneath the cladding before it is put on the boiler but you always have to fiddle with the cladding to get it to fit nicely so how do you keep the mounts in place. You could solder nuts on the back of the cladding but it is not unheard of to have to reposition the stanchion slightly once the handrail is being fitted to get the handrail nice and straight so how do we solve this problem? It is also better not to have the handrail stanchions in situ when you paint the boiler but to put them on afterwards.

Regarding the handrail knobs, look at them carefully before you buy! Some have big knobs (the thought of it!) and are not really near scale and the standoff distance can vary. I've also seen and rejected some with the hole in the knob off center. Make sure that they are nice ones and check the thread. Most these days are threaded 6 BA but in the dark ages you sometimes found them with 1/8 x 40 threads. Make sure that the thread goes right up to the collar so that the knob will fit close to the cladding.

Now cut some bits of 10g copper sheet, that's 1/8 ins. thick say 3/4 ins square. Drill a hole in each for the 6 BA thread, tap them and then anneal the squares at red heat. Let them cool then put a slight curve on them the same radius as the boiler barrel or firebox. Get some double sided carpet tape and stick it to the outside radius of the copper square and then stick the square to the inside of the cladding lining it up with the hole you will have drilled in the cladding. Screw a 6BA bolt with a lock nut externally into each cladding hole and copper square and run the lock nut down and tighten. The mount is now secure for the duration of your fiddling, sanding, priming, painting, boiler mounting etc. etc. Once the boiler is painted and mounted on



the frames you simply release the lock nut take out the screw and screw in the handrail knob. See the photos.



