

Product Reviews

Sheffield No. 1 Handcar
Alameda Car Works
1565 W. Harriet Ln
Anaheim, CA 92802
www.alamedacarworks.com
(888) 808-7861

1" scale: \$369.95, introductory price \$295.00

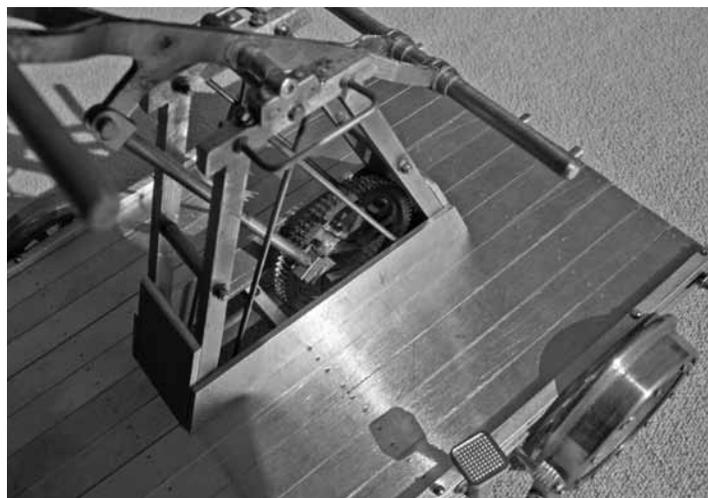
1 1/2" scale: \$449.95, introductory price \$345.00

Joe Devlin has been designing and building 1" scale models for years, many of those ended up in the Iron Pony line of kits, now Riding Railkits. He also designed some 1 1/2" scale cars as well. If you have made any of his kits before, you know that sometimes they are unconventional, but in the end easy to put together and are very nice.

Joe has now designed and is offering a working handcar kit from Alameda Car Works in both 1" and 1 1/2" scales. It's a Sheffield No. 1 car, manufactured by the Sheffield Velocipede Car Company of Three Rivers, Michigan. These are exact scale kits and it is hard to notice any differences between this and the prototype.

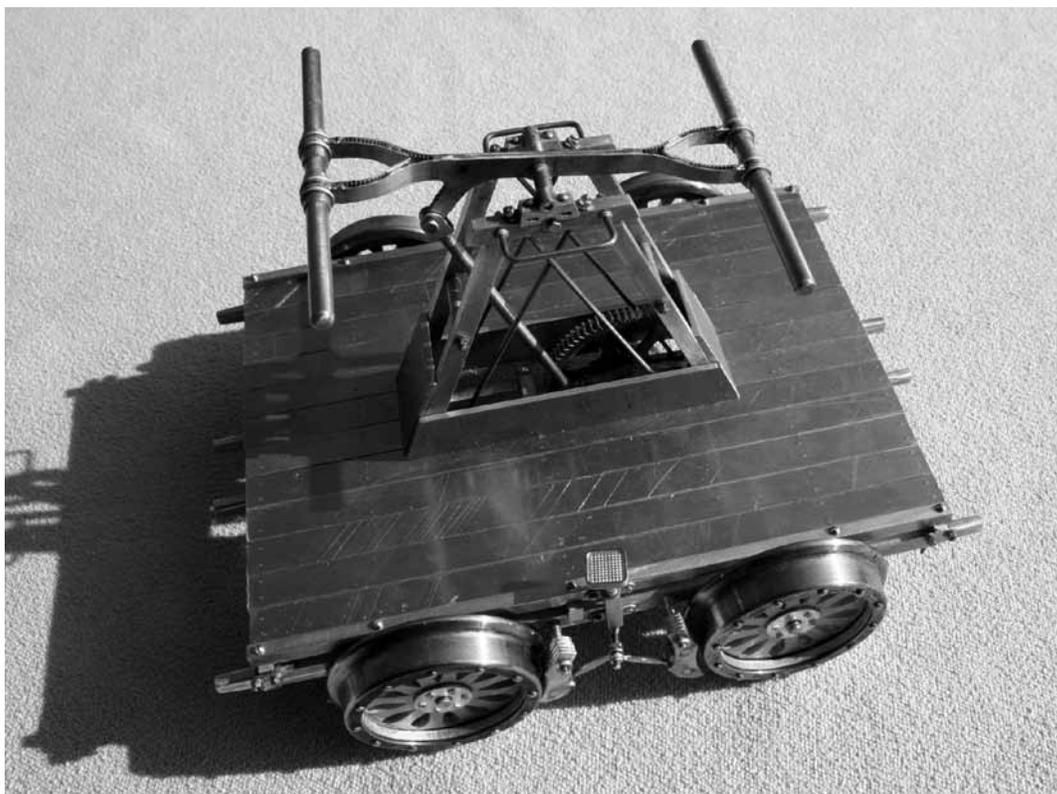
The gauges are exact as well, meaning 4 3/4" for the smaller and 7 1/16" for the larger. Yes, that is smaller than the standard for 1 1/2" scale, but these are true scale models. Plus, you really won't be using these on your track and will be mostly static models. If you want, you could easily widen the gauge to 7 1/4" or 7 1/2", there would just be more space between the deck and the wheels which might look a little funny. The 1 1/2" handcar will fit on the 7 1/2" gauged track as designed, but will be loose if you try to run it.

These are true craftsman kits, meaning you make them with time and patience for the best results. All the parts are laser cut or etched out of aluminum, steel, and brass. You are required to measure, drill, and assemble all the parts. This does not mean the kit is hard. In fact, it was quite the opposite.



Our sample kit was the 1" scale version. The two variations are exact copies of one another and impossible to tell apart other than size. All the manufacturing and parts go together exactly the same, just one has larger raw materials.

All the parts are laser cut to size and length. The only cutting you will need to do is the round brass rods. Some of these are quite short when installed, and would be difficult to not get lost in shipping if cut to length at the manufacturer.



There is a need for the usual filing and deburring, as well as measuring devices. I recommend a caliper of some sort, as there are some measurements that are down to the hundredths. I found a Dremmel® tool will help with filing many of the parts.

You will also need to do some drilling and a drill press will help immensely in getting the holes vertical. Joe says they built one model with a pin vice to see if it could be done, one claim we were not about to try! In the end, it does mean that anyone can put this kit together.

The parts all come completely flat. Any pieces that are “three-dimensional” are made by folding and assembling various flat pieces. Some of these etchings have up to six folds to them.

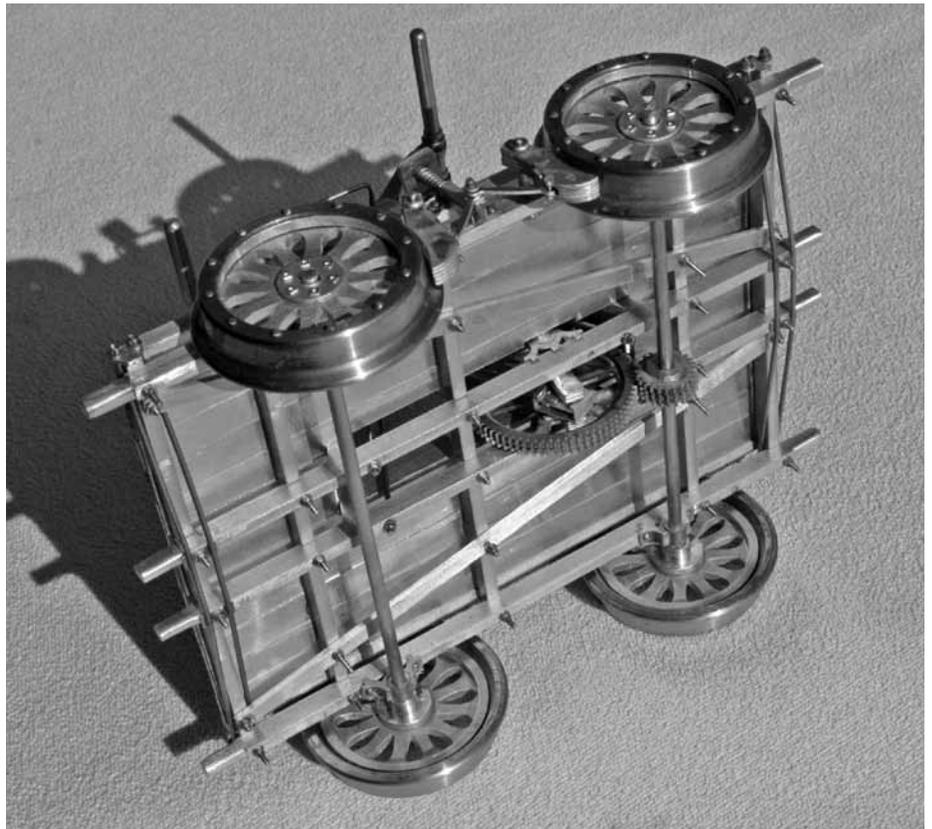
The kit makes extensive use of CA cement, sometimes known as Super Glue®. The cement makes assembly go quicker and holds together well. There are some parts that can be assembled with epoxy or solder, but the whole thing can be done with the CA cement if desired.

One of the more unusual ideas in the kit was with the tension rods on the bottom and in the gallows. The rod is cut, then the threads in the nuts are reamed out. After reaming, they are placed on the unthreaded rod and tacked with a drop of CA cement. Capillary action draws the glue into the joint and the excess is wiped away. The result looks very good and is easy to achieve.

The parts all fit together with great precision and made with appropriate materials for their job. The gears and wheel treads are steel, and the journals are all brass. Painting can be done at anytime, but would probably be easier if done as individual parts are assembled.

The finished model is 6 5/8” long x 5 1/4” wide x 4 1/4” high to the top of the gallows.

One other recommendation I would make is to build this in a clean shop or a large table. The small parts can sometimes get lost (there



are a few extras of some of the smaller parts), and I found myself looking on my workbench for lost parts to no avail a few times.

The end product looks great and is a well-detailed model. The walking beam runs the wheels and the brakes stop them just like the prototype. This is a model that will look as great on your railroad as it will on your fireplace mantel or your desk at the office.



Pros: Well detailed, parts fit well, clear instructions, nice diagrams, sturdy finished model, makes a great desktop display

Cons: The 1 1/2” scale model won't fit right on 7 1/2” track

