

Crane Trucks - Any make, Any gauge, Any age

FROM THE COLLECTION OF FRED VAN DER LUBBE

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Click the picture to see a train of cranes:



2 Introduction

The added play value of cranes with toy and model railways resulted in many of the train manufacturers making crane trucks in their range. Many years ago, when looking around at a train collectors fair, a seller had just a few Lionel Standard Gauge items. Lionel Standard Gauge is rather rare here in the Netherlands, so I had no plans to have a Standard Gauge layout. One of the items was a crane, and I thought that just having this one crane as an example of Standard Gauge trains was a good idea, so I bought it. At a later train fair, I met a seller who had a table full of different crane trucks and he mentioned that he just collected cranes, but now was quitting collecting. I bought only a couple of cranes from him, but by now I was not only a train collector but also a crane collector, however the number of cranes is not in comparison to the number of trains.

This small catalogue contains all crane trucks from my collection; I do have some cranes which are not on wheels, these are catalogued in my book *Tin Train Accessories*. I have cranes in various gauges and scales of different brands. The catalogue is organised on the countries the toy or model crane originates from and further on Gauge and maker. The index in the back can be used to find cranes via the maker or brand. Measurements in this catalogue are in centimetres. The mentioned track gauges are 00 / H0 (16.5 mm), S (22.5 mm), 0 (32 mm), 1 (45 mm) and Standard Gauge (54 mm). Most of the cranes in this catalogue are not to a defined scale.

This catalogue will not elaborate on the history of the makers or brands of the toys and models described here.

Further, another interesting but not covered area, is the technical qualities and/or history of the prototype railway crane. However, to introduce the terminology, the following description might help:

A railway or railroad crane (UK: crane truck or breakdown crane; US: crane car or wrecker) is a type of crane used on a railway for one of three primary purposes: freight handling in goods yards, permanent way maintenance and accident recovery work. Although the design differs according to the type of work, the basic configuration is similar in all cases: a rotating crane body is mounted on a sturdy chassis fitted with flanged wheels. The body supports the jib (UK) or boom (US) and provides all the lifting and operating mechanisms; on larger cranes, an operator's cabin is usually provided. The chassis is fitted with buffering and/or coupling gear to allow the crane to be moved by a locomotive, although some are also self-propelled to allow limited movement about a work site. For cranes with a jib that extends beyond the length of the chassis, an idler car (also known as a 'jib carrier' (UK) or 'boom car' (US)) is provided to protect the jib and to allow the crane to be coupled within a train. The idler car is usually a long, flat wagon that provides a means of securing the jib for transportation; storage areas for special equipment or supplies are usually fitted too. Larger cranes may be provided with outriggers to provide additional stability when lifting. Sleepers (ties) are often carried on the idler car to put under the outriggers to spread the weight applied to the track bed.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Jacques and Tamme for tips and proofreading.

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3 Austria

3.1 H0 Gauge

3.1.1 Kleinbahn

This model of a steam powered crane, which is made by the Austrian maker Kleinbahn, is advertised as an ÖBB (Austrian railways) crane, but it has no lettering at all. It has some resemblance with a Krupp Ardel 90T crane. The matching jib truck has DR (Deutsche Reichsbahn) lettering. The catalogue number of the crane is 359 while the jib truck is 333. Total length of this, completely plastic, ensemble is 23 cm while the maximum height is 15 cm.



The jib can move up and down and the hook can be lowered. A small handle, which is normally placed on the crane frame, can be fitted in the crane house to turn the spindles.





The crane body with operators' cabin can be rotated; there are no movable outriggers, the outriggers are fixed on the frame.



4 England

4.1 0 Gauge

4.1.1 Brimtoy

This is a rather ragged copy of the Brimtoy (8-wheel) bogie Southern Railway crane truck. The roller in the top of the jib is missing and the hook does not look original. Length of this crane is 15 cm and the height is 9 cm.



The jib cannot move up or down but can rotate; the hook can be lowered with the winding handle or crank.

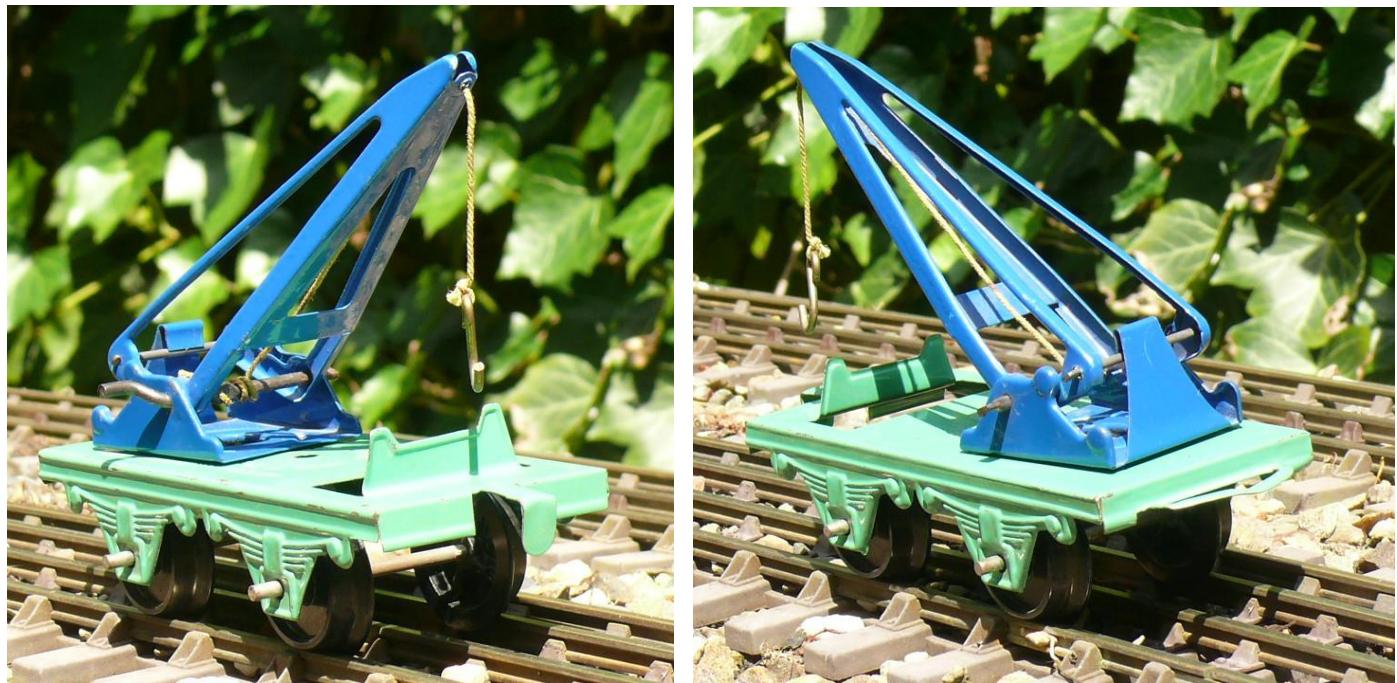




Markings on the two boxes on the frame show that these are for first aid supplies and tools.

4.1.2 Hornby

This very small (10 cm long) crane truck which is not based on an original crane is made by Hornby in their M0 series.



The crane body can be rotated and the jib can be lowered to rest on a support.





Hornby made two different crane cars with the same 10T crane with fixed jib.



The red Hornby crane car is a late (1948-57) version of the No. 1 Crane truck. This 4-wheel car with automatic couplers has a length of 14 cm.





The crane body can be rotated and a winding handle is used to raise and lower the hook.



Hornby used the 10T crane in grey combined with a van body to make the No 2 Breakdown Van & Crane 8-wheel wagon. This LMS version was made from 1924-27 and is 23 cm long.





With this car, also the crane body can be rotated and a winding handle is used to raise and lower the hook.



4.1.3 Wells

This crane has the lowest Wells catalogue number, No. 1. These cranes were the first toys the British toymaker Wells from London made, starting in 1920. Most Wells cranes, which were made in red or green, came without any coupler. This red 4-wheel example has a coupling possibility but only on one side, so it is at the end of the [Train of Cranes](#). Total height is 12 cm, length of the car excluding coupler is 9 cm.



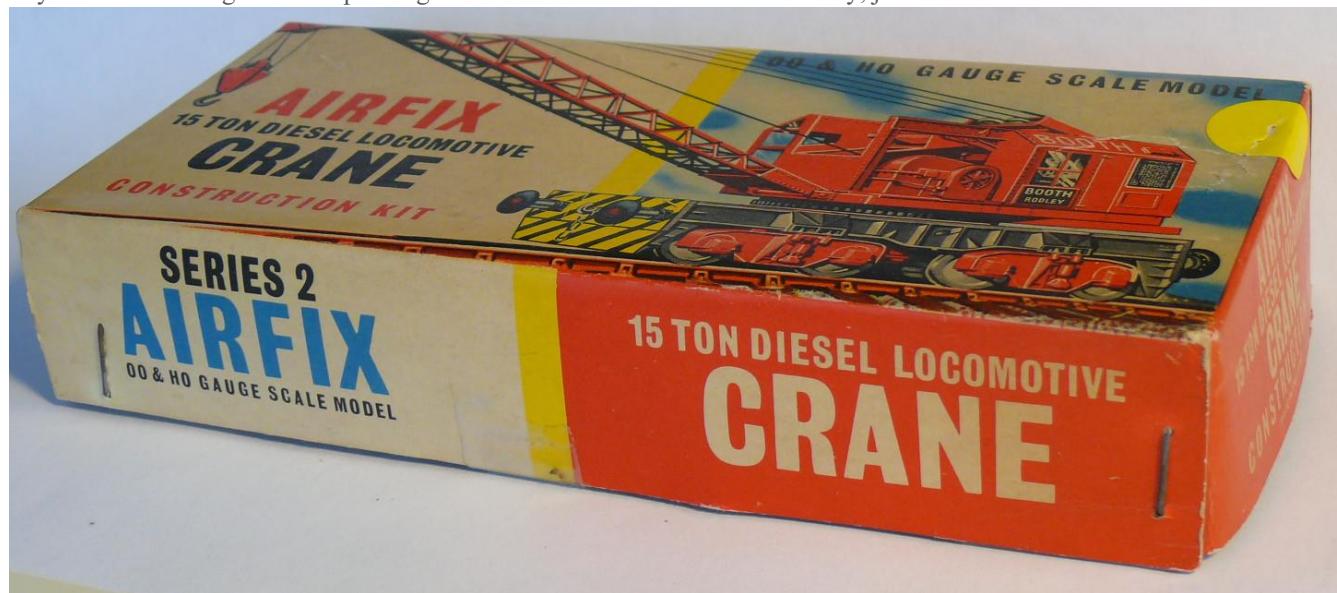
The crane body can be rotated and the hook lowered, the jib is fixed.



4.2 00 Gauge

4.2.1 Airfix

In 1961 Airfix issued this kit of a 15 Ton Diesel crane. This is a plastic kit in one color red with decals which should be made up to yield a 10 cm long crane. Depending on the skill of the maker the crane body, jib and hook are movable.

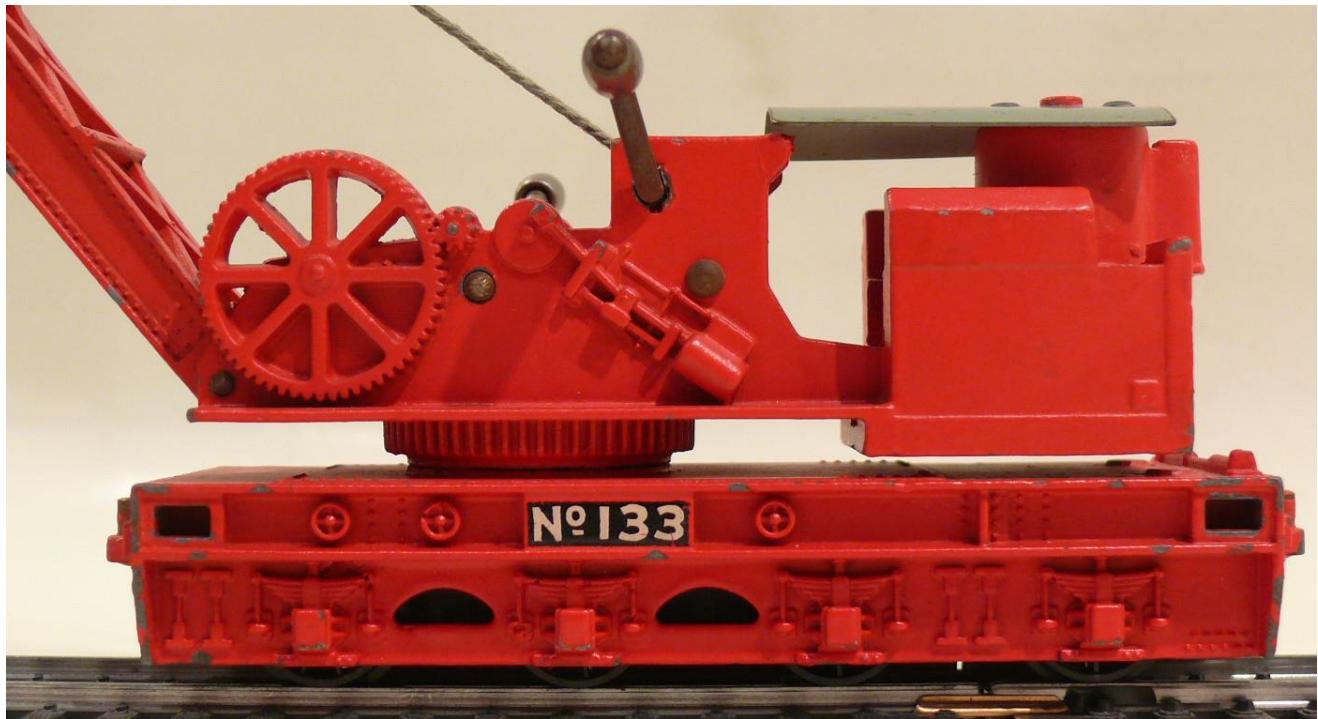
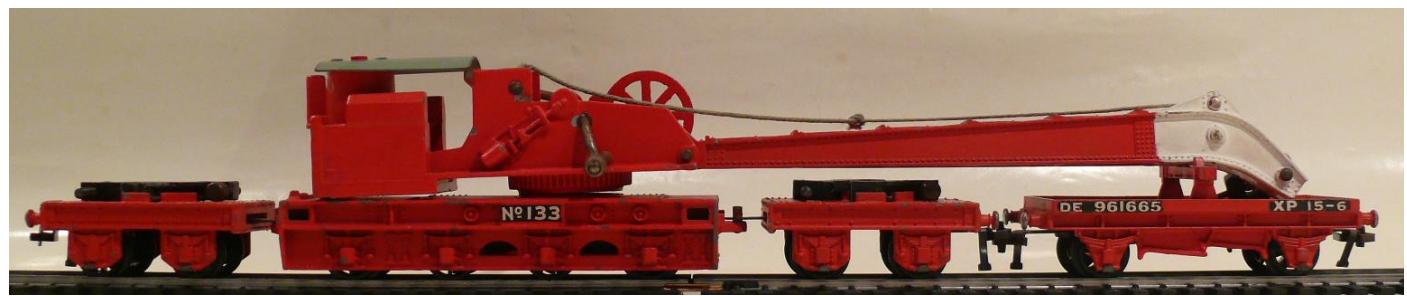


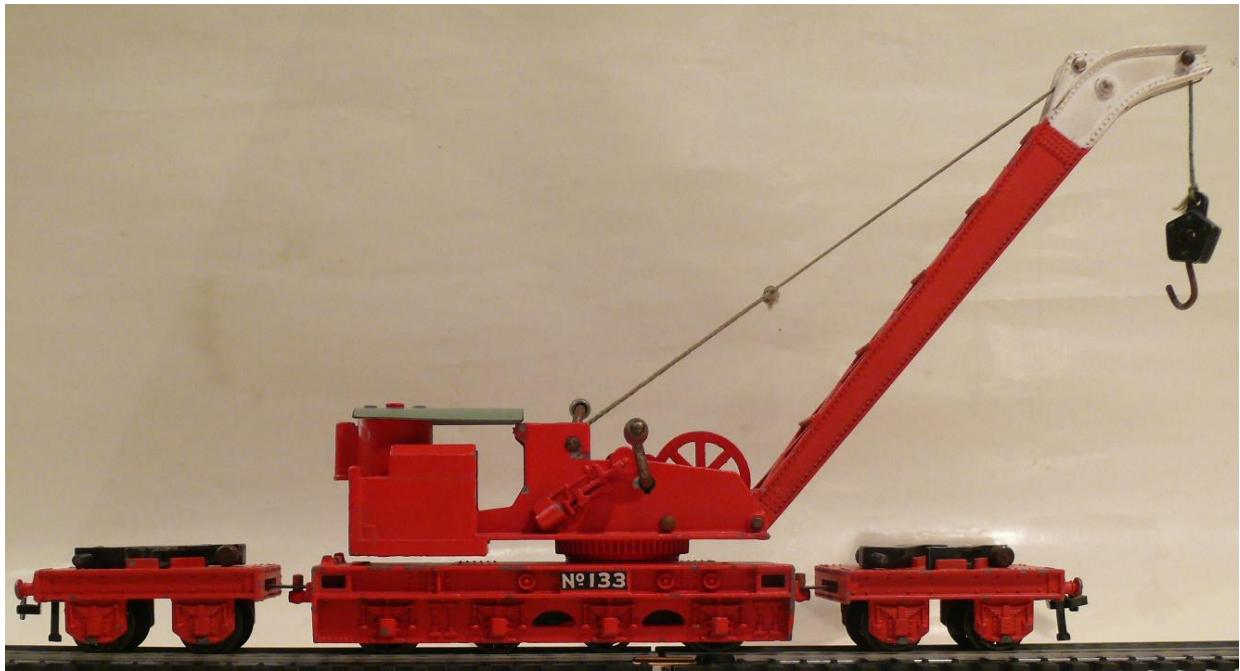
Recently I decided to make the kit; I should have used a better type of wire. The hook and jib are moveable, but the plastic crank construction is rather weak, it broke at first use.



4.2.2 Hornby Dublo

This cast metal breakdown crane set is made in the sixties by Hornby Dublo. It is a total of 33 cm long and has catalogue number 4620. The set contains an 8-wheel crane, a 4-wheel jib truck and 2 small 4-wheel spacer cars that also hold two outriggers each.





The outriggers can be inserted in the four corners of the crane and then adjusted in height. The crane body can rotate and with cranks the jib can be moved up and down and the hook lowered. Total height is 15 cm when the jib is raised.



4.2.3 Triang Hornby

The box of this crane-set mentions Triang Hornby, so it is from the seventies. Catalogue number is R739 and the total length is 36 cm; maximum height is 15 cm. The plastic set consists of an 8-wheel 75T crane, a 4-wheel jib truck and two small 4-wheel spacer trucks. The jib truck carries also the 4 outriggers. When I bought this set I liked the black and red livery but found out that that is not original; this set was all red.



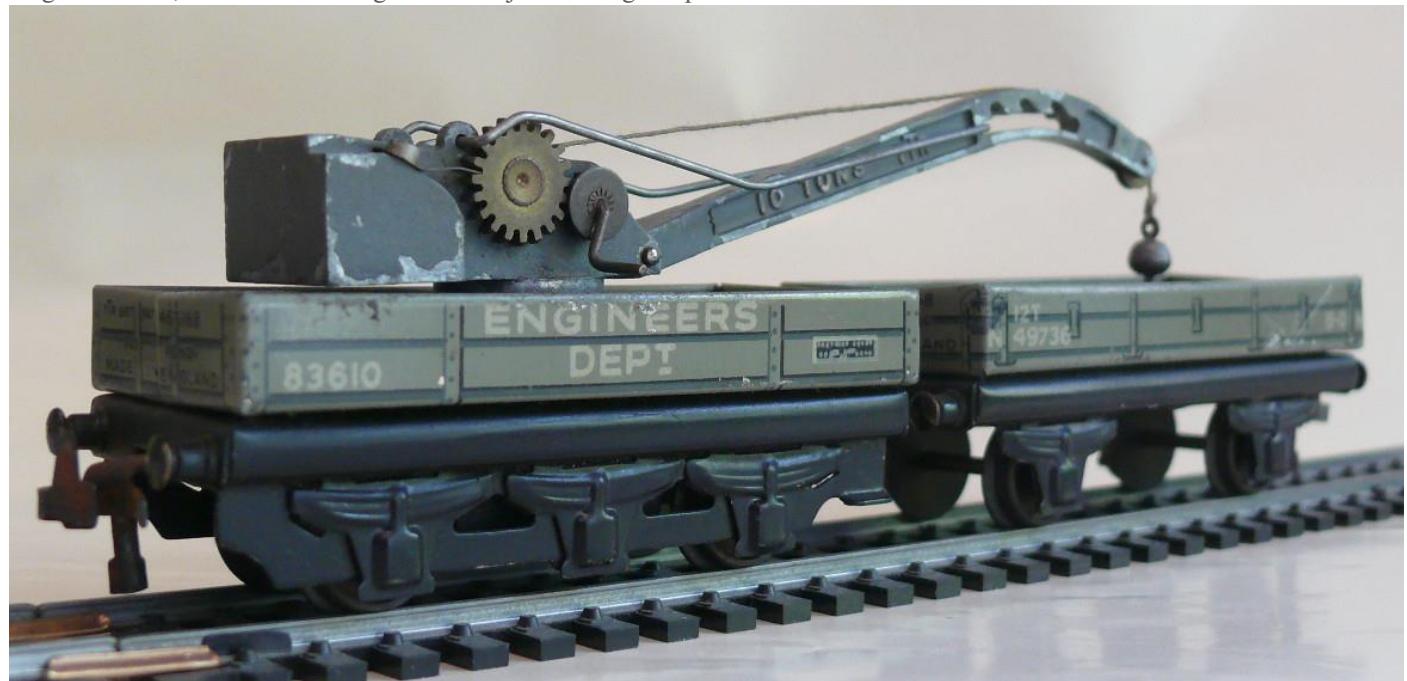
The two cranks can be used to move the jib and lower the hook. Outriggers can be used to stabilise the crane when the crane body is turned.

Note that the crane is not in balance and hangs forward.



4.2.4 TTR

TTR or British Trix¹ made with catalogue number 615 this breakdown crane. It consists of two tinplate 3-plank short coupled wagons, one being 6-wheel and carrying the crane and the other a 4-wheel match truck. The match truck should have a diecast jib rest, but that is missing. Note that the crane has buffers on one side only while the match truck has buffers at both sides. Total length is 17 cm, the maximum height with the jib in its highest position is 10 cm.



The jib can be moved up and down by setting the bracket in one of three possible positions; the hook can be lowered



¹ Trix in England is also known as British Trix, TTR for Trix Twin Railway and Trix Trains.



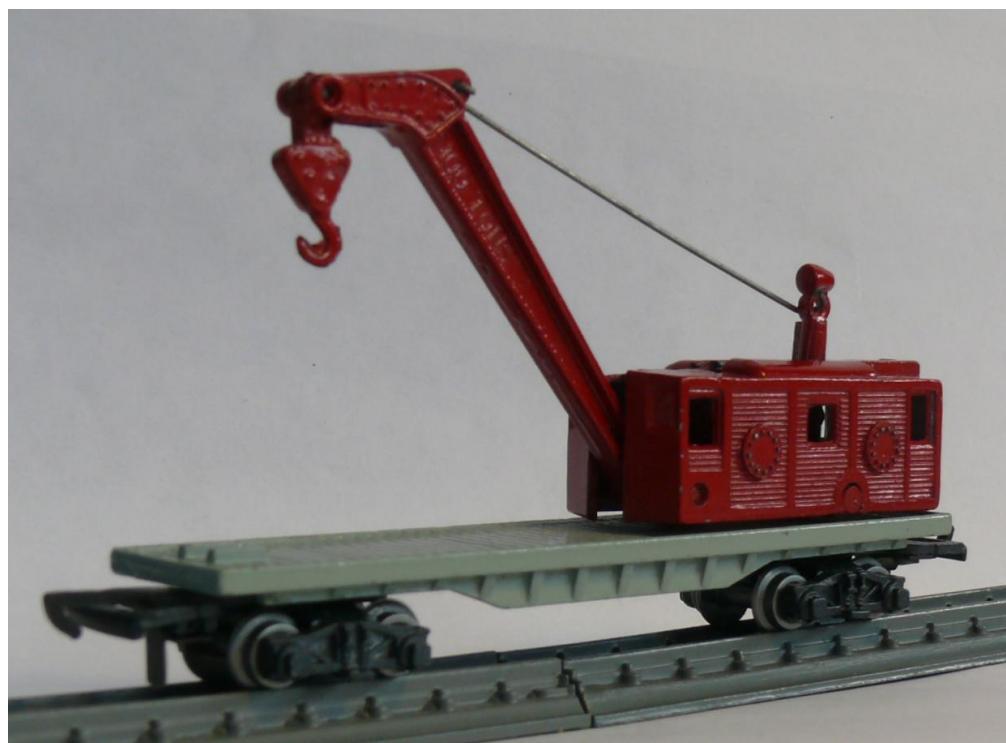
The crane body can be rotated.



4.3 N Gauge

4.3.1 Lone Star

In 1957 Lone Star introduced its diecast push trains in a scale of 1:180. They run a track gauge which is with 8 mm just 1 mm smaller than N gauge. The 8-wheel 100 Tons British crane truck shown here has catalogue number 36. The jib can move up and down and the crane-body can be rotated. Length is 8 cm and maximum height is 6 cm.

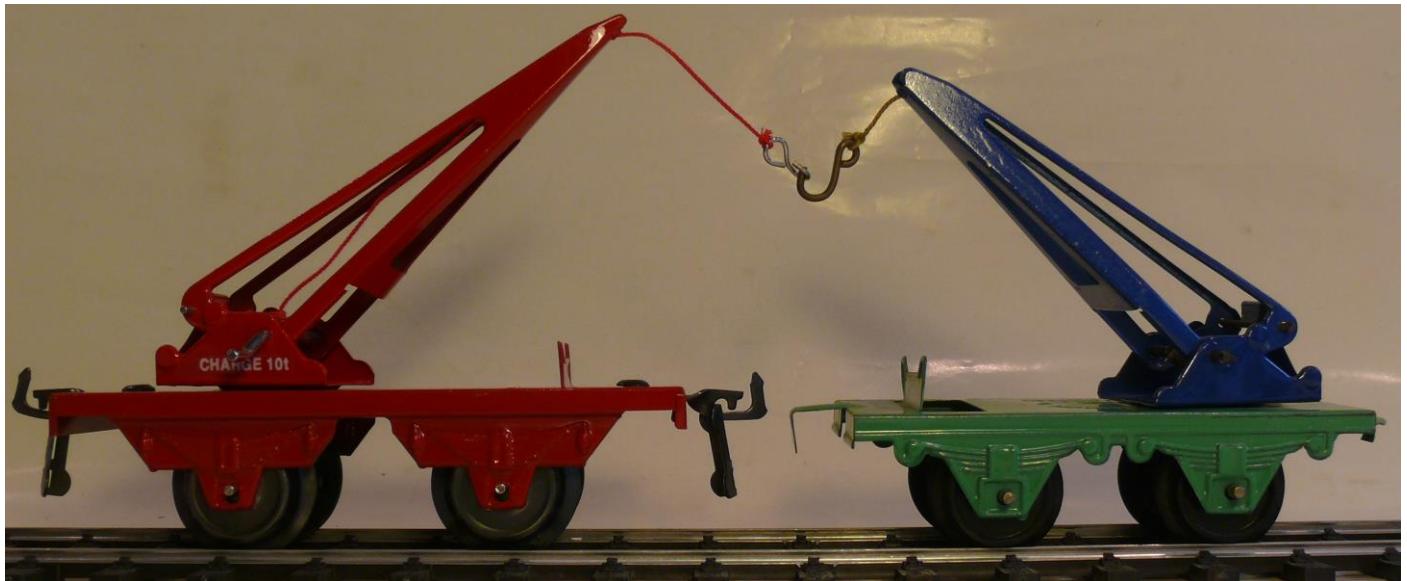


5 France

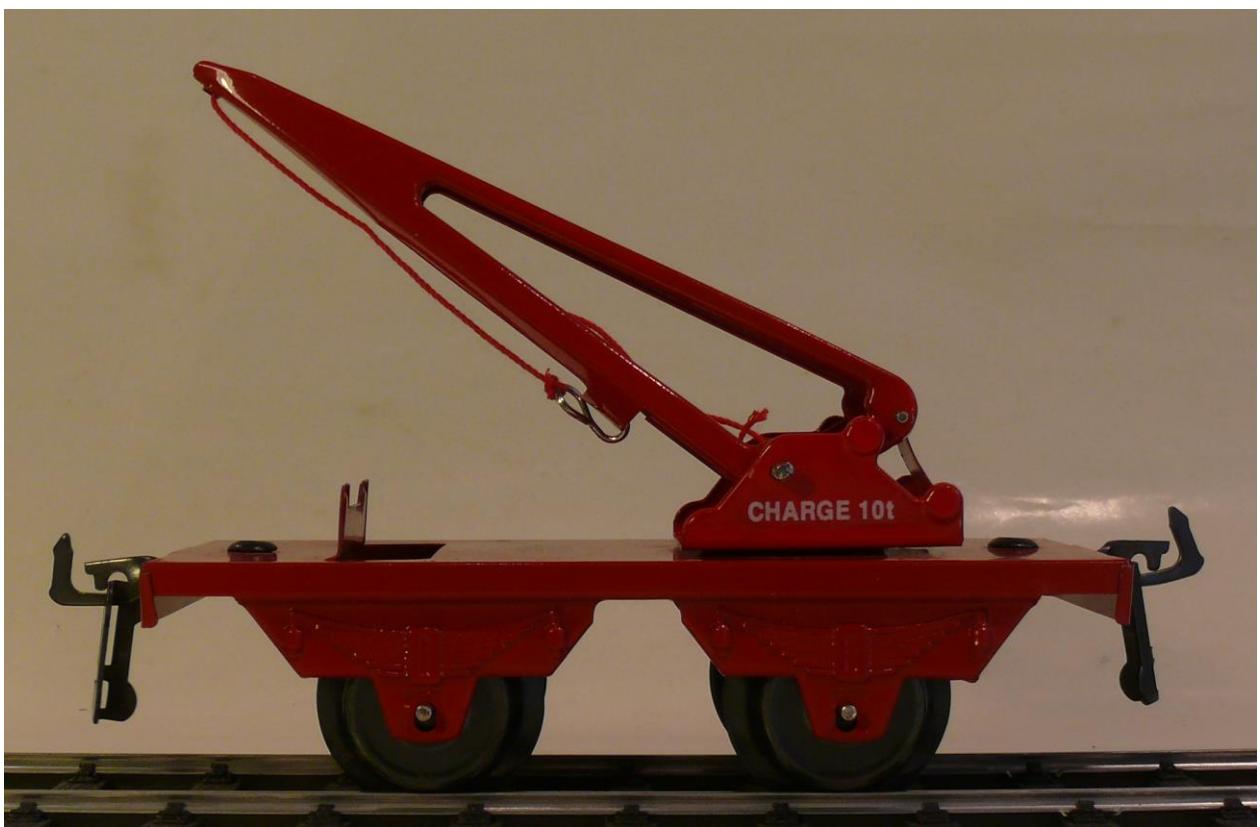
5.1 0 Gauge

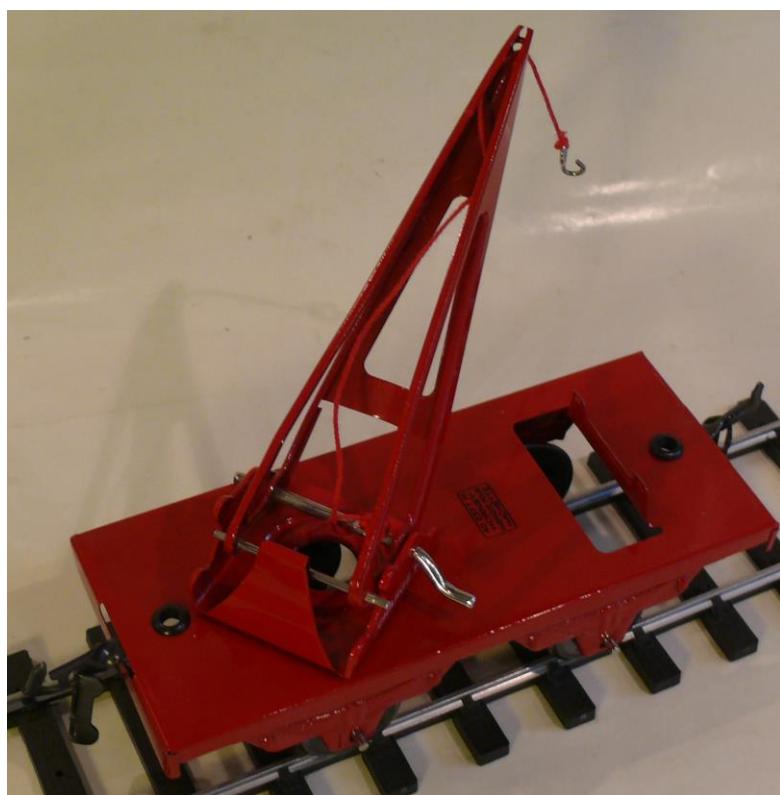
5.1.1 Hachette

Hornby France made in their M series of smaller 0 gauge trains between 1930 and 1940 a four wheel crane truck. The French publisher Hachette made a series of replicas of French Hornby trains including this crane truck. This crane looks similar to the Hornby M0 crane (see 4.1.2) as the picture shows, but is a bit bigger:



The Hachette replicas do have correct looks, however they are made from very thin tinplate and thus a bit flimsy. Length of the car is 12 cm. The crane body can be rotated and the jib can be lowered to rest on a support.



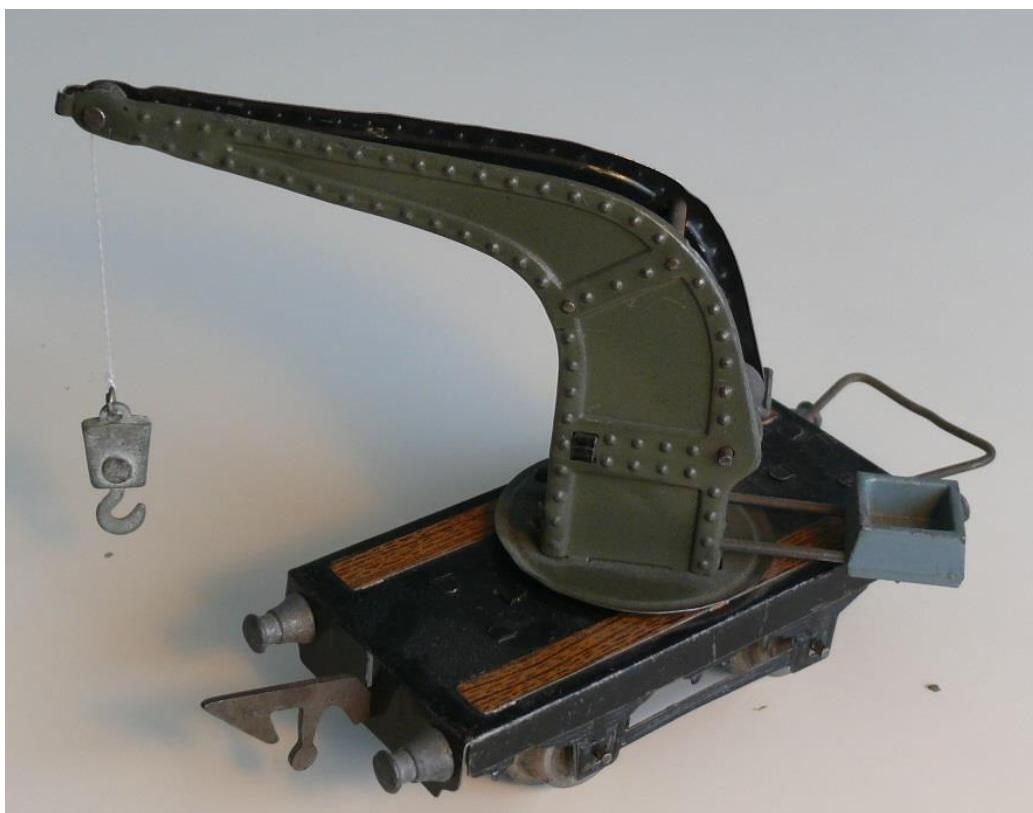


5.1.2 JEP

JEP used the same crane body from 1929 until 1964 on 4-wheel and bogie wagons, the latter, like Hornby, combining the crane with a van body. Here is the 4-wheel version made from 1933-1951 with hook and loop couplers ("A croc" in JEP parlance). Length is 13 cm while the height is 11 cm.



The crane body can rotate and the hook lowered; the jib is fixed but the small counter weight can be pulled out.





5.1.3 Le Rapide (LR)

French LR (Le Rapide) made 6-axle, 4-axle and 2-axle crane-cars; I have two different versions of the two axle crane car, shown below. The crane body of the older (pre-war) version is larger having a counterweight.



The postwar cranes bodies are the same, but have different colors on the 2-axle and 6-axle crane.



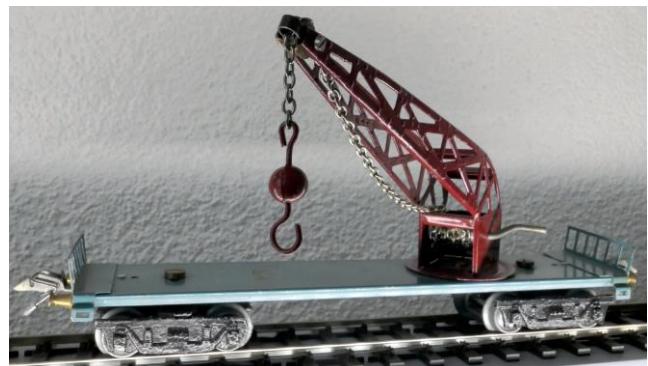
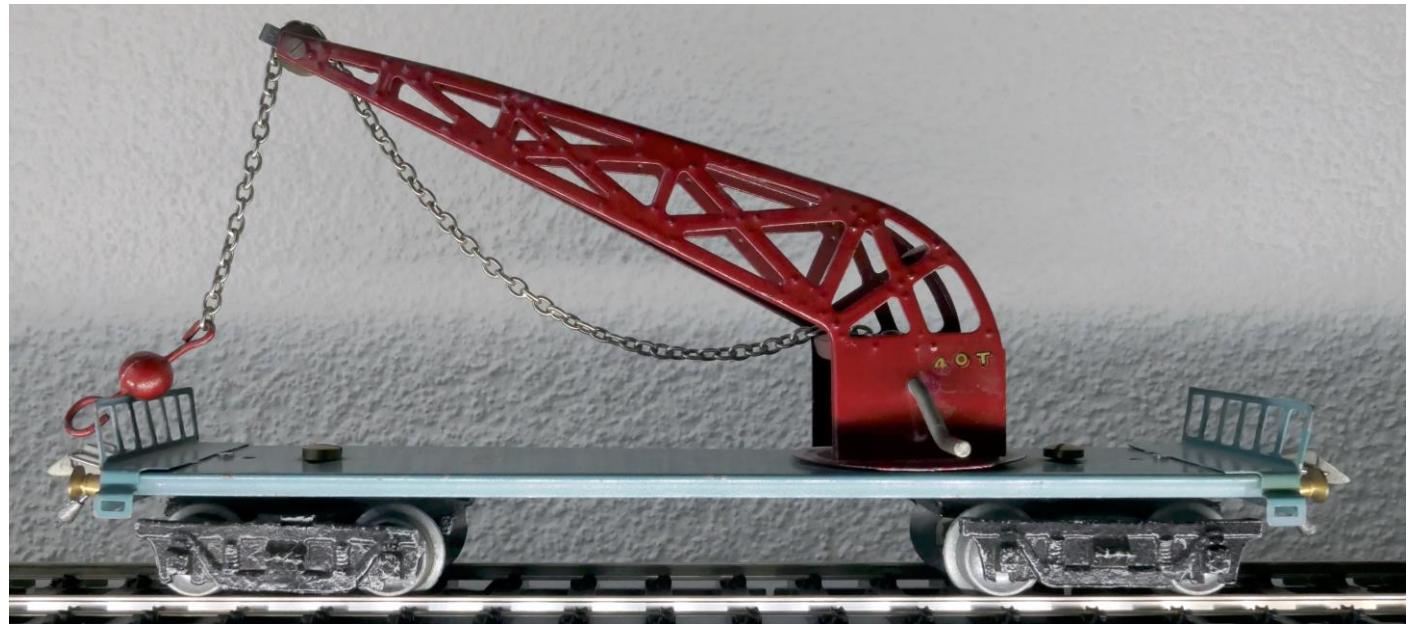
The pre-war LR crane has a marking of the PO (Paris Orleans) railway company and a folded tinplate frame, it is 16 cm long.



The postwar Le Rapide 4-wheel crane car is 17 cm long. The frame including buffers and axle guards is one cast piece with the SNCF name cast in. The jib is fixed but the crane body can rotate and the hook lowered.



The 4-axle Le Rapide crane was made in a pre- and a postwar version. I have the postwar version of which the crane is very similar to that of the 2-axle postwar version above. The length of the car is 24 cm and since the crane is not centred it does not protude lengthwise like the other cranes do.

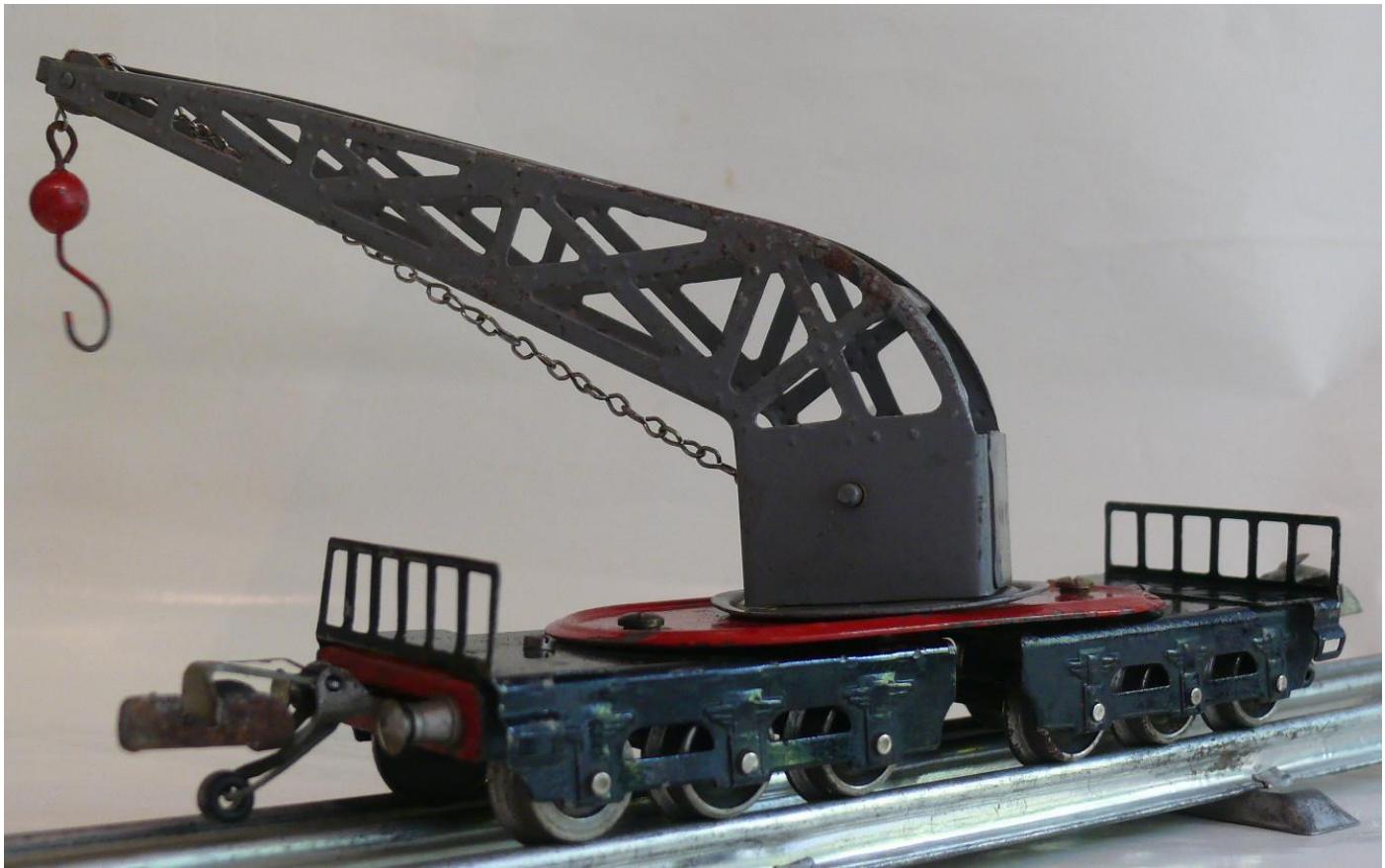


Length of the 6-axle crane is (a few mm shorter than the 2-axle crane) also 17 cm while the height of both cranes is 11 cm. The crane has lettering that it can lift 40 T and has no LR or railway company marking.



Also with this 6-wheel car the jib is fixed but the crane body can rotate and the hook lowered.





5.2 H0 Gauge

5.2.1 Jouef

With catalogue number 663 Jouef made between 1966 and 1973 a set with a crane and two flatcars. The set is a realistic model of an 85 T crane from the French Railways (SNCF) made by Cockerill and is one of the most complicated models made by Jouef. The crane has 8 axles of which 2 on both sides are on separate sub-frames which hold the outriggers when the crane is transported. When in operation the outriggers are supported by the supports that are normally transported in one of the flat cars; the other flatcar holds the jib. Length of the complete crane train is 38 cm.



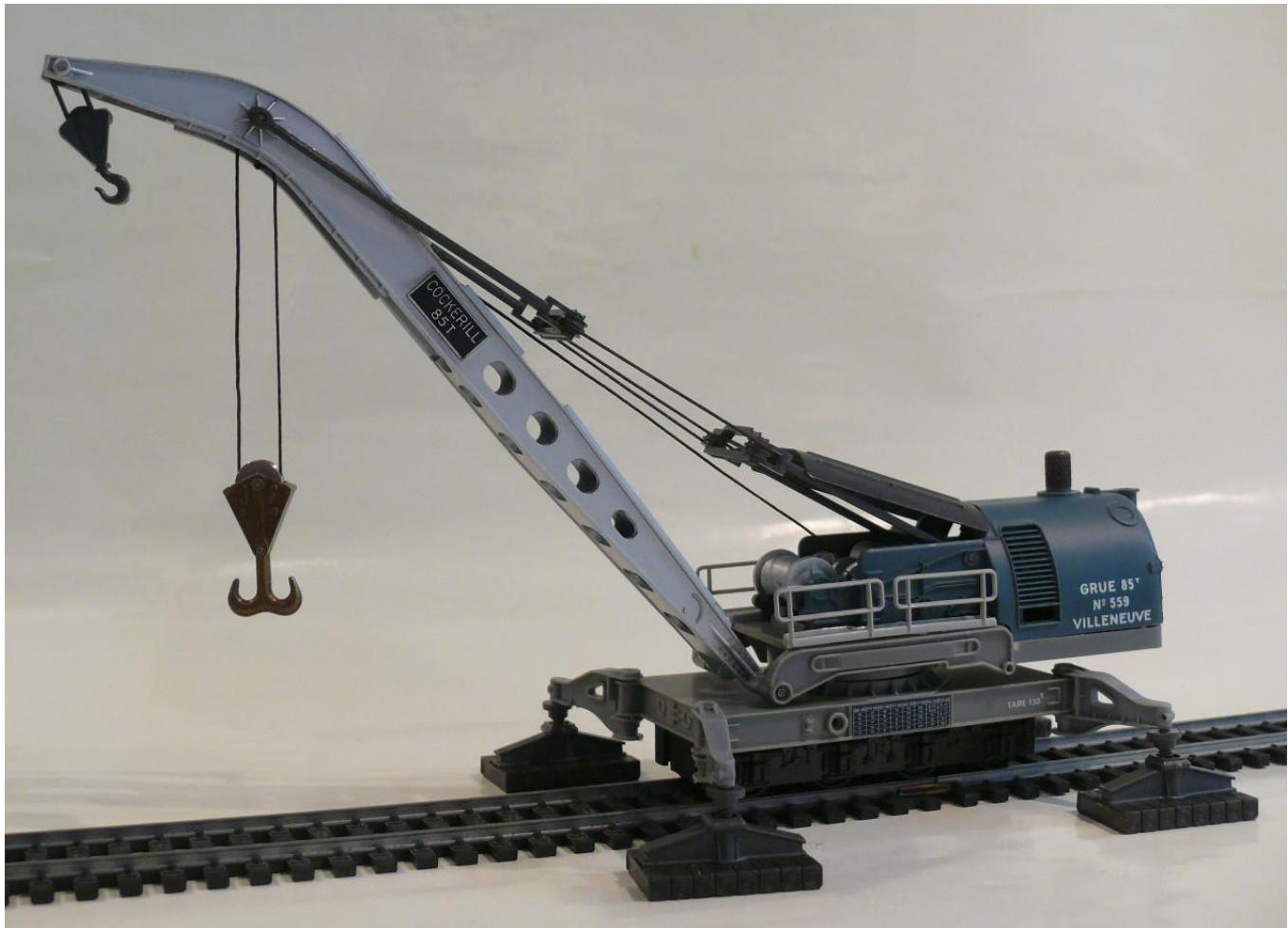


The car that holds the outrigger supports:



Crane and jib car:





The knob that controls the boom height looks like a chimney; the control to lower the hook is seen under "Villeneuve".

6 Germany

6.1 1 Gauge

6.1.1 Märklin

Märklin made in their series of modern tinplate style trains called Maxi a crane car of the Deutsche Bundesbahn (DB) with extra car for the jib. The crane is 6-wheel while the jib car is 4-wheel. The whole set (catalogue number 54990) is made of metal with exception of the Märklin type Gauge 1 plastic couplers. The model is based on a 6 Ton Krupp Ardelt crane. Length of the crane with car is 48 cm.





The crane body with operator's house can rotate. There are two cranks, one to move the jib up and down and one to lower the hook. There are four outriggers which can be screwed down to stabilize the crane when operating.



6.2 0 Gauge

6.2.1 Billerbahn

There are not many narrow gauge railways items in my collection. This Billerbahn crane is an exception. Billerbahn is supposed to be 0 scale and runs on H0 gauge track. This crane is not in a very good condition and even lacking some parts. The crane is metal/tinplate and has a length of 14 cm.



The body of the crane can be rotated with the wheel at the front. The jib is movable and the hook can be lowered.



6.2.2 Bing

Bing of Nurnberg made some different cranes. This 4-wheel car is the smallest. The short wheelbase and the height makes it a bit unstable. It is all metal with a lithographed body and no buffers. This car is 9 cm long and 12 cm high. This version is made between 1925 and 1933, catalogue number is 10/531/0.





The crane body can be rotated by hand and the hook lowered with a crank. The jib is fixed.



This larger Bing 8-wheel tinplate crane was made in in the late twenties . I assume that this version with the lettering 10 TONS was made for the UK market. The crane car has a length of 21 cm including buffers, but the crane boom causes of course an extra overhang. When the boom is raised the height is 17 cm. The catalogue number is 10/574/0.



Former owner of this crane George found the overhang of the boom to large and added a Bing catalogue number 10/544/0 small (9 cm) flat car with stakes as a boom car. He added to the car two movable wooden blocks holding the boom such that the crane and boom car when coupled will go through any tinplate curve.



6.2.3 BUB

This crane is a product from KBN (Karl Bub Nurnberg) or BUB. It is very similar in layout and in size to the Bing crane car (see 6.2.2). It is also metal with a lithographed body and no buffers. It is marked KBN, Made in Germany. The coupler on the car is the type used from 1935-1939, so this car is newer than the Bing car. This crane car is 9 cm long and 12 cm high.





The jib is fixed. The crane body can be rotated by hand and the hook lowered with a crank.



6.2.4 Kraus

This 4-wheel crane has no markings but the couplers are typical Kraus or Kraus-Fandor & Co., Nurnberg, Germany; Kraus also made an 8-wheel version with the same crane body. It is not dissimilar to the Bing and BUB cranes, but has a larger crane body. Length and height are 13 cm.



The jib is fixed but the crane body can be rotated. With the crank the hook can be lowered.

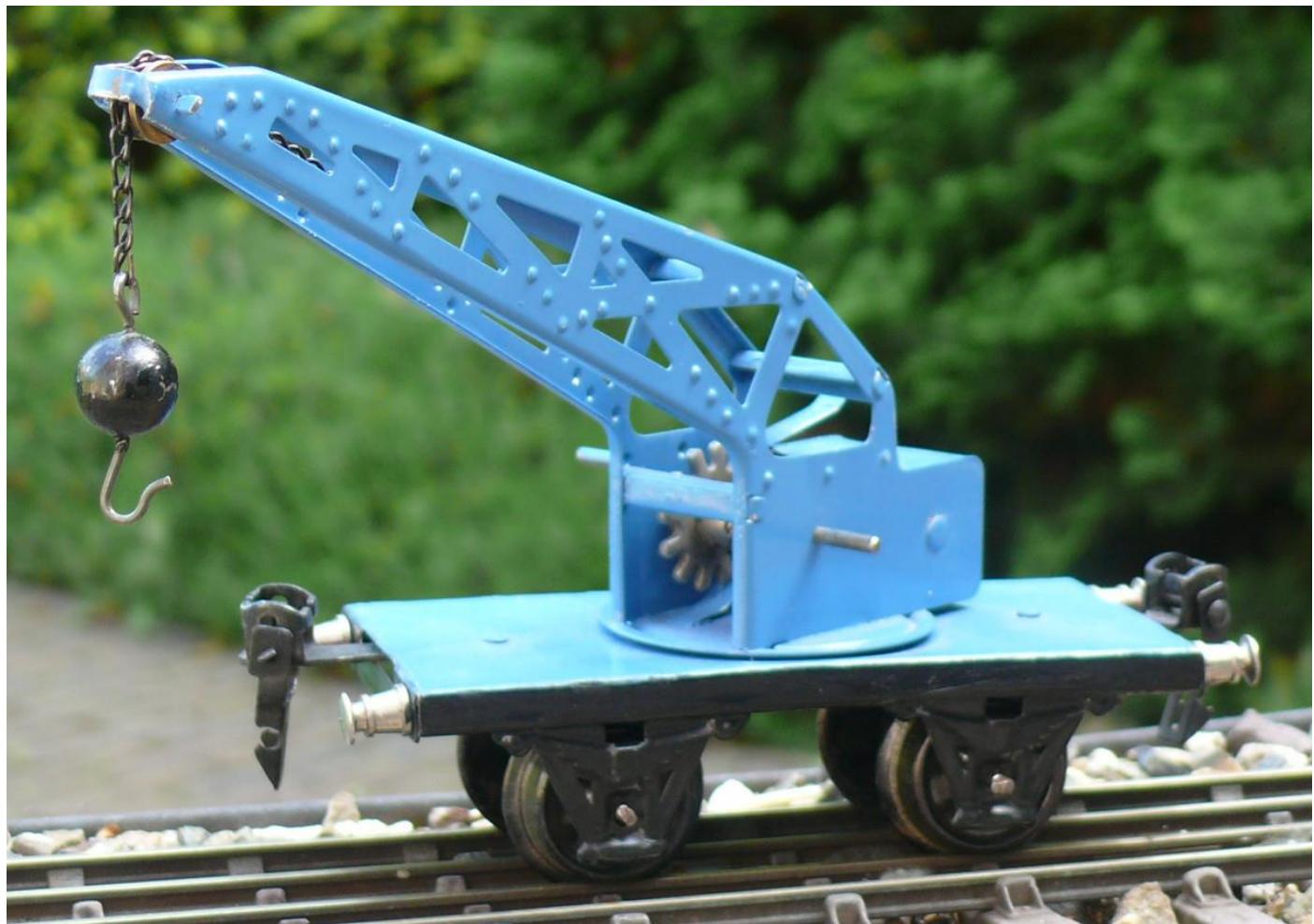


6.2.5 Märklin

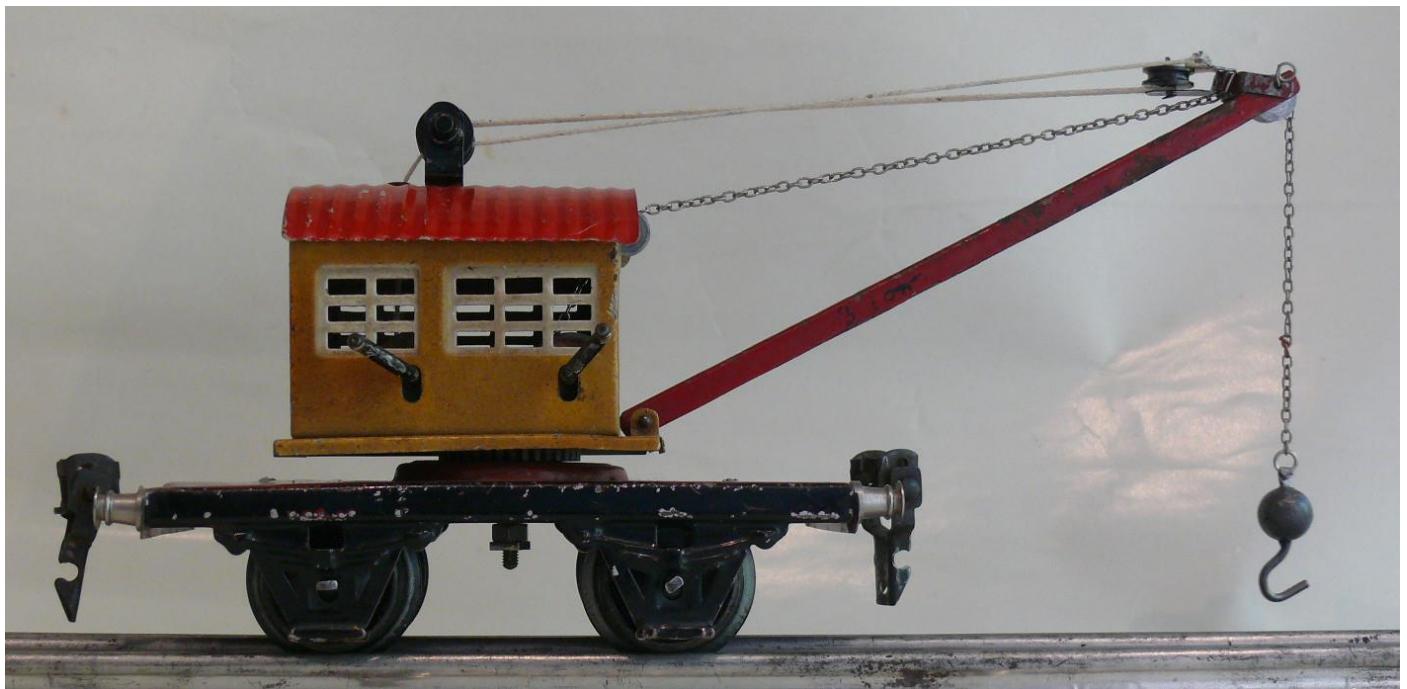
Märklin made many cranes; a Dutch collector even made a 120 page book on Märklin railway and non-railway cranes. I have two crane cars by Märklin, both made of metal and with equal length of the car.. The first one is from 1925-1940. This one looks similar to the Hornby No. 1 Crane truck (see 4.1.2). It is 13 cm long and 11 cm high.



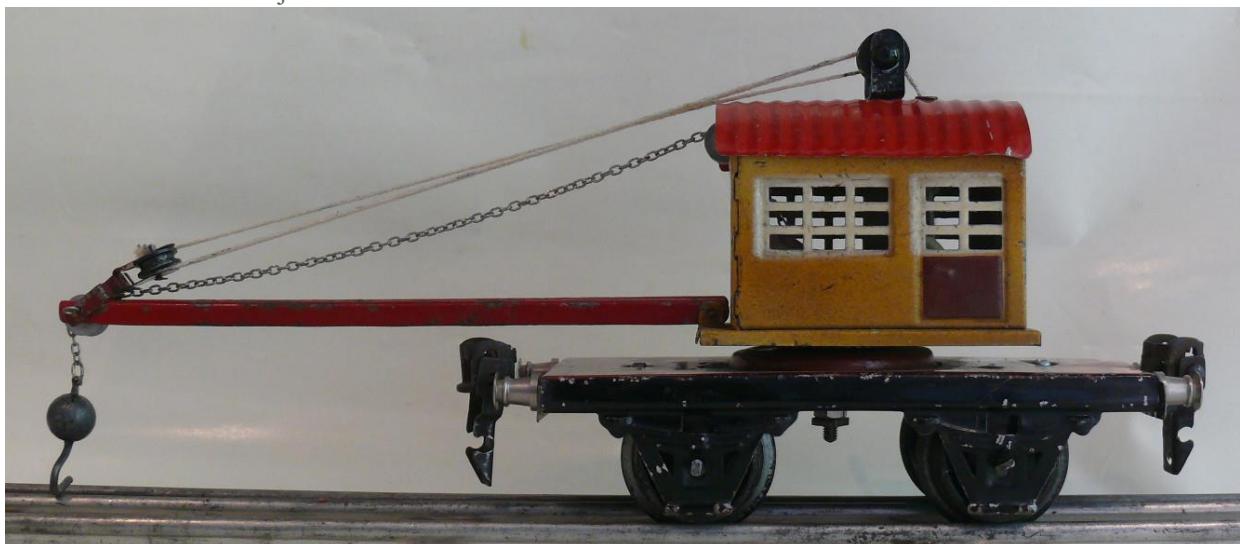
The jib is fixed and the body can be rotated; the hook can be lowered with a crank.



This next newer Märklin crane car was made from 1939-1954 (the older one in better condition than the newer one, which is missing its smoke-stack). It is 17 cm high.



This crane has a jib which can be lowered:



The crane body can be rotated and the hook lowered.



I usually waited for
the crane hook to rest
when I took a picture.



6.2.6 Schuhmann

Adolph Schuhmann (with the trademark AS) made this small crane car in the thirties. It is marked Made in Germany and has no maker's trademark but is positively attributed to Schuhmann. It is an all metal car with a simple lithographed body. The frame of this car, which has no buffers, was also used for other Schuhmann cars. It is 14 cm long and 8 cm high.





The body can be rotated and the hook lowered with the crank. The jib is fixed.



6.3 H0 Gauge

6.3.1 Fleischmann

The German model train manufacturer Fleischmann made various crane cars. This is a small one with catalogue number 5019 and is based on a crane from the German railways of the type Whylen which as far as I know was a 6-wheel car. This is a plastic car with a length (of the car) of 10 cm and a maximum height of 11 cm.



With a crank which can be inserted at the right side of the crane the hook can be lowered. The jib can be raised by shortening the jib support. The crane body can be rotated.

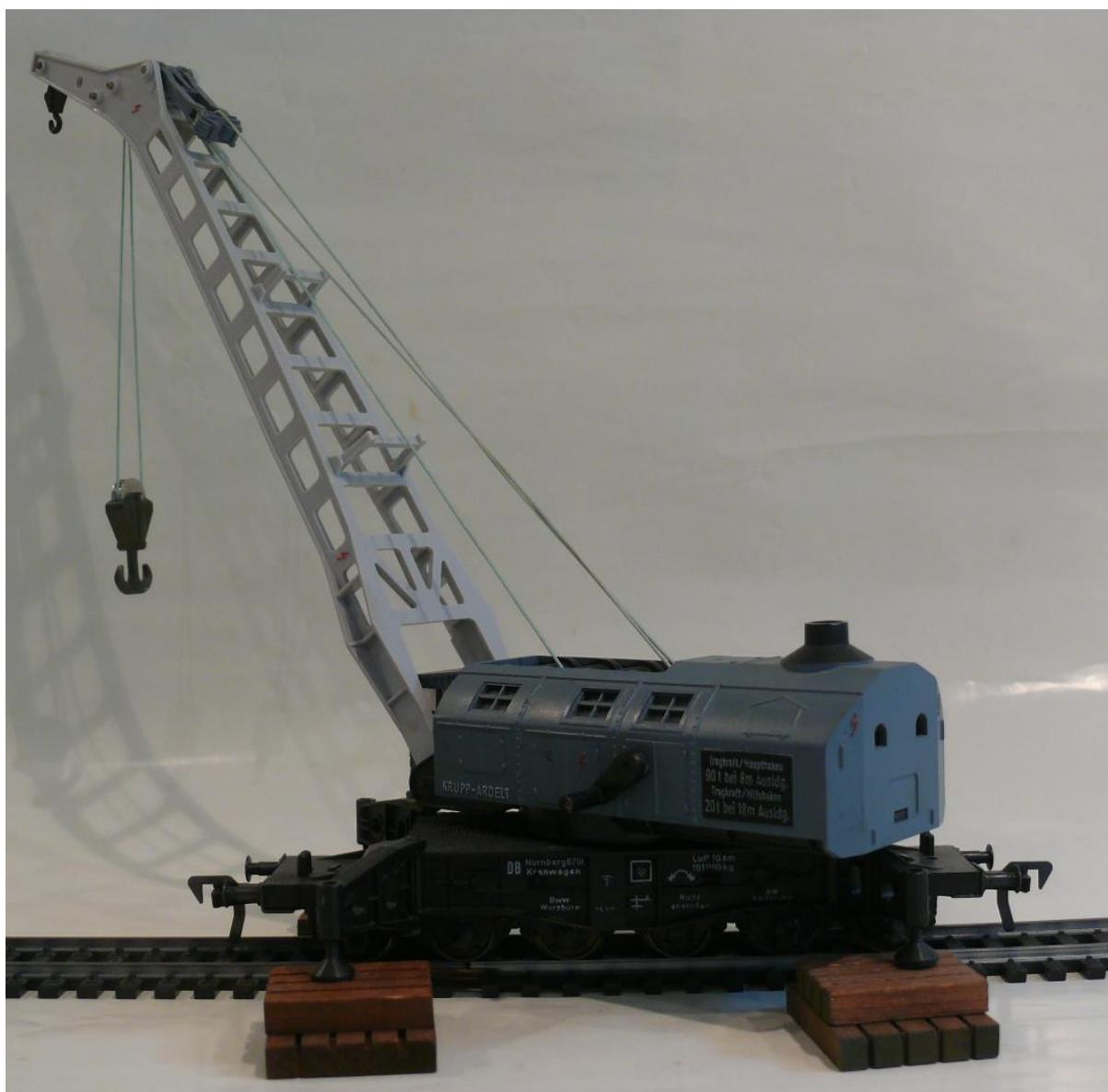


The next Fleischmann crane consists of a set of 4 cars: the 6-axle crane car itself, a 4-wheel car to rest the jib and carrying some outrigger stands, another 4-wheel car under the jib also with some outrigger stands and an 8-wheel car with the counterweights of the crane. Catalogue number is 5597 and length of the total set is 49 cm. The crane is based on a Krupp Ardelt 90 Ton crane from the German railways.





The outriggers can be pulled out and screwed down and the outrigger stand used to stabilize the crane. Two cranks can be inserted to lower the hook and move the jib up and down. The crane body can be rotated.



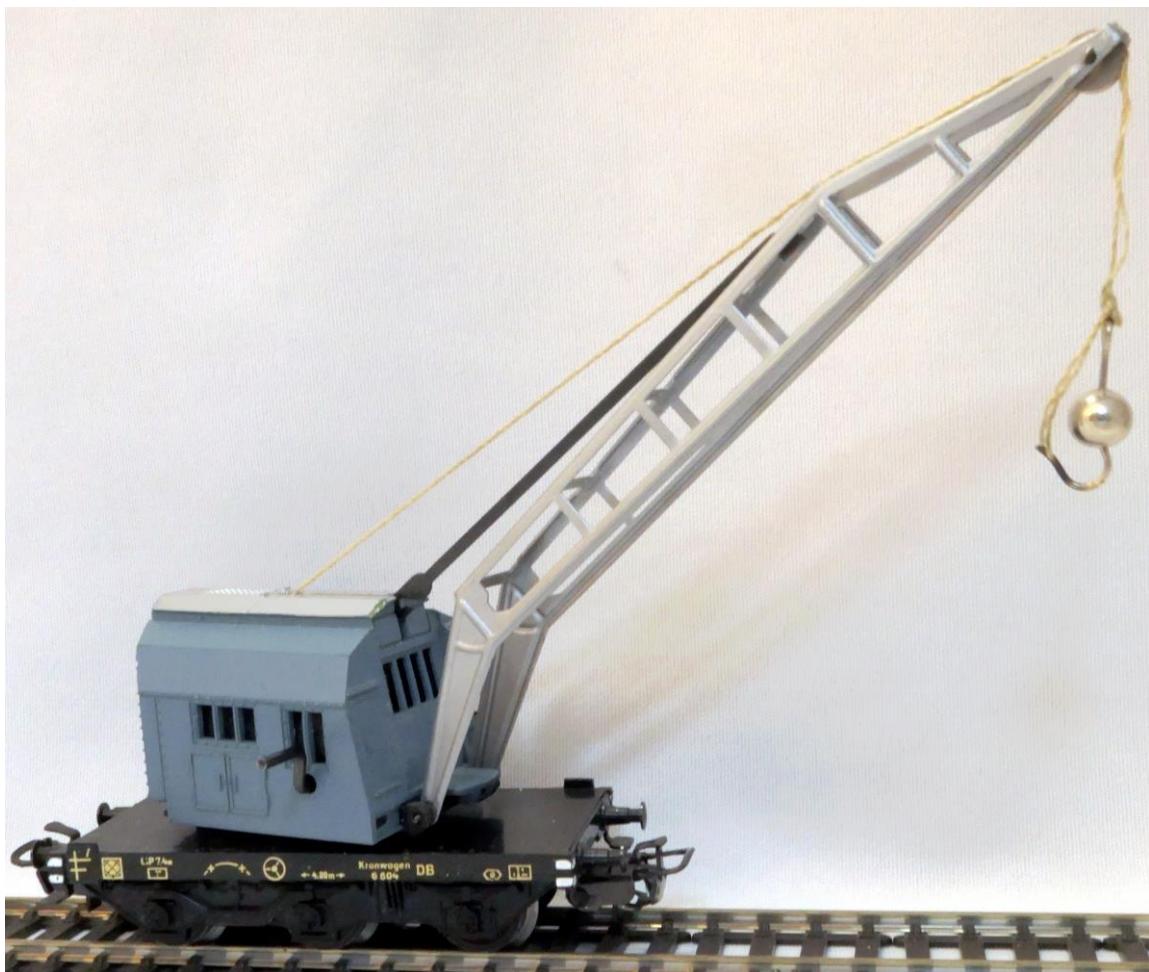
The counter weights can be attached to the back of the crane.



6.3.2 Märklin

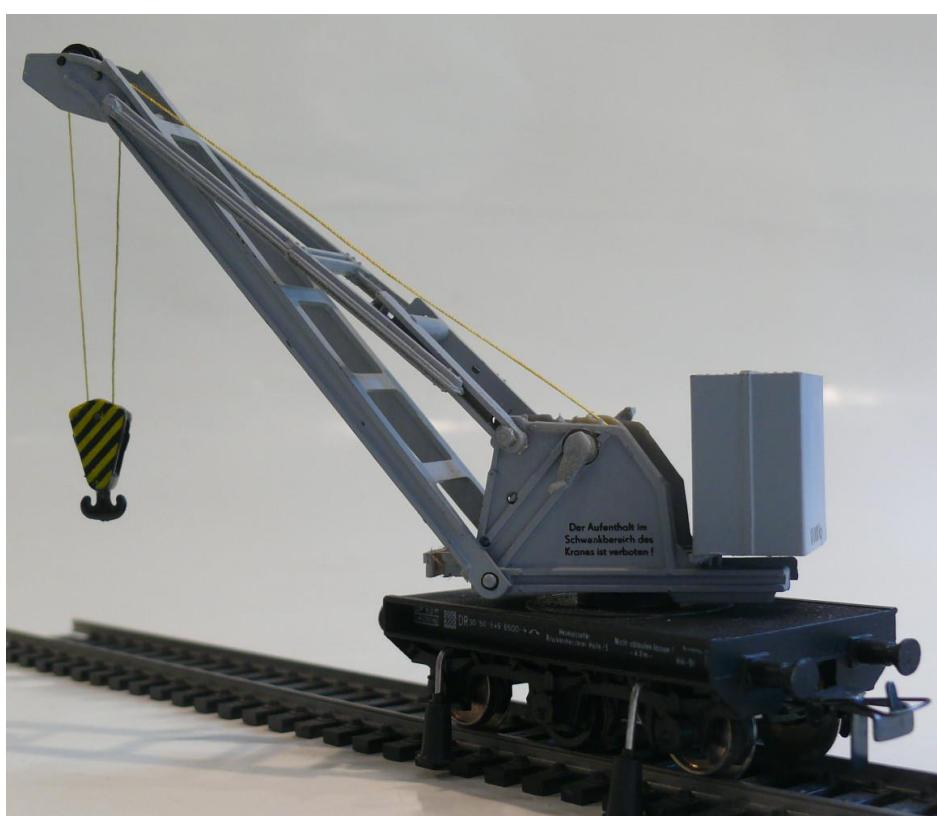
This 6-wheel Märklin crane with 4-wheel car to rest the jib has catalogue number 4611 for the crane and 4503 for the car. It is a crane based on a Krupp-Ardelt prototype similar to the one made in gauge 1, see 6.1.1 and has DB (Deutscher Bundesbahn) markings. It was made in this version with a round hook in 1959. The position of the boom can be changed and the hook lowered with a crank. The crane is metal with however a plastic crane house and the crane car itself without boom is 8 cm long. The maximum height with the boom raised is 11 cm. The 4-wheel car is 10 cm long.





6.3.3 Piko

The East German model train manufacturer Piko made this crane truck with catalogue number 452/14 in the eighties. The 6 wheel car is based on a 10 T prototype of the DR (East German railways). The plastic car has a length of 7 cm, the height is 12 cm maximum.



The crane body can be rotated and the hook lowered with a crank. Small outriggers are present..



The jib can be raised by shortening the jib support. The counter weight can be pulled out.

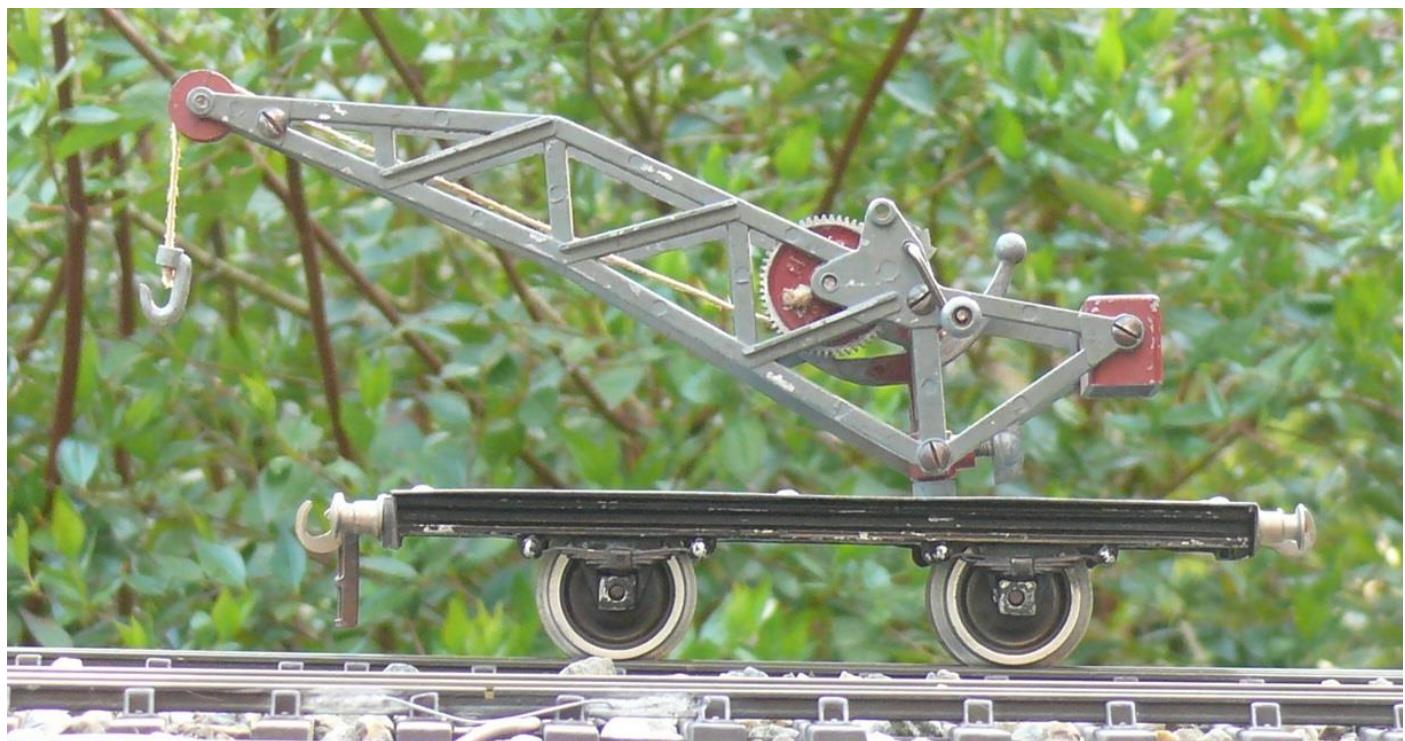


7 Italy

7.1 0 Gauge

7.1.1 FAGE

FAGE or F.A.G.E. is a rather obscure Italian train brand from the years after WWII. This metal 4-wheel crane car is one of their few products. It is 19 cm long and 11 cm high and still has the original hook.





The trademark can be seen on top of the car just behind the buffers.

The fixed jib can be rotated and the hook lowered with a crank.



7.2 H0 Gauge

7.2.1 RivaRossi

This 8-wheel RivaRossi crane car based on an American type flatcar is made in Italy but for the American market. The plastic car has catalogue number 2256 and is 16 cm long.



The crane is fixed with chains and is not functional or to be operated.



8 USA

8.1 Standard Gauge

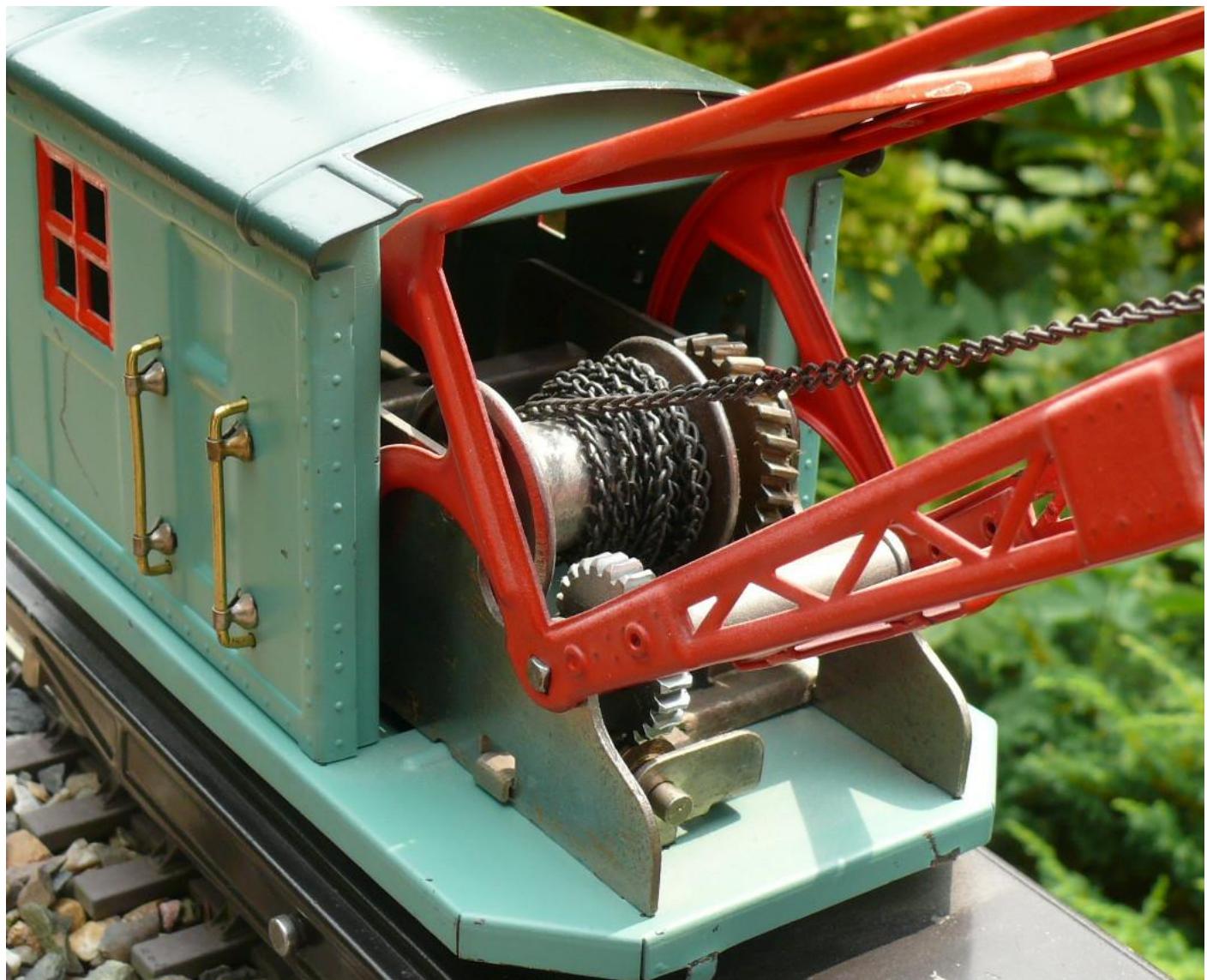
8.1.1 Lionel

The Lionel Standard Gauge 219 crane car (or derrick as it was called) was made in the thirties. It is a very large and heavy car with a length of 32 cm and a maximum height of 42 cm. It is very rugged and has large play value.





The crank wheel on the car is used to rotate the crane body. The crank wheels on the back of the crane body are used to move the boom and lower the hook. The inner works look very firm and heavy.





8.2 0 Gauge

8.2.1 Lionel

This Lionel 0 gauge crane with catalogue number 2810 is a version made between 1936 and 1939. Like the Standard Gauge crane, it is very rugged and has large play value. Of course, it is smaller with a length of 22 cm and a maximum height of 25 cm.





There are three cranks: one to rotate the crane body, one to lower the boom and one to control the hook.



8.3 S Gauge

8.3.1 American Flyer

American Flyer made two different cranes through the years.



The sheet metal crane car or wrecker was introduced first, in 1946. The version shown with catalogue number 906 is a later one having knuckle couplers. Length of this 8-wheel car is 20 cm and maximum boom height is 15 cm. Note that there seems to be a stand to keep the hook, however this is the stand for the brake wheel (which is missing).





With the crank at the back of the crane body the boom can be controlled while the crank on the side lowers the hook. The crane body can be rotated.



The crane with catalogue number 944 has a cast metal car frame and a plastic crane body and boom. This is a 6 axle car with a length and a maximum height of 19 cm. This wrecker was introduced by American Flyer in 1952. I lettered it for Union Pacific.





The crane body can be rotated and with the two wheel cranks the boom can be operated and the hook lowered.



8.4 H0 Gauge

8.4.1 Walthers

The American model railroad supplier Walthers issued a six pack work train kit, i.e. a kit for six plastic cars forming a work train, for a number of railroads. I have with catalogue number 98 the Union Pacific version. Here are the crane and boom car of this set. Both of these cars were made with tooling which was already in the sixties used by Gilbert for cars in their H0 range. Total length of the two 8-wheel cars is 27 cm while the maximum height of the boom is 13 cm.



There are no cranks to operate the crane. The body can be rotated and the boom and hook are movable by a little fiddling with it.



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