

## WHY WON'T IT RUN ... STRAIGHT?

By Dick Ray

Did you ever wish that you could run on good rail so that your car didn't lurch back and forth? Maybe it's your wheels and not the rail. As it turns out, wheel contour is more important than rail contour. Worn wheels won't track well anywhere.

Several years ago we ran an article on measuring wheel contour and another article on alignment. Since that time the number of operating motorcars has tripled and few owners recognize when the wheels are worn out. There is a simple way to judge wear and contour.

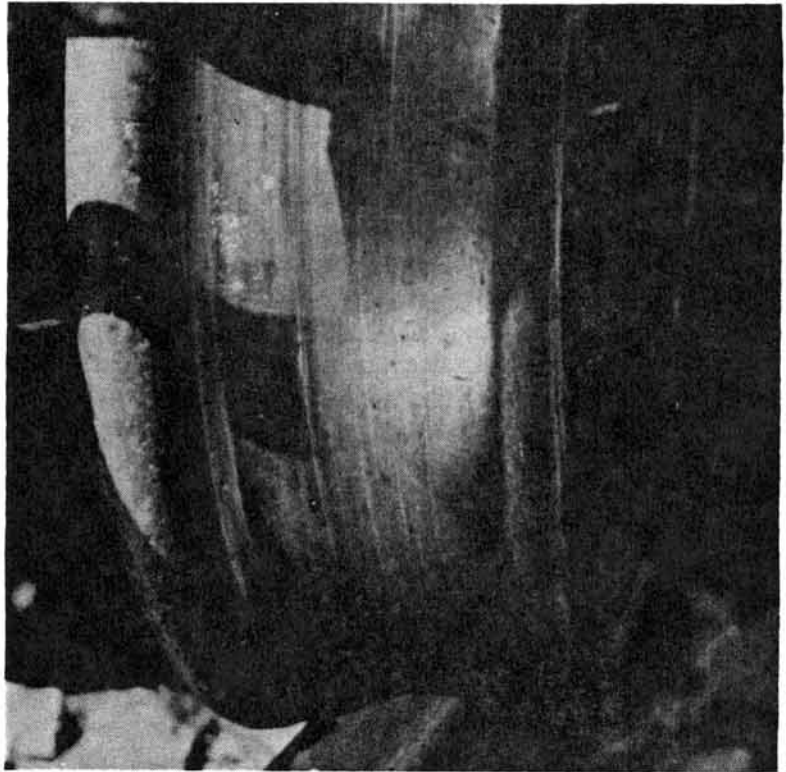
At the BR&W meet last summer, I photographed my own front wheel which has more than two thousand miles on it but still tracks well. The two photos on this page show a good wheel and a worn wheel. I'm not sure how well they will print, but I will explain what to look for.

The photo of the good wheel shows a shiny stripe on the flange, then a rusty stripe on the tread next to the flange, and finally a shiny surface on the outer half of the wheel tread. This does not mean that the car has narrow gauge--it means that the tapered tread is guiding the car properly and the wheels are not moving back and forth across the rail much.

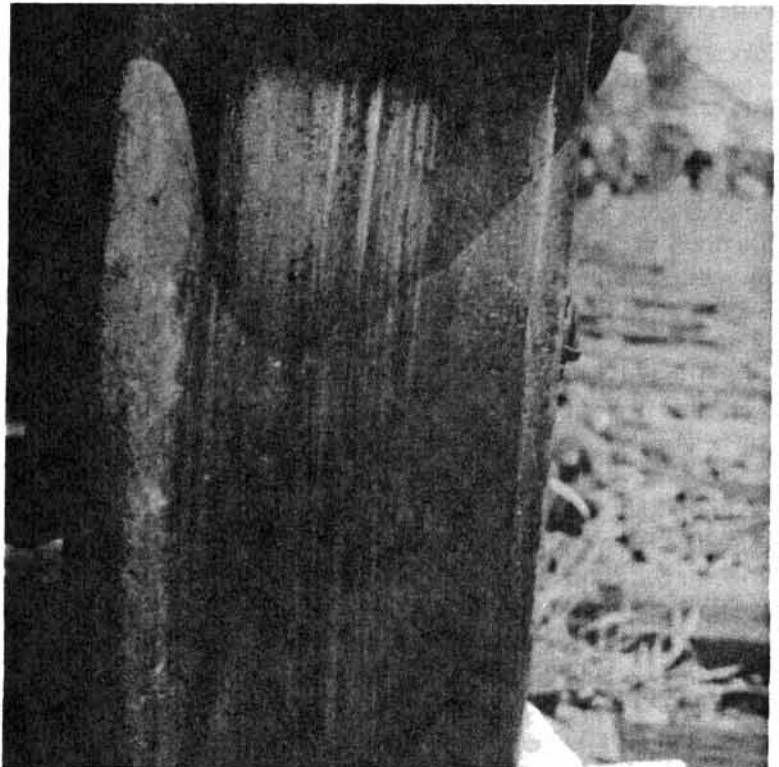
The other photo, of a worn wheel, shows that the wheel is shiny all the way across. This comes from the wheel moving back and forth across the rail. Having ridden in this car I can attest that it does not track well on straight track or curves. The wheel is still plenty thick and safe but it will wear rapidly from now on.

An additional characteristic will appear as a wheel wears, and this can be seen in the photo. At the outer edge of the tread a definite corner takes shape where the wheel once was rounded.

This makes wheel inspection as simple as walking around the car and looking for the dreaded totally shiny surface, and the dismaying outer edge corner. If you see these things, maybe it's time for new wheels.



*The good wheel . . . it has a shiny stripe on the flange, then a rusty stripe on the inside of the wheel next to the flange, and then a shiny stripe on the outside edge of the wheel.*



*The worn wheel . . . it is shiny all the way across the wheel, from the flange to the outside edge, and has developed an edge where the wheel was once rounded.*