

Easy E-unit repairs

Toy Train Restoration Product tools

I'VE OFTEN HEARD that we should be careful what we wish for – even if it is a good thing – because we just might get it. When reviewing a riveting tool set in the January 2006 issue, I mused about having something equally helpful to assist with the repair of old Lionel reversing units. While I never expected such a quick response, guess what?

Toy Train Restoration Products sent us its new assembly jig and anvil, which eliminate the necessity of having three hands to get a reverse unit back together again. I'm not sure if these tools are exactly what Lionel's service stations used in the old days, but they work well.

Hosanna and Hallelujah!

My Millennium has arrived, even if it is six years late.

The package from Toy Train Restoration Products contained its reverse-unit Anvil (part no. STX-377), reverse-unit Assembly Jig (no. STX-378), and a packet of hard-to-find reverse-unit parts (no. STX-379) – switch plates, spring washers, and rivets for use around the lock-out lever on the upper portion of the unit.

The other replacement parts – drums, two-, and four-finger-contact strips – are all available from most parts retailers.

These tools facilitate the top-to-bottom overhaul of Lionel reverse units of any age. Everything is professional/industrial grade, precision machined, and sturdily built.

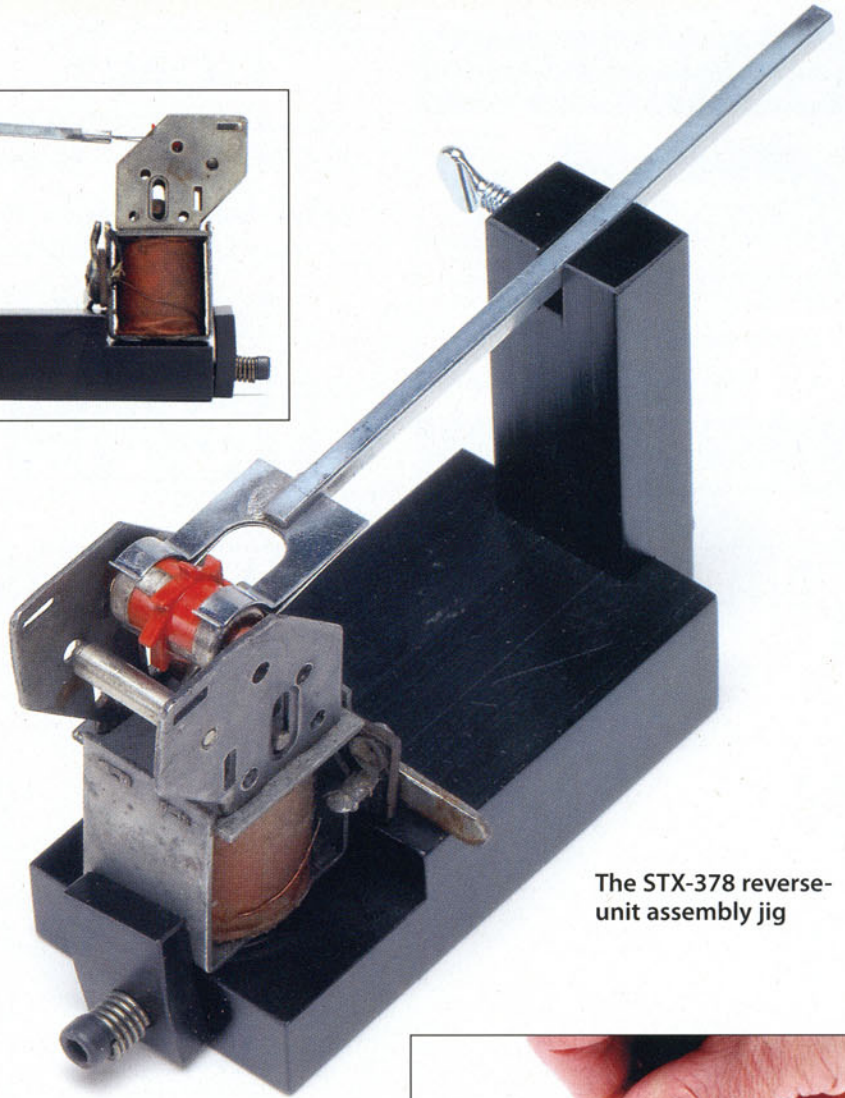
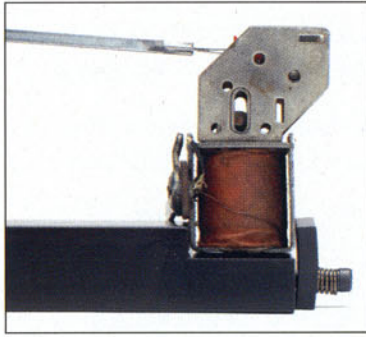
Like the trains they are designed to repair, the tools will probably outlast three generations of owners.

The tools come with a four-page instruction booklet, written in plain English, with clear, step-by-step directions on all aspects of reverse-unit repair, as well as 11 detailed photos of the process.

The anvil serves as a solid backing for the sheet-metal coil bracket when tightening or replacing the rivet and washer in the lock-out lever assembly.

I found the jig most useful. It features an adjustable clip and bracket that hold the drum in position, thereby freeing both of your hands to keep the pawl out of the way. That feature lets you set in the two contact strips and bring the lower side plates back into alignment before securing the mounting stud.

If you've ever tried to put a reverse-unit back together, you know the kind



The STX-378 reverse-unit assembly jig

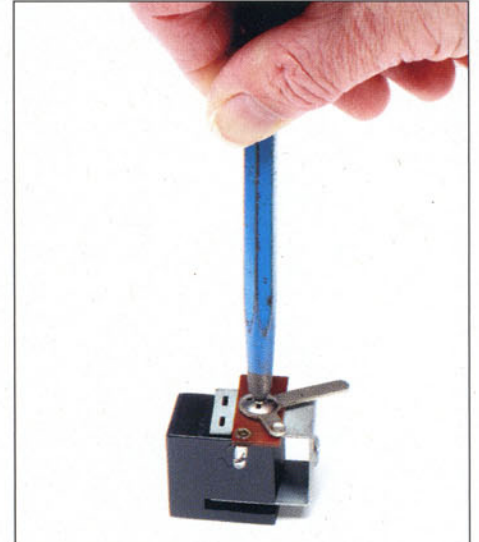
REVERSE-UNIT SERVICE TOOLS AND PARTS BY TOY TRAIN RESTORATION PARTS

Price: STX-377 anvil (\$10), STX-378 jig (\$74.99), STX-379 parts service pack (\$10)

Pros: Well-made, industrial-quality tools

Cons: None

Made in the United States for Toy Train Restoration Parts



Above is the STX-377 anvil. The STX-379 service pack (not shown) contains 12 of the 100-52 rivets and 259-85 spring washers and two fiber switch plates.

of patience, luck, and finger gymnastics such an operation usually takes.

Surely, all the deities in the Pantheon will rest easier because of these helpful tools – their names will no longer be called out in vain by hapless toy train service technicians and do-it-yourself operators who find themselves wrestling with cantankerous reverse units.

Although probably worth every dollar, because of their price tags, these new products may not be for everyone. (Yes, I have factored in the cost of head-

ache medicine.) However, if you do a lot of locomotive repair and restoration, or have a string of balky and erratic engines sitting on the shelf because their reverse units need attention and you can't bring yourself to tackle that frustrating job, this one's for you, Bud!
– Ray L. Plummer **CTT**