

Wellington British Railway Modellers



September 2025

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One Big Beautiful British Railway Bridge
New Wairarapa, Manawatū Trains
4-6-4 and 4-6-0 Streamliners
A Chapter of Accidents

Feel free to copy this PDF to anyone you think might enjoy it. – Editor

One Big Beautiful British Bridge

Julian Lermitt



When it is completed, the 3.4km Colne Valley viaduct on the HS2 will arguably be Britain's longest railway bridge. It has won the Royal Fine Art Commission Trust's Building Beauty award. It cost a lot – £1.6 billion – but perhaps doing nothing would cost a lot more in the long term.

A 1:148 model (British N scale) would be 23m long. Anyone got a spare aircraft hangar?

New Trains for Wairarapa and Manawatū

Alstom have been awarded (on 8 September) the contract to supply and maintain 18 5-car battery and electric multiple-unit trains (BEMU) for the Wairarapa and Manawatu passenger rail services. The 5-car articulated sets will be able to carry up to 475 passengers (231 seated) at speeds up to 120 kph. There will be provision for wheelchairs, bicycles prams and luggage and toilet, water dispenser and vending machine facilities.



The Tuhono trains will be New Zealand's first Battery Electric Multiple Units.

The project name is “Tuhono”, meaning to connect or unite.

On the Wairarapa Line (between Masterton and Wellington) the programme will double peak services (from the current 3 peak each morning and evening, to 6 peak services). On the Manawatū Line (between Palmerston North and Wellington) the peak services will also be doubled (from the current 1 peak service each morning and evening, to 2

peak services). The daytime inter-peak and weekend rail passenger services will also be increased across both lines.

This improvement in public transport across the lower North Island will include :

- 18 Battery Electric Multiple Units (BEMU) (trains)
- A driving simulator representing the new trains to educate and train drivers
- A new BEMU maintenance facility at Masterton
- Battery charging facilities at Masterton and Palmerston North
- Expanded stabling yards at Masterton and Palmerston North
- Improved stations and platforms along both routes
- Improved operational facilities at Masterton and Palmerston North
- Passing loop improvements to enable crossing with freight trains



Because of the narrow width of the tunnels, in case of emergency provision has been made for evacuation through the drivers' cabs, either by train-to-ground or train-to-train.



The agreement reached with Alstom means that GWRC have pre-priced options available to enable the following potential key changes to the contract:

- i) the installation of European Train Control System (ETCS) in the units,
- ii) additional trains,
- iii) Metro-specific variants, ie different additional trains for Wairarapa or Manawatū .

The agreement also enables other New Zealand public transport authorities to enter into negotiations with Alstom for suitable BEMU's to suit their needs.

[The editor, a frequent traveller on the Wairarapa line, comments: the new trains are promised 'from 2030' which is slightly later than originally expected. Two toilets for 475 passengers seems a little sparse – we will have to learn to go before we travel. The Minister of Transport did warn us that there would be 'no frills' on the new trains. The designers seem to have worked hard to include reasonable facilities for travellers. The battery-electric drive means that these trains at least will not add to the problems resulting from the icing of catenary wiring which occurred earlier this year. The prospect of improved off-peak travel to Palmerston North looks promising – perhaps the city council there will come to regret banishing the railway to the outskirts of town sixty years ago.]



Looking just like a model railway, this picture was taken in 1937 at the south end of Tintern station on the Wye Valley Railway. The Camp Coach slept 6 and could be rented for £3 per week. Photograph posted on 'X' @VoughtSikorsky.

WI 4-6-4 and B17/5 Streamliners



Originally built with a high-pressure boiler, then rebuilt to resemble an A4. Above, seen at Doncaster in 1959, the year it was withdrawn. Below, seen pre-war near Potters Bar. Photographers unknown.



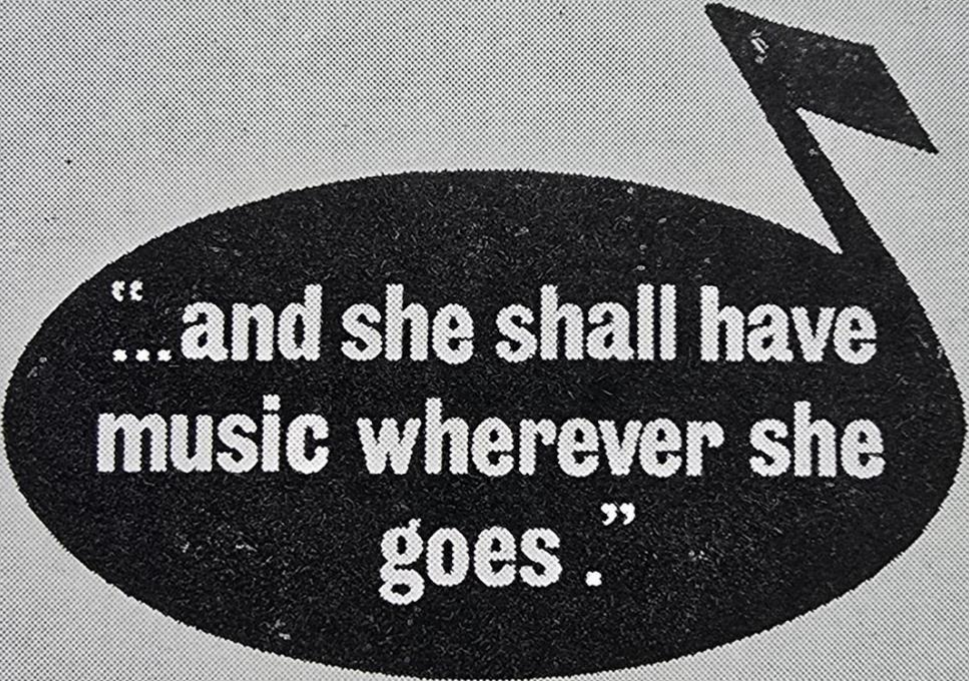


R.C.Riley 1949 photograph, posted on 'X' @adipullenLNER

In East Anglia they pined for their own streamlined trains, so Gresley tarted up a pair of B17s and named them *City of London* and *East Anglian*. The streamlining achieved nothing in the way of improved speed. After the war, Thompson's unstreamlined B1s had no trouble improving timings.



John Law's undated photograph, also posted on 'X' @adipullen LNER.



**"...and she shall have
music wherever she
goes."**

BUT

**noisy transistors and blaring refrains —
may annoy other people using the trains.**

**PLEASE REMEMBER - IT IS AN OFFENCE
TO OPERATE A PORTABLE RADIO
(OR OTHER MUSICAL INSTRUMENT) TO
THE ANNOYANCE OF OTHER PASSENGERS**



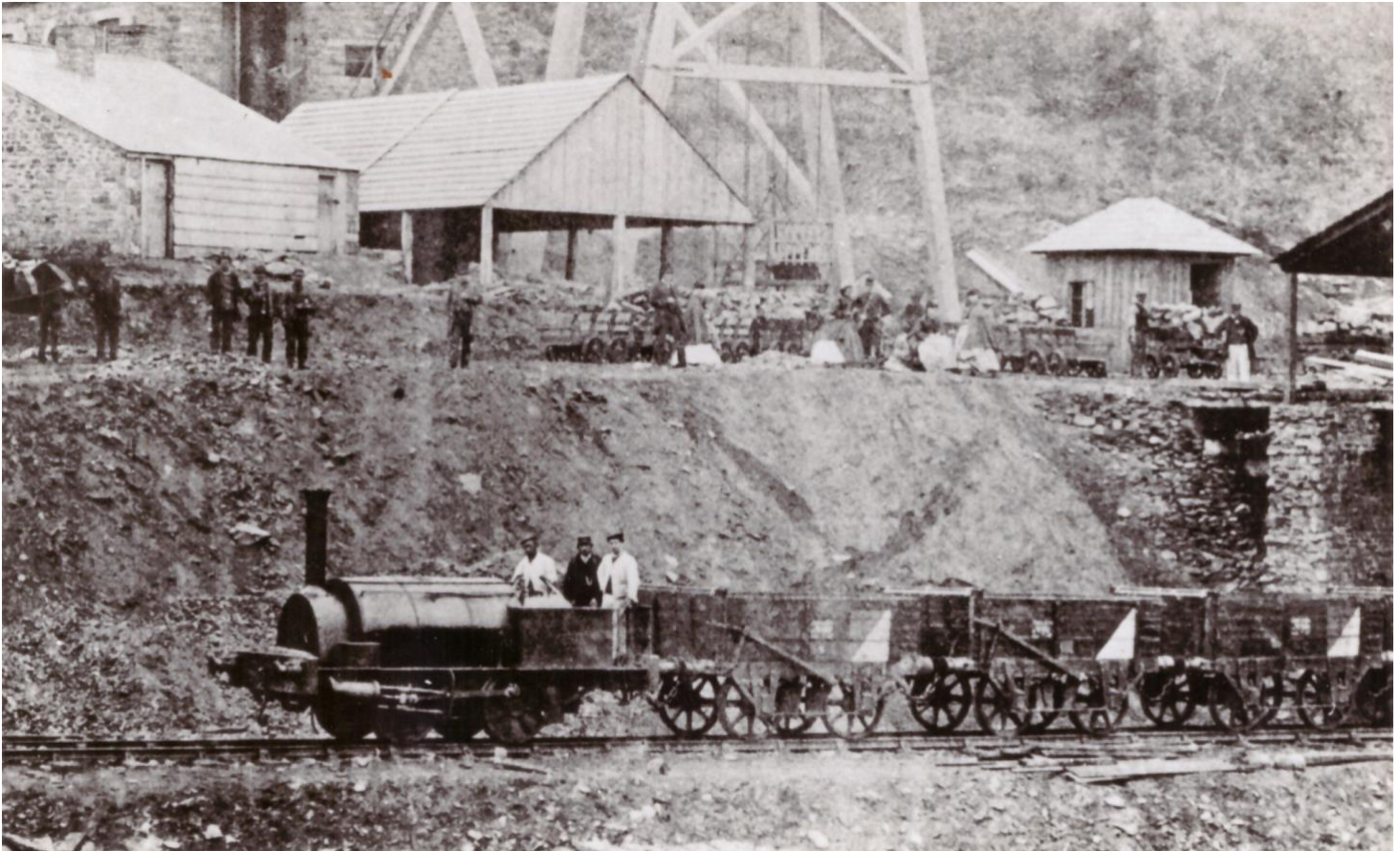
Thank You



In July 1983, 20169 and 20147 run round their empty stock train at Leicester, to form the 0815 to Skegness. Photo credit: 'X'@nickbro76777852.



Class 47/3 Brush Type 4 #47338 a Manchester Guide Bridge, 15 November 1982. Photo credit: Richard Bywater, 'X'@SalopianLyne.



A view of Windsor Colliery, Abertridwr. The locomotive is believed to be Fowler #3154 of 1880 *Lylie*. Of note are the very short wheelbase wagons which were distinctive of South Wales practice at this time.

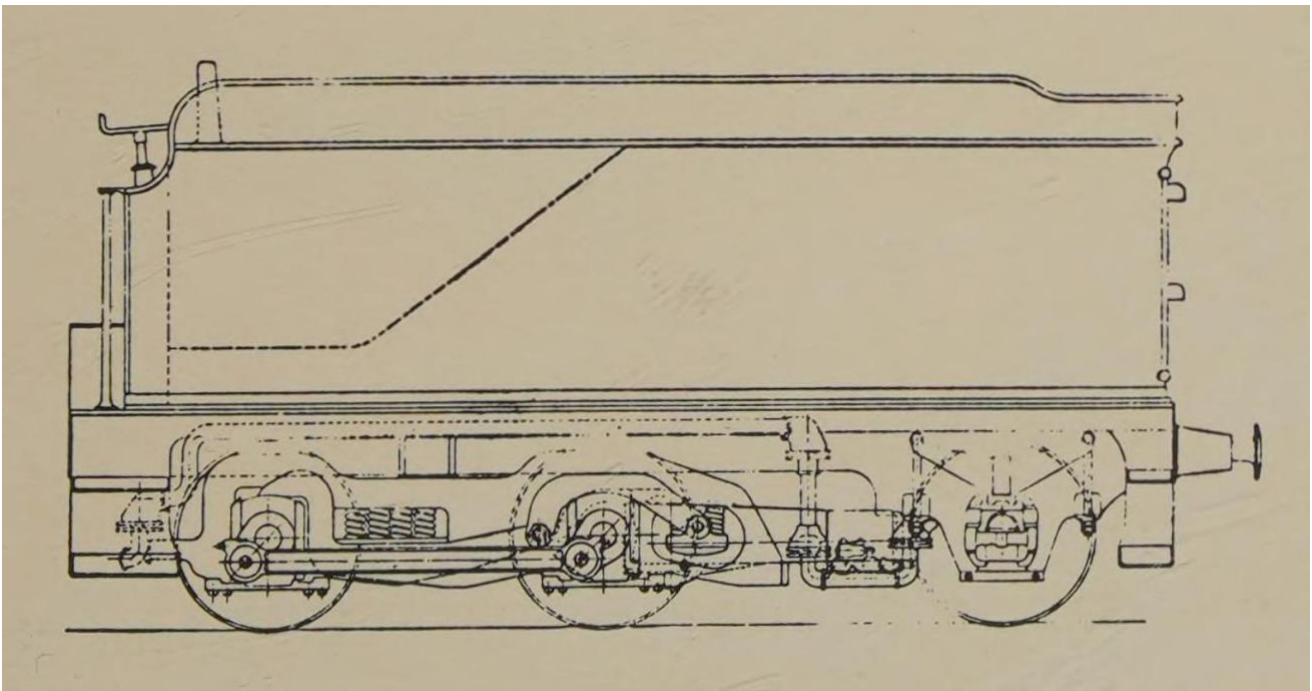
The mine trucks on the upper level are plateway trucks, that is they have flangeless wheels which are guided by rails of L-shaped cross-section.

There is a lot of modelling interest in this picture, starting with the two different kinds of railway on two distinct levels.

Photo credit belongs to Killeen Keane, [@littlewhiterabbit.bsky.social](https://bsky.social/@littlewhiterabbit)

A Booster Tender for Kings and Castles

During the depression, as the export trade dried up, one enterprising firm suggested this booster driven tender for Great Western Kings and Castles. Whatever Mr Collett thought of the idea, the editor suspects I.K.Brunel would have been intrigued. NB: booster drives were only engaged at low speed, in order to help start heavy trains.



*Southampton
Maritime Depot with
an 08 inside. An
easily modelled
modern prototype
MPD.*

*Photo credit: 'X'
@NickCar23619332*



Holiday crowds at Victoria Station in the summer of 1920.



SR Merchant Navy Class # 21C10 at London Waterloo 20 March 1948.

The Last of the Broad Gauge



Broad gauge GWR engines await scrapping or conversion to standard gauge. Many of the more recent broad gauge locomotives had been designed with conversion in mind.

The Last Push-Pull



Ivatt 2MT prepares to leave Seaton Junction Rutland with a motor train to Stamford on 2 October 1965, the last day of regular push-pull working on BR.

The erudite Latin quotation (from Vergil's Aeneid) reads "The final day has come, the inescapable time"

A Chapter of Accidents

As a change from wrestling with 19th century H0 models for RailEx 2025, I decided to assemble a secondhand KirksTM coach kit I recently acquired from Marcus Lecky at a recent club meeting. This was a model of an early LNER 52' 6" Third Class corridor compartment coach intended for East Anglian services, and would fit nicely with a rake of four of these shorter coaches which I had previously assembled about a decade ago. The purchase of this kit was nonetheless an indulgence, as I bought more than forty of these kits from the Wairarapa Model Railway Club, who had been given these from the estate of a deceased member. I am about half way through building them.

One of the features of these Kirk's kits is that wide use is made of sprues which have parts intended for more than one kit. This inevitably means that once you have assembled a few of these kits that you acquire a good collection of spare parts. This came in handy when I opened the kit and found three bogie sides of the correct pattern, sufficient for one and a half bogies, and three underfloor trusses, only one of which was the correct length. A rummage in my spare parts box yielded the necessary replacement parts so that construction could begin.

I normally cut plastic kit parts from their sprue with a small pair of side-cutting pliers, and then clean up with a small file. *Unfortunately* the kit may have been exposed to excessive sunlight in the forty years since it was manufactured, and the plastic had become brittle. One of the coach sides promptly snapped in two, and the first underfloor truss practically disintegrated. Never mind; the coach side was easily glued back together, but replacement trusses will have to be fabricated from brass.

It is much simpler to paint and letter model rolling stock while it is still in nice flat pieces so I began with painting. *Unfortunately* I was trying to airbrush a brand of acrylic which I had previously only applied with sable brushes, using an acrylic thinner from a different manufacturer, and my delicate airbrush did not like the combination and clogged up almost immediately. No worries – I would unblock it using that ultrasonic cleaner I have been meaning to try. I bought it last Christmas with a gift card I had been given as a present but had not got around to using it yet.

Unfortunately said ultrasonic cleaner is USB-powered. The USB power supply charges a battery which proceeded to take days to charge for the first time; moreover I had no idea if or when it would be fully charged, mainly because the instructions were the worst I have yet encountered, a true masterpiece of incomprehensibility.

So I went to the website of the airbrush supplier looking for a spare nozzle. *Unfortunately* I there discovered that my 7-year-old airbrush was not the latest model, and the supposed replacement nozzle for my model did not look like the one that I had. So I chucked a 0.1mm drill bit in a pin vice and used this to clear the nozzle and reacquire a functioning airbrush.

In the meantime I painted the coach sides using a flat brush approximately 6mm in width and this worked well. Nowadays I use flat brushes for brush painting, except where delicate work is needed.. I decided to paint this coach BR crimson, which will make a nice contrast with my other coaches of this length which are maroon. Two light coats were needed. The first coat looked distinctly scarlet, and required a second coat for the crimson hue to emerge. I found that it was best to let each coat dry for about 5 minutes then use the flat brush to work over any brush marks, removing any surplus paint in the process.

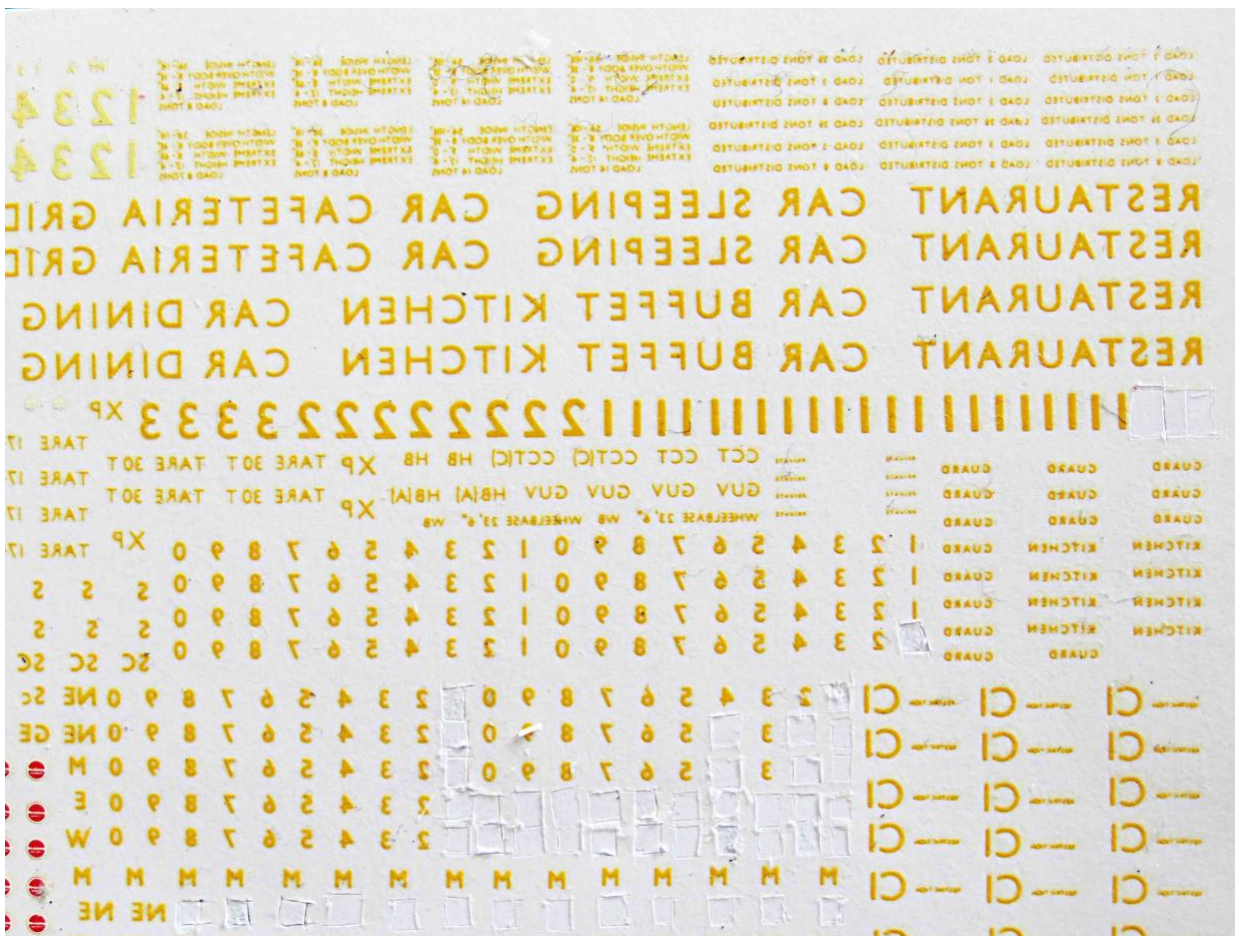
After painting glazing was added to the coach sides. This might usually be added a little later, but in this case the broken halves of one side

needed reinforcing. After waiting 24 hours for the paint to dry thoroughly transfers (*decals* in American, and also in French) were applied. For those unfamiliar with transfers, they need to be applied to a *gloss* surface. That glossy patch on the side of a railway vehicle can always be subsequently covered with matt varnish, once the transfers are dry.

It is always much easier to apply transfers to the flat part of a model that is still to be assembled, rather than wrestling with the completed model, and here is what I use to apply them. A pair of fine tweezers, a small paint brush (the nylon type is fine), a very sharp knife, a rag and cotton swabs to mop up with and a small piece of sponge to press the transfers flat once you have positioned them. Incidentally, if you are already a dab hand with transfers, please feel free to skip what follows.



I used the HMRS Pressfix transfer sheet #14, *BR Steam era loco and coach insignia*. Peel back the backing sheet and this is what you see:

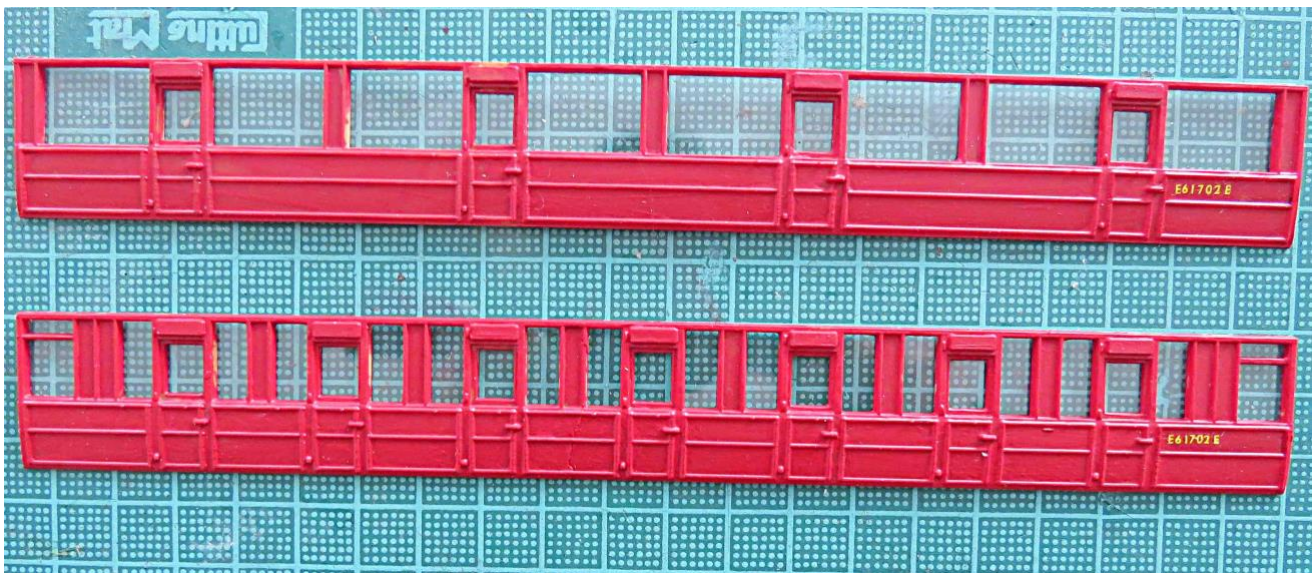


The top surface is in reverse and is sticky. This sticky surface is what will actually be attached to the model, so we employ the backing sheet to cover and protect that part of the transfers we are not working on.

The task here is to cut around, but close, to the transfer you want to apply. That means cutting through the top layer of paper, the actual transfers and also the next layer, while leaving the bottom layer, the backing paper, intact. Carefully remove the transfer, beginning with the point of your knife and finishing with the tweezers. While still gripping the transfer with the tweezers, dip it in water for about ten seconds then turn the transfer over (so it now looks the right way round) and apply to the model. As the transfer continues to absorb moisture, the protective

layer of paper which is now above the transfer will float off. Position the transfer correctly in place using the paint brush, then gently sponge off the surplus water, pressing the transfer flat. When dry, the transfer can be sealed in place with gloss or matt varnish as appropriate.

Unfortunately the first sheet of transfers I used, bought from an estate, was rather old and there was considerable difficulty getting a delicate set of numbers to adhere to the model. When I switched to a fresher sheet productivity improved to the point that a pair of coach sides was nearly completed in little more time than it usually takes to construct an entire coach.



Work yet to be done on these coach sides:

Seal the number transfers with matt varnish, tidy up the crimson paint, and touch up door handles with brass paint. Add a brass wire mid-way up the large windows on the corridor side, to represent the corridor safety railing.

Paint the end windows on the compartment side white (these are the lavatory compartment windows). On the same side add 'No Smoking' transfers to a couple of compartments.

Traders in Secondhand Model Railway Equipment

These traders in model railways are even more important now that the number of model shops is dwindling. If you are aware of other traders who handle models of British railways, please let the editor know.

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Point to Ponder

Ancient Babylonian tablet:

“The gods do not subtract from the allotted span of a man’s life the hours spent fishing”*

*For “fishing” substitute “railway modelling” or anything else that takes your fancy. They don’t call these things ‘re-creations’ for nothing.

Next Totem

The October 2025 edition of *The Totem* will be published on 17th October. If there is anything you would like to contribute to the editor, Julian Lermitt, email:

<mailto:kiwiscrooge@xtra.co.nz>

Events of Interest

2025

September 2025

21 Club formal monthly meeting in clubrooms. Pizzas at 1pm, business at 2pm. “SALES DAY” – bring your surplus stuff to sell. Also, we will mark Rail 2000.

20 – 21 Wanganui Model Railway Expo, Wanganui City College Hall, 84 Ingestre Street, Wanganui. 10.00 am to 4.00 pm.

October 2025

I Gold Card group meeting at clubrooms (all others welcome). Meet mid-morning, bring lunch and a project to work on. Be prepared to set the world to rights.

4 – 5 Christchurch Model Train Show, Cowels Stadium, 170 Pages Road, Aranui, Christchurch. Information here:

<https://christchurchtrainshow.co.nz/-show-info>

19 Christmas comes early this year, in the form of the annual quiz (Quizmaster John MacDonald will be overseas in December).

25–26 Great Little Train Show, Surrey Park, Invercargill.
(Labour Weekend)

November 2025

1–2 Hamilton Model Railway Exhibition, Hamilton Gardens Pavilion, Hungerford Crescent, Hamilton.

5 Gold card group meet at clubrooms. (Everyone else welcome.) Bring lunch and a project to work on.

15-16 RailEx 2025 at the Walter Nash Centre, Taita, Lower Hutt.
Information here:

<https://railex.org.nz/>

There will be no formal monthly meeting in November, because of RailEx. The clubrooms remain open at all times to members.

The above events are those which in the editor's judgement will go ahead, in the absence of interruptions outside the control of the organisers.

Events of Interest is compiled from a number of sources, the principal ones being the What's On page of the New Zealand Model Railway Guild website: <http://nzmrg.org.nz> and the Model Train Shows website <http://trainshows.co.nz/>. Information is published in good faith but no responsibility can be accepted. Always check with organisers before travelling long distances.

Club Officers

Chair: Roger Simmons email <mailto:rogersimmons nz@gmail.com>

Deputy Chair: Julian Lermitt email kiwiscrooge @xtra.co.nz

Treasurer: Clive Williams email <mailto:treasurerwbrm@gmail.com>

Secretary: John MacDonald email <mailto:secretarywbrm@gmail.com>

Wanganui Model Railway & Engineering Society

PRESENTS THE
WANGANUI MODEL RAILWAY EXPO



Wanganui City College Hall
84 Ingestre Street, Wanganui
Saturday & Sunday

20th & 21st September 2025

10am to 4pm

Adults \$7

Child \$3

Family (2A + 3C) \$18

