

# Wellington British Railway Modellers



## April 2026

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*The Last Journal*  
*Resin Wagons From Australia*  
*Loading Gauges*

*Feel free to copy this PDF to anyone you think might enjoy it. Earlier issues of The Totem can be downloaded from the club's website:*

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

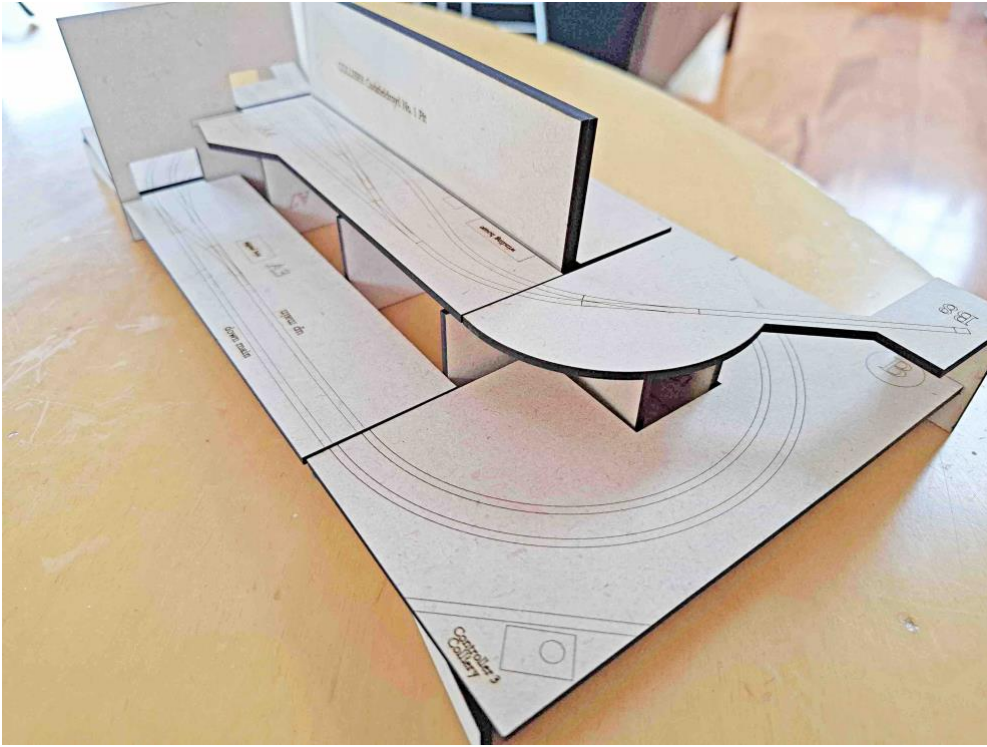
– Editor

All in all, there are just too many architects in our club. Put two of them, John MacDonald and Roger Simmons, together and what do you get?

Not models, but *models* of models.



Here is Roger Simmons' model of John MacDonald's design for the new club universal track 00 DC layout. By adding an upper level three operators can be kept happy simultaneously. Come along to the club meeting on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April when John will present the design and the thinking behind it.



## Alligator Teeth?\*



Here is an unusual sign for your contemporary-era British layout. Those “teeth” are spring-loaded, and robustly enforce one-way street signs by ripping the tyres of miscreant motorists driving the wrong way..

## Gallery

More from the recent Model Railway Club show which was featured last month.



Janes Creek. *Excellent modelling in 1:76, EM gauge.*



# The Last NZ Model Railway Journal

# NZMODEL RAILWAY

JOURNAL

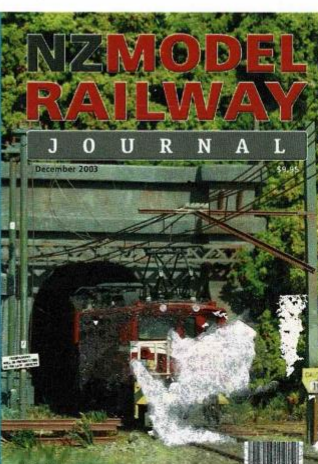
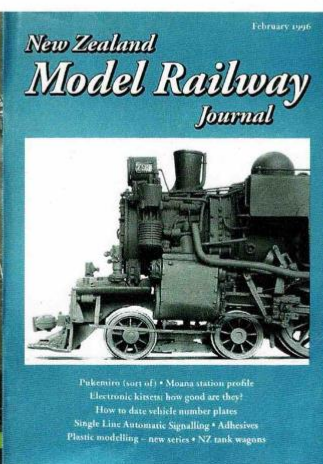
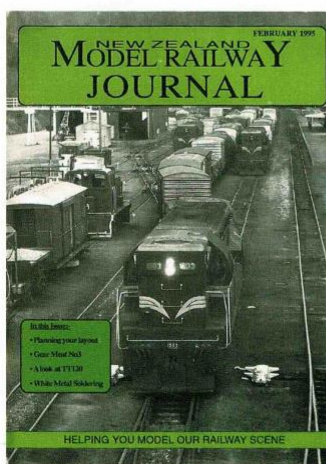
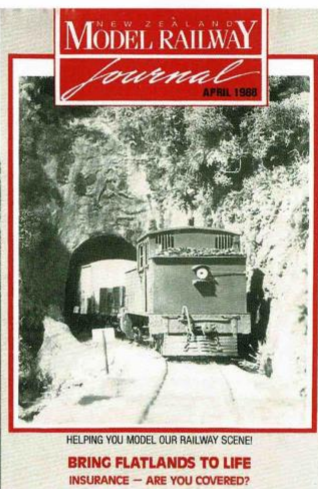
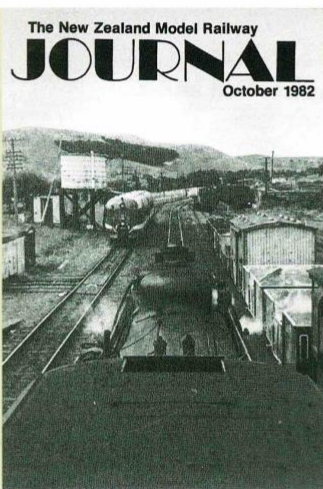
Issue 428

\$17.50

11/05

The Last Print Issue.

- How Things Have Changed...
- The Future of Model Railways.
- The Journal Editors.
- AI for Railway Modelling.
- From the Archives.



Born in the same month as the editor of *The Totem*, the *New Zealand Model Railway Journal* has appeared in print for the last time. The costs involved in producing and distributing a printed magazine were becoming

unsustainable for the members of the New Zealand Model Railway Guild. In place of a magazine is the NZMRJ website:

<http://www.thejournal.nz/>

where you will need to be a Guild member to access the detailed contents of the *Journal*. The current cost of annual membership is \$50.00.

## **Resin Wagons from Australia**

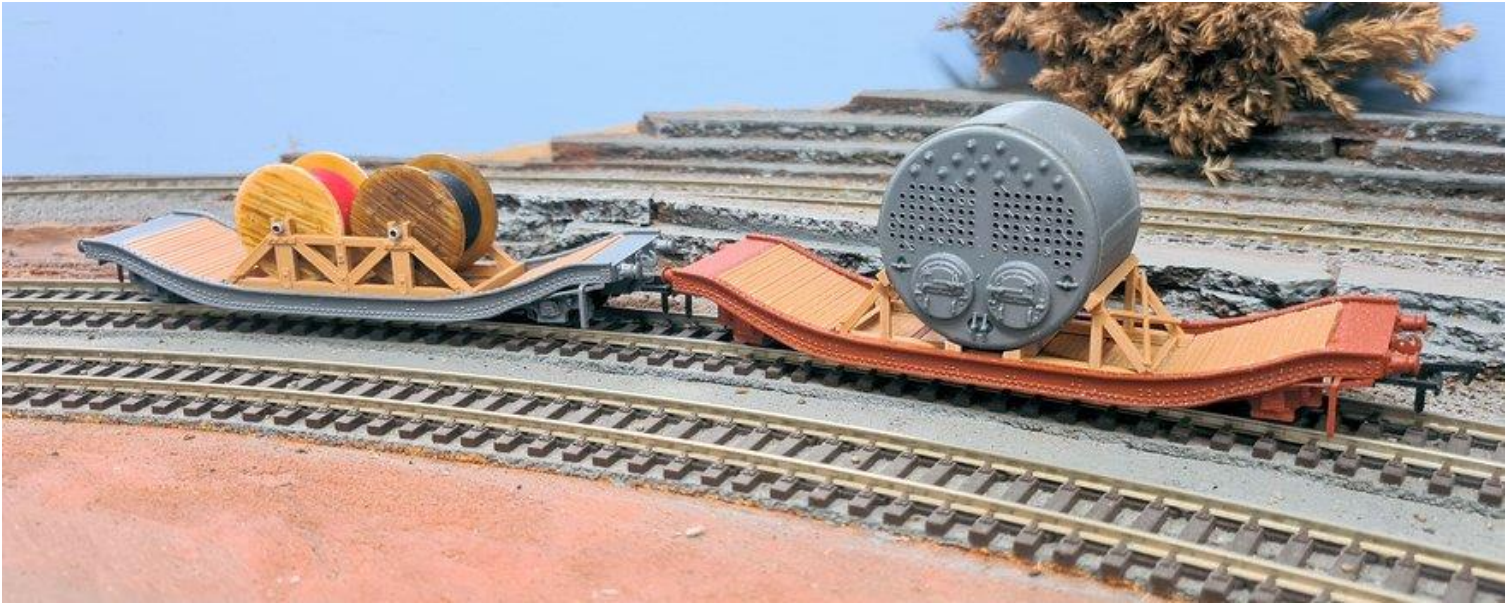
David Hobbs drew the editor's attention to this website:

<https://bygone-models.com/>

where you can find models of assorted British freight wagons in 0 and 1:76 scales. There are also viaduct components, unusual loads, and two varieties of BR brake tenders which were used to provide early diesel locomotives with additional braking power when hauling unbraked wagons.



GWR Mink F.



Lowmac.





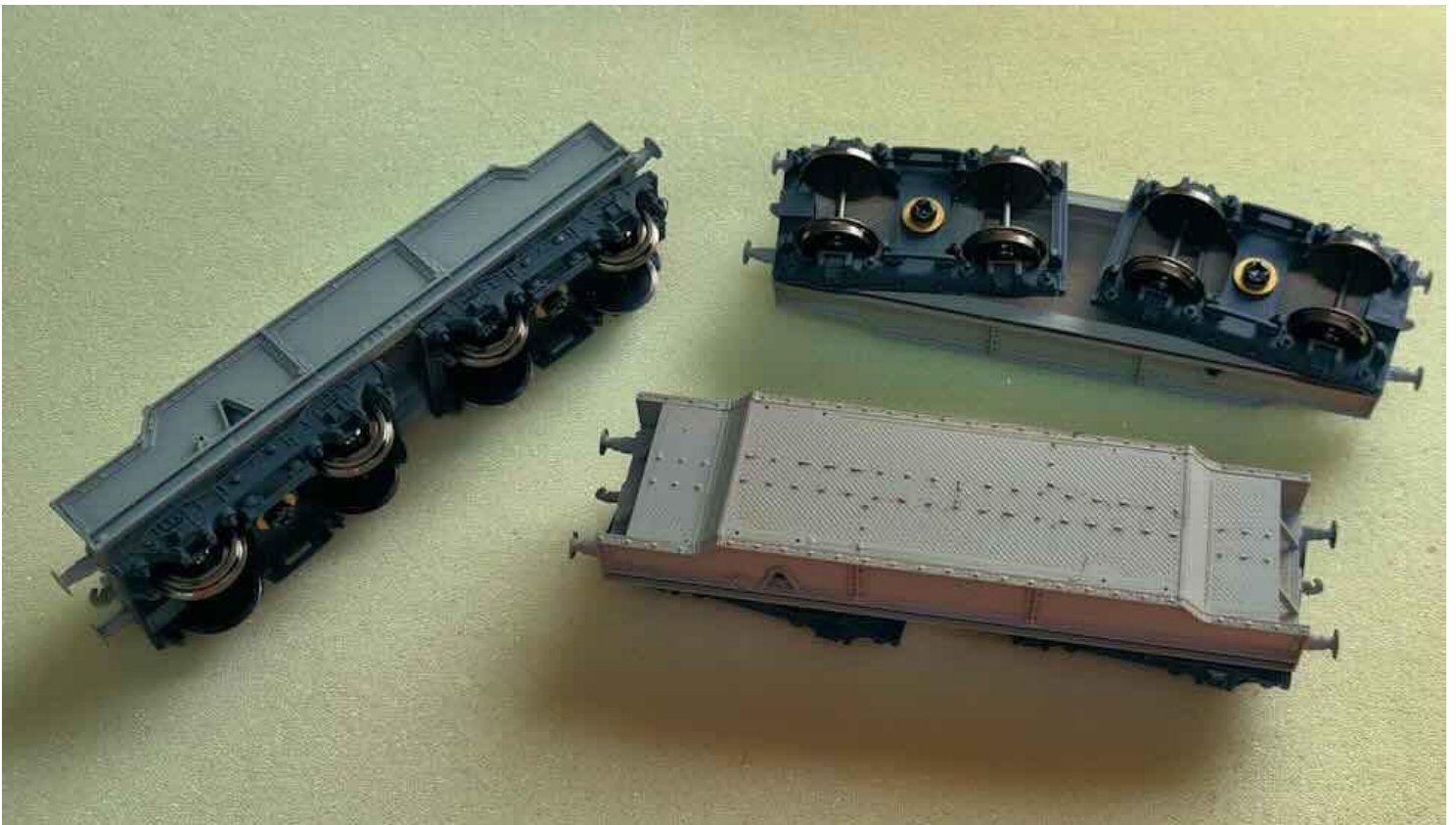
*GWR Water Tank Wagon.*



*SECR 10-Ton Vans.*



*BR Brake Tenders.*





Models intended for 00 layouts are supplied with wheels. Models suitable for EM can be provided, but are supplied without wheels.



A petrol station contemporaneous with GWR 'Saints' and Midland Compounds.

Quite what was involved in 'Motor Exchange' is not known – possibly trading in second-hand vehicles.

No correspondence will be entered into about the punctuation of "Lawrences'".

*Tyres inflated free at 336 Clapham Road, Brixton, London in 1920.*

## Modern Freight Trains



*4119, Masborough – London Gateway, passes the High Street level crossing gates at Lincoln Central, on 13 February 2026. Source: @RegalEagle12 on Twitter, 'X'.*

A very attractive scene for modellers with its mixture of ancient and modern buildings and varied textures of building materials. The modern footbridge could make an interesting variation of the 'exit to the fiddle yard at the back of the layout' theme.



*Rauceby Station, complete with LNER station running-in boards, an operational signal box, manual crossing gates, (one of them wonky), two styles of ornate gables and a modern water heater on the roof of what may have been the stationmaster's house.. All of this on 30 March 2026 Anno Domini. A superb picture by @RegalEagle12 on Twitter, 'X'.*

The weed killer train appears to have only sprayed one track so far. The train, hauled by 66651, is 6E02 Toton – Boston Sleaford Sidings. If you modelled this you could use up all your fence leftover oddments – there are at least six different styles of fencing visible. The nauseating shade of blue-green paint on the signal box was presumably inflicted by a franchise holder.



*At Basingstoke, 66025 hauls 4M60 Southampton MCT – Northampton Gateway on 13 March 2026. Picture posted on 'X' by @RegalEagle12.*

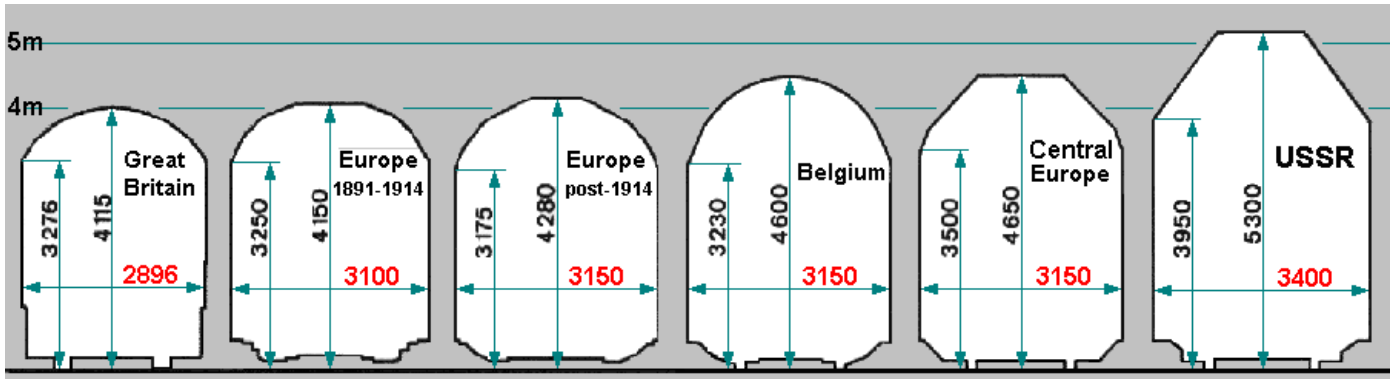
## **Loading Gauges**

**Julian Lermitt**

The loading gauge has been described as railway infrastructure's most unforgiving constraint. Signalling systems can be upgraded; bridges can be strengthened; axle loadings can sometimes be relaxed by restricting speed. The loading gauge is literally set in stone, or brick, or concrete at every tunnel, station platform, and bridge on the railway.

Britain was the first nation to build a major railway network – only it was not a network at all, rather a patchwork of uncoordinated little

railways built to different standards which joined up reluctantly. One legacy of Britain's early start in rail transport is a smaller loading gauge than everyone else.



At the time of the grouping of Britain's railways in 1923 the managements of the 'Big Four' were faced with the task of attempting to reconcile the different loading gauges of their constituent companies.

In the South, the South Eastern and Chatham loading gauge was 3 inches (76mm) lower and 3 inches narrower than the London and South Western, while the London Brighton and South Coast was the tallest of the three major constituents of the Southern Railway.

	Width	Height
SECR	9 feet	13 feet 1 inch
LSWR	9 feet 3 inches	13 feet 4 inches
LBSC	9 feet	13 feet 6 inches
Composite gauge	9 feet	13 feet 1 inch

New rolling stock intended for use on all these three railways would have to be built to a composite gauge which combined the most restrictive dimensions.

The London Midland and Scottish Railway had *thirteen* different loading gauges for the various Sections of the network. In general the maximum width of these loading gauges was 9 feet, though on the Maryport and Carlisle it was 8 feet 10 inches and on the North Staffordshire it was 9 feet 6 inches.

On the Midland section the maximum height was 13 feet 9 inches, but on most of the major LMS constituents such as the LNWR and L&YR it was 13 feet 6 inches. The Glasgow & South Western loading gauge had a maximum height of 13 feet, while on the Highland the comparable figure was 12 feet 9.375 inches. (The mind boggles as to where the three eighths of an inch came from.) The Caledonian, just to be different, had two loading gauges. Normally the height was 12 feet 11 inches, but “over certain main lines” it was 13 feet 3 inches.

The greatest variation in LMS loading gauges seems to have been below platform level. Typically the loading gauge narrowed slightly from the 9 feet width at a height 3 feet 6 inches above rail level, but on the former Caledonian Railway the 9 feet width went right down to 1 foot above rail level. As a consequence Caledonian locomotives with outside cylinders could not be considered as prototypes for standard engines to be used throughout the LMS network.

If you fancy a deep dive into historical loading gauges on British railways, here is an excellent site:

<https://www.devboats.co.uk/gwdrawings/loadinggauges.php>

On a model railway, of course, the width of a loading gauge has to be radically increased so that rolling stock can negotiate our extremely tight curved tracks. Failure to remember that can cause major difficulties. I can recall a model railway club (not the VBRM) where members nearly came to blows when a tunnel on the club layout proved too tight for one member's favourite extra-long freight cars.



*Leeds, 1959. Note the way the traffic light is painted.*



Source: @JoeBrownLondon on *Twitter* 'X'.

Birmingham Curzon Street station, which opened in April 1838 for trains as far as Rugby. The London and Birmingham Railway opened to London five months later. The station was closed to regular passenger traffic in 1854, when Birmingham New Street opened. Curzon Street will reopen for passengers some time in the 2030s for the HS2, after a gap of a trifling one and three-quarter centuries.

The Totem editor once began a model of this building for his 19<sup>th</sup> century model layout, but chickened out when it came to the Greek columns.



*Fun fact: in 2025 London's Elizabeth line (above) moved more people...*

*...than Highway 401, the busiest freeway in North America (elow).*



*Fun fact source: @CompletedStreet on Twitter, 'X'.*

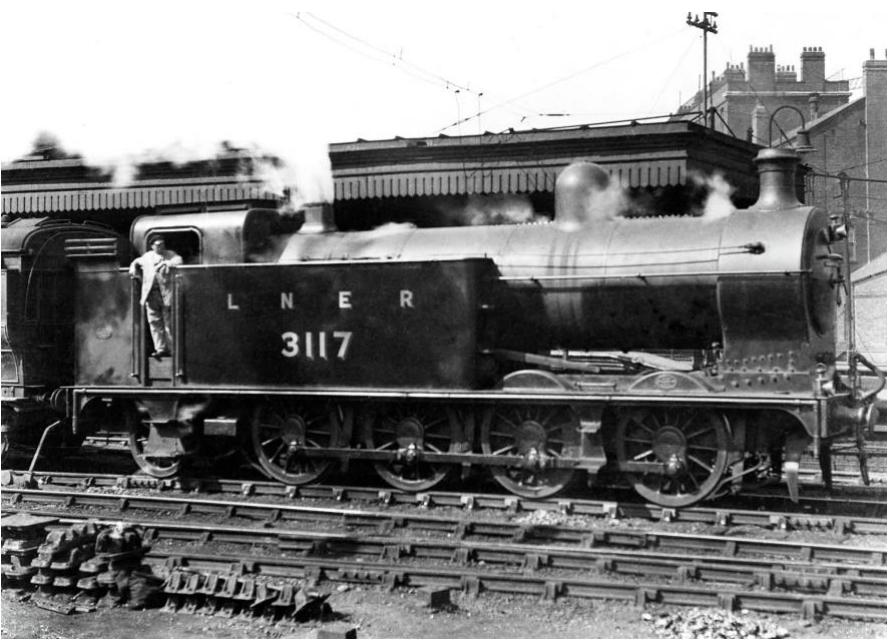
## Not What It Seems



*“AI, picture me a Cornish branch line.”*

*Source: @Tarka\_Man on ‘X’.*

Gemini, an AI system, imagines a Cornish branch line. True, cattle pens are not normally on the main line and the cows will have to be helicoptered in but that could be St Ives in the background.



*Now that’s a proper shunting engine.*

*Class R1 0-8-2T at Kings Cross in 1927. This locomotive was scrapped in 1933.*

*Photograph by CCB Herbert.*

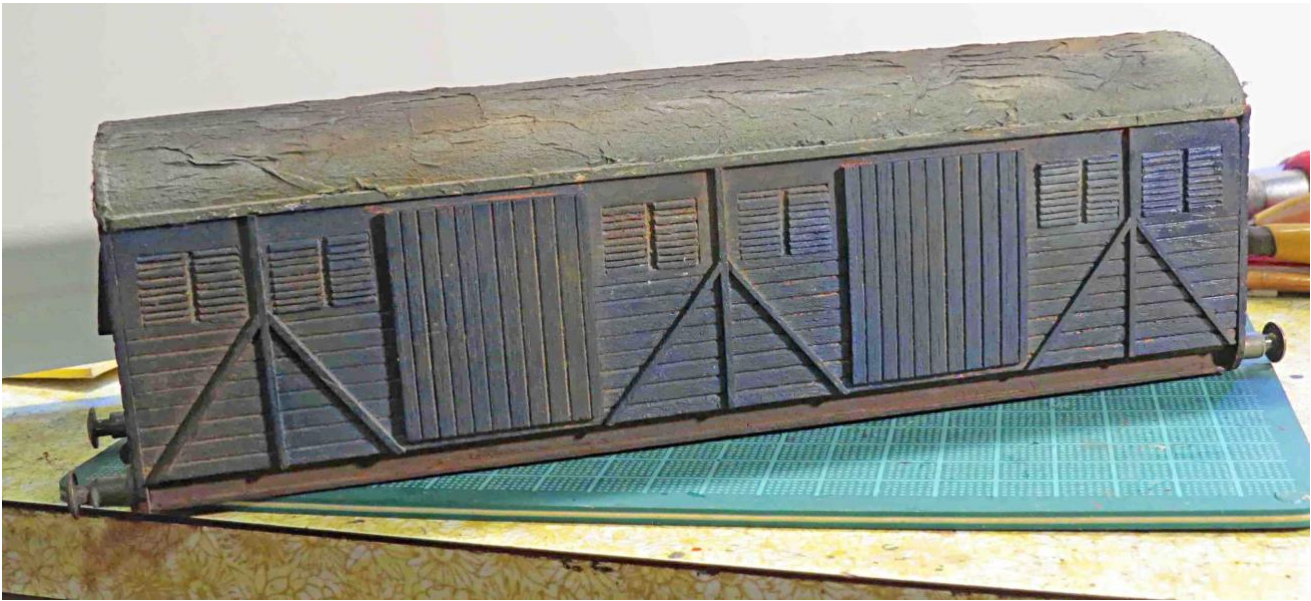
## Lest We Forget

It is that time of the year again and Anzac Day is next week.



*Stephen Bone (1904 – 1958) was a noted war artist in World War 2.*

In this painting four middle-aged railway staff are shown, one carrying an Air Raid Warden's steel helmet. A shunter carries his pole. The younger, fitter men are all away serving in the armed forces, while these four men exhibit a weary resilience. These are the staff who will move record passenger and freight traffic despite enemy bombing and having to work in blackout conditions. In the sky are three barrage balloons and artillery pieces are cargo on the freight train in the background. There is still one locomotive painted green, so perhaps this was painted sometime during the first half of the war.



*This can fill up a space in a dark corner of the club 0 gauge layout.*

I used to buy small lots of secondhand 0 equipment (very occasionally) and these transactions tend to be a bit of a lucky dip. This time there was –

(1) A half-finished coarse scale GWR 0-4-2T complete with 1940s (at the latest) motor and gear train which was incapable of being transformed into a working model. Any time spent on it would have been good time thrown after bad. It went straight to the bin.

(2) Various unopened packets of 0 scale parts, which joined all the other neatly sorted packets of 0 scale parts.

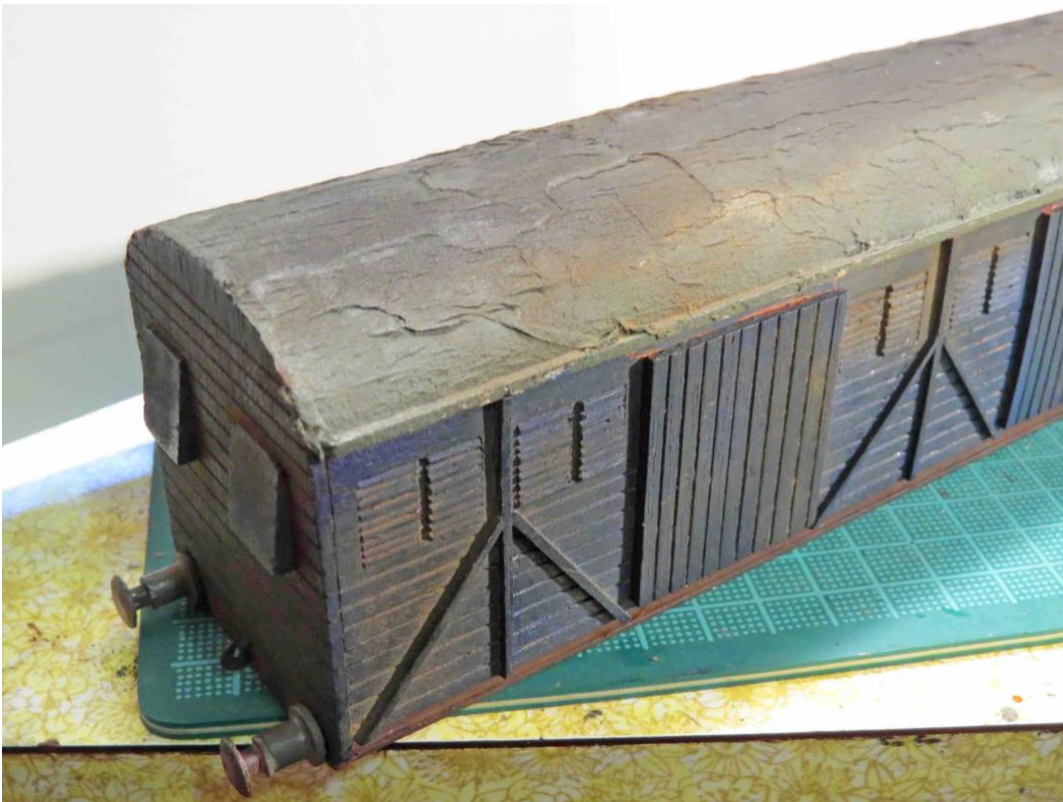
(3) This thing. I forgot to photograph it before I started playing around with it but as it was delivered it was in plain wood of indeterminate origin. I could not find any prototype in my reference books on freight vans. Possibly the prototype of this ventilated van was originally intended for milk or fruit traffic. It seems to me that it was intended to be mounted on a 6-wheel chassis, but without a definite prototype to model, I was not going to build a chassis. Resisting the temptation to toss the van into the

bin, I decided to experiment with some weathering powders I had been given and transform it into a grounded body.

Coupling hooks and three buffers were added.

The sides and ends were first painted in LNER engineering blue with black solebars and buffer beams. One of the three layers of a paper tissue was then stuck onto the roof with dilute acrylic paint. The water-based paint causes the tissue to expand slightly and produce wrinkles which, when dry simulate old cracked painted canvas. After drying, this was trimmed to size.

Weathering powders were then applied using some small make-up brushes from a \$2 shop. The trick here is to apply powder very sparingly and slowly build up the effect you want. If you overdo it, the powder can be wiped off with a slightly damp sponge. The powders are then sealed with a light coat of artist's fixative spray.



## **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.

### **MARCUS LECKY**

<mailto:marcuslecky47@gmail.com>

### **TRAINMANIA©**

022 605 5415

<mailto:lionel@trainmania.co.nz>

<http://www.trainmania.co.nz/>

### **TONY DRAGICEVIC**

027 872 3630

<mailto:tony.dragicevic@gmail.com>

### **JOHN HESLIN**

**Invercargill**

021 188 9049

<mailto:tootroom@gmail.co>

## **Next Totem**

The May 2026 edition of *The Totem* will be published on 15<sup>th</sup> May. If there is anything you would like to contribute to the editor, Julian Lermitt, email:

<mailto:kiwiscrooge@xtra.co.nz>

*(If you are sending material which you did not create, such as, for example, a photograph which was taken by someone else, please indicate the source. The Totem is available to the world wide web via the club website and the intellectual property of others must be respected.)*

## **Club Meetings**

The Wellington British Railway Modellers' Club meets on the third Sunday of each month at the club premises on Platform 2, Waterloo Station, Lower Hutt. Pizzas for lunch at 1pm, with any formal proceedings at 2pm. Many members arrive earlier. There is also a regular meeting on the first Wednesday of the month, beginning mid-morning; bring lunch and a project to work on. Members have access to the clubroom at all times and most of the club activities take place outside of formal meetings.

## **Events of Interest**

### **May 2026**

- 2-3 Dunedin Model Train Show, 12 Wickliffe Street, Mosgiel, Dunedin.

## June 2026

13-14 Hastings Model Railway Club Show, Cheval Rooms, Hastings Racecourse, Hastings. *Note new Venue.*

## July 2026

4 – 5 Ashburton Model Train Show, Tinwald War Memorial Hall, 10 Graham Street, Tinwald, Ashburton.

*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://nzmr.org.nz> and the Model Train Shows website <http://trainshow.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: Jacob Borich email <mailto:jacob.borich@gmail.com>

Treasurer: John MacDonald email <mailto:treasurerwbrm@gmail.com>

Secretary: Martin Curwen email <mailto:secretarywbrm@gmail.com>

