

Wellington British Railway Modellers



March 2026

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Virtual Model Railway Show
Live Steam Models
Modern Freight Trains
Basswood

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

Gallery

The Model Railway Club is holding their twenty-fifth annual show at the Alexandra Palace this coming weekend, 21 – 22 March. The MRC has been posting details of some of the forty layouts on show, so here is a virtual preview.



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Addison Road, 0 gauge.

Photograph: Tony Wright



Queen Charlotte Dock, also 0 gauge.



Carlton Vale, a London Underground layout in OO.





Note the characteristic Underground station building and the taxi drivers' shelter.



Auchinraith. Scotland in EM gauge.



Hanton Tarrant. *Southern Region in 3mm to the foot.*



Castlefinn. *The County Donegal in 00n3.*



Janes Creek. A Kent quay in EM gauge. Superb marine modelling.



Trowland, in S scale
($1/64^{\text{th}}$, or $3/16$ inch = 1
foot.)

This year the S Scale
Society celebrates its 80th
anniversary.

Photograph: Jamie Warne,
BRM.

Prototype for Anything



Source: @Steam1957Loco on Twitter, 'X'.

Two class 67s with a train comprised of vintage coaches on a train from Manchester Piccadilly to Euston approaching Kidsgrove. A handy 'prototype for anything' for contemporary modellers. At the front, 67007, while 67006 brings up the rear. An extravagant (mis)use of locomotives just to avoid running round.



A screen grab of 60120 *Kittiwake*. We modellers often have difficulty getting cabside numbers in a straight line – so, apparently, did British Railways.



??? Useful prototype for an interesting scenic feature.

Basswood

Marcus Lecky kindly emailed the editor upon discovering Basswood at a local Mitre 10™. At first glance it might appear to be a substitute for the sometimes scarce balsa, but though light it is much harder and needs to be cut with a saw rather than a knife.



Dense and strong though light, basswood makes an excellent base for operating scenic accessories like watermills.

Stick pins into it to make jigs for soldering items like handrails.



Being of American origin, basswood comes in imperial measurements.

These 24" x 3" sheets, covered in brickpaper, form a retaining wall on the editor's 00 layout where the edge of the layout is too close for comfort.

Modern Freight Trains



66084 approaching Sandbach with 4L32 Trafford-Felixstowe.

*Source:
@Steam1957Loco
on 'X'.*



Accelerating away from Oxford, 70803 produces plenty of smoke.

A scene resembling a model railway with its multiple parallel tracks.

*Source: 'X',
@RegalEagle12*



At Lincoln, 66520 runs through with 4E81 Felixstowe North - Doncaster Europort.

Plenty of modelling detail here.

Source: 'X',
@RegalEagle12



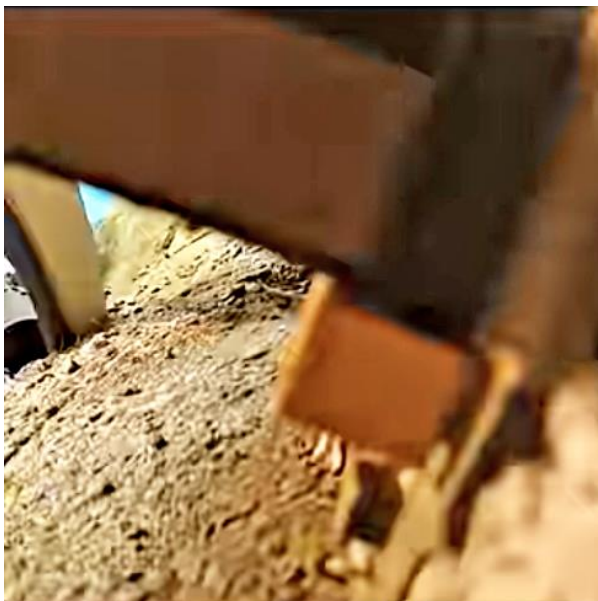
66207 at Wrawby Junction.

Source: @RegalEagle12 on 'X'.



A Japanese modeller mounted a camera at the front of his train and then ran it past two cats.

This did not end well...



A recent item in the newsletter of the Southland Society of Model Engineers:

Locomotive Steam Engine Project For Sale: Allan Biggs was a fellow club member who passed away at the end of 2025. We didn't see much of him in the last couple of decades due to his retiring to Manapouri but Allan kept his hands dirty, tinkering around the workshop and enjoying the club newsletters.



Allan's nephew Terry Birch has inherited one of his last unfinished projects and would love to see this steam engine completed but Terry is an engineer of 1:1 scale equipment and feels he



could not do this project justice, so is looking for a scale modeller who is prepared to take it on.



Allan project was a 5inch gauge version of a 2-8-0 steam locomotive that club member Aaron felt was closest to a Gresley designed Class 02 first built in 1921 and created for freight operations under the GNR and later LNER liveries. The loco is of a size that could be finished as a steam loco, or modified to operate as a battery powered model.



Terry lives on the edge of Invercargill and happy to show the project to any interested modeller before discussing any offer. Terry can be contacted at 0274198881

Allan Biggs's model was clearly intended as a live steam model but could be adapted to battery power. I was curious as to what regulations cover the construction of small steam engine boilers. They are, after all, pressure vessels which are potentially small bombs. I soon came to regret my curiosity. Suffice it to say that there are indeed regulations, and they are not trivial. Anyone contemplating the building of any kind of miniature live steam engine should join their local model engineering society where they will be able to find informed and experienced guidance. A local model engineering club that is easily accessible to VBRM members is the

Hutt Valley Model Engineering Society Inc, Marine Parade, Petone whose website is:

<http://www.hvmes.com/>

Model live steam engines of course predate electrically powered models. According to Curly Lawrence, whose pen name was 'LBSC', and who was the premier 20th century designer of small steam engines, ordinary folk are perfectly capable of making a basic steam locomotive.

'Curly' Lawrence (1883 – 1967)

You can read Lawrence's biography in a rather bashful Wikipedia article.



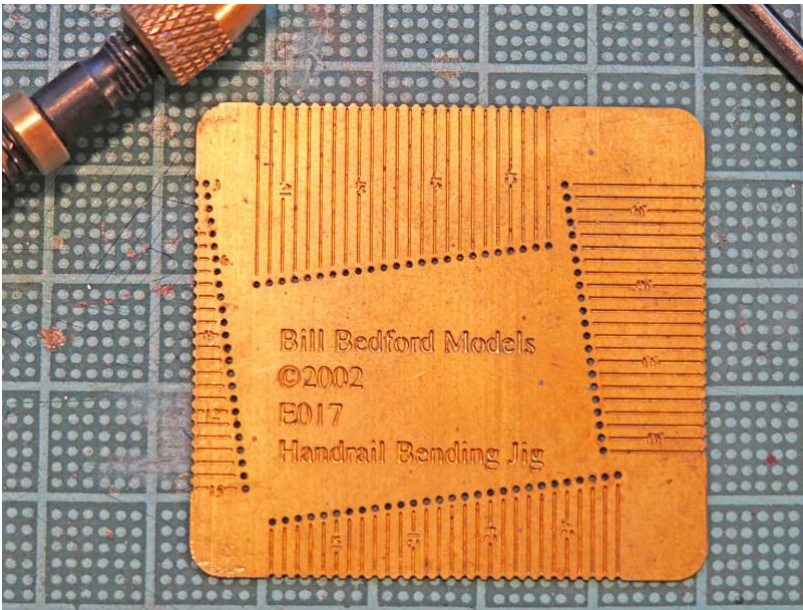
Christened William Morris Benjamin, later changed name to Lillian Lawrence. Created about 140 highly successful miniature steam engine designs, which are still built today. Winner of the 1920s "Battle of the Boilers" with Henry Greely. That is a 4-12-2 busy hauling its designer. Yes, readers, there were trans people before the 21st century.

I have long been amazed at the number of tools that I end up using to complete what initially appears to be a simple job. Clive Williams had given me a Comet metal kit for a BR kitchen car. These all-metal kits are a mixture of etched brass and whitemetal parts, so some tricky soldering can be anticipated. Comet kit instructions comprise both generic instructions applicable to all kits, and further instructions which are specific to one kit. This is a bit confusing until you get used to it.

The general instructions strongly recommend that the sides and ends be assembled first, followed by the roof and then the undercarriage. After examining the sides I decided that the handrails and possibly also the door handles would be most easily fitted before attaching the sides to the ends.



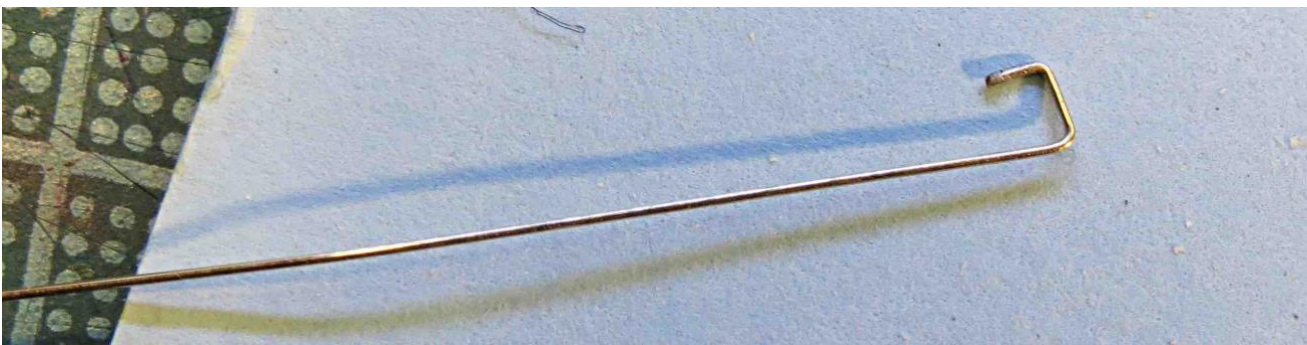
The simple job of making and attaching seven handrails took these seven tools, plus a vice and a soldering iron.



Bill Bedford's clever idea for making handrails. Form a right-angle bend at one end of a piece of wire, drop that wire end into the appropriate hole, then bend the other end of the handrail at the edge of the jig. Handrails as short as one millimetre can be formed.



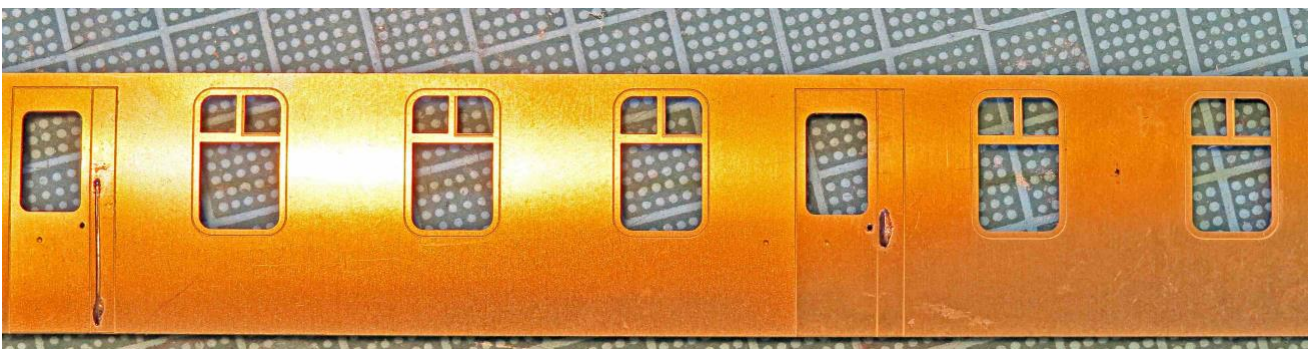
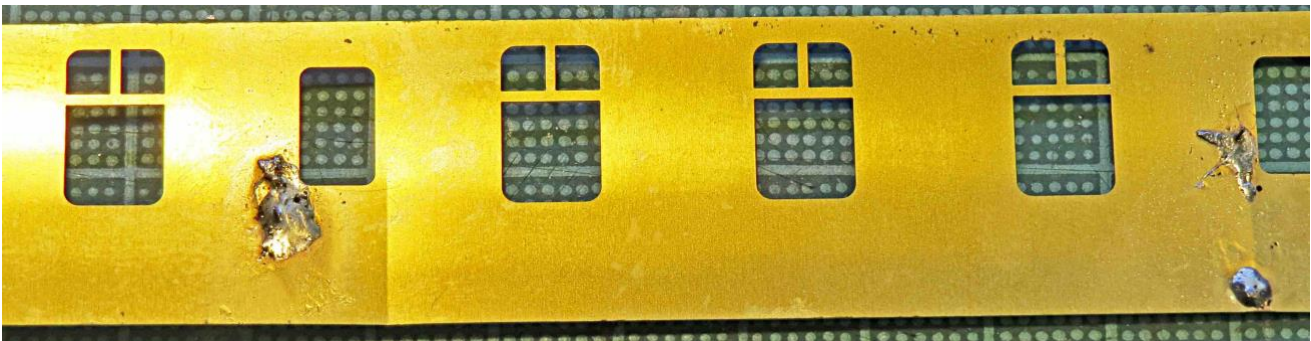
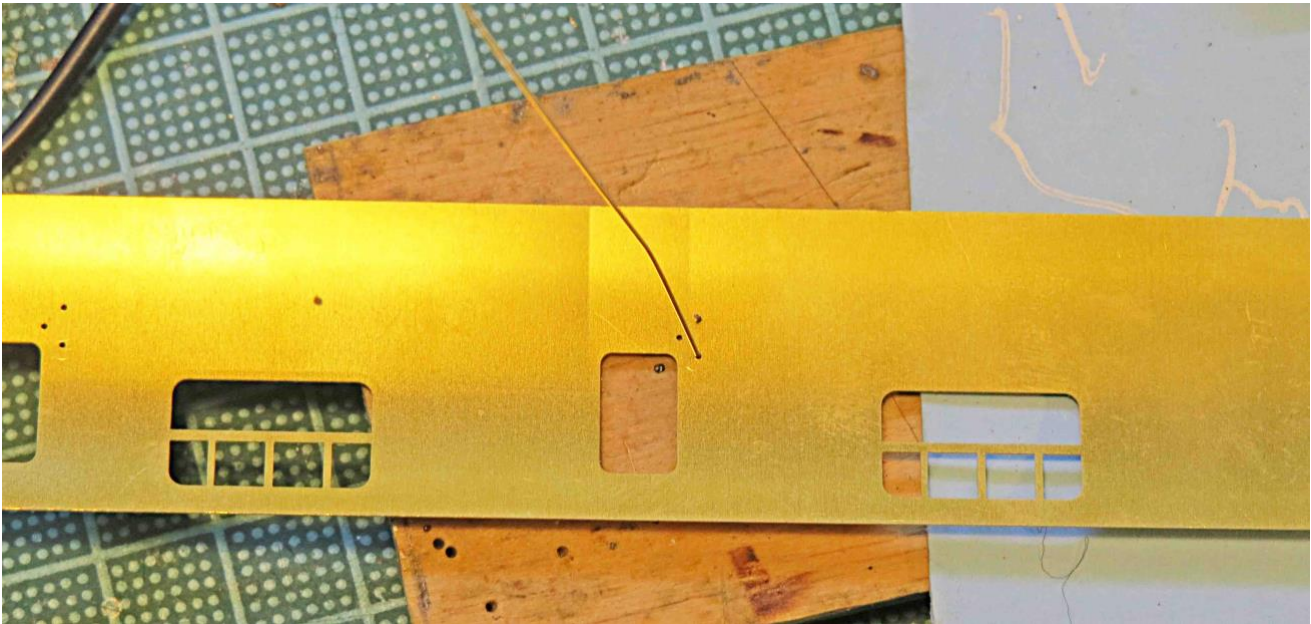
Because I was using 0.45mm nickel-silver wire rather than the softer brass wire supplied with the kit, the wire had to be clamped to the jig with forceps to achieve a clean second bend at the edge of the jig.



The wire after bending in the jig.

The etched holes in the sides were then opened up from approximately 0.45mm to 0.5mm to give myself a little slack. For such small-diameter drill bits a hand drill is essential.

The picture below shows the back (interior) of the coach side with the handrail wire inserted ready for soldering. Leaving a length of uncut wire provides a good grip so that the handrail can be held at right-angles to the coach side and (hopefully) with the handrail standing proud of the coach side at a realistic distance. The goodness-knows-how-old brass sides can then be cleaned with a fibreglass brush prior to soldering.



The result is not wonderful, but adequate. Seven handrails took two hours.

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©

A reminder that Trainmania's new shop is now open in Warkworth.

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Next Totem

The April 2026 edition of *The Totem* will be published on 17th April. If there is anything you would like to contribute to the editor, Julian Lermitt, email:

<mailto:kiwiscrooge@xtra.co.nz>

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

March 2026

28-29 Bulls 2026 Model Railway Show, Bulls Scout and Guide Hall, 30 Wilson Street, Bulls.

April 2026

11-12 Hamilton Model Railroaders Club Model Railway Exhibition, Te Awamutu Events Centre, 3 Selwyn Lane, Te Awamutu.

May 2026

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

June 2026

13-14 Hastings Model Railway Club Show, Hastings Sports Centre, 503 Railway Road, Hastings.

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

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

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