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Issue 224 February 2026

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## TEMPLE BRIDGE

Crossing the Thames on the BR Southern Region in '00' gauge



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# TEMPLE BRIDGE

**JOHN TISI** imagines what might have happened had the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway had its own terminus north of the River Thames in this fascinating and evocative 'OO' gauge exhibition layout.

PHOTOGRAPHY, MIKE WILD





**Above:** Above the traffic, the signalman waves to the driver of Fairburn '4P' 2-6-4T 42069 as it sweeps round from Southwark station with a passenger train before crossing Temple Bridge on the final approach to the terminus.



**Left:** Billinton 'K' 2-6-0 32342 nears journey's end with a train from the south coast as a vintage 4-SUB four-car suburban EMU clears a platform at Temple Bridge station.



**T**EMPLE BRIDGE is my 'OO' gauge layout, built with help, advice and practical assistance from fellow members of Redditch Model Railway Club (MRC), one of the great benefits of belonging to a club. There is a limit to the amount of practical knowledge you can get from an online video. A practical demonstration and getting your own hands dirty really are the only ways to learn new techniques. It must also be admitted that Temple Bridge is a bit big for me to move and operate on my own. Other club members seem to like helping to operate it, which is much appreciated.

The layout is set in the 1950s-1960s in Central London on the Southern Region (SR) third-rail system. It measures 17ft x 8ft and is run with analogue control from two control panels. I had always hankered after building an exhibition layout of my own and semi-retirement and the pandemic provided the opportunity. Planning and building took about five years and Temple Bridge is based on a plan from the late Cyril Freezer who inspired many a layout in my youth. I chose 4mm scale as I have always modelled in that size and as one gets older the smaller scales become visually challenging. The layout has been exhibited a few times so far - twice at Redditch MRC March exhibitions, the Severn Valley Railway, Key Model World LIVE at the NEC and Stafford show.

The backstory here is that the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway (LBSCR) only ever got as far as London Bridge on the south bank of the River Thames. This layout examines what might have been if it had joined the >



**PO3** Left: As Thames river boats pass below, Bulleid rebuilt 'Merchant Navy' 35023 *Holland-Afrika Line* sets back into Temple Bridge station to couple up ahead of departure with a train for Hastings.

**PO4** Right: The hemmed-in nature of the railway is clear in this view of the electricity sub-station nestled in the arch between Bridge Garage and Southwark Filling Station. A 'Brighton Belle' five-car EMU rumbles along the viaduct above.

**PO5** Below: A busy scene at Temple Bridge station as 3D three-car DEMU 1302 awaits departure for East Grinstead, while a 2-NOL two-car EMU is about to leave with a South London Line train. A Southern Railway D3/12 diesel shunter marshalls parcels vans in the centre siding.

South Eastern Railway (SER) and London Chatham & Dover Railway (LC&DR) in having a terminus on the north bank sharing access via Borough Market junction.

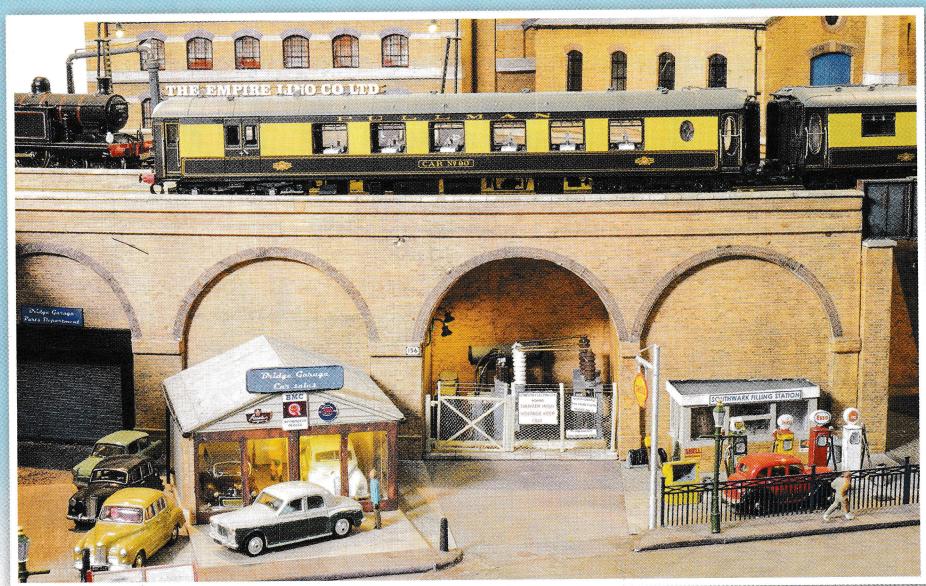
The location is near Temple tube station on the Embankment between Waterloo and Blackfriars bridges. The other side of the bridge is in the borough of Southwark and the minor station is similar to Wandsworth Road in character.

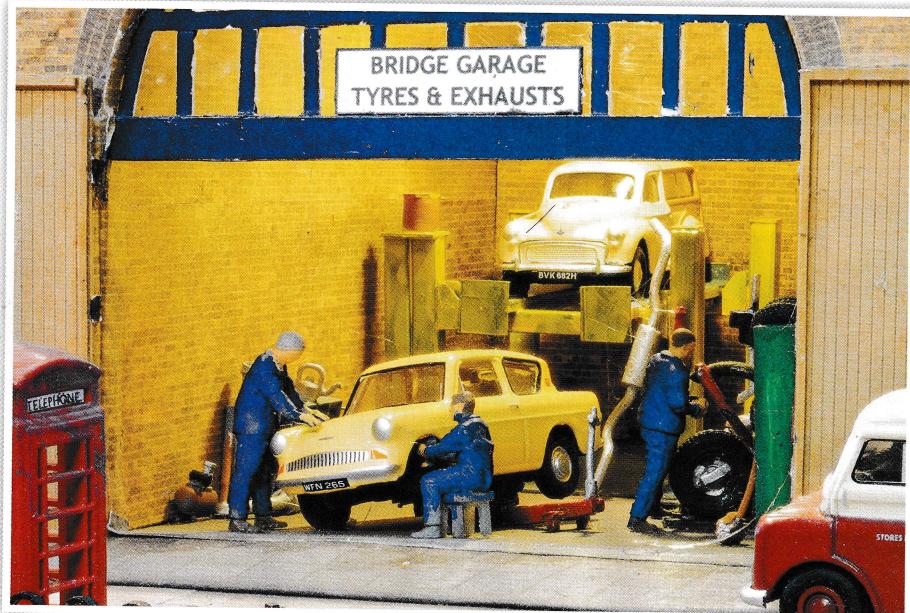
## CONSTRUCTION

The baseboards are 9mm ply frames with 12mm tops to make a substantial base to survive being transported in vans, set up and dismantled numerous times and packed away at home. The baseboards are a maximum of 4ft long and the storage yard and scenic boards fit on top of each other with end sheets that screw on with 8mm machine screws. The supports are six trestles and 'T' bars made from 9mm ply screwed and glued together which give a flat surface to assemble the boards on. Toggle clips and pattern maker's dowels ensure quick accurate alignment when assembled. Electrical connections are by multi-pin Mate and Lock connectors. All of this is done to minimise setup time. We have the job down to 40 minutes now - it takes longer to put the trains on!

Track is Peco code 100 - reliable and robust for exhibition layouts - laid directly on the baseboards and pinned with veneer pins as proprietary track pins won't go into plywood without bending. I never use cork as 1950s era track was 'flat' ballasted so 'shoulders' are unnecessary and once ballasted the supposed sound deadening quality is removed by the glue. The striking scissors crossover was made by removing the rails from a short crossing and splicing in the point rails with the sleepers adjusted to suit. The distinctive Southern Region third-rail uses Peco insulator pots and code 60 rail. Ballast is a mix of stone chips glued in the usual way with diluted PVA. It still needs weathering, and I'm hoping for a volunteer from the club to undertake this important but daunting task. »







**Left:** Mechanics busy themselves with car repairs in the workshop, set in one of the arches of the viaduct.

**Right:** Emergency services deal with an accident between a bubble car and a London Transport double decker bus.

**Below:** A 4-SUB four-car EMU leaves Temple Bridge bound for Epsom, while several other EMU types - including 2-BIL, 2-HAL and 2-EPB - await their next duties in the platforms. The General Post Office's (GPO) Ruston DS can be glimpsed in the siding in company with a Maunsell Bogie Luggage Van.

### SCENERY IN 'THE SMOKE'

The bridge has a 12mm ply trackbed and risers inside each pier to give it structural strength. The bridge sides, under girders and piers are all cast resin mouldings from home produced silicone rubber moulds. The river is painted ply with the water made using ModPodge. For the uninitiated, this is a clear jellified PVA material ideal for making waves using a foam brush. The only downside is that it took two weeks to set! The boats were pressed into place while the water was still wet and seem to attract lots of comments and considering my boat modelling was limited to an Airfix *Scharnhorst* when I was 14, I haven't had any criticisms for my efforts 55 years later which is pleasing - the joke is the two coal barges Onion 1 and Onion 2 - the onion barges...

The north river bank has a representation of the road junction between Arundel Street and Embankment complete with a 1930s Art Deco SR concrete bridge and Temple Bridge tube station entrance to the LT District and Circle lines. The road accident causes amusement and no one has been injured - just the pride of the bubble car driver and the bus driver's hope of a good driving award for 1955.

The station sits on a sloping viaduct up to The Strand at the front of the station entrance and has five platforms. Platforms 1 to 3 serve the suburban services and 4/5, the main line side. The overall roof is again a cast resin moulded construction from home-produced moulds. Each long girder is made of four approximately 12in long sections glued back-to-back, as the castings are single sided, to get detail on both sides. Similarly, the sloping girders are special shapes to lock into the long girders. The whole assembly is quite

robust and travels in its own box. The station roof is modelled without the glass as it allows you to view the concourse details, the departure indicator which has correct destinations and stopping places, the platform ticket barriers, W.H. Smith's bookstall and the staff block with the upstairs announcer's box.

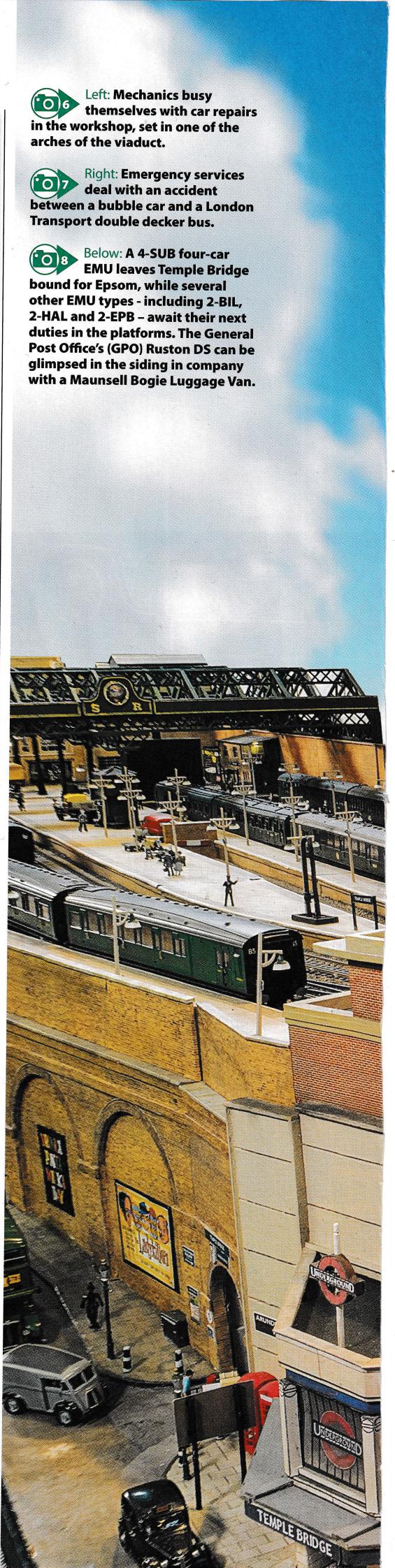
Under the station is a goods and parcels depot accessed via the tunnel entrance by the Tube station with a goods lift on Platform 4 and a parcels train dock between Platforms 3 and 4. Parcels trains are handled in the third track between Platforms 4 and 5. The GPO has a sorting office at the back of the station with its own Ruston DS shunter and platform which gives some shunting activity in between the intensive EMU arrivals and departures.

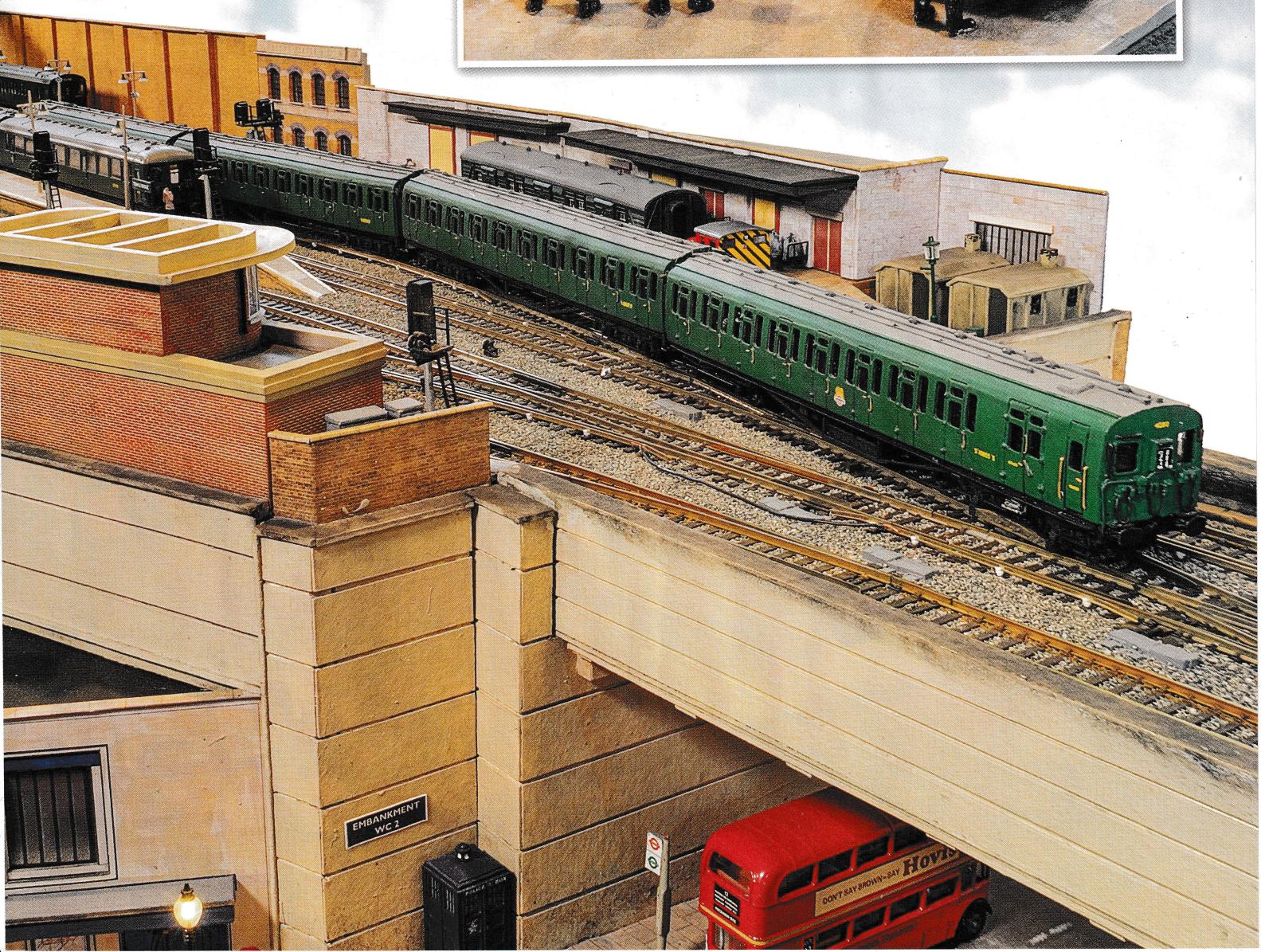
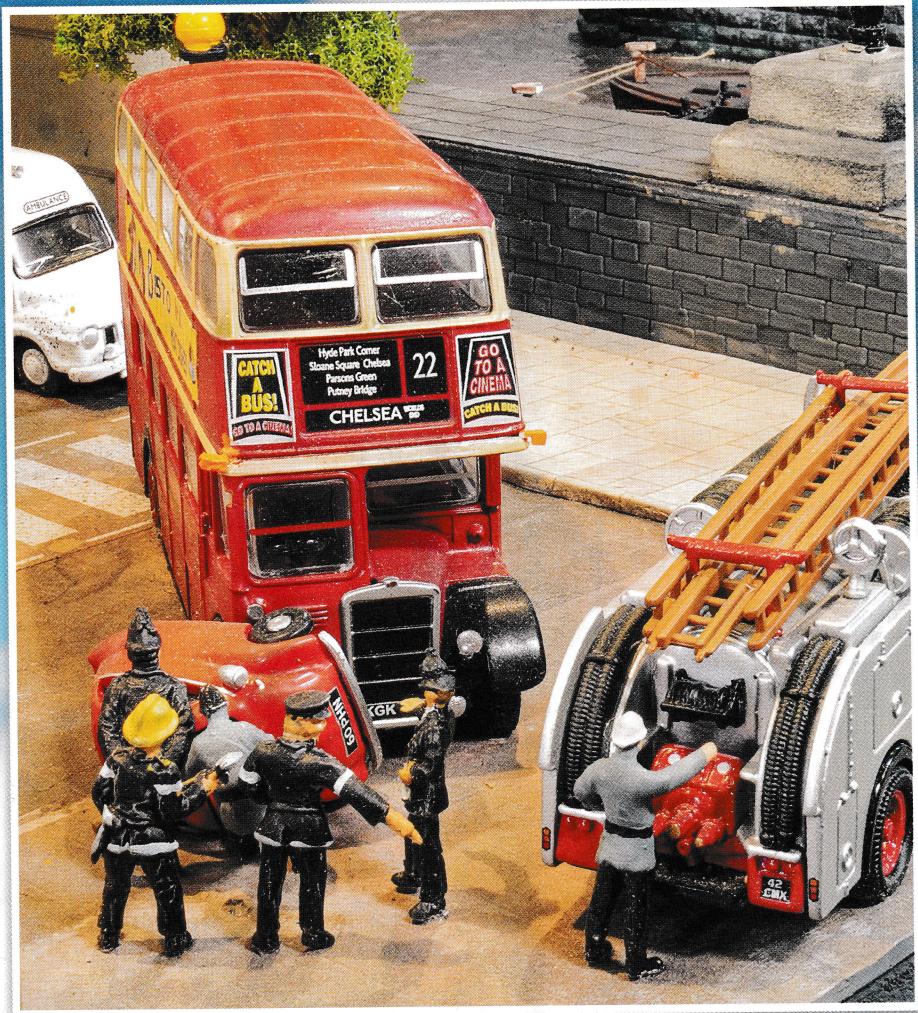
The main station building is in the Southern Railway concrete Art Deco style and is based on those at Surbiton and Richmond. The booking office is fully detailed. Outside the station is a taxi rank and bus stops and LT has its new future bus for London, the Routemaster RM 2 on show in the forecourt.

On the south side of the river, the line curves round to join the line from Charing Cross to head towards London Bridge. The other station is Southwark, based on the LBSCR South London Line stations such as Wandsworth Road - windswept and a bit grotty. Only the two-car South London Line trains deign to stop here. The curved viaduct has a good collection of users in the arches, housing Bridge Garage, an LEB substation and an Italian café named Accini's after the one my cousins ran in London in the 1960s. The block of flats is based on a LCC standard design seen all over inner London from the 1930s onwards»

*"The main station building is in the Southern Railway concrete Art Deco style."*

**JOHN TISI**



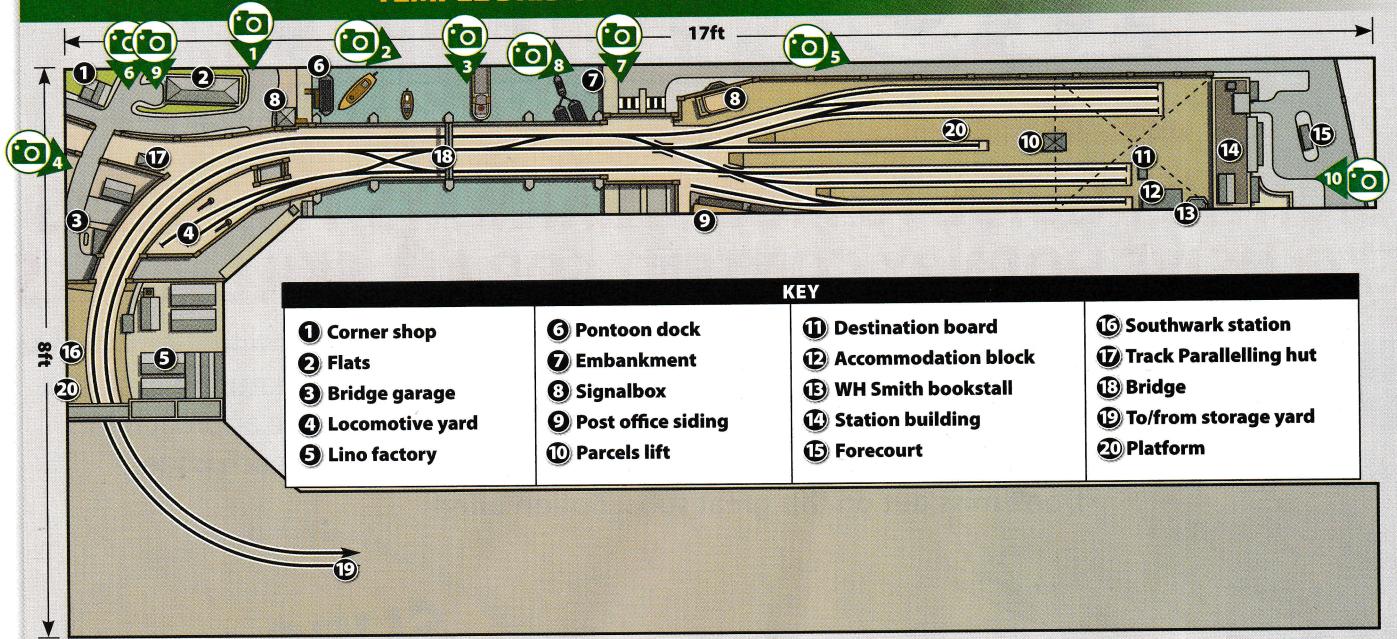




Striking 'Brighton Belle'  
Pullman 5-BEL EMU 3052  
rounds the curve at Southwark on  
the final leg of its journey from the  
south coast resort to London.



## TEMPLE BRIDGE TRACK DIAGRAM (NOT TO SCALE)



with the characteristic open balcony walkways, tall chimneys and external guttering across them.

Pemberton's Stores corner shop is all that remains of the row of terraced houses bombed in the war. This was still a feature of that part of South London right into the 1970s. Those of you who watch Ealing comedy films may recognise Pemberton's and Miramont Place with Bridge Garage opposite from Passport to Pimlico.

The closed chord to Charing Cross and its viaduct with removed bridge makes a good scenic break at the end of the layout as does the corrugated iron bridge across the railway for the factory of the Empire Lino Company's works hiding the exit to the 12-road storage yard. The factory buildings cover up some locomotive storage tracks in the storage yard.

The Track Paralleling Hut on the viaduct is something I have never seen modelled and made from memory of visiting them during my apprenticeship as there are almost no pictures to work from. All the buildings are card overlays on 3mm MDF shells. The viaduct sides are five layers of various thickness grey artist's card laminated together with PVA, all finished with Scalescenes brick papers and detailing prints.

### CONTROL

Electrically, the layout is cab control and trains can be driven either fully throughout the layout from the two station panel controllers, or the storage yard can be controlled from a third controller and trains handed back and forth between the operators which keeps us occupied and interested at the back of the layout. We try to run as intensive a service as possible as the real stations in this area had trains waiting for platforms to clear in the rush hours with limited room for errors or late running.

All the signals are TrainTech products and are manually controlled from the

panel, except the home on the bridge which is released by a push button and resets automatically and the signal into the storage yard which works automatically using Block Signalling control boards.

Rolling stock is formed from a large fleet of Electric Multiple Units (EMUs). Some are kit-built with either Hornby chassis or Branchlines motor bogies and ready-to-run units. Trains range from the 2-NOL, HAL, BIL and EPB units, pre and post war 4-SUBs, to main line 4-COR, 5-BEL, 6-PUL and 4-CEP units, a 3D Diesel Electric Multiple Unit (DEMU) and a Hastings 6S DEMU. Very soon, a 4-DD double-deck EMU will appear.

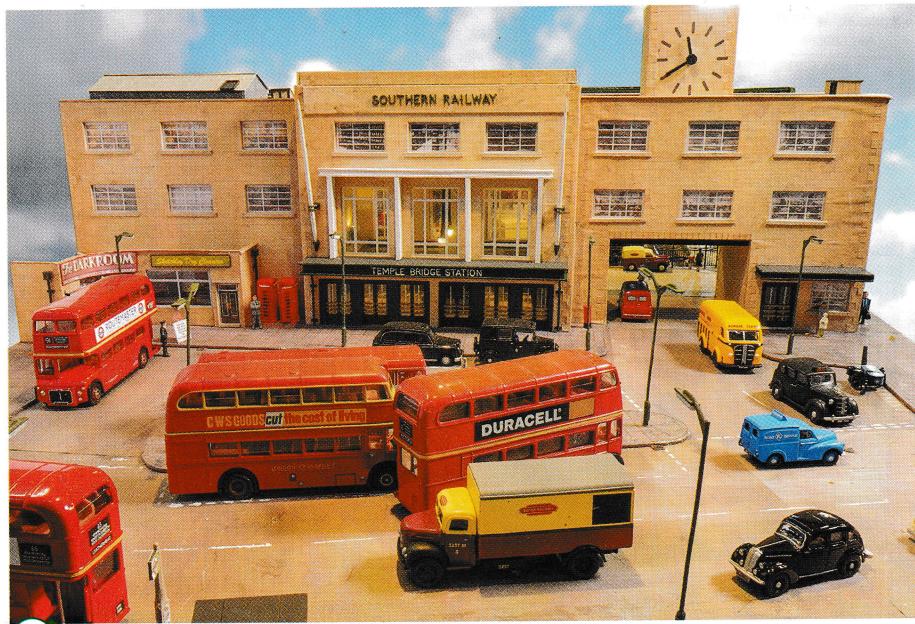
The steam fleet is also largely cast metal or brass kits with ready-to-run models as well. I seem to have made just about all the varieties of South Eastern & Chatham Railway (SECR) 4-4-0s and even the Hornby 'Merchant Navy' has a brass tender. The NuCast Partners Brighton 'K'

is an outstanding newly launched kit. I do like making kits, but I fear it is a dying art in railway modelling circles, possibly because you need to master soldering. Some oddities include London Midland and Scottish Railway Bo-Bo diesel 10800 which had a brief trial on the Southern running on Oxsted services, the Class 24 Bo-Bo diesel used while the Class 33s were delivered and a Bulleid Raworth Co-Co on the Newhaven Boat Trains.

Would I do it again? Yes, if I had the space for another SR third-rail layout, but Temple Bridge still needs many more people. It may be up to an exhibitable standard but there is plenty more work to keep me busy!

Temple Bridge's next exhibition appearance is at the Redditch MRC Show on March 7/8 2026 at Trinity High School Redditch – I hope to see you there! **HM**

● **Discover more layout features at [www.keymodelworld.com/trains/layout-features](http://www.keymodelworld.com/trains/layout-features).**



⑩ Buses and taxis ply for business outside the stunning art-deco station building.