



FACTFILE

LAYOUT NAME: Temple Bridge
SCALE/GAUGE: 4mm:1ft/16.5mm/OO
SIZE: 17ft x 8ft
ERA/REGION: 1950s-'60s/London
LAYOUT TYPE: Fiddleyard to terminus

LONDON CALLING

This might-have-been layout captures the heart of London's old railway, offering viewers a slice of the capital in miniature.

Words: John Tisi **Photography:** Phil Parker



Under the railway in Southwark, the traffic is oblivious to the 4 SUB on its way into Temple Bridge.

TOP RIGHT: An MLV is being unloaded in the parcels bay with a Post Office Bedford van ready to take the bags to the sorting office.

MIDDLE RIGHT: The Post Office siding with their own Ruston 48DS shunter and a GUW being unloaded at the sorting office platform.

BELOW: A busy scene on the Embankment with the emergency services dealing with a minor accident as an L1 4-4-0 departs with a Kent Coast service.



‘**T**emple Bridge’ is a fictitious layout representing what might have been had the London Brighton & South Coast Railway built a terminus on the north side of the River Thames in Central London. In reality, they didn’t progress further than London Bridge on the South Bank. It is modelled in the BR (S) 1950 to 1960 period.

Temple Bridge station is located where the present-day Temple tube station is on the Embankment, with the station built right on the river’s edge running up to the Strand next to Arundel Street.

This is my first exhibition-standard layout, but by no means my first ever. Various home layouts over the years have been constructed, and I am lucky to be able to have a large one in a huge spare bedroom at the moment.

The layout was built when I retired, as I had always wanted an exhibition layout of my own. I was born and brought up in South London and did my Engineering Apprenticeship with British Rail in Croydon, so it had to be 3rd rail DC electric. I have tried to capture the London that existed up to the 1970s when I remember the “old railway” and how it looked and worked.

“I have tried to capture the London that existed up to the 1970s when I remember the “old railway” and how it looked and worked.”





The build

Third rails are Peco components and rail with dummy cabling. I tried to get this as accurate as possible, as some other 3rd rail layouts I have seen have some improbable features, shall we say? The real thing is based on the train being able to bridge up to a near-two-car-long gap, so tiny bits of rail are not necessary.

The station has five platforms, three for suburban trains to the Surrey and Sussex suburbs and two for main line services to Kent and the Brighton Line. The concourse has the usual offices, Buffet and Waiting rooms as well as seating and a destination board, giving stopping points for the services; a goods lift gets the parcels up and down to the arches below.

Parcels trains are handled in the short bay in the centre of the layout, with the GPO having their own siding for postal services to their sorting office. The station has a goods depot in the arches under the platforms, accessed from Arundel St by a tunnel.

One of the more interesting features is the scissors crossover on the bridge, made from modified Peco points, and a short crossing took a while to work out how it is done, having seen one somewhere online.



ABOVE: The main line side with Raworth Co-Co electric loco 20002 and a D1 4-4-0 and the Brighton Belle waiting at the platform ends.

LEFT: An aerial view of the station with L1 4-4-0 leaving with a train and pre-war 4 SUB in the suburban platforms.

**ABOVE:**

A street scene with Pemberton's stores and the businesses in the arches behind the flats.

MIDDLE RIGHT:

Here's Nev's snack bar on the side of the river next to the base of the signal box.

**BOTTOM RIGHT:**

The entrance to the tunnel under the station and the entrance to the parcels depot.



The station was rebuilt in the 1930s by the Southern Railway in its concrete Art Deco style, reminiscent of designs built at Surbiton and Richmond. The forecourt has bus stops and taxi ranks, and London Transport has its new bus for London, *the Routemaster*, on show to the public. The road bridge over The Embankment, the signal box and the tube station are all also in the SR Concrete "Moderne" style.

The station has an overall roof modelled without the glass. The glazing was removed on most London stations during the war, and it also enables the viewer to see the detail on the concourse below. The roof is scratch-built from home-produced resin casings made by the author.

The river bridge is made from resin castings, again scratch-built and carries the railway over the Thames to the curved viaduct and Southwark station, modelled on the windswept and rather grotty south London line stations. The closed spur to Charing Cross has been taken over by nature and has been commandeered by the power supply section for a new track paralleling hut in connection with the Kent Coast electrification.

The Empire Lino Co. works occupies the corner of the layout and hides the exit to the fiddleyard, which has 12 roads. Some loco storage sidings are located under the factory buildings.

The floating pontoon dock is the calling point for river ferries and pleasure boats. The boats were something new for me, my experience being limited to an Airfix kit as a child, and the results seem to attract lots of interest and compliments, which is great, and thank you to viewers for them.

Arches provide space for the Bridge Garage premises and the LCC block of flats is typical of interwar town planning in London.

There are lots of Red LT buses around the layout, as that was the main means of transport in the capital, as well as the railway and tube lines, until the mid-1950s bus strike, which lasted for some weeks and encouraged the acquisition of cars. This killed off 20% of LT's bus routes in the process.

The scenery is mainly card modelling with detail papers from the Scalescenes range of downloadable sheets. Buildings are 3mm MDF carcasses covered with multiple card layers and the same printed brick sheets. There is a theme of the Passport to Pimlico film, if you look closely at the corner by the flats.



TOP LEFT: Temple Bridge tube station on the District and Circle lines, rebuilt in the Charles Holden style.

MIDDLE LEFT: An LB&SCR K Class 2-6-0 waiting to leave light engine at platform 5 next to the "Glasshouse" style signal box.

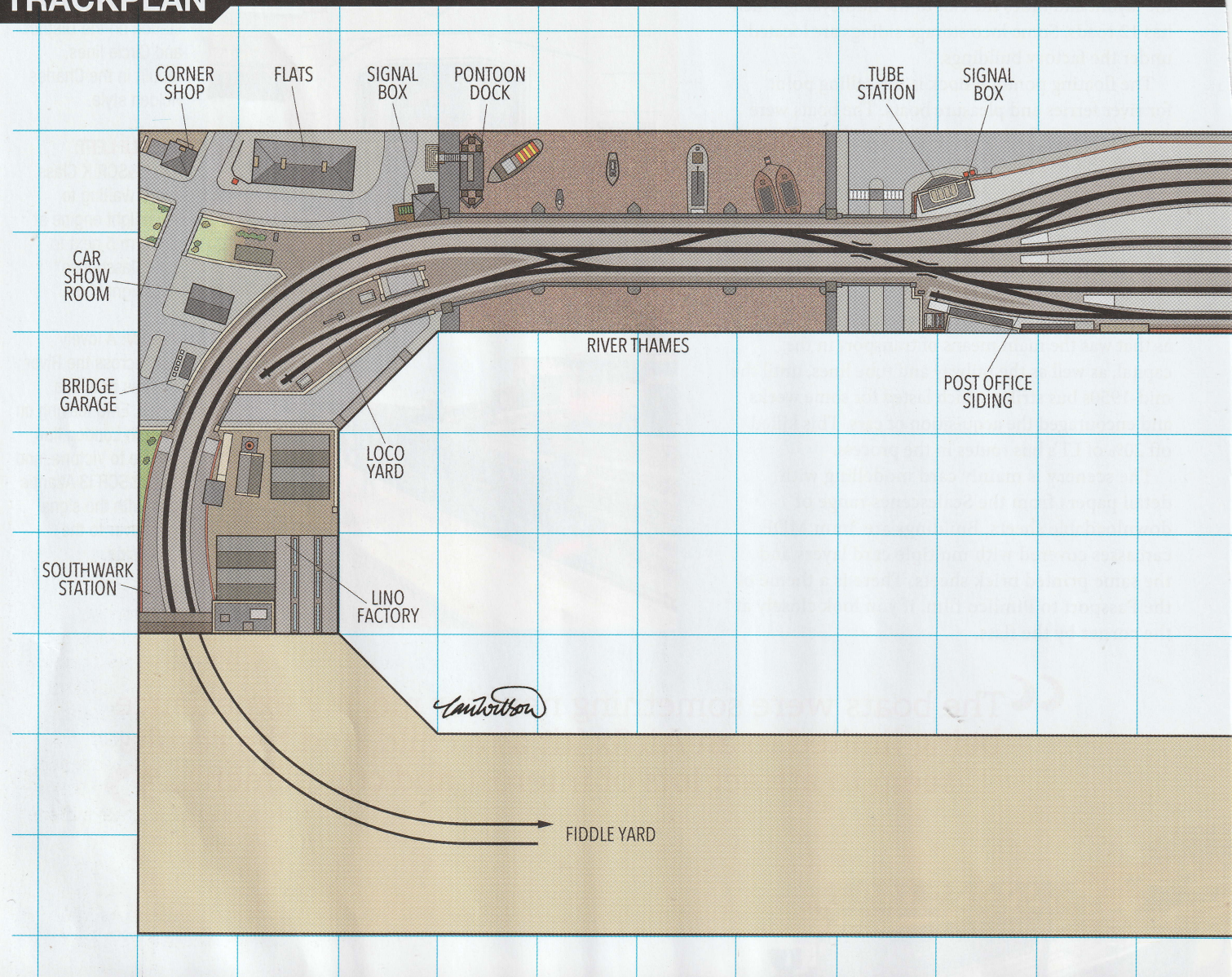


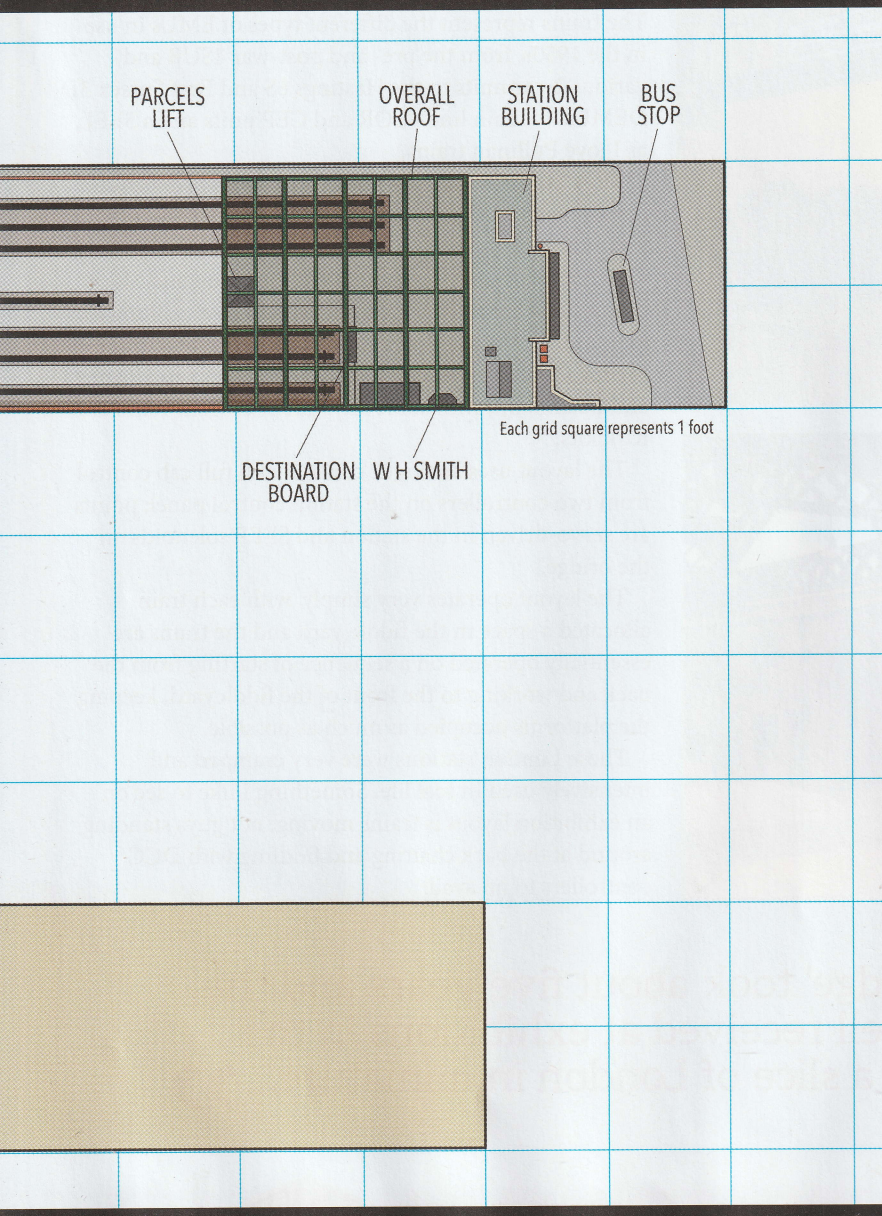
BELOW: A lovely view across the River Thames bridge, a 2-NOL EMU leaving on a South London line service to Victoria, and an LB&SCR I3 Atlantic tank with the signal to go over to the Local side.

“The boats were something new for me, my experience being limited to an Airfix kit as a child, and the results seem to attract lots of interest and compliment...”



TRACKPLAN





ABOVE: That's me in the middle, with Guy Craddock (left) and Rob Jones (right), my helpers from Redditch MRC.

About the modeller

Name: John Tisi

Age: 70

Number of years modelling: Over 60

Favourite era and region: Eastern/Late steam/Green Diesel

Favourite locomotive: Bullied Pacifics

I'm a retired railway rolling stock electrical engineer with 50 years of experience in the railway business, designing and modifying railway vehicles, everything from light bulbs to 25 kV systems. I have been modelling since I had my first Playcraft train set at the age of 10; a Class 22 Bo-Bo, some wagons and a circle of track.

My home layout is still called 'Branford Green', as was the first one all those years ago. I have a wide interest in prototypes, from 3rd rail DC to LM and Eastern Region, always in the late-steam/green diesel era.

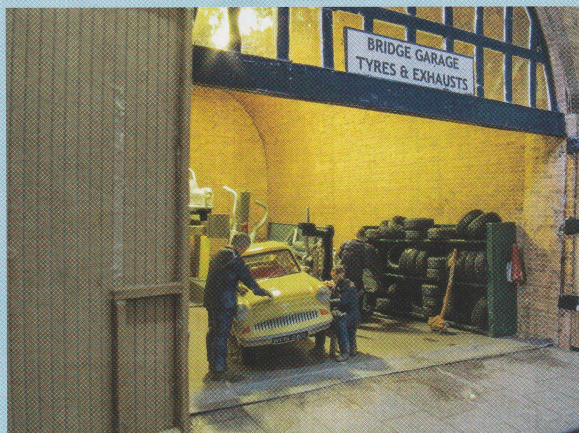
Born in London, I now live in the Midlands as a result of working for Metro Cammel in Birmingham and Hunslet TPL, and have been a member of Redditch Model Railway Club for many years.



A busy scene on the concourse with passengers waiting and the destination display giving the next train information on manually-operated flip-over wooden flaps.

TOP RIGHT:

Bridge Garage tyre bay with a Ford 105E Anglia getting a new tyre and some engine attention. There's a Moggy Minor on the lift getting a new exhaust, too.



MIDDLE RIGHT:

The WH Smith's bookstall and the Porters' and Supervisors' office next door. Just out of view is the station announcer's office on the top floor with a big window.



BELOW: Raworth CO-CO 20002 rounding the curve at Southwark with a boat train from Newhaven passing the signal box.

Rolling stock

The trains represent the different types of EMUs in use in the 1950s, from the pre- and post-war 4SUB and various 2-car units to the Hastings 6S and East Sussex 3D DEMUs, to main line 4COR and CEP units and a 5BEL, as I love Pullman trains.

Most are kit-built from many sources and scratch-aid components running on Hornby chassis or Branchlines motor bogies.

Steam locos are representative of Brighton and SR designs and are mostly kit-built, as I do have a liking for kit building; the building of them was a challenge, and the results are very satisfying. Coaches are from Hornby and Bachmann, with some kit-built ones from Ratio and Kirk kits.

The layout uses analogue control with full cab control from two controllers on the station control panel; points are servo-driven in the station and SEEP solenoids on the bridge.

The layout operates very simply, with each train allocated a space in the fiddle yard and the trains are essentially operated on a sequence of starting from the back and working to the front of the fiddleyard, keeping the platforms occupied as much as possible.

These London stations were very cramped and intensively used in real life. Something I like to see on an exhibition layout is trains moving, not guys standing around at the back chatting and fiddling with DCC controllers to no avail.

“Building 'Temple Bridge' took about five years and the layout has been well received at exhibitions in the Midlands as being a slice of London in miniature...”





You may gather I don't share the fascination with DCC control. I see it as a hindrance to "playing trains", not a help, and my eyesight won't let me see the unit numbers to punch into a DCC controller - each to his own.

It is possible to drive the whole layout from the station controllers and setting up the fiddleyard from its own panel. When there are more operators available, the fiddleyard can be driven locally from its own controller and trains handed back and forth.

Signals are all Train Tech kits with the home signal released manually and resetting on passage of the train, and the starter at Southwark works automatically using Block Signaling units.

Uncoupling of loco-hauled trains is done by use of fixed magnets and iron wire bars on standard tension-lock NEM couplings; great to use and very simple to make.

Reflections

Building 'Temple Bridge' took about five years and the layout has been well received at exhibitions in the Midlands as being a slice of London in miniature, very pleasing and exactly what I set out to achieve.

I am the first to admit the design is an adapted one from the pen of the late Cyril Freezer, and I hope it fulfills his inspiration for a 3rd rail exhibition layout.



ABOVE: Southwark Station, modelled on the run-down ones on the South London line, has wooden board platforms and gas lighting. A new 2-EPB forms the service. The Empire Lino works are behind and across the station.

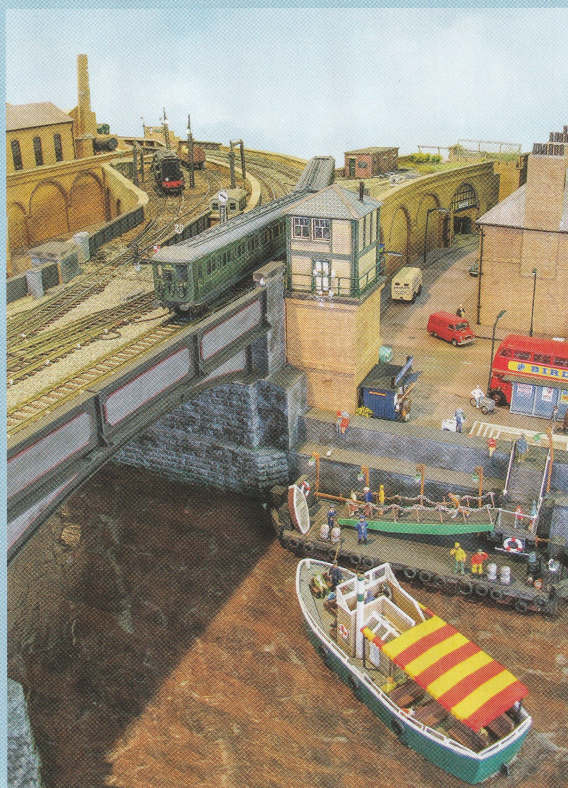


MIDDLE LEFT: The station forecourt on The Strand with the imposing SR Art Deco Moderne-style building, complete with bus stops and a taxi rank.

BOTTOM LEFT: View into the dark, damp tunnel to the parcels office under the station.

RIGHT: Southwark Pier with the pleasure boat about to dock. This is a typical Thames floating pontoon dock next to the bridge, with a 2-NOL unit on its way into the station.

BELOW: Merchant Navy 35032 *Holland Afrika Line* is waiting for the road to couple onto its train next to Southwark signal box.



I had great help and advice from friends at Redditch Model Railway Club and I thoroughly recommend joining a club, as there is a limit to what you can learn watching YouTube videos. There's no substitute for chatting with other experts and sharing knowledge and getting your hands dirty.

The resin casting aspect was a new departure for me and has worked out very well. I learnt a lot and the results are bespoke and unique to the layout. The buildings are all scratch-built and that was also something I wouldn't have considered doing without the encouragement and advice from the building experts at the club.

The ballasting needs weathering, and I am still waiting for a willing volunteer from the club members to do this for me. I think I will have to steel myself to get the airbrush on it as Private Pike has gone AWOL!

I think the future is a blank at the moment. A layout is never finished and there's always another kit to be built. However, there's a roundy-roundy third rail layout set in South West London in my mind, but I'm not sure if I have another exhibition layout in me...you never know. ■

“ I had great help and advice from friends at Redditch Model Railway Club and I thoroughly recommend joining a club, as there is a limit to what you can learn watching YouTube videos. ”

