



➤ A terrible title... but a great new experience for modellers of UK prototype

Creating better track has always been seen as something that only experienced modellers can do, but I'd be very happy to suggest that most of you could actually do it very successfully indeed.

Similarly, I often see comments from those who have never actually tried that it's hard to do, takes forever or that it's a complicated process. None of those things are true of course, those comments are just assumptions or perhaps a conversational excuse for not bothering... nothing new in the hobby at all, especially with the expansion of digital communications.

Hand made track is immensely satisfying to create, looks fantastic and more than anything, will transform your layout from "Just another model railway with nice locos, building and scenery but track that's not quite right" to something special, far more visually appealing and actually believable.

➤ You'll never know unless you actually try.

We all have more hobby time right now, so this is an ideal time to try something new.

Even if you do not usually use Bullhead track, if you model UK prototype there WILL be places in most prototype areas where bullhead track is still part of the trackage system... so this applies to you too, and you will be able to integrate your first ever hand-made track into your layout.. So read on!

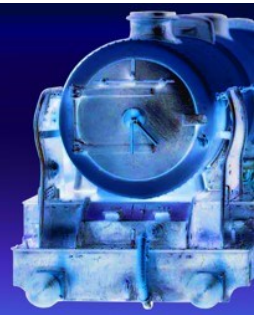
It all starts with some pre-made, pre-etched sleepers and some beautifully made brass chairs. They are even pre-tinned ready to solder!

➤ We'll show you the range before we discuss how it's done...

We've been planning for a long time and these four products are of course just the tip of the iceberg.

They were created to give a selection of products for you to use to test your ability, fix the track at baseboard edges whether you model with flat-bottom or bullhead track... or to experiment, learn and perhaps also take the big step of adding some "Super quality detail" to a corner of your layout.

So - these 4 "test products" are just the beginning.



Pull up a chair, work on your track

4 NEW products from Legacy Models & DCCconcepts

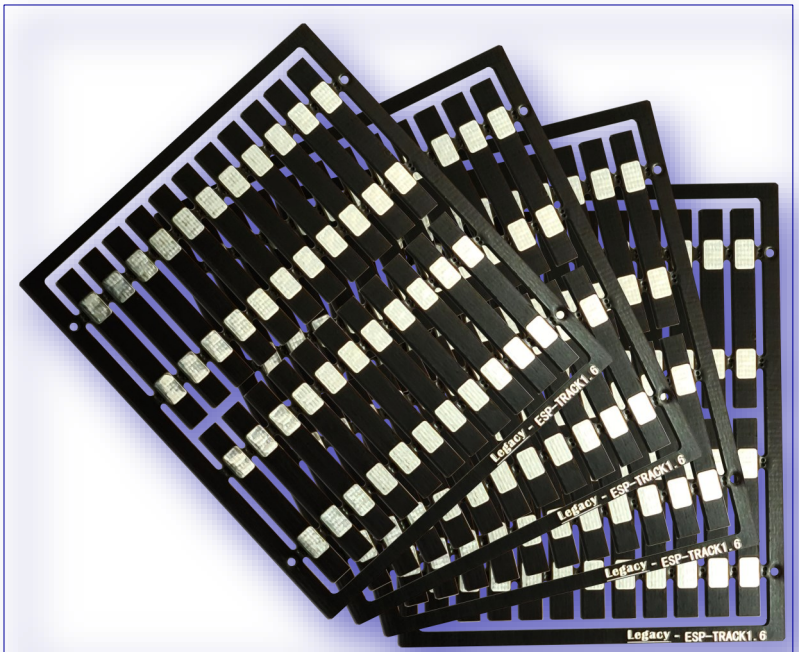
LM-TK1

4 Frets of 22, totalling 88 4mm scale sleepers, 1.6mm thick. High quality MIL spec fibreglass so they will never curl. Pre-etched so no cutting of copper to isolate rails.

Pre-tinned for easy soldering and Suitable for use with both Bullhead rail with chairs and Flat bottom rail in Code 75 or Code 100.

Easy and quick to remove from the fret. The tabs are cut so that any "dags" will only be at the bottom & invisible once ballast is added, so if you prefer, you can just leave them there rather than trim them off.

For "end of track use" at baseboard ends, you can use many glues, but we recommend that you use epoxy to secure them permanently in place.



LM-TK2

22x 4mm scale sleepers, 1.6mm thick and 40 finely cast rail chairs. The Sleepers are high quality MIL spec fibreglass so they will never curl and pre-etched so no cutting of copper to isolate rails. Sleepers are pre-tinned for easy soldering.

The Brass chairs are scaled from original drawings, finely cast and beautifully detailed.

There is NO flash on these chairs which are created using fine jewellery techniques and no clean up is required.

The LM-TK2 is an ideal pack to experiment with as it contains a little of everything!





Pull up a chair, work on your track

LM-TK3

88x 4mm scale sleepers, 1.6mm thick and 80 finely cast rail chairs. The Sleepers are high quality MIL spec fibreglass so they will never curl and pre-etched so no cutting of copper to isolate rails. Sleepers are pre-tinned for easy soldering.

The Brass chairs are scaled from original drawings, finely cast and beautifully detailed.

There is NO flash on these chairs which are created using fine jewellery techniques and no clean up is required.

LM-TK3 has enough to give you the parts to create a really nice piece of test track as the basis

for experimenting, but still leaves spare sleepers for that layout area needing a little extra detail.



LM-TK4

100 absolutely beautiful brass chairs at an incredibly good price. Our Brass chairs are scaled from original drawings, finely cast and beautifully detailed.

NO flash at all so they are usable straight out of the pack with no need for tedious filing and cutting because they are created using fine jewellery techniques. They are also annealed after casting so if you DO want to modify them, its not at all hard to do.

It is hard to describe just how much better value these are in every possible way when compared to our competitors offerings in this category so we will keep it simple.

Brass chairs with finer detail, Zero clean up at less than half the cost. Enough said!





Pull up a chair, work on your track

➤ Things to come.... One day before too long I hope

While I am NOT yet committing to a specific range timescale as it's a massively complex project, we have already completed more than 100 different 3D-CAD drawings for all of the special chairs needed for turnouts of all types at several frog angles including, single and double slips, diamonds three-way turnouts and other forms of special track.

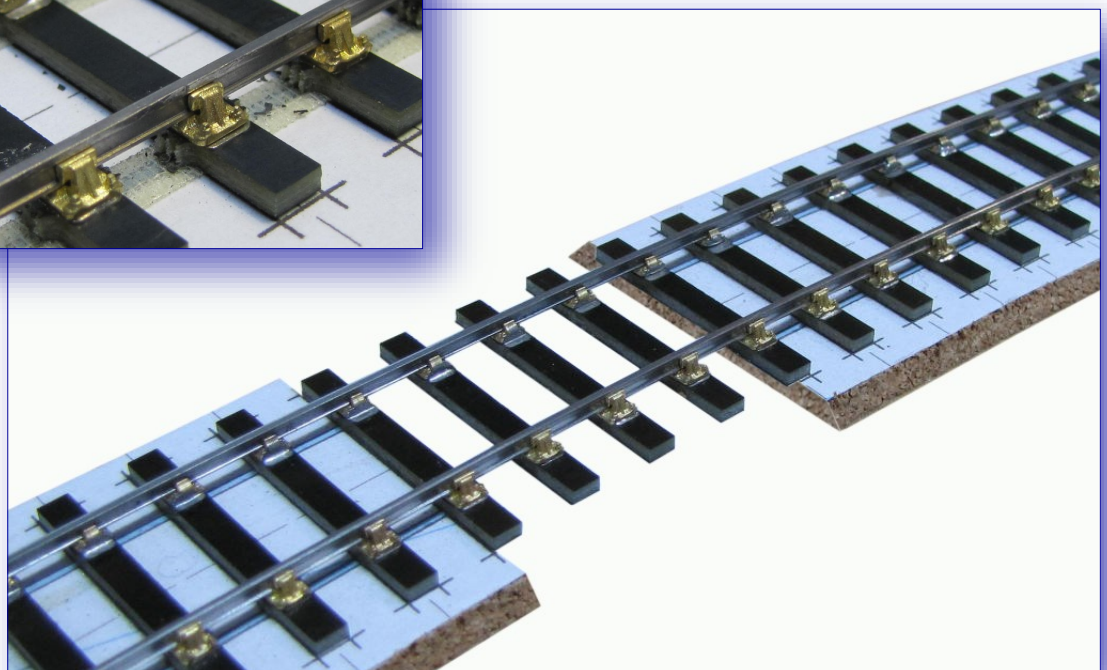
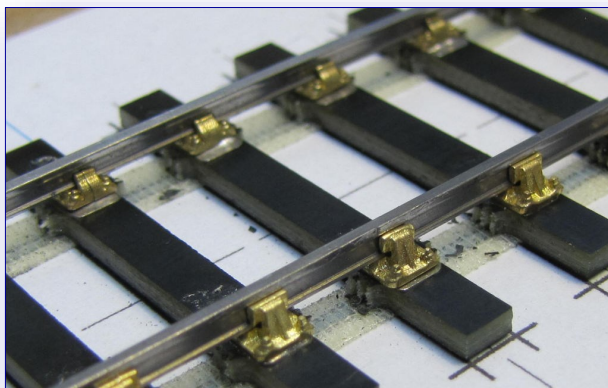
So—its all ready for tooling and production.

Additionally, we already have pre-cut frets for many forms of point-work and have also modified all of the templates in our library, ready to upload them with correct chair numbers, worked out how many of each would be needed for a kit... But that's a later story!

(If I tell you that a Single Slip with a #7 frog angle has 23 different kinds of Chair and uses 129 chairs overall, and that every frog angle needs many special chairs just for that frog angle... you will I hope understand why I am not rushing to make promises about "whole range" timing)

➤ Creating hand-made track

- *I have heard a zillion excuses for not making track. All from people who argue vehemently about the position of details on stock and locos, but seem to forget that it's a model railway - and a railway by definition is a network of - you guessed it - track... NOT a collection of things on wheels!*
- *Lets start off with a picture or two of what we are talking about...*





Why you CAN do it. You just need to try.

Lets look at the usual “excuses” for not trying...

Too time consuming. Too hard. I couldn't do it. I don't see the need. ALL of them are convenient nonsense of course. Most of them just avoidance, because there IS a wee bit of fear about things that are not properly understood. A real shame in a hobby that should be proud of growing its skills and abilities at every level.

Too time consuming? ... compared to what?

- *No more time is needed than you would use for making a scale fence, an accurate building, installing catenary, detailing a loco or coach or wagon. Need I go on?*

Too hard? ...I don't think so.

- *Place sleepers on the template. Use PVA or double sided tape to hold them. (you can download a template from our website or create one in software such as TEMPLLOT.)*
- *If Bullhead, slide the chairs onto the rail*
- *Position and solder rail #1 to the sleepers. (Using a rule to keep it straight if needed)*
- *Position rail #2 precisely using low cost gauges and solder. (Use roller gauges that are easy to buy and last a lifetime)*
- *That's it. You made some track!*

You couldn't do it? ...Yes you can.

- *You already do ALL of the things that track making requires. Placing parts, sticking them down. Soldering, measuring. There is NO magic required, just a will to do well!*

You can't see the need? ...OK...

But—A railway is a “way made of rails”. Therefore, an accurate model of any railway needs an accurate model of the track to be its starting point. So - By definition... without that approach, I wonder if you might really be a modeller of trains, but not a “Railway modeller”!

Controversial I know... But this is a healthy debate, not an insult or a challenge.

To me, accepting avoidable compromise at step #1 is rather like an artist or maybe a movie director not caring about the setting for his work, only worrying about the fine detail of the main subject and portrayal of the star.

It may become a technically nice rendition of a subject, but it will never be regarded as a great work, because it totally lacks proper context.

NO commonly used ready to run track is even close to reality. So... just for the fun of debate.

“If you can't see the point of accuracy in the primary focus of a layout, please don't wax lyrical on the web about the details of anything that runs on it. You have no credibility”.

(OK, I'll duck now, but remember that grown-ups wildly swinging handbags is not a good look. If you want to argue, go for it, preferably on the DCCconcepts forum because I can't be bothered elsewhere at the moment - but please do it intelligently and with good natured positive intent)



Tools and Tips and techniques.

Tools: It doesn't need very much in the way of special tools to make track, so you can mainly work with what's already in your toolbox. We've added some suggestions here for those who love tools - or may need advice or to add to those they have to have a go at track-making.

- **Templates:** we have a wide range on our website already, but for those who want to make their own, there is only ONE game in town! The software is called Templot.
It's truly for track design, not a traditional "layout design" program. It needs a little patience to learn but it is truly brilliant. There is a very good user group to help if needed. Strongly recommended and downloadable for free from here... <http://www.templot.com/>
- **A printer:** You'll need to print templates. (When you print, check the setup screen first to make sure you print at actual size, as most printers will compress pages to fit paper size.)
- **A Soldering Iron:** 50~65 watts or more with a T-2 type tip. [We supply all Irons](#) with this kind of tip and it's the very best we have found for general layout work, so a good soldering Iron is not just for track making - It'll be the best choice for all the work you need to do around the layout in every category.
- **[DCCconcepts 179 Solder](#) and our [Sapphire no clean flux](#):** Both will make soldering easier as together they make it flow beautifully. By all means use other brands if already in your box ...or your habit or preference, but we guarantee ours is as good as it gets!
- **[Track Gauges](#):** A set of DCCconcepts Roller gauges will do for now. We have them for all gauges. You might want to also add a 3-point gauge if you start making turnouts later. Low cost, super-accurate and they last forever, so a great toolbox addition.
- **[Track Cutters](#):** A set of [DCCconcepts XTC track cutters](#) will find lots of uses around the layout anyway, so make sure you have some in the toolbox anyway!
- **A Steel rule and some files:** We are sure you have those.

Tips & Techniques: Small things can make it easier. Here are just a few things that may make taking the first steps to track making easier for you

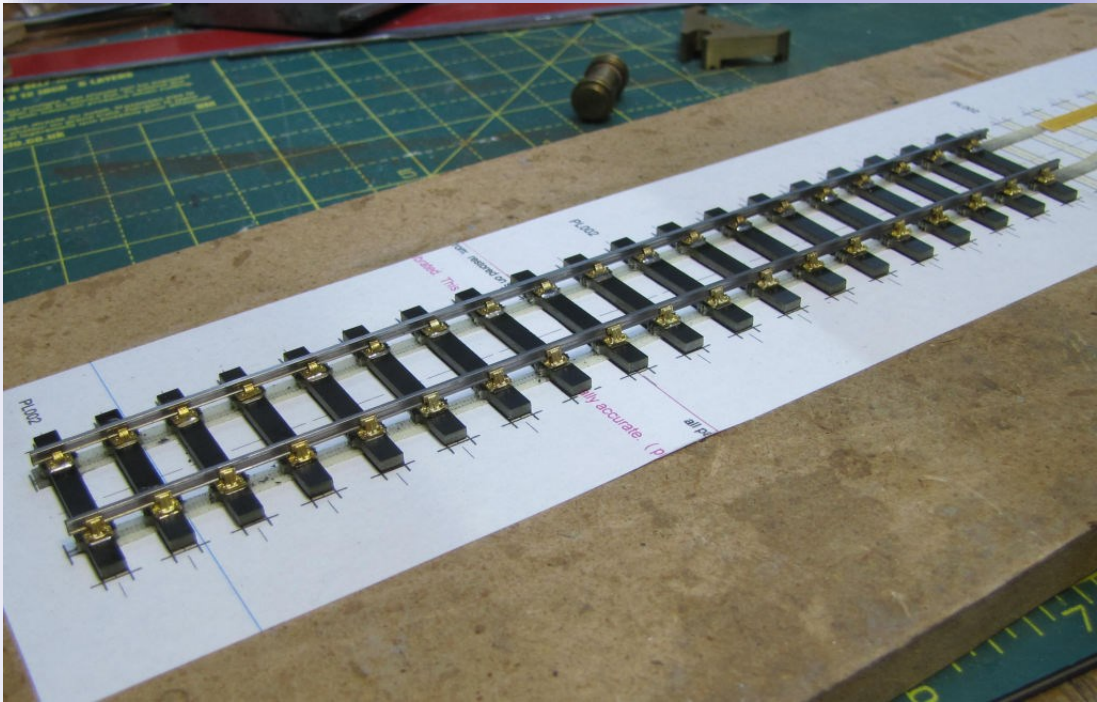
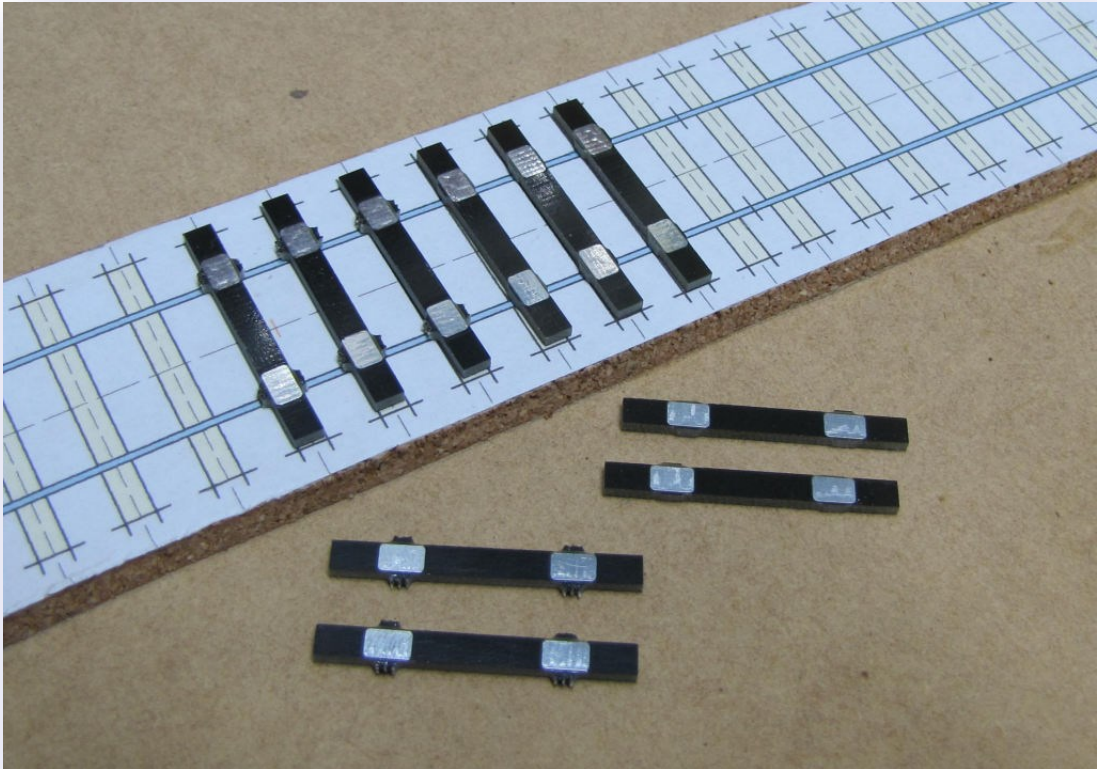
- **Don't listen to "Grumpy from Tunbridge Wells":** He's probably never made track anyway, is afraid of trying because he isn't confident with an Iron but will never tell you... and doesn't want you to do what he cannot. Leave him to complain to all that will listen that the rivets on the latest loco are all wrong, and just get on with making track!
- **A small mirror:** It is remarkable how much a small mirror held vertically on the track will help you make it straight and regular. Better if its not in a frame, but easy for you to test as a concept with any you can find lying around. Give it a go... you will be surprised.
- **Get the rail the RIGHT WAY UP:** Not a problem if you model in Flatbottom of course, but... Bullhead rail is not symmetrical. One rail-head really is slightly smaller than the other, and the SMALL one goes on the bottom and into the chairs. BTW, wedges go to the OUTSIDE!
- **Solder sleepers randomly and don't do it all at once on one rail:** If you add lots of heat to one rail all at once, the rail expands... and can force a "banana shape. Initially do say every 4th sleeper, soldering the others later once the gauge is set nicely for both rails.
- **Join our Forum:** We'll be there to help. Just log on to <https://www.dccconceptsforum.com/> & sign up. You'll find some great modellers and all our tech staff ready to discuss anything.



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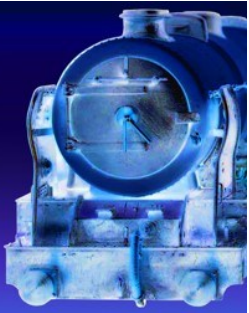
Postscript

Lets finish with a couple more photographs of hand-made track. (With thanks to Stuart Birks, who did the work and then posted them on a thread in our DCCconcepts Forum)





DCC thinking outside the square
concepts



Pull up a chair, work on your track





➤ Signing off for now....

As you probably noticed, I love great looking trackwork. I think its critical to have SOME parts of the layout that just look right, and while you may not have the time to do ALL of it, why not make at least one scene on your layout "As good as it gets".

By the way... Having taught several groups of modellers at all skill levels, I really do mean it when I say "Everyone can do it". Some are brilliant at it immediately, some take more time, but everyone gets it, and as soon as small technique issues are sorted, everyone soon succeeds.

Have a go... there's nothing to lose, and any hobby should be a happy journey full of learning.

Kind thoughts, Stay well

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Richard Johnson', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Richard Johnson

DCCconcepts