



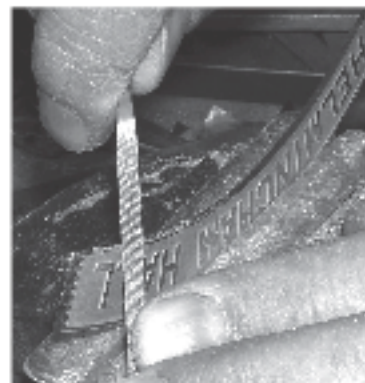
FINISHING YOUR PLATES: A GUIDE TO GETTING THE BEST RESULTS

This guide is written for you if you have no previous experience of finishing plates. I have tried to be as thorough as I can but if you have any further questions please don't hesitate to give us a call.

FIRST JOB

First of all, please clean the plates with a scouring powder (Vim or Ajax) and scrubbing brush. Thoroughly drench in clean running water and dry. Be particular about the rinsing!

Whilst a laser cut edge is very clean, it might, for neatness and especially for larger (model engineering) scale plates, be an idea to lightly draw file around all the edges. The photo below shows this. Some plates do not have a beading all round, for example LNER A3 and some B17 nameplates. This also applies to any plates without an edge beading such as smokebox number plates. It won't take much work and once you are happy with the finish, scrub clean (and rinse!) once again ready for the paint.



PAINTING

We recommend a proprietary car spray. Halford's satin black for all black plates is perfect and 'Nissan 526' gives a good 'railway' red.

For larger scale plates:-

- Lay out the plates on a clean sheet of paper on a flat board in as dust-free an environment as you can manage. Immediately before applying the paint, gently blow away any dust on the surface. Apply enough paint to give a good cover. 5 inch gauge and larger nameplates and cabsides would normally need two coats applied about an hour apart. These above-mentioned paints contain extremely good pigments and coat well. Works plates and other small plates may need only one coat. **Note: etch primer is not necessary.**
- Leave to dry for about 48 hours. They are, of course, quite safe to be left sitting around for years in this state as long as they don't get a knock. Make sure they are well packaged.
- To polish: start with 600 grade 'wet-n-dry' worked wet. Place the plate on a flat surface, face up and wrap the abrasive paper around a small block; rub over the the surface to remove paint from the tops of the letters and edges. Progress onto 1200 grade to obtain a good finish. It's worth spending some time on this.
- Pour a little pool of brass polish onto a sheet of clean paper and rub the plate, face down, in the pool to get a bright polish. Rinse VERY thoroughly and wash in a squirt of detergent in the palm of your hand before rinsing (again, VERY thoroughly in running water) and drying.

For small scale plates:-

- Paint as above but apply a very light coat of paint and allow to dry hard.
- Polish by placing the plate face down onto some 1200 grade 'wet-n-dry' paper that is wet. Gently remove the paint from the surface of the letters and borders. Rinse and wash as above.

REPLICA CAST IRON PLATES

Cast iron plates were cheaper than brass on the big engines but they involve an extra bit of work for us. Smokebox number plates can be finished to look just right with the application of white enamel paint to the figures once the black paint has been removed as described above. (You will not need to polish them, of course.) Alternatively - and this does require some investment in materials so worthwhile if you are doing quite a few plates - viscous printing ink (the kind used by lino printers), available from good art shops, can be applied very sparingly by a nylon roller. (Spread thinly onto a small sheet of glass first.) This takes a little practise but, of course, mistakes can be simply wiped off before the ink dries or, if minor, a little black can be retouched. This is the best way to apply white to shed plates, BR works plates and some tender plates. Once you are happy with the result leave them to dry for at least two days. They would also benefit from a coat of clear lacquer.

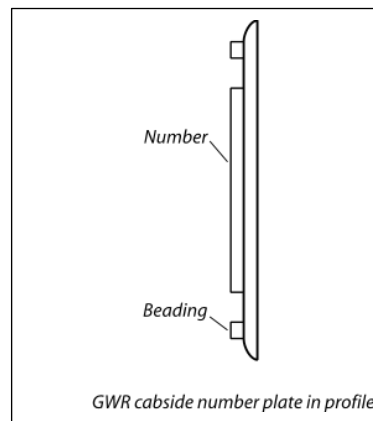
Great Western plates

1) FORMING THE BEADING ON G.W.R. NAMEPLATES.

Start as above but after painting the plates, use fine files to form the half round beading whilst at the same time removing the paint. Then progress with the abrasive paper technique as described above. The more time spent here, the better the result.

2) FORMING THE EDGE OF A G.W.R. CABSIDE NUMBER PLATE (only applies to larger scales).

You will probably be aware that the beading is not at the edge of the plate. The diagram illustrates how the edge should be formed. The edge of the plate will be obvious as you look at the etching.



FIXING (model engineering scales)

The one question we are asked more frequently than any other is "how do you attach the plates?" The answer depends upon how much running the engine will see. Really, for anything other than a glass case display model, all plates must, for safety, be mechanically fixed. Very small countersunk screws or tiny rivets, possibly with the heads turned down for neatness, are recommended. There are some exceptions: Southern Railway nameplates come to mind where the prominent bolt heads were characteristic of the plates.

It might be reasonable to glue on tender plates and works plates (providing they are not onto a hot surface, of course). Whatever you do, please don't ever ... EVER ... be tempted to use double-sided tape. The adhesive is a liquid that never sets; it is always a liquid and the plates will slide off! But, as previously mentioned, I am only at the end of a phone

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P.S. Did I mention rinsing...?