

Replica Nameplates
Decorative Photo Etching
Reproduction Plates for Restorations
Etched Labels, Signs & Plaques
Graphic Design, Illustration
& Artwork for Print



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This guide is intended for use by those Model Engineers who have received their plates etched but otherwise unfinished. I have tried to be as thorough as I can but if you have any questions I shall be happy to explain further. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you need to. The guide is written for those with no experience of finishing plates, but those who have may like to keep this leaflet handy, if only for the contact details.

FIRST JOB

Before the plates leave us they will be cleaned with a scouring powder and scrubbing brush, thoroughly drenched in clean water and dried. It would be a good idea to repeat this process before you make a start. Be particular about the rinsing!

MAKING A START – NAMEPLATES, CABSIDE NUMBERS, WORKS PLATES ETC.

Cut the plates fairly close to the edge, ideally with a band saw or linisher. The closer you get – the less you file! Be brave ... and careful. (For those who are more brave than careful, I am only at the end of a phone.)
File to the edge. There isn't much more to say here. (If you have built the engine yourself *you* can teach *me* how to file!) Draw file around all the edges. The photo below, left, shows this operation. Follow this by applying a slight chamfer if required. Some plates do not have a beading all round, for example LNER A3 and some B17 nameplates. See photo below, right. This also applies to any plates without an edge beading such as smokebox number plates.



Once you are happy with the finish it's time for the paint but it's important to scrub clean (with scouring powder as above) once again ready for the paint.

PAINTING

We have always used a proprietary cellulose car spray. Halford's satin black for all black plates is perfect and the recommended shade of red is 'Nissan 526'.

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" gauge and larger nameplates and cabsides would normally get two coats applied *about* an hour apart. These paints contain extremely good pigments and coat well. Works plates and other small plates may need only one coat. Leave to dry at least over night and probably the next night also. They are now, 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.

POLISHING

Starting with 600 grade wet & dry paper (used wet), lay the plate face up onto a flat board and by wrapping the paper round a small block, rub it to remove the paint from the tops of the lettering, the beading and the edges. Progress onto 1200 grade to obtain a good finish. The abrasive at this stage also takes out the last of the filing marks. It is laborious work but worth taking time over.

Using a proprietary brass polish, with the plate face down in a small pool of polish poured onto clean paper, work the plate round in circular movements to obtain a brilliant polish. Rinse, then, with a good squirt of washing up liquid in the palm of your hands, clean it. Next, and do not omit to do this, rinse thoroughly in running water. Then rinse again. And once more for luck. Last of all dry the plates by placing them face down onto a couple of thicknesses of kitchen roll to soak up the moisture. Use a fresh bit to dry the plate then ... stand back and admire your morning's work!

CAST IRON PLATES

They 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. (Obviously you will not then polish them.) Alternatively, and this does require some investment in materials so worthwhile if you are doing quite a few plates, viscous printing ink, 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. This is really the only 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 several days. They would also benefit from a coat of clear lacquer.

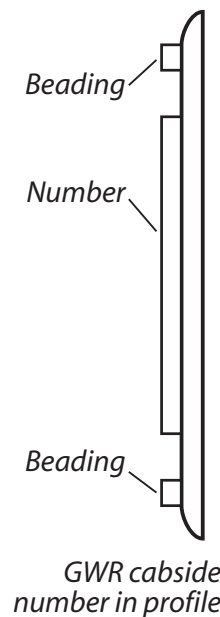
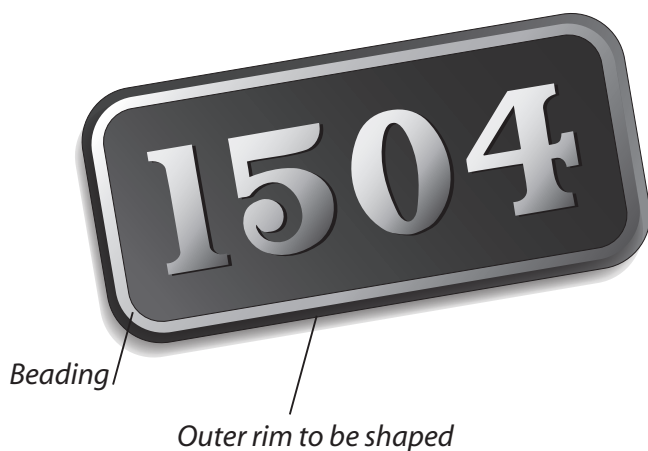
GREAT WESTERN PLATES

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.

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.



SMALL SCALE PLATES (i.e. 7mm, 10mm and 16mm :foot)

Having built the model you will be equipped with the very fine tools needed to cut the plates from the thin sheet. Good light and a strong glass will, no doubt, be to hand. In general the finishing technique is largely the same for small plates.

FIXING

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 have. Really, for anything other than a glass case display model, nameplates and cabside numbers must, for safety, be mechanically fixed. By which is meant very small countersunk screws or tiny rivets, possibly with the heads turned down for neatness. There are, of course, exceptions. Southern Railway nameplates come to mind where the prominent bolt heads were a characteristic of these 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 never ...**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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