



BR Brake Van World Tour 6 Morrinsville Model Railway Show 2025



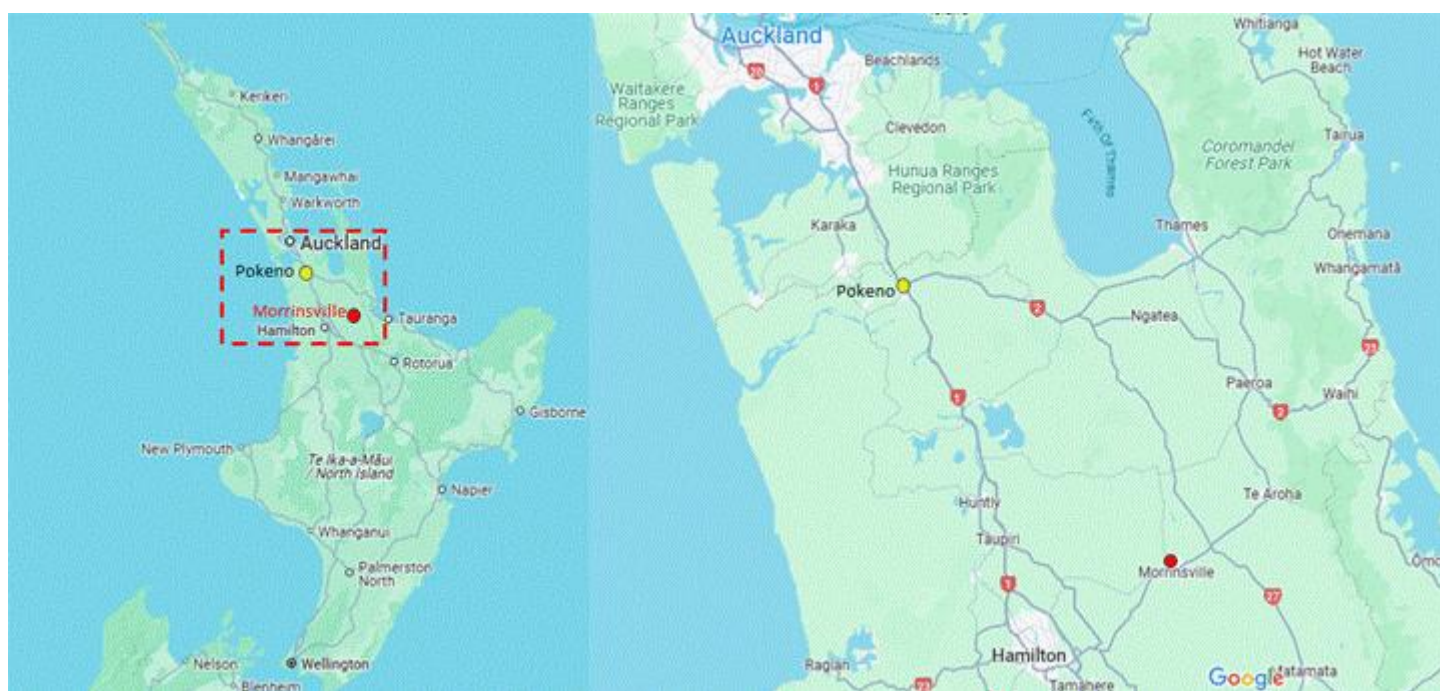
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The centre piece of the show, a 1:33 scale model of the Bay of Plenty line crossing the Waikato River in Hamilton.

This trip happened very much at the last minute, having arrived back in NZ the evening before and in some degree of stress from the situation we had been called over to Australia to help out with. However, a friend and I took the chance and went down with the brake van and enjoyed a bit of therapy (for me) in the world of model railways for the day.

I am grateful to Dave Heatley, Hamilton Model Railroaders and the 9mm to One Foot Scale NZR Modelling Group for permission to photograph the brake van on their layouts over which they gave me unrestricted access. I also wish to thank Simon Sharp for his help in ensuring I did not intrude on the operation of these railways whilst I was taking the accompanying pictures.



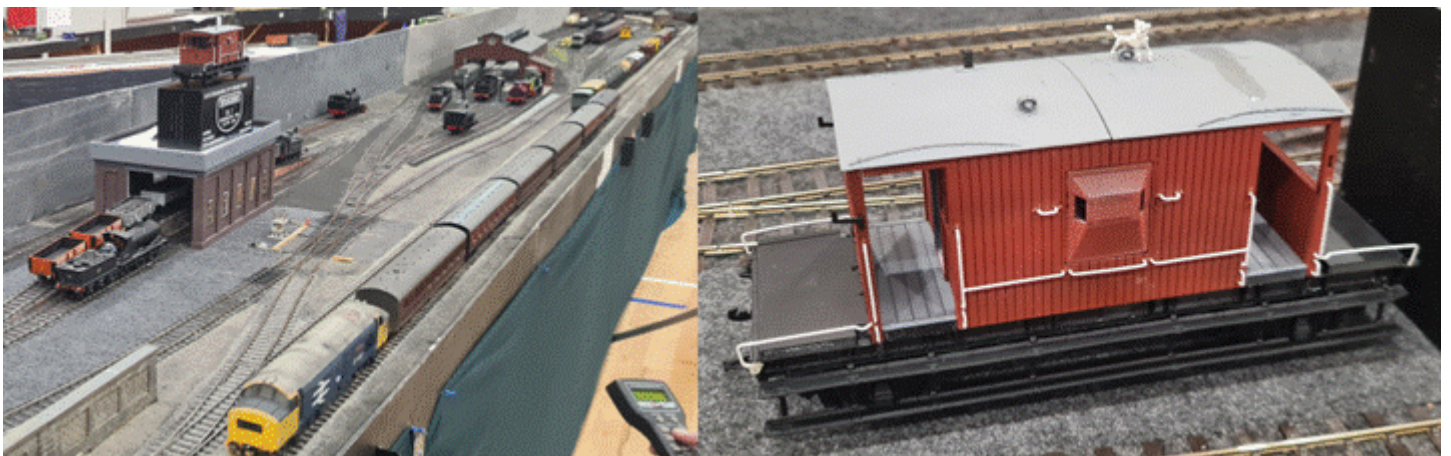
A map of the North Island on the left, with a detail map of the area in question on the right. As usual, our home town of Pokeno is marked in yellow whilst the places visited and photographed are highlighted in red.



A surprised Dave Heatley, Hamilton Model Railroaders newsletter editor and owner of this British Railway O gauge railway reacting to something even larger than what he is used to, as well as my presence since most folk thought I was still in Oz!



Having got used to it, he is now admiring it.



A general view of this side of the railway and, on the right, one of Dave's recently acquired dogs (O scale) having a ride.



Dave also found a Great Western O gauge brake van to compare.



Moving up a scale, this is the work of the NZR 9mm to the foot group. This scales out at roughly 1:33 which is close enough to the 1:32 of the brake van. Thus, in size they are reasonably comparable. Of course, the scale is set to allow the use of O gauge track to represent the NZR 3' 6" standard gauge. Narrow gauge this is not! Of particular interest is the loco on the left (NZR DC class) which is 3-D printed. The loco prominent on the right is an original English Electric DF built in the mid-fifties as a precursor to the BR class 40s and 37s.



A view of this end of their extensive layout.



The other end of the engine shed with three NZR locomotives stabled. All three are likewise 3-D printed to a very high standard and demonstrate how far this medium is progressing at this end of the world.



One of the original GM Motors DA class locos passing through with a traditional four-wheel wagon freight of yesteryear. These were introduced in the early 50s and lasted right up to the Millenium before the last one was withdrawn. Many were re-engined in the 1970s and reclassified as DCs. Some of these are still running today. The model is scratch built using traditional materials and methods.



Further along the railway, a typical NZR provincial town station with coaching stock stabled and a more modern container train passing through. The containers are also 3 D printed.



A rebuilt DG class locomotive with a hood cab added. The original cabs were notoriously prone to leaks from wind and rain and were hardly weatherproof. Originally built by English Electric, these did not last nearly as long as their GM counterparts and had all gone by the early eighties. Note the typical NZR brake van in the background as a comparison.



The DA passing through once more on another part of the railway. I recall David Halfpenny asking the question of this scale as to whether it should form part of the remit of G1MRA. Putting the brake van in this shot adds to this conversation! Certainly, the work done by this group shows what is possible in these closely aligned scales. As G1MRA committee members will know, I have recently written to G1MRA on this and other matters in response to a request for feedback in the NL and J. These photos are a useful indication of the depth and range of this area of the larger modelling scales and what can be achieved internationally.



The goods yard. Whilst there is still much to do in terms of scenic detailing, every year this railway is shown, more has been done and the standard of modelling completed thus far is extraordinary. It really does convey the typical NZR scene really well.



An example of a completed scenic section.



The showpiece of the railway is a scale model of the original railway viaduct over the Waikato River in Hamilton. The model is dimensionally accurate and the river surface is only just above floor level. The brake van really does highlight the size of this superb model.