

Cafe express

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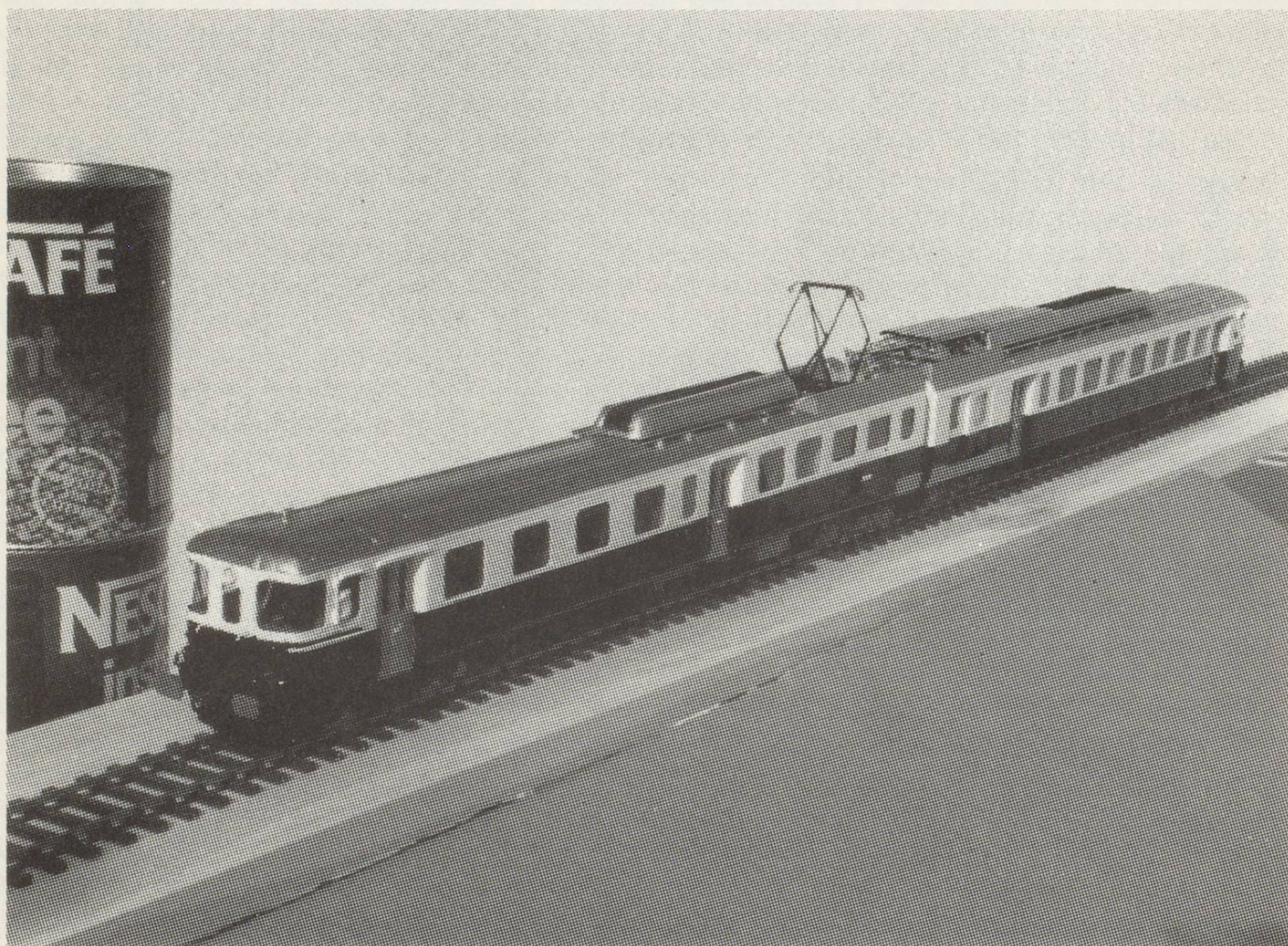
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CAFE EXPRESS

By P. Elwin

One of the first things I notice boarding a Swissair flight is the smell of fresh coffee — if you were to get into my gauge O model of a BLS railcar, I expect the aroma would be much the same, for it is built from seven or eight 750 gramme instant coffee cans.

Large cans of instant coffee and powered milk have proved to be a useful free source of tinplate, and I have used this material in models of coaches, wagons and locomotives. It is easy to work and, being free, I do not have to think twice about discarding mistakes and starting again. Obtaining supplies is quite easy — just put the word out in the office and works canteen; most of my empty cans are the result of my wife telling her travelling companions on the morning commuter train — and showing them photos of the results.



*BLS Triebwagen and Trailer courtesy of "*****" coffee.*

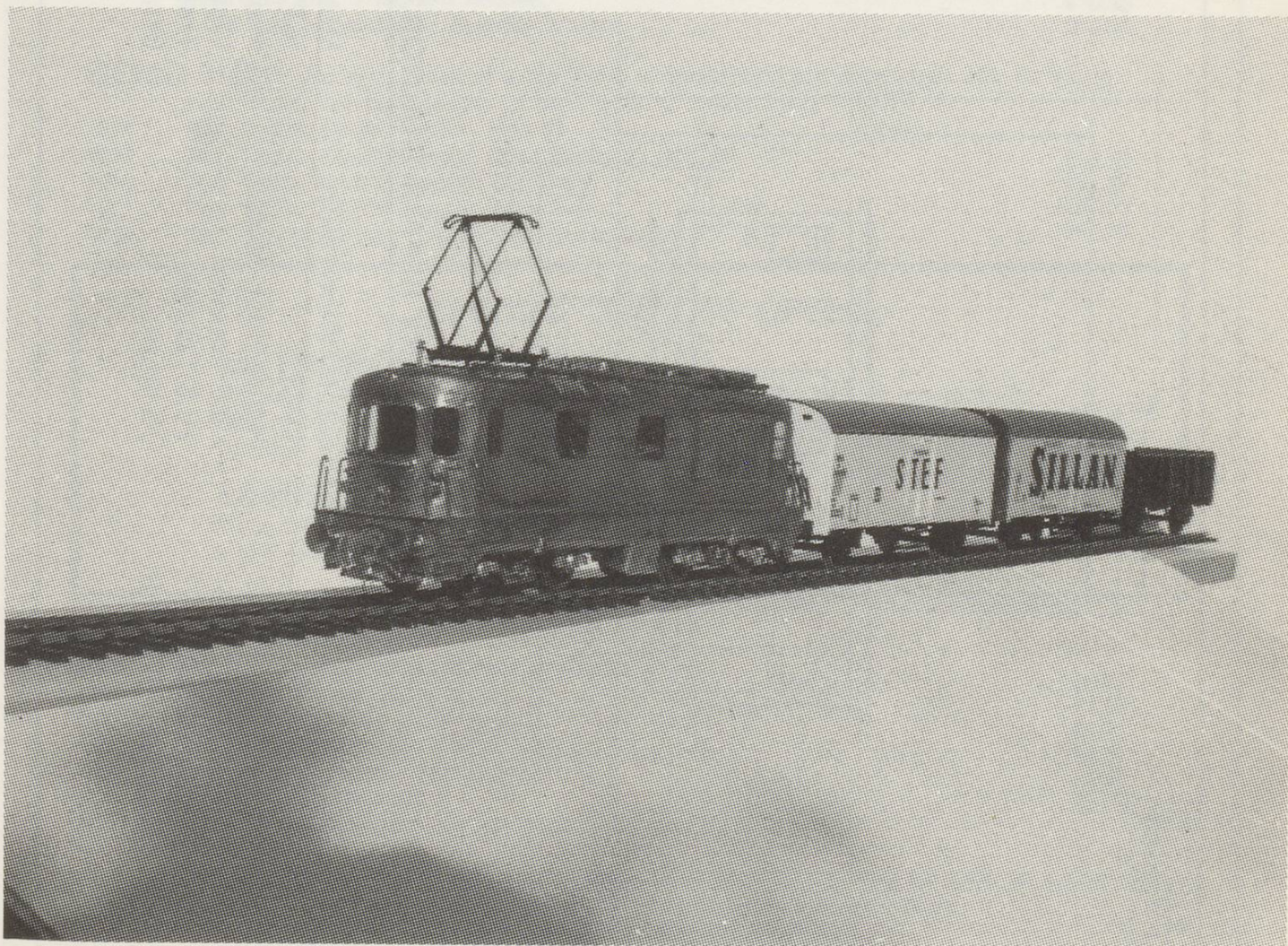
Photo: P. Elwin

The advantages of coffee tins are that they are mostly not printed, lacquered inside, or ridged. It is fairly simple to remove the top and bottom rims, flatten out the side after slitting down the welded joint and rinse with soapy water. If I need a really big sheet of metal, then I resort to one gallon oil tins, but they are very dirty to use, being both oily and printed on the outside. They do, however, look quite spectacular made up before painting, especially if you leave most of the printing in place.

This BLS ABDe 4/8 set is of soldered construction although, with care in the selection of prototype, you can use toymakers' tin tab assembly with success if you do not like soldering. The vehicle bodies consist of a wrapper with the two sides and roof in one piece. After punching out the windows, the wrapper is carefully bent to shape by hand, and bulkheads are soldered inside to retain the shape and provide rigidity. The floor, an inverted tray with seats folded from tin attached, is screwed in under the bulkheads, allowing for easy removal for attention to wiring, painting and glazing. Because of the curve in the lower body panels, the seats are set in a little from the side, otherwise you cannot get them out, but this is hardly evident from the outside, and you have to leave space for the glazing anyway.

On the mechanical side, I have used a surplus Bühler motor driving through three identical sets of 4:1 contrate gears to both axles of the power bogie. Wheels by Firmco, as sold for DMU sets, and the pantograph is from Sommerfeldt. A DPDT switch provides overhead/rail change-over with a centre off position for isolation.

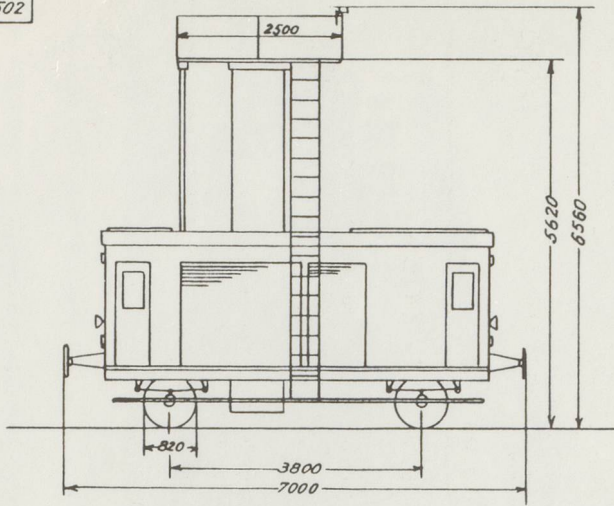
For working the tinfoil, a pair of ordinary domestic style scissors – but not **the** domestic scissors, otherwise there will be trouble! – and a selection of metal files are the main requirement. A small gas blowlamp is useful for soldering, but in the main a reasonably heavy duty electric soldering iron is good enough. To help in handling these large sheets of metal, I have two pieces of angle iron about 650mm long, which are placed on top of my engineer's vice to extend the grip. They also act as straight edges to help when cutting out the windows. For this, I use a small screw driver and light hammer to chisel out the opening and smooth things up later with a file.



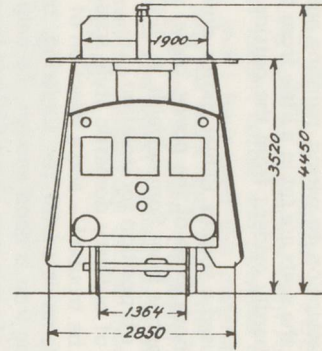
BLS Re4/4 built by P. Elwin.

Photo: P. Elwin

Gez. B 6.3.44
BLS R No. 502



Tm 2/2



BN CATENARY REPAIR TRACTOR. TYPE Tm2/2 No. 53

Built:	S.L.M. Winterthur.	Motor:	Saurer Type L610 6 Cyl.
Date:	1943.	R.P.M.:	1800/min.
Brake:	Hand, Foot, Motor.	Max Speed:	45 km/h.
Weight Tare:	9.0 Tonnes.	Lighting:	Electric or Battery.
Service:	10.5 Tonnes.	Tractive	
Max Towed Speed:	75 km/h.	Effort:	8 Tonnes at 40 km/h.