

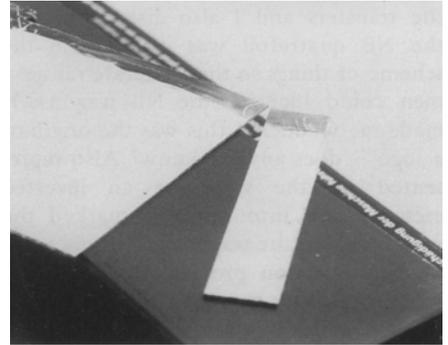
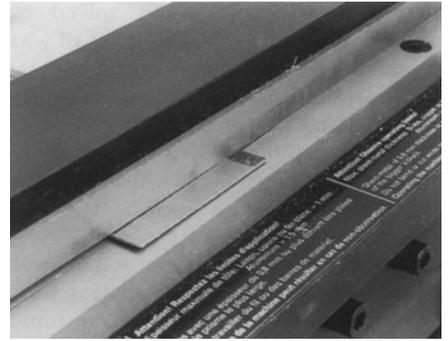
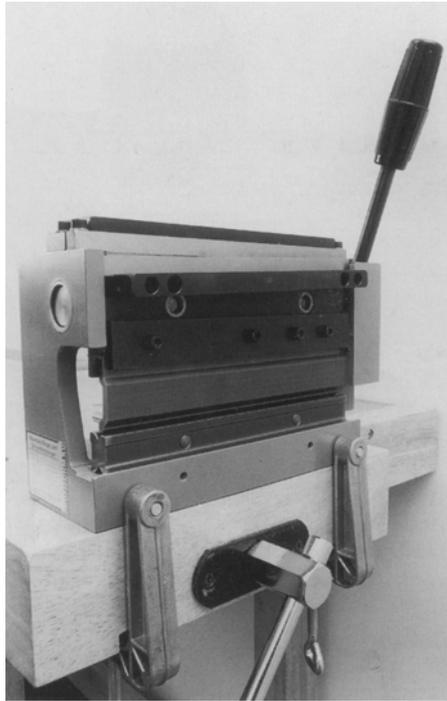
CLEAN CUT

by BARRY NORMAN

"Ask anyone which tools are needed to create a decent model and you'd probably be told a lathe would be useful, a temperature-controlled soldering iron or perhaps a quality airbrush", said our editor. However, I would like to add one more. Although Martyn was trying to use this argument to make a different point, it cannot be denied that tools (some expensive) do make our model-making easier.

I had been trying to saw out some new brake levers for the 7mm scale wagons I was improving. It took me some time to fret out the profile with a piercing saw and then file the cut lines smoothly. I had to do this several times and the process was becoming progressively fiddly and tiresome. As a way of escaping from the rigour of this job, I accepted an invitation to visit the Gauge 1 Association's Golden Jubilee exhibition with my friend Alan. Amongst the meths fumes and steam were plenty of traders, so I started to wander through their stands to see what was on offer in this rather appealing scale.

Huddled in one corner of the building there appeared to be a group of tweed jackets eagerly watching a demonstration of a neat little guillotine and press. I joined them and was immediately taken with the ease at which it sliced and folded metal. The cuts were clean, and brass up to 1mm in thickness was



being trimmed quicker and neater than I could cut a piece of paper with a knife (the machine was making its first appearance in this country with its Swiss manufacturer and creating considerable interest). I could instantly see many uses for this piece of kit and was becoming jealous of the way in which it made so many tiresome jobs so easy, but I was brought to my senses by the cost.

As one does in these situations, I wandered around, had a cup of coffee and chatted about the guillotine that had obviously caught the eye of several others at the show. I considered that I still had many modelling years left in me and would no doubt be cutting a

considerable amount of metal in that time, so I went back with cheque book in hand. However, I was a little surprised to find that within two hours of the show opening, this rather beautifully engineered Swiss machine had been sold out.

I am sure that to most railway modelers, equipment of this sort would be considered a complete extravagance, which indeed it is. Nevertheless, for the professional model-maker or very keen scratchbuilder of locomotives, a precision machine like this would soon pay for itself with the time that it saved cutting and filing brass, nickel silver, Plastikard or paper, and would soon become indispensable. With it you would be able to cut thin paper as cleanly as you could cut metal (up to 1mm thick) and slice a strip up to 200mm long from a sheet. You would also be able to bend it in the vee block beneath the cutters and use different length bars to fold metal up into a box before soldering it square. Also, as an accessory, a set of differently shaped punches can be purchased. Whilst I agree with Martyn that imagination is the key to quality model-making, tools do make life an awful lot easier, and if this whets your appetite, contact English-speaking Profiform AG, Präzisionsmechanik, Udligenswilerstrasse 60, CH-6043 Adligenswil, Luzern. Tel: 041-370 88 50. Fax: 041-370 82 92. Item 110000 Profiform 200 costs £278.81 excl. VAT.

