RAILWAY MODELLER
JUNE 1985
80p
FOR THE AVERAGE ENTHUSIAST – EVERY MONTH

GUIDE TO RAILWAY ATTRACTIONS FREE (INSIDE)
There are six 'Britannia' Class locos in use, all detailed Hornby models modified with 9F valve gear, ER-type smoke deflectors etc.

RAILWAY OF THE MONTH

Holden St. James

The 4mm layout of the Bury St. Edmunds MRC

Described by I. S. Harper and Club members

WE FELT that Felstowe, our previous exhibition layout, had done quite enough exhibition rounds, and that the time had come for a replacement to be found. So with some sadness it was decided to bolt it firmly back into the club’s main layout. Then, with heads together, a plan for a new exhibition layout was drawn up. It was to be up to the same standard as the club’s permanent layout but designed for public entertainment (fifteen people is about maximum the clubroom can hold). It could display both club and individual members’ stock to its greatest advantage.

So a quadruple-track system was chosen, along with an extensive fiddle yard, in order to keep something always on the move. A station was planned with platforms long enough to hold either a full length HST or an equivalent loco-hauled train, still with room to spare, and a goods yard with fairly extensive facilities to make and receive freights. Oh, and I must not forget the single track branch which keeps the Chairman amused! From this comes Holden St. James, and if you reverse the name you get a gentleman who used to build locos for the Great Eastern Railway.

As I said earlier, we run both club and individual members’ rolling stock, which means that there is a fair coverage of both steam and diesel traction. When operating, we do try to keep things in proportion so as not to spoil it for the older or more serious modellers. If requested we take liberties, where a modern diesel train may run with a steam type, the two of which may never have been seen together in reality. The actual period of time is the same as with our main club layout, ie steam dominance with diesels just appearing. The location is East Anglia, naturally.

The problem

On deciding just what we required, the next problem was where to build it and how to store it. Alas, this is a problem still with us. As our main clubroom is filled ‘choc-a-block’ with railways, it was out of the question to build it there. Fortunately our then secretary (John Forge) came to the rescue, or at least his place of work did. At the back of his works was a large room with ample space to build the layout, so all thanks must go to his governor for allowing us to build it there after works hours.

Designed specifically ‘for public entertainment’ at exhibitions, this 24’ × 12’ OO layout features quadruple track and facilities for keeping trains constantly on the move. Steam dominates, but diesels are also welcome in this East Anglian setting. Colour pictures of the layout will be found on page 241.

Photographs: Brian Monaghan

Railway Modeller
Contrast in motive power at Holden St James, with Classes E4 and B1. Platforms can handle a full-length HST or equivalent.

Class 47 'County of Hertfordshire' is held at signals, while a grimy 47454 passes with an empty MGR train.
Construction
This follows the traditional form in which baseboards 8" × 3'0" are made from half-inch thick chipboard, with 2" × 1" for cross bracing and half-inch ply for the edges. They are then glued and screwed to form a solid modular construction. The whole layout is supported on legs made from 2" × 2" which, when bolted into position, also have additional 2" × 1" cross bracing. To ease erection each is numbered to correspond with numbers on the layout boards. When each board is placed against its neighbour the two are then bolted together, resulting in a firm structure. There are eight boards; six are 8'0" × 3'0" and the two end boards 6'0" × 3'0". When the layout is fully assembled it covers an area of 24'0" × 12'0". Because of its size it can cause problems with transport, so a large team of members are required to 'hump' and assemble the layout. One of our members has access to a surveyor's theodolite, so it can be quite amusing to see us trying to accurately level the layout in an exhibition hall!

Trackwork
PECO track and points were used throughout, with concrete-sleepered track laid for the two fast lines. The points are all PECO Electrofrog for improved running. We had intended laying the track on cork but, as we did not have access to enough, the track was pinned directly to the chipboard. When ballasted, if the gaps between the track sections are sufficient a very realistic clackety-clack can be heard. Care was taken when laying the track to make sure that we had nice sweeping curves, and that the station had a gentle curve.
Ballast is sprinkled on dry using a paint brush, and brushed carefully between the sleepers, making sure it does not come in contact
The station is partly scratchbuilt, but also uses kits from Prototype Models. Footbridge is constructed in Plastikard.

with the running rails. It is then sprayed with water which includes a small drop of your ‘favourite’ washing-up liquid to act as an agent. Then diluted white PVA glue was ‘dribbled’ on to the wet ballast using a suitable paint brush. It may seem tedious, indeed it is, but after it’s dry it’s well worth the effort.

Scenery

This could be covered by an article in itself and a brief description does not really do full justice. The station is a mixture of scratchbuilt and prototype kits, using the Heckington station building as a basis. The overbridge was built by the Chairman using Plastikard and I think GWR influence; still it’s very good.

All the actual landscape scenery was done by our treasurer. The method was to use softboard formers etc to build up the embankments and rock formation, and then cover with plaster to make a very realistic railway environment. The plaster was either painted or sprayed using suitable car aerosols. Flock powder and paint spray are then alternately textured on to the scenic area until the required effect has been achieved. Put an aerosol can in Norman’s hands and you will keep him happy for hours! Trees are again all hand made using GPO cable covered with plasticine, painted and then covered with lichen. The small stream is very realistic and I must admit that a couple of times I have thought that if you touch it, you will get wet fingers. What Norman did was to paint a muddy river course on the plaster and then pour gloss varnish over it until a rippled stream was achieved. I believe he had to do this quite a few times as the varnish kept disappearing!

The farm in the corner was again scratchbuilt, and careful observation reveals a whole host of detail.

For those of you who are familiar with Ipswich station, there is a decided similarity between our platform-based signal cabin and the one that did stand on platform 3. A little close inspection of the interior detail will reveal that the builder has even included the block instruments.

Electrics

We must be lucky to have a resident ‘sparks’ who used all his skills in wiring the layout and making all the control panels.

The panels can be best described as follows: Panel A — Fiddle Yard — four controllers — two for the outer fast tracks and two for the up and down fiddle yard loops and their relevant sidings. By driving a train off the fast tracks on to one of the outer fiddle yard loops you then go on to that relevant controller. This means that you can then move locos about the fiddle yard without interrupting the rest of the layout.

Panel B — Inner down slow — one controller handling trains on the down slow also passes freight to the yard.

Panel C — Freight Yard — one controller handles all movements in the freight yard.

Panel D — Inner up slow — this is a duplicate of panel B except that it also handles power for the branch.

All panels have ingenious plug-in hand-held controllers which are all home-made and have proved to be very reliable.

As money was at a premium, only the main points are electrically operated using H&M motors via the stud and pencil method. All panels have provision for total point motor control, and this could be done at a later date.

One of our main features is the automatic working colour light signals on the fast tracks. The slow lines use manual two-aspect operation. Automatic operation of the three-aspect signals is worked by a box of relays. When a train passes over a break in the track, relays are operated to cause that signal to go to red and the previous one to amber etc.

Locos & rolling stock

All locos and rolling stock are owned by the club itself, and this is a very large quantity. But at an exhibition individual members also bring their own stock along, and this keeps a very wide range of trains on the go. Looking at the photos you can appreciate how much stock we do have, and also the amount of detail that has gone into certain items. We hope to replace the early Triang ‘Britannia’ class locos with the new ‘Morning Star’, some of which can be seen in the photos.

All the coaching stock is coupled into permanent sets, and they are run into some twenty rakes. Some of them are named “The Fennman”,

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An MTK kit is the basis of this two-car diesel multiple unit, finished in early 1960's BR green livery.

“Buffet Car Express”, “The East Anglian”. Headboards are fitted to the relevant locos (most important). For the freight enthusiast we can muster up well over two hundred wagons. There is a nice twenty-wagon container train which can cause untold havoc if it becomes derailed, with containers falling off and blocking all tracks. That has been known to happen.

Modern image power is supplied by two HST’s featuring Hornby power cars and Jouef coaches, one having working power cars at each end and through wiring for better pick-up. There are various other diesels, some of which are the named variety.

In conclusion, where do we go from here? Yes where do we go? We have an excellent exhibition layout, but it is sitting under the main layout gathering dust. If you think you can find a good home, then do not hesitate to get in touch with the writer.

I would also like to thank the people who made the old church hall at Homington available to us over a period of months, and to Brian Monaghan for the excellent photographs. But finally to you, the RM and the readers who have been waiting for this article to appear. It must be some two years ago when our first preview pictures appeared. Thank you!

Model of the former Ipswich South signal box.

BR Mk I first, with 'East Anglian' roofboards.

Essential maintenance at Holden St James.
Railway of the Month

COLOUR FEATURE

The busy scene above is at the south end of Holden St James station. Locos seen are a modified Hornby Britannia No. 70012 'John o' Gaunt' (note the close-coupled tender); an ROD 2-8-0 leaving the yard on a goods train; and a C12 and J15 awaiting their next turn of duty while a J69 shunts the yard. In the picture below, an Inter-City 125 rushes past on the main line.