

Isle of Man in miniature

Peel Station

Jim Lawton concludes the story of the 4mm scale model of the Isle of Man Railway

Photos by Brian Monaghan

VISITORS to the Corn Exchange, Manchester, Christmas 1965, will remember that Peel was not completed in time for the Exhibition. This was to have been Ken Ball's bit, but owing to the demands the Macclesfield Club makes on its Secretary, Ken just could not make the grade, furthermore for the same reason there did not seem to be any prospect of a let up.

Crisis

The situation was serious and so a board meeting was called to discuss the situation. Jim Edgar offered to make the gas works and goods shed, Harold Brown the kipper factory, no model of Peel would be complete without one. In a moment of weakness I allowed myself to be lumbered with Peel Booking Office. We did not let Ken get away with it altogether we gave him the engine shed to make, burnt bit as well.

The baseboard, made by Ken for the '65 show is of conventional construction, 2in. x 1in. cross-battened every foot and covered with Celetex.

Plans of Peel Station were non-existent, but fortunately we had lots of photographs, some taken by me and many others by helpful friends. From these pictures we constructed our models. The methods used was to take the measurement of a door, or a window during one of my visits or that of a friend, and then to work out by proportion the dimensions of the rest of the building. We found that this method was much quicker than going all over the building with a tape, furthermore we were by this means able to determine the dimensions of those parts that we were unable to reach from the ground. Mind you to do the job properly you need dozens of pictures, preferably on a flat plain where this is possible, to avoid distortion, which makes calculations more difficult. The liberties we have taken have been forced upon us through lack of space. An example is in the length of the platform which is very much shorter than its prototype. In fact the whole site is much more compact than the actual thing. However I think those people who are able to see it will agree that we have achieved, to a remark-

able degree, the realism and atmosphere of the original.

Construction begins

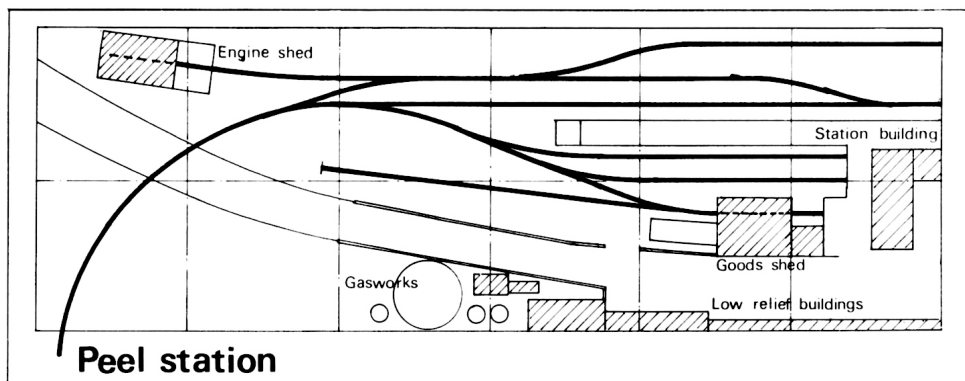
Methods of constructing the buildings are more or less orthodox, using plywood, balsa, card, scraperboard, styrene sheet, etc. There are one or two things new such as the stucco effect of the exterior of the buildings. This was achieved by painting over the side of the building with P.V.A. adhesive, sprinkling with cork-dust, allowing to dry, then painting with a white undercoat (oil paint). The end product is a very realistic reproduction of the actual thing. Jim Edgar produced some very realistic iron railings by making a simple jig with an old block of wood and a few nails. The nails were knocked into the wood in predetermined intervals in two rows and the wire wound round. The horizontals were then laid across the verticals and both soldered together. The bottom loops were then clipped off, the whole painted and when dry it was pressed into the baseboard with pliers. The promenade railings were made from four inch pins forced into



Winner of the 1965 Railway Modeller Cup

LEFT: Peel goods shed with station building in background.

RIGHT: Peel gasworks.



the baseboard with two rows of wire soldered to them.

Gas works

Jim Edgar's Gas Works was made entirely from styrene sheet. The method was to wrap the styrene sheet around a former, immerse it in hot water for a few moments and then in cold. You will now find that the styrene sheet has taken the shape of the former and it only remains for you to make a butt joint with Mekpak. This method can also be used for locomotive boilers.

Station building

The station office building is a very complicated piece of work having lots of gables and several pitches of roof. It was found when the drawing was made that all the main angles were 45 degrees, but the pitches of individual roofs, such as the veranda roof, at all sorts of odd angles. One piece of the roof

had four different angles and four unequal sides. Nor were all the gables the same size either. The structure was built from card fastened with Evostik and braced inside with the triangular pieces left over when the gables were cut. Window frames and doors were from styrene sheet and the roof tiles (red) were scribed on scraperboard; 1/16 in. balsa wood was used for the joists, showing beneath the eaves and the veranda; and umbrella ribs were used for guttering. The black-and-white parts were made from coloured styrene sheet also. This did away with having to paint them.

Engine shed

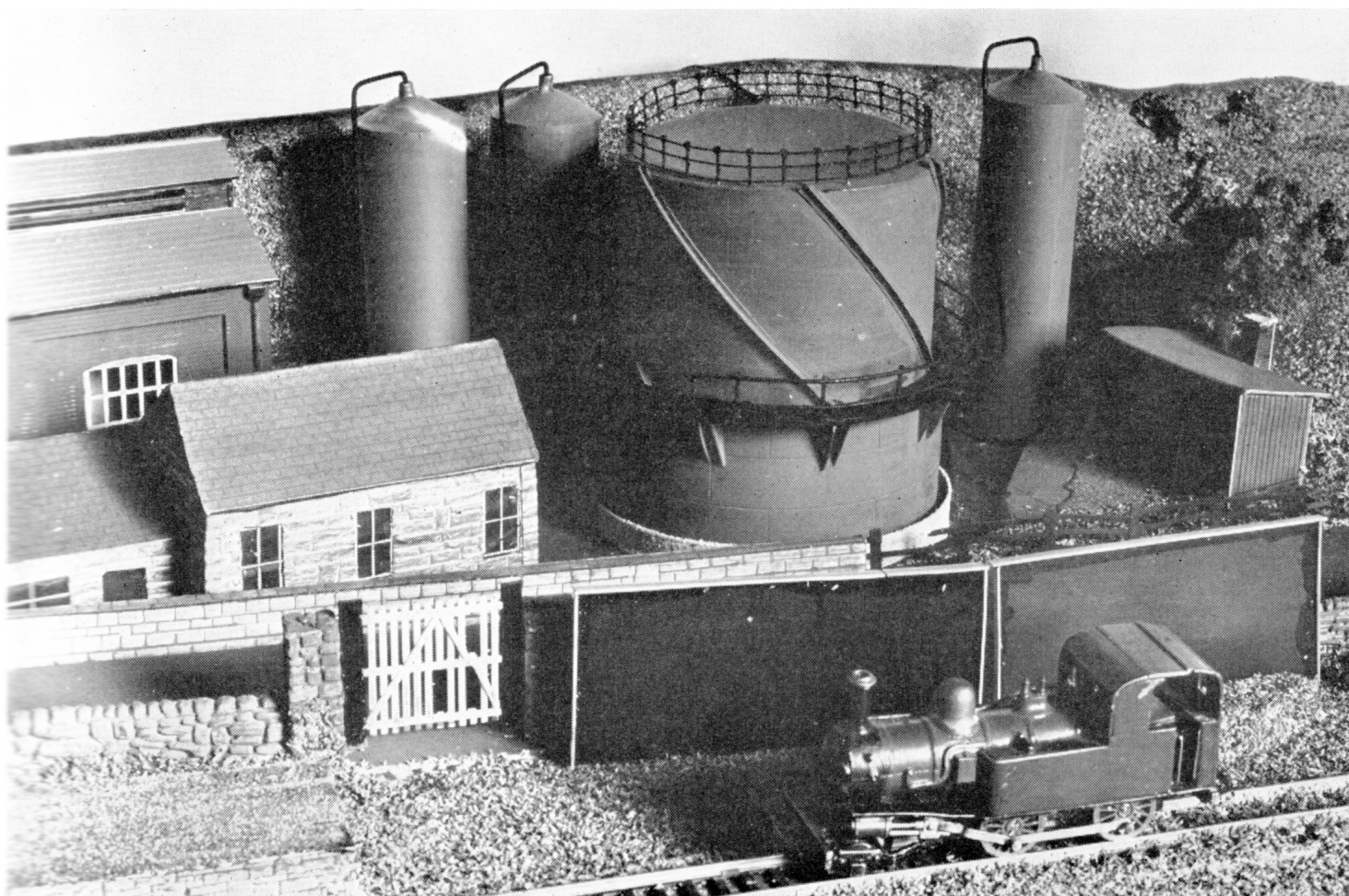
Ken Ball's engine shed is a very good replica made on conventional lines, except for the burnt out bit, which was built and then set on fire. The best way I know of simulating a gutted building. The only problem being to put out the fire at the correct moment. He managed it after two attempts!

Kipper factory

Last but not least is Harold Brown's kipper factory. This is an excellent little model, which although not a scale model of the actual building on the site, captures all the salient features of this type of building. One very ingenious piece of work is the flaps on the roof. These are wooden flaps made to open any required aperture in order to control the rate of combustion within the smoke house. Harold has made those on his model do just this by making the hinge from tooth-paste tubing, which allows the flaps to be partially opened as in the prototype.

Foxdale is also Harold's domain and he has rebuilt the station building, added a water-tower, and a loading-bay thus completing the picture.

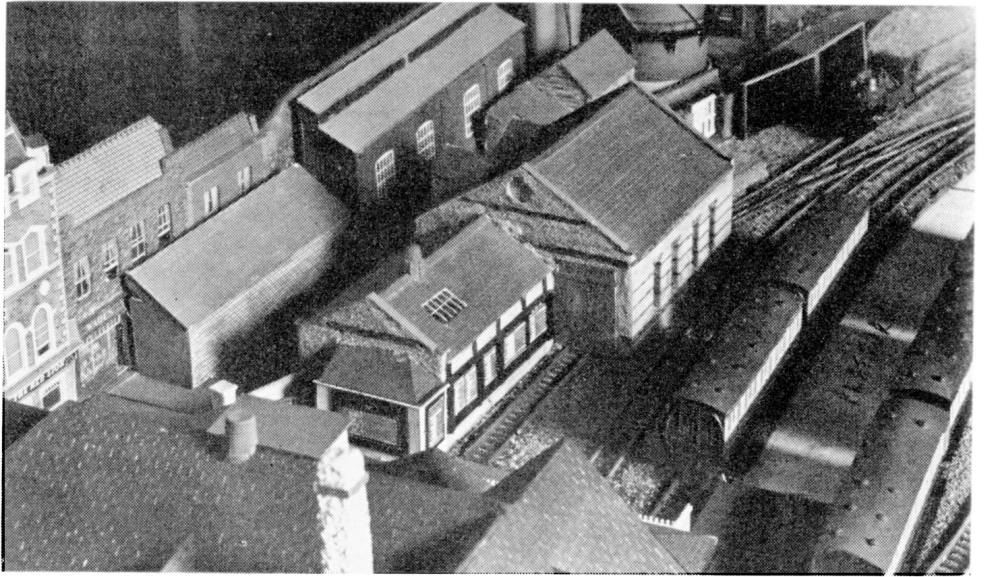
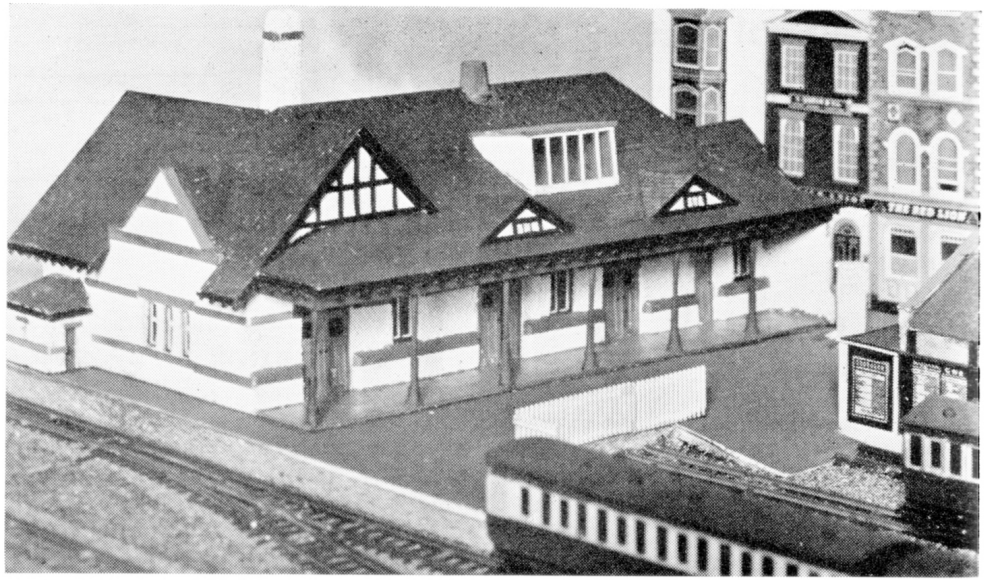
By the time this article appears in print, we shall have appeared at the Corn Exchange for a second time and will be preparing for Macclesfield in April. We hope those who are able to see it will like what we have done.



The prototype

Most of the people interested in the Isle of Man Railway, will know that the General Manager, Mr. Sheard, died a few months ago and that he has been succeeded by a Mr. Lambert. The future of the railway is anybody's guess especially as most of the engines, rolling stock, and equipment are becoming very run down and in some cases dilapidated. Let us hope that the Manx people will do something before it is too late. However whatever happens I am glad to have had the pleasure and privilege of modelling this excellent little railway, almost in its entirety. My thanks go to the splendid group of modelers who have joined me in this project, to George Mellor for his interest in producing loco and coach kits, and also to C. J. Freezer and photographer Brian Monaghan for their part in the publication of articles and photographs.

Let us hope that each of us have done our bit towards creating an interest that will one day save this railway from the fate of its Irish counterparts. Whatever the ultimate fate of the railway is we have managed to make a living record of it. What we shall do about keeping it is another problem. Being modellers, we are of course anxious to plough a new furrow, and whilst we would like to keep the layout intact, space is at a premium. Furthermore unlike the "Trilogy" each piece is not a complete layout in itself, which means that most of the team have had no layout to run at home. So like the prototype the future of the model is uncertain, unless we can find a buyer or a permanent home for it.



TOP: Close-up of Peel station buildings.

BOTTOM: Aerial view of Peel. At the time the photograph was taken the platform had still to be installed.