



Double-headed freight crosses the overbridge by the Ingle Nook Inn.

Inglenook revisited

Often imitated, seldom surpassed, this OO gauge exhibition layout has a long pedigree

by Alan Wright, MMRS

Photographs by Trevor Foster



J72 eases by the cattle dock, whose occupants seem fixedly uninterested.



At the end of the day, the J72 and Drewry diesel head for the junction.

NOT EVERYONE who goes to a model railway exhibition or reads a magazine such as RAILWAY MODELLER is a dyed-in-the-wool enthusiast. Many people visit shows or read magazines to get inspiration as they consider taking up the hobby. They can see, both in the exhibition hall and in the magazine pages, superb model railways, some large, others not quite so large, and some very specialised. It

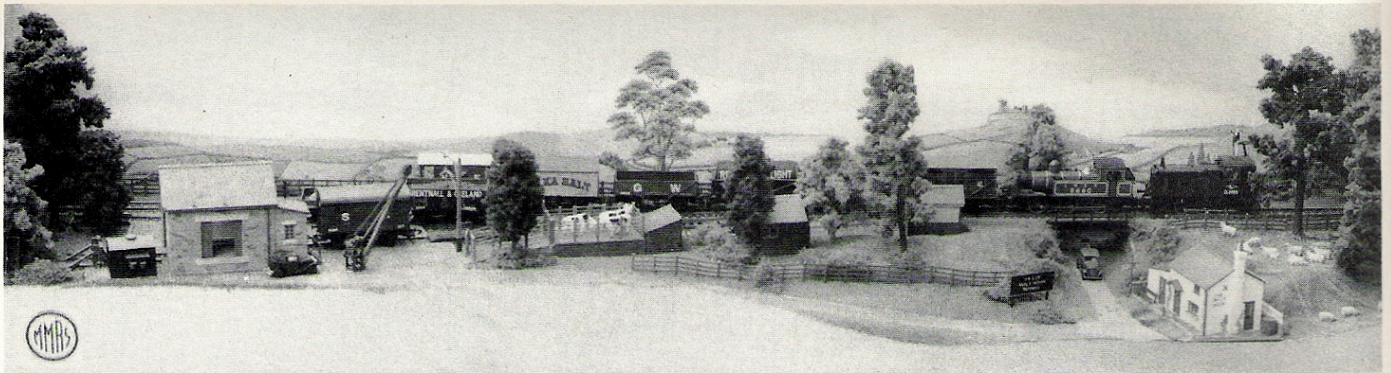
seems that every modeller who exhibits or writes tends to push his own particular ideas on what is the best way to model railways, something that leaves the intending modeller wondering just what to do. He is so befuddled with all these dogmas that in many cases he doubts his ability to be a railway modeller at all. Many of the layouts he sees or reads about require a considerable expenditure of both time

and money as well as demanding a large amount of space and the use of skills which can only be learned by using them. The cold realisation of this fact is often sufficient to derail his aspirations to have his own model railway!

Exhibiting layouts over the years, the writer has become aware of the need to encourage the newcomer by showing him that using ordinary commercial items, straight out of the box, is



The J72 enters the goods shed bunker first: no smoke or sparks allowed inside!



the easiest way to make a start and that a small simple layout which does not need a long period of gestation enables him to see results from the time, money, etc, that he has put into his new-found hobby.

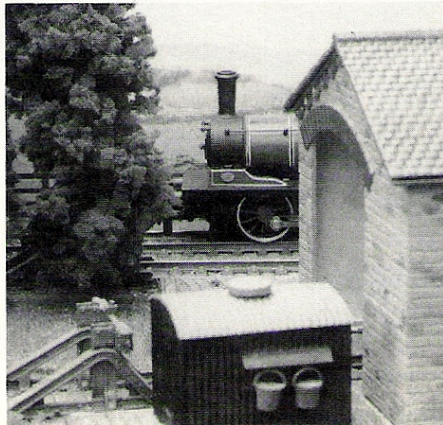
The writer is unashamedly nostalgic. He recalls many happy hours spent 'mugwumping' in his tender years. As everyone knows, mugwumping is the art of sitting on the lineside fence, mug on one side and wump on the other, watching the trains go by. He spent hour after hour watching LNER J72's engaged in non-stop shunting, knocking the stuffing out of poor defenceless wagons, in a busy marshalling yard near his home. From the distance it wasn't possible to pick out close details of the locomotives or the wagons, as detail merged into a larger expanse, and no big hands dropped from the skies to couple and uncouple the wagons. The shunters were hidden from view on the other side of the wagons. The railway presented a moving picture, and that is what he wanted in his modelling, a moving scene with 'hands off' operation.

It was Christmas 1979 that the original Inglenook Sidings was let loose on an unsuspecting public at the Manchester Model Railway Society's Exhibition, the writer's own Society's show, where it aroused considerable interest, especially as the operator was standing in the crowd and the train appeared to be doing what the audience wished it to do. The railway looked as though it was operating on its own! Since that appearance the little railway has performed elsewhere in the north-west and has been copied many times in scales from N to G. It is known that at an exhibition in Australia a version was on show there!

The little railway measures only four feet by one foot. It is self-contained with all the electrical items mounted on it except for the control unit which is on a six feet long wander lead. All the rolling stock and the locomotive are standard OO items 'straight from the box', the trackwork comes from the PECO Streamline range, buildings are from small kits or plastic sheet, whilst the trees are from the Faller and Riko ranges.

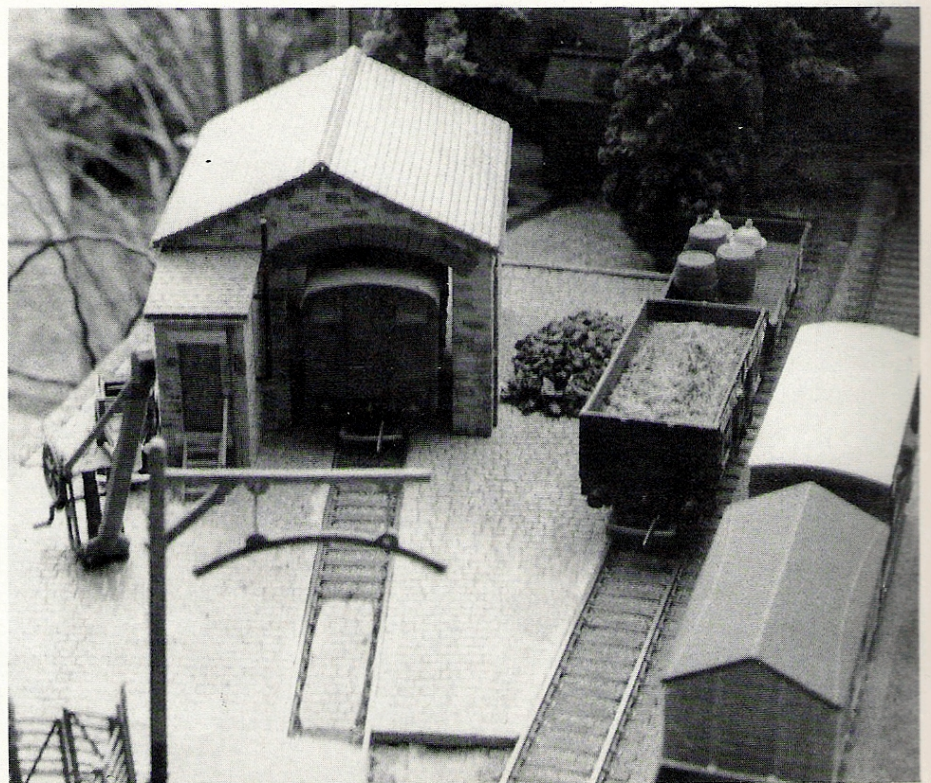
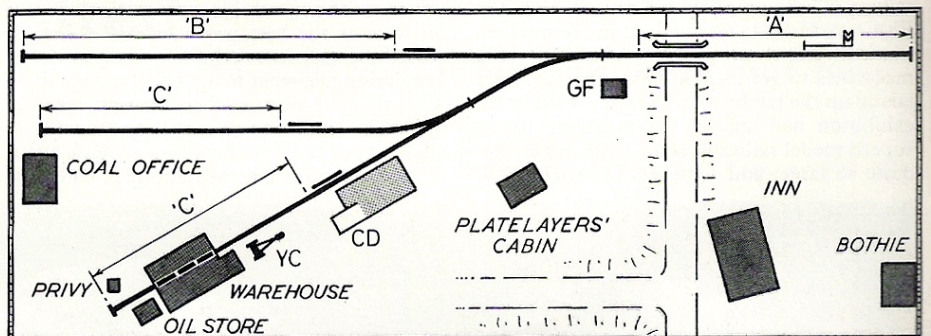
The railway represents a small country goods yard on a quiet branch line 'somewhere in England'. In this instance the owning railway is the fictitious Dunlin and Sanderling Junction Railway, a private company whose trains are worked by hired LNER locomotives. The sidings are just ample for the needs of the district, a small warehouse, cattle dock, crane, and a coal yard. The railway buildings are also at a minimum, a ground frame cabin and a platelayer's hut.

An important item when planning a layout is the scope of its operation. One may think that there will be very little in such a small railway as Inglenook but there one would be wrong. With one small locomotive, only eight wagons, and a brake van there are endless ways of shunting trains by using the 'formula' and the 'tiddle-wink' computer.



The formula

If you look at the track diagram accompanying this article you will see three dimensions marked A, B and C. Dimension A is the length of three wagons and the locomotive standing just clear of the point blades and with the locomotive buffers touching the buffer stops. (It is important that all eight wagons are as near the same length as possible.) Dimension B is the length of five wagons and the brake van standing just clear of the uncoupler ramp and with the brake van buffers touching the buffer stop. Dimension C is the length of three wagons standing clear of the uncoupler ramp again with the buffers of the last wagon touching the buffer stops. These lengths are critical and should be determined before any track is cut and laid.



Bird's eye view of the goods shed, crane and loading gauge.

The tiddley-wink computer

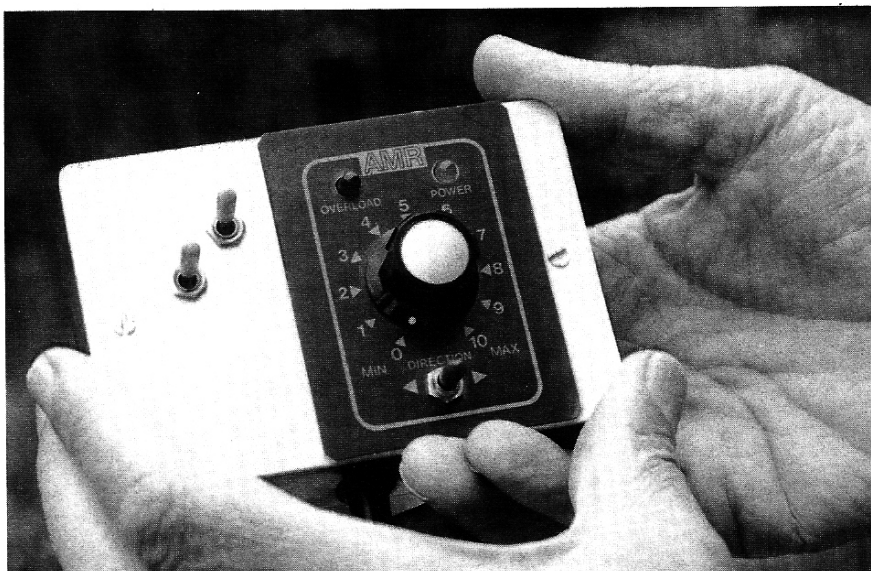
A very simple but very effective piece of equipment. Eight tiddley-winks each have the name of a wagon marked on them. They are shaken up and five laid down in random order. All that remains then is to shunt the train up into that order. It is not so simple as it may sound, and it should be realised that the brake van can never be moved off the main line!

The construction

A piece of blockboard forms the base of the layout whilst a piece of 3/16" plywood is used for the trackbed and the goods yard. A cut is made along the wood so that the approach road to the yard can be formed when the plywood is supported on 'two-by-one' battens. If it is intended to operate the points electrically initially or at a later date holes must be cut in the trackbed to accommodate the PECO point motors which should be fitted to the points from the start. Wires about six inches long should be soldered to the motor tags and taken out through holes in the backscene just above baseboard level for eventual wiring up. The backscene is formed from 1/8" plywood edged with a small wooden angle beading, and a PECO backscene is pasted to the board. The track is laid into PECO ballast underlay and secured with track pins gently tapped into the plywood. A Faller grass sheet is used to form the ground cover; it is glued down over wood blocks and crumpled paper formers. The trees are judiciously sited at each end of the railway to disguise the fact that there are buffer stops present. The trees look better than the usual tunnel mouth or bridge portal and give the impression that the sidings have been built in a clearing in the woods.

The control unit

Use is made of a small hand-held control unit at the end of a six foot long multi-core cable. The mains transformer and rectifiers are screwed to the baseboard making sure they have ample ventilation. A multi-pin socket is fastened to the end of the backscene into which the wander cable can be plugged. Not having any connection other than a satisfied customer with



Handheld power source for Inglenook.

the firm, the writer can recommend the use of the AMR controller which, having a tumbler switch rather than a sliding switch, is kinder to the fingers during shunting operations. Additionally the built-in indicator lights show if the mains power is switched on or not. Plugs have a habit of being pulled out at exhibitions, especially when a multi-outlet is used to feed several layouts, and having a little indicator light can show that the loss of power is not caused by a failure of the equipment on one's layout but by someone else plugging in a soldering iron to carry out on-site repairs. The control unit has two mini-tumbler switches for point operation. From the photograph one can appreciate how simple the control unit is.

The name

The layout of 1979, which incidentally is still in existence, was named from the fact that it occupied the space beside the chimney breast, the Inglenook. The present layout does not

occupy that site and here the writer's other interest, Insignia — the history of inn signs and the stories behind their names — comes into play. It is supposed that a small wayside inn stood at the point where the railway decided to establish its goods yard and so, as has often happened in reality, the name of the pub was used as the name of the area. Being a member of the Inn Signs Society, a group interested in the subject, an actual pub called the Inglenook was easily located and its sign photographed. A small print forms the pictorial sign outside the model pub!

On show

Inglenook will be on show at the Manchester Model Railway Society's Exhibition in the CIS Building, Manchester, on 4th, 5th and 6th of December, and then a week later at the Silver Jubilee Exhibition of the Wigan and District Model Railway Society in the Technical College, Parsons Walk, Wigan on 12th and 13th of December. Here a personal note creeps into the article. Being a member of the Manchester Model Railway Society for some 28 years I have on many occasions represented that Society at smaller exhibitions with one or other of my layouts when it was not possible for the Society to display one of its large layouts. I exhibited at the first show staged by the Wigan Society when their two reputations were firmly established. The first was of having a first rate exhibition with plenty of visitor appeal, and the second, a reputation which the majority of exhibitors at Wigan over the past 25 years know only too well, that of holding the show when the first heavy fall of snow of the winter is due! However, don't let that reputation put off the prospective visitor, do come along to both shows and enjoy a true Christmas bonanza of railway modelling at its best.

Finally my thanks go to my good friend Trevor Foster for his careful work in taking the photographs which accompany this article. I first met Trevor 25 years ago when he was the exhibition manager of that first Wigan show. Model railway friendships can be said to be true friendships; there are a lot of very nice people to know within the hobby.

There, we have revisited Inglenook. Come along to the Manchester and Wigan shows and visit it for yourself. See you there!



J72 toys with a cattle wagon beside the Crow Lane distant signal.