

OO gauge Trackside Construction

Building a simple card-and-balsa structure station

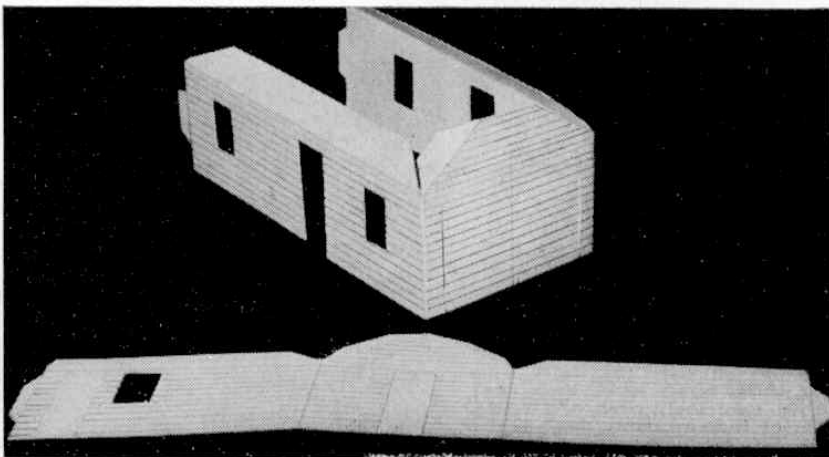
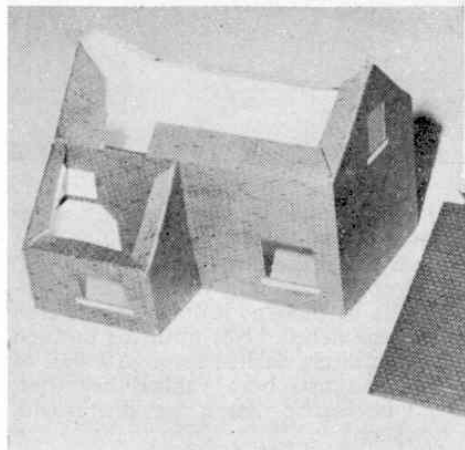


Photo. 1: The picture above gives a good idea of the basic card construction of the station. The waiting room corners have been bent round, by half cutting through with a knife, but the little lamp room is still "in the flat" just as it was cut out from the card.

Photo. 2: The Station Master's House in course of erection. The tabs to which the roof will be stuck can be clearly seen, and the balsa base of the building is just visible through the window openings. Note the cut-out in the end of the roof, which will house a chimney.

A Small Country Station

THE FOCAL points of any model railway are its stations. In fact, a model railway without any stations at all would be unthinkable, and very boring to operate. On a small layout, there will probably only be room for one reasonably interesting station; in fact, it is better to restrict the number of stations on any layout, however big, as too many, closely spaced, impart a "toy-like" atmosphere to even the most ambitious model railway. It is best, for a start, to settle for a small country station, with a single platform and perhaps a "bay," a run-round loop and a couple of sidings. The station can be a "through" station or a terminus, according to choice; each offers quite different forms of operation, which we shall look at in a later article.

Construction

Having established that the most important single part of a layout is the station, we now turn to the problem of building it. Building trackside structures is, in fact, a very enjoyable side to railway modelling; it does not demand the same standards of accuracy as locomotive and rolling stock construction, and yet it is just as interesting. Our station building represents a typical small branch line affair, with timber-built waiting room and brick Station Master's house. It is based upon a model designed by John Ahern, who was a pioneer of scenic railway modelling in the early post-war years. There is no reason why you should not design your own station buildings "from scratch" or build an exact replica of an existing structure—perhaps your local station. Either way, the best way to make the structure is from card. We used Bristol board, which can be easily obtained from artists' suppliers, but any good quality card with a nice smooth surface

will do. Start by making a full-size drawing of the building, and then transfer the various "parts" to the card itself. Photo. 1 shows how the three sides of our waiting room were cut out in one piece, and the corners half cut through and bent round after cutting out. In the same picture, the little "lamp room" is shown "in the flat," just as it was cut out from the sheet of Bristol board. In the end wall of the main building are two slots, into which the tabs on the lamp room walls fit, thus joining the two buildings together. We used a Swan Morton Craft knife for all cutting operations.

Photo. 2 shows the Station Master's house under construction. Construction is of card once again, this time covered with brick paper. The tabs at the top of the walls will be used to support the roof, which, as can be seen in the picture, has a cutaway at one end to accommodate a chimney stack. Although the walls of our buildings are of card, we have used $\frac{1}{8}$ in. balsa as a base, which is cut accurately to exactly fit inside the walls; this balsa base is just visible through the window apertures in some of the pictures, and it adds greatly to the final rigidity of the model. Photo. 4 shows the waiting room, lamp room and Station Master's house joined together; our station is taking shape. The boarded timber walls of the waiting and lamp rooms are represented by scoring lines on the card, and filling these lines with ink. If the final coat of paint is not too thick, these lines will show through to give a passable "boarded" effect. If you are really meticulous, you can cut out individual boards, and stick them on separately; this will give a more realistic effect, and is really worth the trouble; we didn't have time!

All windows are glazed with thin perspex sheet, or any suitable transparent material; remember to glaze the windows before sticking on the roof. Chimney

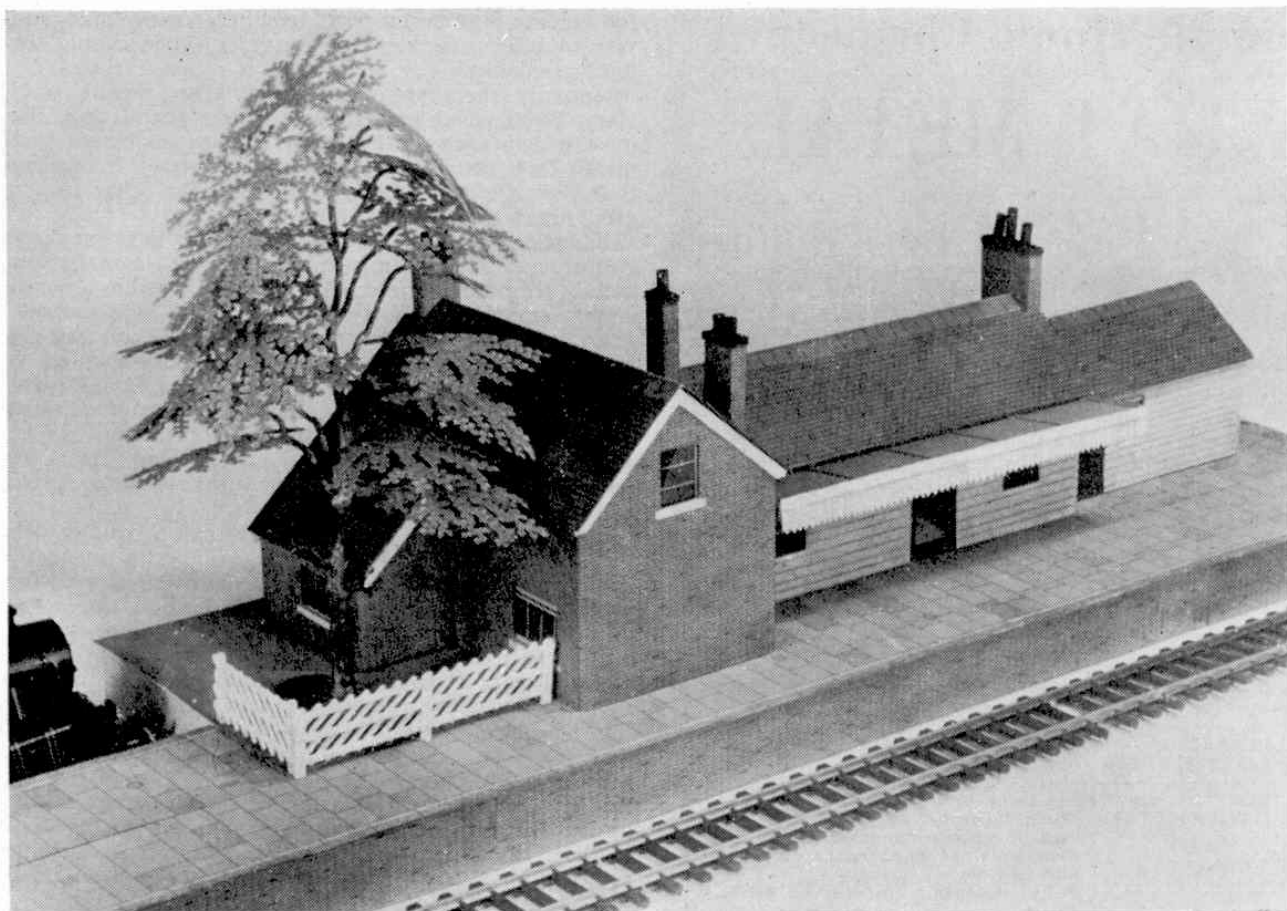


Photo. 3: A general view of the completed station. Detailing is as yet incomplete, but the fence and Britains' tree add much to the overall effect. The platform is from a length of 1 in. x 1½ in. hardwood, faced with brick paper, and pavement paper.

stacks are made from balsa, wrapped around with brick paper, and the pots are made from spent ball-point pen refills, which look most realistic when painted.

Painting and papering

The station buildings can be painted in any desired colour scheme, or in the colours of your favourite railway company. Always use matt paints, with a preference for rather austere colours. Our buildings are in buff and brown (rather like the old Great Western stations) with the house in yellow brick with a red-tiled roof. The short platform on which our building stands

was made simply from 1 in. x 1½ in. hardwood, surfaced with brick paper. This simple method gives a really strong platform. The Britains Silver Birch in the Station Master's garden completes the rural effect. When the model is almost complete, you can really go to town adding details like timetables, name boards, posters, people, weighing machines, milk churns, trolleys and lamp-posts; we have not got around to embellishing our station yet, but when we do we'll show you some more photographs. Models like this have a habit of developing into complete layouts—now we just can't wait to build a signal box to match!

Photo. 4: The left-hand picture shows the three parts of the station building joined together. The "window sills" are simply strips of light coloured paper, stuck on. The picture on the right gives a low angle view of the buildings; note the boards.

