

Buckshee

Scotland's branch lines inspire many modellers, and Redditch Model Railway Club's 'Buck' McNroy was no exception. Club secretary **GUY CRADDOCK** describes this fascinating layout's creation and development. *Photography, Mike Wild.*



BUCKSHEE was born out of the desire to build a totally new exhibition layout by a number of Redditch Model Railway Club members who wanted to create a layout suitable for one day shows. All the other club layouts like Arrowmouth (HM3), Chilcompton (HM8) and Dagnell End (HM34) are large layouts that are only really suitable for two-day shows because of the time they take to set up.

Whilst Buckshee is exhibited as a club layout it is actually owned by Buchanan McInroy, known as 'Buck' to his friends, and who has family origins in Scotland. The layout is designed to fit in a small hatchback car and the baseboard sizes were dictated by what would

fit in the back of his Metro. In typical Buck fashion, he sold the car before the layout was completed and then had a strange request of the car salesman who sold him his new car as he took along one of the baseboards to ensure it would fit in before he purchased it! The name of the layout comes about because much of the material used has come for nothing so Buck got it 'Buckshee'.

Buckshee is the result of what the first station on a projected line from Oban to Campbeltown could have looked like. The story goes that the line was promoted by the Caledonian Railway after the opening of the Callender and Oban Railway in 1880 (a line was at one time proposed from Campbeltown to



**A BR Sulzer Type
2 draws wagons
forward from the
loading dock at
Buckshee.**

STATISTICS

Owner:	Buchanan McInroy
Scale:	'OO'
Length:	15ft
Width:	18in
Track:	Peco code 75
Control:	DC
Period:	BR Scottish Region, 1950, 1960s or 1970s

Dalmally). Unfortunately it was soon realised that the line would be too costly to build with little if any profit and was thus terminated at Buckshee.

Buckshee is situated just slightly North of Kilinver on the shore of Loch Feochan (a sea loch) with a short branch of about two miles heading North East to serve a distillery in the village of Feochan. The village of Buckshee has a small harbour with the fish being taken out by train. There is also a small distillery which again has its product taken out by rail. Other goods traffic is generated by the distillery at Feochan.

Baseboards and track

Three out of the four baseboards which measure 3ft 9in x 1ft 3in are of a conventional solid top construction of softwood and plywood. The fourth board that forms the fiddle yard has a well created in the board framework which is covered in white melamine. This allows a series of track cassettes of various lengths to be moved around easily. These cassettes are made of a chipboard base covered in melamine with strips of L section aluminium strip screwed to them at the correct track gauge to allow the trains to operate on them.

The baseboards are joined together using pattern maker's dowels for alignment, which are incorporated in a metal rectangular plate. There are two of these in the ends of each board and the plates also incorporate a hole for a nut and bolt as well as the dowel. The dowels allow the layout to be assembled quickly at shows with the track correctly aligned every time. The result is a very firm and solid base for the railway which is much lighter to transport around to shows than our other exhibition layouts. The layout is also self supporting on its own trestles, each with a chain to adjust the height.

"The layout is designed to fit in a hatchback car."

GUY CRADDOCK

All of the track on the layout is Peco code 75. This has been laid on cork using wall tiles from a DIY store instead of the cork sold in rolls specifically for railway modelling. The formation has then been ballasted with granite chippings that have been stuck using diluted PVA glue, in the conventional manner. Once the track was laid the rail sides were painted a rust colour and the whole formation has since been toned down using a variety of aerosol-spray colours.

During the laying of the track a number of permanent magnets were installed under the track to operate automatic couplings on the »



trains. We decided after experimentation to use the American Kadee coupling system. Kadee produce a large range of couplings, many of which simply plug into the coupling pockets on the latest ready to run stock. The permanent magnets we have used are a mixture of the Kadee standard permanent magnets and some we made up out of the magnets from door catches. The latter works as well as the Kadee version on totally straight track but where there is any curve in the track we have found it is better to use Kadee's own product. We have also found that the Kadee couple height gauge is a very good investment. Using the height gauge we have made a simple coupling tester which is mounted on a short piece of timber at the end of a piece of track so the heights of couplings on all locomotives and rolling stock can be checked before use.

If the layout was started from scratch today then the wiring could have been simplified by the use of one of the Digital Command

Control systems which we have used on our most recent club exhibition layout Dagnell End. Buckshee is wired by the normal common return method to provide cab control via a single control panel behind the station. The size of the layout means it is very much operated on a one engine in steam principle.

Buildings

Virtually all the buildings on the layout are scratchbuilt, mainly using thick card for the basic structure. This includes the station building and signalbox, both of which have been made using drawings of suitable prototype buildings from the area of Scotland the layout is based.

We have not been afraid to use and adapt suitable kits and fully finished items. For instance, the weighbridge office has come from the Hornby Skaledale range. We have however cut the corner off the building to make it fit the required site. This proved to be easier than we

expected using a hand saw because the walls of these resin buildings are fairly thick so the remains of the building did not disintegrate as we had expected. The method was used on the stable block beside the distillery where the whole of the rear of the building was removed to thin it down to make it fit the required location. The piece we cut off did not go to waste as we simply turned it round and have used it as a low relief building in another part of the layout. The platforms are constructed from chipboard topped with hardboard. The platform edging is made from balsa wood. This allows for any out of gauge locomotives or stock which, if it rubs against the platform edge, to wear away the balsa wood rather than damage the rolling stock.

The small Loch Shee Halt on the branch line by the loch is an adapted Wills kit that has been modified to fit the location. The ruined farmer's croft building behind comes from the Ten Commandments range. This building is

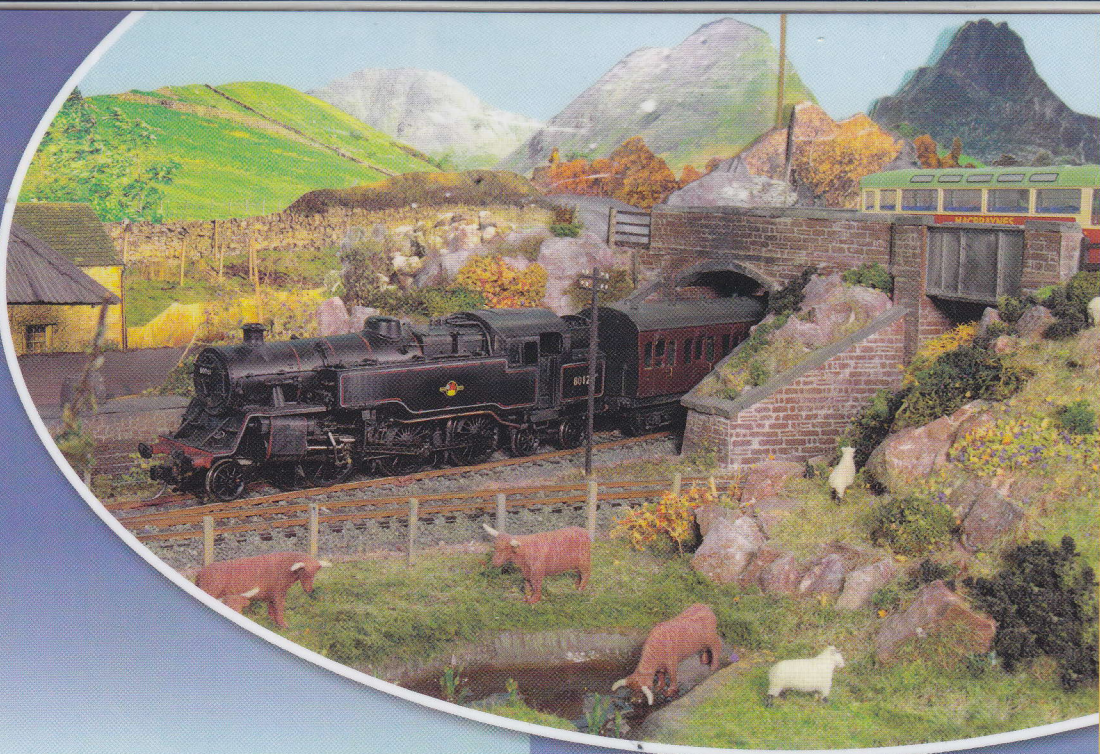




Right: A BR '4MT' 2-6-4T crosses the junction on the approach to Buckshee.



Below: A Caledonian 'Jumbo' 0-6-0 skirts the edge of the Loch as a Class 20 leads a goods train on the causeway.



based on a typical Scottish croft house which has been painted and weathered to suit the location. The ground around it has been built up to ensure it fits into the landscape. Being close to the scenic break into the fiddle yard it also helps to mask this area.

A notable omission from the layout is signals though this is soon to be rectified as a number of suitable signals which have been adapted for their locations from the Model Signal Engineering and Ratio ranges are under construction. As part of this process we are also experimenting with making them operational.

Scenery

The scenery has been built around the track formation to create the illusion of the railway being built through it rather than the other way round. The scenery is supported on expanded polystyrene covered with plaster bandage with additional Polyfilla. When this is dry, the ground is painted using mixtures of green and brown poster paints. The scenic ground cover is then built up using chopped foam compounds or scenic foliage to give the ground cover some depth.

Much of the recent scenic detail is down to Derek Collett, who admits he had not done any scenic modelling before joining the club.

"There is nothing like real rock to represent rock!"

GUY CRADDOCK

Following a conversation and some inspiration from one of the demonstrators at a local model railway exhibition and some patience, Derek is producing much of the detail seen today. A speciality of his on some of our other layouts is rose bay willow herb, which unfortunately is not appropriate for this layout. Derek has however spent many hours making the station gardens on the platforms and painting the many figures that are on the layout. To provoke discussion from the spectators at exhibitions he included a sheep with a tartan fleece and another with a wire wool one amongst the normal herd. »



4 Left: Outside the station the postman goes to collect the latest mail consignment.

5 Below: A '439' 0-4-4T simmers at Buckshee while waiting to depart with the passenger service.



Use has been made of genuine granite stone in some places on the layout to create rock features. This was achieved by smashing up a lump of granite ballast acquired from a local railway into smaller pieces. This did actually take some doing but there is nothing like pieces of the actual rock to represent rock!

The key water feature on the layout is the loch that the railway runs each side of. Over the years we have experimented with many ways of making water features. For Buckshee we need to create a choppy water effect so using resin was not appropriate. Following some advice we gained from members of the North Devon Model Railway Club we have

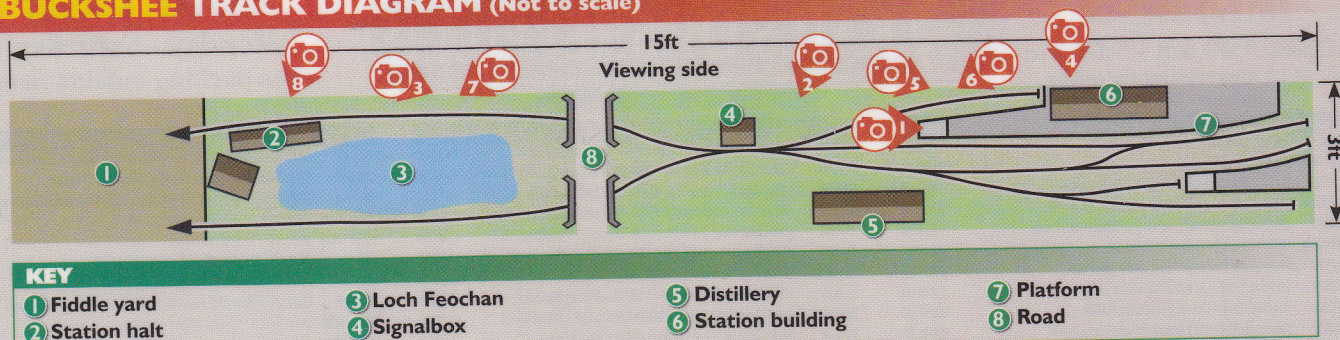
used their method. The secret is Artex paint used to create textured ceilings. We first cut a sub-base out of the piece of plywood onto which we applied neat PVA glue. The Artex paint was then applied and then using a brush dipped in water we were able to create the wave and wind effects on the water surface. Once dry we then painted the surface and added a layer of varnish to seal everything and give the water a slight shine. The method is very simple and quick to achieve and provokes much comment at exhibitions. It has also proved to be very hard wearing and is standing up well to the rigours of model railway exhibitions

The backscenes also provoke a fair amount of comment at exhibitions, as they are pseudo three-dimensional and provide a very effective sense of depth without taking too much space. The pictures are taken from old calendars that we have collected. Many hours were spent finding the right perspective and building the cuttings up to form a picture. The pictures are mounted on card and using two or three layers of these pictures with card spacers between them, the effect is created. Once these are made up some careful painting of some pictures is done using poster paints to remove modern-looking items such as cars and so on. Before they are installed, the whole »





BUCKSHEE TRACK DIAGRAM (Not to scale)



106 Above left: The Caledonian 'Jumbo' approaches the station with a mixed goods which includes provisions for the local distillery.

107 Below: A Clayton Type 2 coasts towards Buckshee with a mixed goods.

units are matt varnished to remove the shine. A particularly cunning part of the illusion the backscenes create is behind the loch. The railway appears to be running on a causeway between two parts of the loch but the part at the back of the layout is painted onto the backscene. If you look closely there is even the image of a train running on the opposite bank of the loch. This was a picture found in a railway magazine and is actually a Great Western branch line train!

Rolling stock

The layout fleet is very much a mixture of detailed ready-to-run and kit built items. The layout can be operated in two distinct eras of British Railways steam and diesel of the early 1960s and British Rail diesels of the 1970s, or as sometimes happens at exhibitions, a mixture of the two eras.


In the 1960s era the locomotives include a Q Kits '16XX' 0-6-0PT, a McIntosh '439' 0-4-4T and Caledonian Railway 'Jumbo' 0-6-0. There are also ex London Midland & Scottish Railway Fairburn and BR Standard 2-6-4Ts which are detailed and renumbered Bachmann items. When the layout runs with BR diesels there are a much detailed Hornby Class 29, Bachmann Class 20s and 25s and Classes 17, 26 and 27 from Heljan. We have examples in green and blue liveries of many of these locomotives to allow an easy change in era. We also have a much modified railbus based on the old Airfix kit with a Branchlines motorising kit which runs fairly well though is likely to be replaced with one of the new forthcoming Heljan ready-to-run examples.

Like the locomotives the coaches and wagons

are again a mixture of kit built and ready-to-run items. The coaches are a mixture of Comet for the former LMS suburban stock and Ian Kirk kits for the former London and North Eastern Railway coaches. We also use a number of ready-to-run items from the Airfix and Bachmann ranges, notably the latter's excellent Mk 1 coaches which we run in maroon and blue and grey liveries. The wagons are either kits from the Parkside Dundas and Genesis kits ranges or ready-to-run items from Dapol, Mainline or Bachmann.

All of the locomotives and rolling stock are fitted with Kadee couplings though we have had to take care to get the heights right for them. This is especially true on some of the locomotives from the Bachmann and Heljan ranges which are fitted with NEM coupling pockets: although a suitable Kadee coupling can be plugged in much care has to be taken to get the coupling just right.

The future

A layout is never finished and whilst Buckshee has been exhibited a number of times we plan to continue to add detail to the layout. Our model railway club is always building layouts and whilst we have recently completed a large Southern Region layout called Dagnell End (HM34) we have just started a new layout called Oakenshaw which is based on the former Midland Railway set in West Yorkshire in the 1960s. Building on the experience of Buckshee we have plans for another terminus to fiddle yard layout of a similar size but set in the 1970s. The layout will also be used as a test bed for us to further experiment with DCC operation. 



108 The ruins of a farmer's croft stand forlorn above the railway at Loch Shee Halt.