



With the shed in splendid isolation, the path to it has to be cleared when the snow falls

EQUIPMENT

I've said before, in MMI articles, that I'm in awe of real model engineers. I can't solder for toffee, and the thought of a lathe makes me quiver in my boots, so my approach to equipment is tempered by a distinct lack of skill. Our model club, the Sheffield Ship Model Society, has regular visits from a professional ship modeller, and I once heard him say that all you need, to be able to build ship models, is a table, and a sharp knife. Now I take a lot of comfort from that, because it really sums up my approach. I have the obvious tools, like scalpel, pliers, saw, pin vice, steel rule, etc., and I do have some powered support, in the form of a Dremel, and a Minitools jigsaw, but it is all pretty basic. You'll not find any computer-controlled equipment, working from CAD programs here!



ABOVE: The cupboard, with parts, and tools in it, and the stereo on top, along with a yacht. The Anglepoise 'looks' over my shoulder when at work



ABOVE: The seat at the workbench, with the larger, regularly used tools on shelves behind it. The Dremel is in its box on the wall, and a couple of toolboxes are on the floor, along with the black keels for the square-riggers. There is space on the wall for plans

 GREAT BRITAIN

LIFE IN THE SHED

IF YOU BUILD MODELS, YOU'D BETTER HAVE SOMEWHERE TO DO IT!

AUTHOR: TOM GORMAN

A MOVE OUTSIDE

I used to build my models in the loft, the largest room in the house, but its relatively weak floor started to creak more and more, driving mad everybody else at home, so the days of my residence there became numbered, and other plans had to be made. Now there are always plenty of things on which to spend money in my family, so when I heard talk of a shed for model building, I wondered if it would ever reach the top of the priority list. To cut a long story short, it did, and this is the short tale of its inception, organisation and use.

CIVIL ENGINEERING

The shed is 10 ft by 8 ft, which I think is the smallest practical size to allow you to both build, and store, largish models. At that size, we needed a base, so that was the very next move after ordering the shed itself. That done, and the shed erected, it has to have power, for heat, light and tools. In our case, that was the catalyst for replacing an ancient fuse board in the house, at the same time as the shed's supply cable was installed. At the other end is a modern consumer unit, taking the power to two double sockets, and the lights. The replacement of a dining room carpet soon after, allowed the cutting of a suitably sized carpet piece for the shed, and, with that, and a suitable path laid across the garden, I was in business.

WORKING AREA

I like to have the option of sitting down, to work, whenever I can, so my 'bench' is an old school double desk, of the type that has two lift-up lids, and inkwells, raised up on blocks to allow my legs under it, and I sit in a swivel chair. The sockets of a three-socket extension lead are fastened to the side of the desk, and plugged in to one of the wall sockets, so that I have power right next to the job, whenever I need it. I have an old cupboard in the corner, and, as my collection of parts and tools has grown, it now contains small parts boxes along with the Minitools jigsaw and its transformer. Its top makes a shelf, good enough to take a small



ABOVE: The end wall, the storage area for the square-riggers. The chargers live off the bottom left-hand corner of this picture, on the end of a shelf



ABOVE: The window wall, with the heater on the floor below the window. A square-rigger sits on the bench, undergoing some modifications

stereo player, and one of my model yachts. The speakers for the stereo are hung on the walls, high up, out of the way, and this feature is a civilising influence that I can highly recommend, if you like music.

I used to find, in the loft, that I put tools down behind my chair when not in use, so, in the shed, I erected a couple of shelves behind me, for the same purpose, and I leave this stuff out all the time. The things there are the larger tools, such as pliers, hacksaw, Stanley knife, etc., an Anglepoise Lamp, and the battery chargers. In line with my 'system' of putting tools behind my chair, I put larger tool and parts boxes on the floor, behind me, as well as the removable sailing keels for my square-rigger models. The wall behind my chair has places to pin up small drawings and pictures of my subjects, also a larger area, where I can stick up a full size working drawing.

STORAGE

The back wall of the shed is my main storage area. By shoehorning them in, I've persuaded four sizeable square-rigger models to live, reasonably comfortably, on the floor and on a shelf. My models have 'sailing' cradles raised on legs, allowing sailing keels to be fitted by the pond, but I also have lower cradles, to reduce the headroom needed by the boats on the shelf, to get them to fit in. A model yawl sits with the square-riggers on this side, and a 'Fairwind' sits on the floor in another corner. It's pretty well full now, with the fifth square-rigger living on the bench, but I still have just enough room to work, standing, all the way around the desk.

HEATING AND BIT MORE CIVILISATION

There is an opening window, which I face when sitting at the desk, and under it is the indispensable heater. It is a convector, with a timer, so, when the temperature falls, I can set-up some 'automatic





ABOVE: The door wall, with some artwork, to make the place more homely

heating on' times, to try and ward off the damp. On even the very coldest days, I can get up a very pleasant, cosy atmosphere in there.

By the door, and in other odd spaces, I have a picture or two, just for the pleasure of them. When you're fed up to the teeth of doing something, or seeking inspiration about the next move, the pictures, and the birds out the window, can all help!

THE VERDICT

The loft was bigger, it was in the house, so I didn't feel like an

outcast, and I did like it up there, but, on the whole, I've taken to the shed very well. It really does come into its own in the fine weather, when I use a garden bench just outside, with the shed door held back on a catch, letting the sun go streaming in. Also, in the shed, I can give free rein to my taste in music, without anybody hearing enough to worry them. Space is beginning to run out, but I suspect that even if I had the large assembly building at Boeing, I would eventually fill it, so I shall continue to organise, and even rationalise, if I have to!

So, if the thought of working in a shed ever crosses your mind, remember me, and my efforts; take courage, and have a go! **MMI**



ABOVE: The author, on the 'veranda', with a Hooghly River Pilot Brig