



# Southport Model Railway Society Newsletter

No 38: January 2015      Deputy Editor - Allan Trotter  
([eastbankmrc@btinternet.com](mailto:eastbankmrc@btinternet.com))

---

## **Editorial**

The Southport MRS January 2015 newsletter has a temporary editor this month due to our esteemed editor Peter Mills being indisposed due to an industrial accident. Perhaps after our photographic excursion to the not so Wild West at Dodge City last week I have assumed the position of Deputy Editor (or Deputy Dawg) for the duration. Peter hopes to be back in charge very soon. Allan Trotter.

## **Chairman's Notes**

I'd like to wish everyone a Happy New Year and Best Wishes for 2015. I hope you all had the Christmases you had hoped and wished for. Once again we have enjoyed a double Christmas celebration away with family, part Italian part traditional English, which this time was extended into welcoming in the New Year. As an added bonus on our way home we visited the first model railway show of the year, Kidlington Scoutrail 2015, near Oxford which I have reported on in the pages of this issue.

Having enjoyed the seasonal celebrations and the rested break and now that the resulting hiatus it caused has passed, its time to resume the ongoing refurbishing tasks at Portland Street so that we can return to modelling as soon as possible. As my only single resolution for the year I'm hoping to be there at the first available opportunity and if anyone cares to join me your efforts and contributions will be extremely welcome. Here's to a good and productive 2015 modelling year. Frank Parkinson.

## **Secretary's Report**

Nothing to report.

## **Exhibition Manager's Report**

Thoughts to prefix the 2015 Exhibition.

Time flies by ever so quickly. Events recently (which are not to do with anything SMRS related) have set me thinking. The end of September marks 15 full years since I retired (quite early – before things turned for the worse!). My first Exhibition as Manager was September 2001 so at conclusion of this year's Exhibition it will be 15 Exhibitions. Over these Exhibitions there has been constant change. Exhibitor's expectations are naturally much greater. Layouts are more complex. Technology has advanced. Costs have soared. Suitable affordable venues are difficult to find. Free parking, access by public transport, level access, no steps or stairs are all major features. The public are less interested in attending, probably a reflection of changed patterns of family life. Yet our public who do regularly support us require more sophisticated presentations, welcoming premises, interesting Layouts, catering enhancements etc.

It is the small things that make the most interesting comparisons. The paperwork in 2000 was by typed letter – an original that was copied then the names etc added. Replies came one by one, either handwritten or typed. Stamps and envelopes, which whilst cheap, added up to a significant amount. Much was achieved through face to face discussions around the Exhibition Circuit. Thankfully this much remains so today. The entire paperwork including notes took up less than 25% of what is necessary now. And

this is with today's electronic communication. The paper trail has assumed an importance beyond expectation. Just like it has on Heritage Railways and Main Line. In 2014 I spent less on paper and ink cartridges than I did on postages in 2004.

When I look at the Exhibition Accounts for 2004 and 2014 I see that Venue costs, Printers, Advertising have all doubled. Catering costs are just less than double, Accommodation increased by 50%. Secretarial, sundries, signage and Insurance are all less. On income side our Catering surplus is up 25%. Admission costs have been increased by 50%. Our overall surplus has declined by 50%.

Over many years Southport Model Railway Society's Members have annually joined together to create an excellent weekend (according to feedback received) which we all thoroughly enjoy. We never know what the future holds. Strangely we have confidence that we can more than hold our own. The unity and achievement of a successful Exhibition is more than figures on a screen can ever convey. We steadily and at times stealthily introduce changes which freshen up our offering and respond to the negative and positive feedback. Long may we so continue!

Birkdale High School is booked for the weekend of 07th & 08th November. We have some new ideas to trial. I am open to new thoughts. We dare not allow complacency to set in. New blood, new ideas and new ways are always welcome. Should anyone wish to consider taking on the reins from me, they can understudy my activities over the next few months as we pull together the sinews for November 2015.

Tony Kuivala, 04th January 2015.

## Layouts & Club News

**Redecoration of Portland Street railway room:** There has been no progress over the last few weeks, mainly because of the Christmas break. However, we now hope to get back on track again (forgive pun). As much as possible of the ceiling needs to be painted and the support for the layout attached to the wall. Portland Street can then be moved to its next temporary position whilst we tackle the papering and painting of the other two walls. Hopefully this will be a relatively straightforward job with no need to replaster, other than patching.

**Breaking News:** The ceiling of the Portland Street railway room has now been painted the layout support batten has been affixed to the wall and it, the layout, has been moved to its second temporary home. The wall has been inspected and a lot of plaster repair needs to be done. But first of all, all the old wallpaper has to be stripped. The sooner this is done the sooner we can get Portland Street up and running again. So, it is up to you, the members, to make this happen.

**Monsal Dale:** There has been only minor progress on the fiddle yard revamp, again largely due to the Christmas break. A new 'Y' point has been acquired so with any luck over the next few weeks we should be able to at least mechanically get everything working. Then comes the wiring up of the point motors back to the control panel. I have a test panel constructed to check that the route setting switches do what they are supposed too - assuming we connect the right wires, so it should be straightforward! Once this has been completed and tested, we can move onto the tricky job of replacing the single slip at the station throat with a double slip. I know this was not Midland practice, but it will make operation at exhibitions simpler so that there will be more interest for the public.

**Talks:** Our traditional December meeting was again at Jim's. He regaled us with an erudite discussion of the history of railway development in the United States, particularly how this affected railroads in Colorado. Although there were not many photos of actual railroads, we had seen a taster of these in Robin Green's talk. Jim's talk was preceded by a selection of authentic mid western food researched and prepared by Fiona. We are extremely grateful to Fiona and Jim for both the food and for putting up with us.

We commenced our programme of presentations for 2015 with a slide show given by Allan Trotter on Tuesday 13th at the Clubrooms. As mentioned above, last month Jim took us through the history of Railroad development in the USA and particularly Colorado. However what was missing from this were photographs of trains, structures and scenery. This sad state of affairs was redressed by Allan with a selection showing the real railroads of Colorado and adjacent states but none of the narrow gauge stuff which we saw in Robin Green's talk. Ian Shulver.

## **Member' News**

### **Kidlington SCOUTRAIL 2015**

We visited this model railway show on our return journey following New Year celebrations in the south, there were 10 layouts in a range of scales including 16mm live steam called Nockingbigg End and in 9mm Tanybwllch both of which may be known to some of us. Another layout caught my attention though, both novel in construction as the picture shows and it's acquisition. I'll let the owner, Roger Hampshire, tell you in his own words.

### **The Ninety Pence Railway**

The model is based on a fictional town in the Swiss mountains. Built by an unknown person about 20 years ago, with its own carrying and display case, has a working ski lift, lights in the houses, electric signals and points. It was purchased on the English eBay site a few months ago, with a starting price of 90 pence and no reserve. Over 80 persons viewed the model but nobody made a bid. I discovered it 10 minutes before the auction finished. Checks revealed the real starting price was actually one euro (90 pence) and the buyer 'to collect from the owner's home' in Luxembourg, hence the reason for no bids. My daughter lives in Luxembourg and with a single bid of 90 pence the model was purchased. A quick phone call and my daughter drove to the next village to collect it. It needed a little TLC but is basically purchased in the condition as seen, although the track and points need some attention. The rolling stock was chosen by my 7 year old twin grandsons who enjoy playing with it. Frank Parkinson.



## Forthcoming events

The programme for the next few months is as follows:

February 17	Mega points - a demonstration. David Fenton.
February 20-22	Modelrail Scotland.
March	Amtrak: Trains and Travel. Allan Trotter.
April 04-06	York Model Railway Exhibition.
April	A life in 86 minutes. The work of Geoffrey Jones. Jim Ford.
May	Chicago, South Shore & South Bend Railroad. Allan Trotter.
June	Quakers and Railways in Great Britain. Ian Shulver
June 20-21	Woodvale Rally.
July	Painting backscenes. Hilary Finch
August	Statfold Barn. Tony Kuivala
September	No talk (depleted membership)
October	A celebration of the Colorado tour. Members' photos.

## November 7-8 Southport Model Railway Exhibition

### Short Circuits No. 17.

#### "Relay" useful devices.

Mentioned previously in a previous article, relays are quite useful components for use in model railways. So what are they then?

Put simply, they are electrically operated switches. Through the winding which is a coil of fine wire around a central iron core, a current is passed making the core magnetic. This attracts a hinged armature which lifts a contact or a number of contacts and performs the same function as operating a switch. When the current is disconnected the armature releases and the contacts return to the normal setting. Contact units may be make, break, changeover or make before break format, depending on the relay.

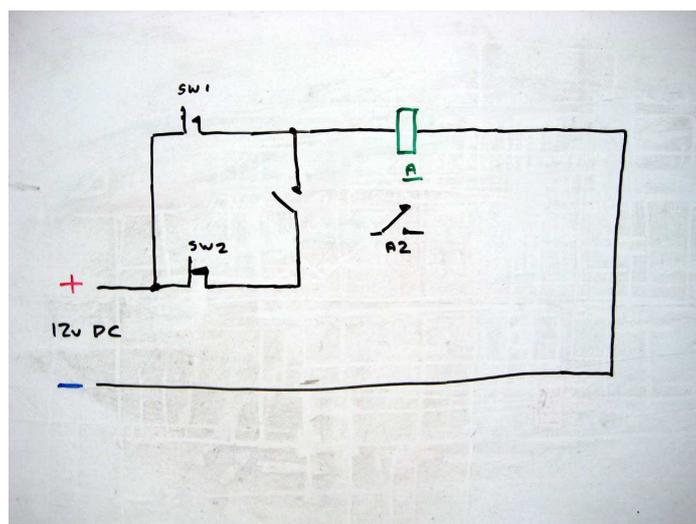
Although many specifications are available the ones most useful on model railway layouts operate on 12 volts DC with contact units rated at a couple of amps.

Using circuitry, relays can be made to latch on after a push button is pressed and pressing another button can be made to release the relay. A holding circuit is provided by the relay's own make contact. Release is by either breaking the holding circuit or applying a short circuit across the relay coil. These methods are useful if the push buttons used are of the double pole single throw non locking type and is combined with the points route setting circuit. Relay contact units may also be used not only to operate signals but also to activate or isolate specified track sections. Relays can be made to be slightly slower to release by connecting a diode across the winding in reverse polarity. For a longer time delay, a capacitor may be inserted making sure that the polarity is correct. This can also help reduce arcing across the switch or push button contacts.

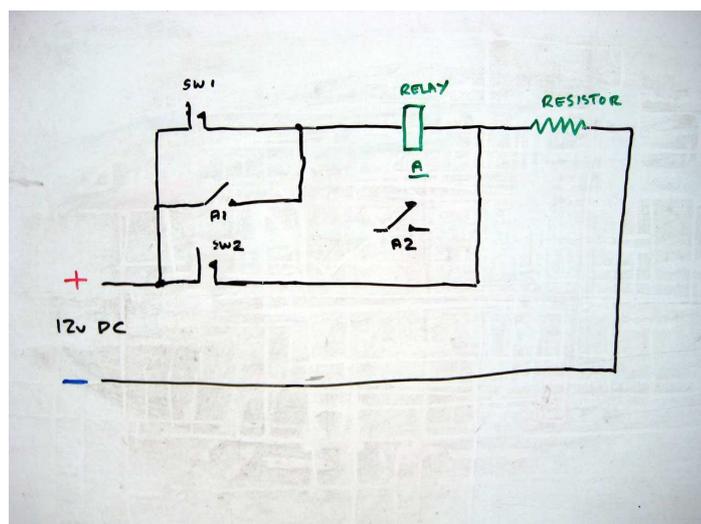
It is very easy for relay circuitry to become somewhat complex. That's not for here though. That would defeat the original concept of this whole series of articles, the purpose of which as stated is "Model Railway Electrics made Easy".

Some example circuits using relays are illustrated but of course there are many more variations, depending on what the requirements are.

### Non locking button, push to make operate, push to break release



### Non locking buttons, push to make operate, push to make release



## Tri-ang Railways Nostalgia

### VLAD, the on Railer. "Vehicular Line Access Device"

The wizards at Margate could never be accused of not producing some imaginative models but surely one of the most extreme examples must be the R752 Battle Space Turbo Car.

Aeronautical power on rails does have some provenance however as a full size propeller driven example operated in Germany and another vehicle ran on the New York Central Railroad in the USA, where a Budd RDC3 (Rail Diesel Car) ran with a twin jet engine pod converted from a USAF bomber.

The Tri-ang Hornby model was first listed in the annual catalogue in 1966 but did not appear for some time after that. It continued in the catalogue until 1971.

The Tri-ang Hornby four wheel Turbo Car vehicle has a high speed electric motor within but this does not drive the wheels, it drives a propeller at the rear. It's most notorious

feature though is a somewhat ferocious looking spike sticking out the front. Apparently this spike was responsible for some incidents by over enthusiastic people being impaled viewing the speeding vehicle at track level. Later models had the hard plastic spike replace with a softer plastic one but not one that was that much softer. The real skill with this model is in driving it. It can reach phenomenal speeds on straight track but would of course derail spectacularly on set track type curves. As propulsion is with the propeller only, braking is achieved by turning the controller quickly in reverse before hitting a bend. The model must have been well proven before release as they survive well the numerous derailments and free flight excursions due to over enthusiastic driving. All in all, an excellent and entertaining model from the days when model railways (train sets!) were actually fun.

Perhaps the present day Train Operating Companies could do with a fleet of Turbo Cars to clear overrunning engineering blockades caused by Network Rail.



**End**