



# Newsletter

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Editor: Allan Trotter

Email: [eastbank@btinternet.com](mailto:eastbank@btinternet.com)

## Editorial.

### DC or not DC, that is the question.

No doubt if a certain gentleman from Stratford upon Avon was around today and he was interested in model railways, his dissertations may have be slightly different.

For anyone joining or rejoining the model railway hobby today the choice of what to purchase is overwhelming. No matter what choice is made there is one item that will be essential if you actually want to run your trains and not just keep them in their box or in a display cabinet and that is some type of train control unit.

The main options are traditional direct current control (DC) or digital command control (DCC). There is no right or wrong here or even an ideal solution to this dilemma as each system has its own different merits. It is not really a good idea to mix the two systems though.

In DC systems, control units are sometimes referred to erroneously as transformers but really there is a bit more to it than that. Such units should more accurately be described as a transformer rectifier line controller unit. There are a number of manufacturers involved in producing line controllers but generally it is worthwhile going for a high quality unit rather than budget types. After all, your investment in locomotives is squander without the means to operate them properly.

Hornby do make DC line controllers and are marketed under the H&M (Hamant & Morgan) brand, a one time independent company but now part of the Hornby Empire. Another brand leader in line controllers is Gaugemaster Controls who also make high quality units. Other makes are available.

With DC systems quite often a dual line controller is useful and once again both Hornby and Gaugemaster supply these as new. However there is another option to consider. When H&M was a separate company, one of their most popular line controllers was a twin track unit called the Duette. As it has two separate secondary transformer windings, it is suitable for common return systems. This permits one loco to operate conventionally from the track and another from overhead catenary. Both locos may be controlled independently either in the same direction or even towards each other. Vigilance is essential to avoid head on collisions though.

Before making your purchase it may be worth checking on Ebay for pre owned H&M Duette units as there are many bargains to be had. A new Gaugemaster twin track unit will set you back over one hundred pounds but a pre owned H&M Duette may be had for around £25.00 to £35.00. Just make sure that the H&M Duette is of the latest design with the vertical front panel and a high-low internal resistance switch. The high resistance setting is essential for proper low speed control of the more efficient electric motors installed in most modern locos of today.

If your preference is for more sophistication such as sound and lights and bells and whistles then your only option is to go for DCC. Both previously mentioned manufacturers also offer a range of suitable control units. **Allan Trotter.**

## **Events Diary.**

Tue 17<sup>th</sup> March. SMRS Committee Meeting, 19:30.  
Tue 24<sup>th</sup> March. Presentation. 19:30. Threlkeld Railway. Tony Kuivala.  
Tue 21<sup>st</sup> April. SMRS Annual General Meeting, 19:30.

All members are welcome at all meetings.

**NOTE:** Meetings will be held at the SMRS Clubroom unless stated otherwise.

## **Chairman's Report.**

As most of you may be aware, from early in January I have been having problems with my vision (blurring, poor colour differentiation as well as double vision) caused by a condition called *basal cell arteritis* This is inflammation of the arteries supplying blood to the retina, optic nerve and muscles controlling eye movement and effectively starves them of oxygen. Although things are improving slowly, it is uncertain whether decent vision will return. Apart from issues with day to day living (driving is a no-no at the moment, reading etc), it has severely curtailed any modelling, particularly 2mm and N gauge. I may ultimately have to make a leap of faith to such scales as On or, heaven forbid, 32mm or 45mm narrow gauge.

But back to Club matters. With the success of the crowd funding project before Christmas, we now had sufficient funds to make major improvements to the interior of our clubhouse. This commenced with upgrading the electrical wiring to modern standards and was almost immediately followed by a start on redecorating the parlour. The bulk of the work has been completed and I confidently expect everything to be finished by the beginning of March. I have to give my sincere thanks to all those who have spent the last few weeks busily working away on this. Indeed on one occasion when I managed to get to the Club, there were eight or nine members slaving away and drinking tea.

What's next? The garden is one area that clearly needs a little TLC and I am pleased that a plan has been formulated, perhaps with some refinements needed, with a start date early in the spring. As part of our commitment to

promoting the historic aspects of our building, a series of "storyboards" are proposed but I will leave our secretary to expound on this.

In terms of modelling, once the parlour has been finished and the library books put back, it is intended to re-erect Monsal Dale so that we have a working N gauge layout to 'play' with. HS3, the upstairs multi gauge multi scale project is progressing well. As has previously been mentioned, HS32 is up and running for battery and live steam operation although at the moment it does not have any DC electrical supply. HS16.5 is also operational and can be used for both analogue and digital running with work continuing on the point motors and the live frog switching so that Hornby Live Steam will be a possibility. HS9 (and HS12) have not been started as yet although we have had some tentative thoughts on what it might look like. I do not think there is a great rush for this since we do have Monsal Dale and in any event, it would be good to complete work already underway. The Club does have great track record in not completing various projects!

By the time you read this, Derek, Tony and Barry will have taken Clairmont Old Quay to the 7mm narrow gauge exhibition at Morecambe on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February. This is our first external exhibition for a couple of years. I hope they enjoyed it.

### **IMPORTANT.**

Finally, may I remind you that your annual subscription for SMRS membership for 2020-21 is now due? Jim, David or I will be more than pleased to relieve you of your hard won cash. **Ian Shulver.**

### **Secretary's Report.**

This month I have not got a lot to report other than to record my appreciation that a good deal of club activity is taking place. The sleeper trip is organised and those who wish to travel have indicated as such and the sleeper berths are already booked. It is very much a traditional sleeper trip for SMRC with a trip on the Jacobite, two nights in Fort William and two nights in Oban with a night on Colonsay and a bus trip in between. The only thing missing is the opportunity to enjoy some deep fried haggis at Tyndrum whilst changing between the two lines as this time we are going by bus direct. What is different is that there will be four couples as three of the WAGs are joining us for the whole trip. The dynamics will be more like our earlier trips to Darjeeling, Marrakesh and Colorado. And one of the WAGs is known to have a habit of counting the units of alcohol consumed.

The decorating of the parlour is now largely complete and work continues elsewhere, led by Colin our indomitable Facilities Manager. As with HS32/16.5/12/9, our more recent members deserve a special mention for their exceptional commitment to this work which also gives them a strong imprint of ownership on the club.

We have also been able to re-start our programme of talks and the next one will take place on Tuesday the 24<sup>th</sup> March when Tony Kuivala will talk to us about his experiences at Threlkeld. Tony stated: This is the story of, perhaps, a little known narrow gauge railway which started life in the 1870s when the quarry first opened, initially to provide ballast for the Penrith to Keswick railway. Demand for stone then increased dramatically for other civil engineering projects nearby. It is an interesting story from the early days through to the establishment of the mining museum you can visit today. Steam and diesel-hauled trains operate throughout the summer holidays and on other special occasions. We are also hoping to be able to re-commence our film nights and outside visits.



Finally, a picture of a full size, 12 inches to the foot scale train. This shows 769 442, one of the new tri power (25Kv AC, 750v DC and diesel electric) trains, formerly a Thames Link Class 319 dual voltage electric unit, in Platform 6 of Southport Station alongside the new passenger shelter which is being erected. I thought it was on driver training but in fact it had broken down and was awaiting attention and eventually limped back to Springs Branch! **Jim Ford.**

### **A Grand Day Out.**

Southport MRS was invited to exhibit its 0n scale layout Claremont Old Quay at the Morecambe exhibition on Saturday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February.

Derek Pratt managed to capture a scene of Trevor Foster's layout in operation at the Morecambe 7mm Narrow Gauge Association exhibition with Tony Kuivala giving a good impression of knowing what he's doing. **Derek Pratt.**



## **Where's Allan?**

The first correct response received was from Andrew Chrysler who stated: *"You are at Quintinshill, which was the scene of a wartime collision claiming many lives. Quintinshill is near Gretna and the "Devil's Porridge" museum (which mainly concentrates on the Gretna Munitions factory) and has a display dedicated to this tragedy". Well done Andrew.*

Ian Shulver also wrote *"I struggled with "where's Allan" - I have seen the picture (just) and think it is the southern uplands but researching the place is not easy".* Thanks Ian and once again, close but no cigar.

*A telephone response was received from Ian Graham who also correctly stated that this location is Quintinshill, scene of Britain's worst railway disaster over a century ago. Well done Ian.*

Thank you to all three members who offered their correct contributions.

For March, I am still in Scotland and this scene shows ex LMS Princess Coronation or Duchess 6233 "Duchess of Sutherland" incarcerated in an open air penitentiary outside a well known operator of holiday camps. This camp is, or was, adjacent to the A719 Dunure Road. Fortunately the locomotive

received a well deserved parole and has now been restored to operating condition and returned for service on the main line. Where am I?



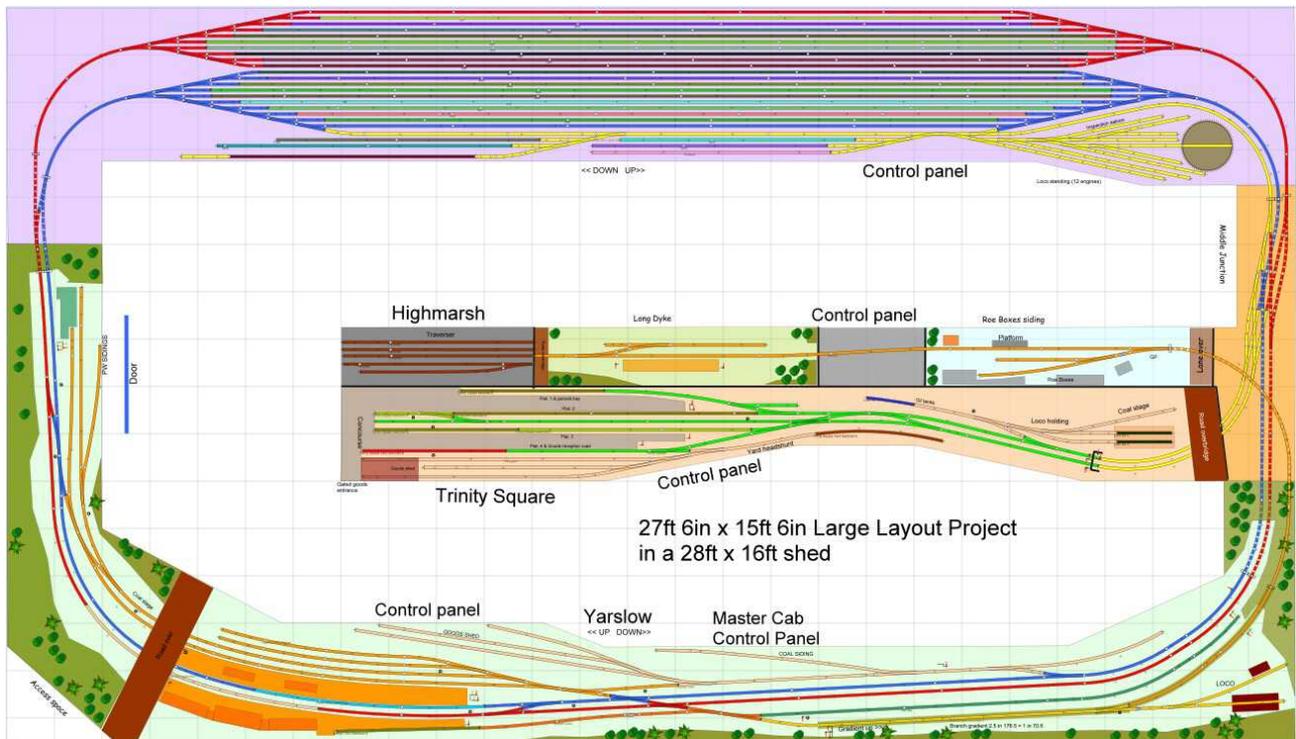
## **Members Miscellanea.**

### **The Empire in the Shed.**

Whether through genuine fascination, or just because I am the new boy, I have been asked to pen a few lines about the "Empire in The Shed" that I propose to build in OO gauge finescale.

My wife and I moved to Southport last Autumn with a view to finding and buying a Victorian villa that we could "do up" and make our forever home. In West London, where we used to live, we ran a painting, decorating and odd-job business. I retrained as an electrician having retired after a 30-year career in corporate banking.

The house we have found, fitting the description above, has sufficient garden space for a shed big enough to house my dream layout. At 28 feet by 16 feet it's no ordinary shed, it is being built by a firm who normally build agricultural barns and stables and the Sefton Council Building Control Officers have been very interested in it! Nevertheless, not being one to accept that I can't have what I want, everybody has been placated and the shed will become the home for the plan below.



I should say at this point that it has taken me about ten years to design all of the aspects of this plan to the point where I know how much track, wire, ballast, locomotives, wagons and telegraph poles I need to build it. In fact, the toughest journey has been to create the design process itself. I started with a blank piece of paper and the idea of "my perfect layout". It is not as easy as it sounds, try it and you will see what I mean. I wanted this layout to satisfy all of my wants, to do everything I ever wanted a layout to do and still be practical for one-man operation.

The design process covers the initial wish list and concept, infrastructure, track-plan, operation and control, electrical and mechanical, scenic and access and finally financial and reasonableness.

### **My wish list was simple;**

- Variety of operation and traffic
- Ability to run a train from storage to storage
- The ability to make a journey on the layout
- BR (NE) Region in the steam/diesel transition period
- Ability to build, maintain and operate single handed

My YouTube channel (Yarslow Model Railway) will give you a taste of my previous layout and the skill levels I have and you are welcome to join "Your Model Railway Club", an online forum where I post regularly. This channel will also carry a series of videos I am making on the above design processes so I won't go into it all here. The layout represents a few fictitious towns in a fictitious county sitting somewhere on the Eastern/North Eastern Region border. This allows me to run a wide range of ex-LNER types and there are

even a few Scottish based engines which somehow manage to find themselves that far south.

The storage loops have a capacity of 38 trains and hold both express and ordinary passenger trains. There are no A4's and 12-coach sets here. This is a secondary main line where the B1 4-6-0's and Standard 4MT's hold court, hauling 8 coach sets full of businessmen between the Midlands, Yorkshire and the Scottish cities. The coastal resort of Inglethorpe attracts weekend excursions. On the freight side, the C-class fully fitted trains run up the ECML so traffic is dominated by F and J class slower workings, a few through freights and a healthy smattering of coal and ore trains.

Engineering trains have always held a fascination for me so the long brown siding is actually a cartridge facility where I can introduce ballast or PW Dept trains. The cartridges also offer a further 12 special workings like a Pigeon Special, horse box trains, a boarding school working and other similar odd-balls. The terminating sidings in front of the running loops hold the 5 trains that serve the terminus station. This terminus, a thinly disguised version of Cyril Freezer's immortal Minorities, is very much the secondary station in the city of Beckbridge. It offers 4 platform faces for inner suburban services and a small yard for parcels and van traffic tripped across from the main city yard. Alongside the storage yard is a loco holding facility which holds spare locomotives.

Yarslow station itself is the amalgam of a number of ideas and allows trains in either direction to be overtaken whilst at the up end there is a small yard for the PW engineers on the site of an old pre-nationalisation wagon repair works. The branch loco shed holds the class J72 0-6-0T that looks after the yard and branch freight.

The layout will be wired for 12v DC control using a Cab Control system. This provides a switching system that can allocate any section of the layout to any one of the 6 controllers. Point motors are SEEP whilst 8-pin relays will switch the frog polarity and run the mimic panel lighting for the storage yards. Duplicate point controls for the storage yards will be sited at Yarslow so that I can run virtually the whole layout from one place.

As to making a journey, I can catch a train into the terminus and then get a connection that gets me around to Yarslow where I can pick up the branch train to reach Highmarsh. The Modelu 3D company made a number of models of myself so you might find me on a platform or driving one of the Standard 4MT 4-6-0's.

I will be keeping a video log on my YouTube channel for those interested and will be happy to answer any questions from members. **Barry Miltenburg.**

## Another Missing Link Missing.

There is much speculation in the media currently concerning undoing some of the wanton destruction instigated by Beeching and his cohort Marples the road builder and sometimes Minister of Transport about reinstating some of the many since closed railway routes.



Whilst most of the local attention seems focused on the North and South Burscough Curves as illustrated above, there is another even shorter link nearby that seldom if ever gets mentioned and one that was actually closed after the Beeching era. This short link existed between Lostock Hall Station and the direct line from Preston to Ormskirk and eventually Liverpool as illustrated below. As at Burscough, the roadbed still exists and is reasonably intact.

If this link were to be reinstated along with the Burscough Curves, this would provide direct access from Southport via the North Burscough Curve to places east in Lancashire via Blackburn and beyond. Not only from Southport though but also from Ormskirk and Liverpool to the same destinations. This scenario would require the reinstatement of double track between Ormskirk and the West Coast Main Line at Farington Curve Junction. This line was at one time the main route from Liverpool to Preston and eventually Scotland.



Yes, there is the issue as to what type of trains would be required as third rail DC is essential to operate into Liverpool Central Low Level. Northbound and eastbound after Ormskirk, diesel power would have to be the order of the day. As illustrated earlier, this situation would be an ideal use for even more Class 769 tri power trains.

There is then the question of capacity at the two platforms at Liverpool Central. Sandhills Station would be an ideal location for interchanges between different lines. At Sandhills Station a centrally located turn back siding already exists.

A far-reaching solution is required but that would involve some controversy. How about reinstating Liverpool Exchange Station or at least part of it? Much of the approach route still exists despite the best efforts of the Luftwaffe and then the post war development speculators. The car park on the station site is just waiting for platforms to be rebuilt. The original station building, now named Mercury Court, still exists although it has been modernised and adapted for other uses. Realistically though, the best use for a railway station terminal building is actually as a railway station.

Reinstating a main line terminal station and one that's not even in London! What a radical thought! **Allan Trotter.**

**END**