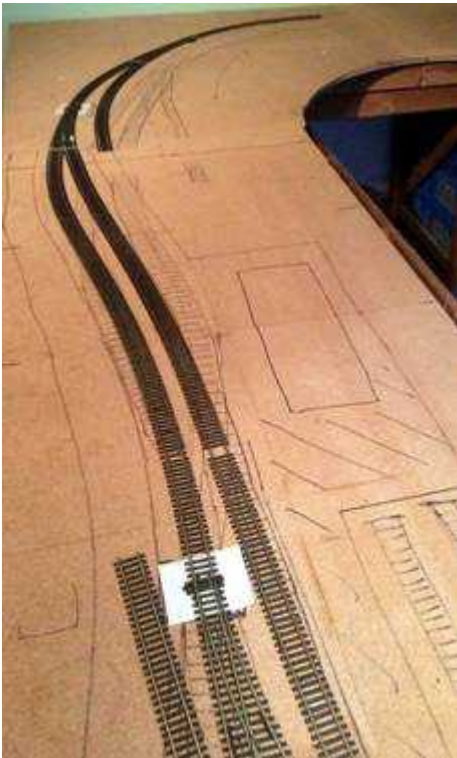


# Newsletter

No.43, June 2015 Editor: Peter Mills

## Editorial



The year is gathering pace and although the weather may be warmer in places, it certainly hasn't always been drier! I must admit, I enjoy nothing better than to sit in the sun and watch the steam trains go past the garden with a beer in my hand and Sydney at my feet. But the inclement weather that we have been enjoying in the Eskdale Valley has ensured that I have had more time to devote to more practice modelling matters inside. This has been made more enjoyable after a chance conversation several weeks ago with one of my neighbours. Karl who lives in No.4 Dalegarth is an active EM modeller, he has no layout, but keeps himself busy by scratch building kits, buildings etc. we hit it off straight away and we have been busy working away on 'Bridge of Kyle' for sometime now. We have completed the fitting of cork tiles, alignment dowels and board bolts to ensure smooth dismantling and erection at Exhibitions. Within

the last week, work has started on laying the track. I find it really useful to have a helping hand, two pairs of hands are better than one as they say. But the main benefit is that you learn from each other whilst working on the layout. This is what the hobby is about, learning and sharing knowledge. You bounce ideas and experiences on what is the best way to do things. Apart from anything else, it is much more fun to do it with someone else and share the enjoyment. A bit like a model railway club! **Peter Mills.**

## Chairman's notes

We have been and still are in the midst of a downsize/de-cluttering programme here at Chez Chairman, which is probably to the good. Although I have been encouraged to do my bit and to my credit have co-operated to some extent, the rebel with a small r in me still continues not to throw everything away. I know it's not an original concept but there is much sense in the home spun philosophy of "it may come in handy one day" and funny thing is it consistently and stubbornly rings true, much to the chagrin of the better half. I was thinking these thoughts only recently whilst hacking away at a length of lead pipe (usual H & S conditions apply) in order to add ballast to a lightweight

garden railway coach and I realised it proves my case once again but don't tell her I said so. Meanwhile I'll continue quietly with my squirrel activities.

I'm looking forward to Father's Day this year as it is one of the few occasions each year when Pendon Model Railway Museum operates the Madder Valley Railway with its original and now delicate rolling stock. Hopefully the offspring will treat me to a surprise visit, I've hinted often enough!



A sad note. We say farewell to Rob Bilsborrow fellow 16miller and member of S.M.E.C. after a short, sharp battle with cancer on 12th May 2015. A creative garden railway modeller, he laid his Mossala Hill Railway to 45mm gauge which always made visits to his line a great pleasure. He was a competent model engineer, always helpful towards members of the local North West group warm and friendly in

nature he will be sorely missed. **Frank Parkinson.**

## **Secretary's Report**

In the absence of Frank, Ian took the chair. Derek Pratt had indicated by e-mail that he was in the process of revamping the website, which would take place over the coming months. Tony reported that the exhibition plans are progressing smoothly. He will be seeing the Greenbank site manager soon and the next step is to obtain accurate dimensions of the various rooms we will be using so that the layout of the exhibits can be planned. It was noted that all room dimensions will be metric. The requirement for a replacement shed was further discussed and will probably be home built as this is the cheaper option. Hopefully a final decision can be made at next month's committee meeting. **Ian Shulver, in Jim Ford's absence.**

## **Exhibition Manager's Report**

As we look forward to November the administration processes continue. Immediate activity concerns the Premises measurements and the implications into how we set out mix of Layouts, Traders and Societies. Catering options are being reviewed, more in a subsequent Newsletter.

Sound Capsules. I was introduced to these novel concepts for sound not involving DCC recently. My initial reaction was sounded (pun is deliberate) interesting. The sound capsules are low cost, easy to fit, no connections or wiring, self contained with built in speaker and battery. On behalf of SMRS I acquired one for evaluation. I chose Steam Express in preference to Steam Freight. There are other options including as examples two diesel locomotive variants, DMU, Electric Locomotive and EMU options. We ran some trials on Outer Circuit of Portland Street which also permitted us to test track resilience in either direction.

The advantages and disadvantages broadly balance. For small layouts in home environment the sound is reasonable in tone and pitch. Unrealistic to fit into modern Steam Locomotive models so we used a trailing wagon as carrier. This meant that the one sound unit was easily transferable between trains. If your locomotive is noisy then sound can be drowned out. In larger rooms or Exhibition Halls very little is likely to be heard. The ranges of sound effects are conditioned by a motion sensor rather than by controller and therefore tend to be rather monotonous. Power is from a battery which will need replacement.

At £40 per unit (plus p&p) it would be possible to have multiple capsules in use over numerous trains for less than the price of one DCC sound locomotive. DCC sound is far more realistic and controllable. This summary is outline only based on limited playing with one Steam Capsule. The individual cost & benefit analysis will depend on what you need in your circumstances.

For greater technical detail please see [www.train-tech.com](http://www.train-tech.com) or Webshop at [www.dcpexpress.com](http://www.dcpexpress.com) **Tony Kuivala.**

## **Layout reports**

Portland Street. Our revamp is under way. The poorly performing track has been replaced, the outer curve has realigned, some points repositioned and the far left hand corner tracks extended to include a small Goods Yard. On a temporary basis the outer track is useable and tested. The next steps are to install DCC Option.

Monsal Dale. The modification to the point layout in the fiddle yard has now been completed, point motors wired up, connection to the control panel made and everything tested. To complete the job a small amount of sign writing needs to be done and a trip to Maplin is required (knobs for the rotary switches and new sturdier push button switches - I bought some latching ones by mistake). Next job up is to look at the single slip in the station throat and replace with a double slip. **Ian Shulver.**

## **Building Report**

There is nothing to report other than we will be starting on the new shed in July. Much of the timber has been donated. Some surgery is required on the old tree stump. **Tony Kuivala.**

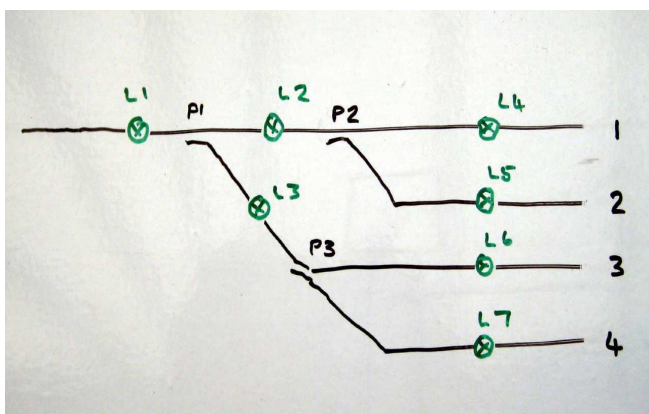
## **Short Circuits No. 21. Basic Visual Route Indication.**

If you have a group of points at the approach to a station or yard then it would be very convenient if you could have some kind of display confirming that a complete continuous route has been set up correctly. Also, if no route is complete then conversely, the display remains darkened. Whilst it is quite simple to have a points accessory switch connected to two lamps or LED's to indicate whether a point is in the set or normal position, this would only indicate the setting of that one individual point, not that a complete route is set. If the track layout consists of a series of points in cascade such as you

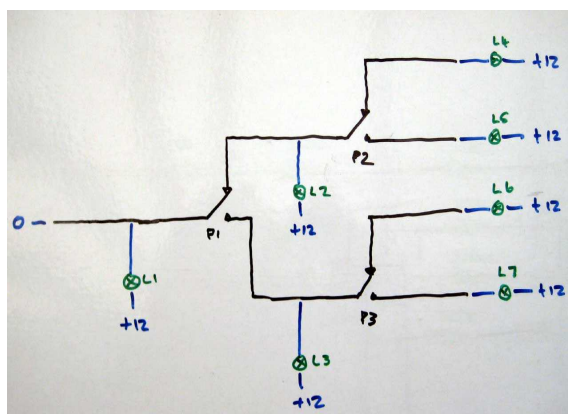
would have approaching a number of sidings in a yard, then wiring through all the accessory switches in the correct sequence is all that is required. If it is deemed merited then extra intermediate lamps or LED's can be wired and installed on the display panel between the points to give a more comprehensive display. There is one serious limitation to the principal of this type of circuit though. If there is more than one approach track or duplicate routes leading to the sidings then this simple bit of circuitry does not work. In this instance some slightly more involved circuitry will be required to maintain the original concept that nothing is illuminated until a complete route is set up. That's for next time. For more see: [www.eastbank.org.uk/circuits.htm](http://www.eastbank.org.uk/circuits.htm)

**Allan Trotter.**

**Panel Display**



**Circuit wiring diagram**



## SMRS Calendar

The following is the diary until the end of the year. If you have any other event that you wish to publicise please let Ian know.

June 9	Talk: Quakers and Railways in Great Britain. Ian Shulver
June 20-21	Great Central Model Railway Event (Loughborough, Quorn & Woodhouse, and Rothley stations)
June 20-21	Woodvale Rally
July 14	Talk: Painting backscenes. Hilary Finch
August 11	SMRS talk: Statfold Barn. Tony Kuivala
October 3-4	Wigan Exhibition
October 13	Talk: North American excursion. Tour members' photos.
November 7-8	Southport Model Railway Exhibition
November 28-29	Warley Exhibition
December 22	Christmas event

**Ian Shulver**

## The Citalian Express

To be absolutely clear, the Citalian Express is not an Italian fast food take away. The Citalian Express was a charter service by train and ship between the UK and Italy. Operations were ceased in the Autumn of 1992.

Before the introduction of the internet and on line booking, travel companies issued annual glossy colour brochures advertising the various destinations and options available. For Italy, one of the main companies was Citalia. Although other companies offered similar packages by air to Italy, Citalia, no doubt because of Italian State ownership at this time (it is now owned by TUI Travel), offered a civilised alternative to flying with all its associated bureaucracy, unsociable flight times, excessive check in times and then the veal crate type seating found on aeroplanes. What was their alternative? The answer was Citalia's exclusive charter train, the Citalian Express.



The Citalian Express was not just one single train of course due to the presence of some water between England and France but consisted firstly of a charter train from London Victoria consisting of two Southern Region 4CEP electric multiple units which ran non stop to Folkestone Harbour, stopping and reversing of course at Folkestone East, then a Sealink ship to Boulogne and then

another charter train which ran through to Rome. The Continental train consisted of ten FS (Ferrovie dello Stato, Italian State railways), CIWL Type MU sleeping cars. There was no restaurant car but in the centre of the train there was a bogie van containing electric ovens where the meals on route were warmed and served in your compartment.

Departure was every summer Saturday from London Victoria Platform 8 at 13:45, arriving Folkestone Harbour at 15:15. Depart by ship at 16:20 remembering to advance your clock one hour and arrive Boulogne at 18:30. Departure from Boulogne Maritime was at 19:23. In the return direction the train departed Rome on Fridays.



The last Citalian Express operated during the 1992 season and was discontinued thereafter. How much more convenient for customers would it be today if the Continental train departed from London St. Pancras direct to Rome? Once the Channel Tunnel and the Continental loading gauge line had been opened, there is no logical reason for this not happening. No doubt because of the

present day petty politics of rail privatisation and the associated fragmentation, this will ensure that it will never happen.

For more images and captions of the Citalian Express and a description of the route see the Eastbank Model Railway Club web page at: [www.eastbank.org.uk/citalia.htm](http://www.eastbank.org.uk/citalia.htm)

## The Serco Caledonian Sleeper Experience



Recently after many years of good reliable running, ScotRail lost its sleeper franchise. The successful bidder was Serco and has taken over the franchise earlier this year. Amongst the many improvements promised as part of their bid. The main change will come in 2018 in the form of 75 brand new carriages with 4 classes of travel. First class with on suite berths, standard single occupancy, and standard shared occupancy and a new pod flat-beds and cradle seats to ensure guests can get rest in comfort.

Passengers are promised from 2018, that they will be able to enjoy a stunning new Brasserie-style Club Car with free WiFi. But this bright future is three years away and until then the new provider of the sleeper service will have to make its mark in a different way.

The time of year is fast approaching where our traditional "Sleeper Trip" holiday will take place. So I thought that I should experience the new sleeper for myself. These days, I am a regular sleeper passenger using the service to the various Scottish destinations regularly throughout the year.. As I said above, with the big changes coming to the service in the future, it was going to be interesting how the new provider made its mark on this historic service. In this modern world of rail travel where the shareholder is put before the customer, it would be interesting to see how they did.

It is easier for me to board the train at Crewe, I leave work and have plenty of time to make my way, normally to Oxenholme, meet up with my uncle for a meal, then catch a train with plenty of time to meet the sleeper. This means catching a train that gets to Crewe around about ten O'clock. I could get a later one, but they cancel trains at the drop of a hat these days and this gives me a bit more recovery time. The only downside to this strategy is that it gives you nearly two hours in Crewe, now I'm not being rude, but Crewe station at night is not the most salubrious of places at night. You could always be tempted out of the station complex and into the surrounding night life. These however consist of a myriad of Indian restaurants, dodgy pubs and take away kebab houses. The latter often wins out of sheer desperation as the Virgin 1st class lounge closes at 7pm. On the plus side, I get the dirty pleasure of something not good for me. Anyway, after indulging in some culture, I make my way to the station for about half past eleven as the train is always early and needs the time to board the passengers and change the loco crew. Even after doing this journey for over 20 years, I still feel the excitement of it. To me, it's one of the last romantic links to rail travel in the past where you board the train in a city and wake up the Highlands.

As part of the new franchise, new locomotives are promised in new livery, but as is normal these days, the delivery of them is late. But we are promised re-engined class 73's to pull the train, I assume from Edinburgh, but you never

know. They have however produced some re-liveried electric locomotives which look very similar to BR blue with the new Serco Caledonian sleeper badge on the side. These include class 92's, but more interestingly, a Class 87 and a Class 86. The latter are normally used to bring the empty stock into



Euston before the Class 92 takes it North. However, recently the Class 92's has suffered mechanical issues and the Class 87 has taken the train to Edinburgh. On this occasion, I was disappointed to see a red DB liveried 90 bringing the train in. As the train pulls into the station, I strain to see any external changes. On the whole, the colour scheme is the same without the previous franchise branding apart from one coach which has been repainted in the new colour scheme. As

a believer in state railways, to me, changes in a franchise often result in a poorer service for the customer. I do try to keep an open mind and as the attended arrived, I stood back so he could deal with the other passengers. Eventually it was my turn and he directed me to a different coach and berth to the one booked and told me that he would be along shortly. I was pleased to find that I had been moved to a first class berth. Good to his word, he duly arrived and asked if I was a frequent traveller etc. I am, but I have not used the train since the new franchise started. He went through the facilities for the train, took my drinks order and asked if I wanted a breakfast and finally what time I would like it in the morning. We chatted for some minutes about the new service and what the plans were for the future etc. He went off and came back with my drinks order and bid his goodnight. I was immediately struck by his enthusiasm and customer service in dealing with my questions. He told me that he had crossed over directly from Scot Rail to do the same job and we chatted about what the public reaction had been to the changes. As we chatted, I noticed his new uniform, when I asked about it and how much better it looked to the old one. He agreed that this was better and that it was in fact Harris Tweed and his tie was the Dress Gordon Tartan. It is often difficult to freshen things up before a big upgrade comes on line. New mattresses, new bedding, new toiletries packs have been brought in to freshen up the cabin until the new stock arrives. All subtle little things, but go a long way to making the experience better. The latter isn't as good as the old ones where you can keep using them as a small toiletries bag, the new ones are a crappy paper bag that can only be used once, but this is only a minor issue.



The décor of the cabin is still the same purple/blue colour. It then struck how long these carriages had been in service and how many times we have as a club had been on them on holidays since 1994. The new

franchise had inherited an ageing fleet with maintenance issues, but on this occasion, the helpfulness of the staff were getting them through it. In the past travelling on the sleeper, your steward determined your travelling experience. Poor steward, poor journey and I'm sure that in reality it's no different now. But it does bring it home how important customer service is! I settled into a good book on the iPad and with my drink in hand enjoyed the journey from my berth. I always enjoy reading on the sleeper, it gives you a chance to take stock and watch the nocturnal world go by through the cabin window. For me the sleeper is a sentimental journey and a link to our railway past. Eventually, the cabin light goes off and the rocking of the train aided by my wee dram sends me off.



As it always seems to be, the next morning was a beautiful sunny morning as we headed through the Highlands towards Aviemore, I even ventured out to the end of the carriage to OPEN! and look out of the window just in case there was a smouldering steam engine being prepared. It all seems so distant a memory when you could open a window and look out, it would probably infringe my human rights now or fall under some health and stupidity twaddle. Then it's back to

the cabin to pack and wait for the much anticipated breakfast. It arrived on time and hot too. For the regular members who go on the sleeper trips, it's been some time since a breakfast menu was offered. Ok, it's not going to be the finest breakfast you'll ever have and came in the form of an airline style meal, but it was sufficient to keep you going and wasn't that bad.

All too soon, your Inverness appears and the Black Isle beyond. No trip to Kyle of Lochalsh this time, just a quick couple of hours in the Highland city before returning to Edinburgh via Perth and Glasgow Queen Street. I did have enough time to visit the new club shop of the mighty Inverness Caledonian Thistle opposite the station to buy a scarf for the upcoming cup final, but that's another story. **Peter Mills.**

**END**