



# Southport Model Railway Society Newsletter

No 39: February 2015      Deputy Editor - Allan Trotter  
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## **Editorial**

The Southport MRS February 2015 newsletter still has a temporary editor this month due to our esteemed editor Peter Mills being somewhat indisposed. I am pleased to be able to state that many contributions have been forthcoming this month. Because of this we have a larger than usual edition. Deputy Dawg has compiled this newsletter but Peter, the High Sheriff of Dalegarth, seems to be improving as he has managed to submit reports for this month. **Allan Trotter.**

## **Chairman's Notes**

I recently visited local modeller Shaun Finucane at his home to see and operate his layout, Bilton Junction. I was accompanied by fellow member Ian Graham who was himself visiting for the first time. You may recall Shaun's name from an article I wrote for the May 2012 Newsletter, where, following his move from a Birkdale loft he, with occasional assistance from me, rebuilt his layout in an extensive long cellar in his house in Leyland Road. Despite the Arctic conditions outside we enjoyed a pleasantly comfortable few hours operating the layout, test track running some of my loco stock and generally 'playing trains.'

The morning and not for the first time, brought to mind the fact that those of us without home layouts, self included, presently lack access to any such facility while refurbishment work continues at our club rooms. Needless to say work has been continuing under cold and sometimes trying conditions but despite this progress has been made and we are close to getting Portland Street secured in its final operating position. We will then at least be able to get OO modellers up and running. However there is still much to do and the more people we can involve the quicker we can be operating and functioning as a productive modelling society. I am therefore asking for as many of you as possible to come along and give whatever help, no matter how limited, that you can. I appreciate that not all of us have particular skills or as able bodied and that many have made all sorts of contributions previously but this is an ongoing process. If we can co-ordinate ourselves into a cohesive group we can become an active and creative group once again so please come and tell me if there is some way that you can help. **Frank Parkinson.**

## **Secretary's Report**

### **Monthly Talks:**

Last month's talk continued with the American theme when Allan Trotter gave a slide show (yes some people do still have 35mm slides) of the "Real Railroads" in Colorado and some of the adjacent states. This followed on from the slide show late last year when Robin Green showed pictures of many of the narrow gauge railways in the area. Most of the slides were taken in the early 90's so those who are going on the September excursion will be able to judge how things have changed, both scenically and with the motive power and rolling stock. Many thanks to Allan for putting together this illuminating (forgive the pun) entertainment.

Our next talk will be on Tuesday 17th February and will be held at Southport Football Club on Haig Avenue. This will be given by a guest speaker, Dave Fenton, and will take the form of a demonstration so a good turnout (pun not intended) would be appreciated. In this demonstration Dave will show us how to use one of his control boxes to operate up to 12 points. The control mechanism can also be used to motorise signals, complete with a realistic bounce. As a matter of interest, if you have 10-12 (or multiples) of points to operate, then the unit cost works out at no more than for a simple Peco solenoid unit. I am sure that Dave will have some of his boxes available for you to purchase on the night so bring along your cheque books or cash.

Your Committee is looking for someone to take over the catering arrangements for these talks. This is not a particularly onerous task, simply collecting names of those who wish to partake of food (you decide what the food will be) and then arranging to collect it on the night. Please contact Frank if you are willing to help out.

Ian is looking at our programme of talks for next year 2016. Although 2016 seems a long way ahead, it would be nice to think that we have got an outline programme with at least some talks promised. This year we have had a sort of theme (Colorado) which has worked quite well, so perhaps we could have one for next year. Please could you let Ian have ideas, and promises of talks or demonstrations. The exact title is not required at this stage but the subject matter would be useful. Rather than one long talk per session, we could have two or more shorter ones. Remember, this is your Club and to make it vibrant does require some active input from you, the members. **Ian Shulver.**

### **AGM:**

The 2015 AGM will be held on Friday 6th March at the Scarisbrick Bowling Club on Falkland Road. Please note that we intend to start the proceedings shortly after 19.00 since we can only have the room until 22.00. As usual there will be light refreshments at an appropriate juncture during the meeting. The formal calling notice in on the Club notice board as is the signing up list for the various Club officers. If you wish to nominate someone, you must get their agreement. If you wish to have any topic discussed at the meeting, it would be useful for you to let Hilary know. You can also let Hilary know of any nominations, but she does need to this information by Tuesday 3rd March. Please note that nominations for vacant officer positions will only be taken at the meeting if none have previously been received. **Hilary Finch and Ian Shulver.**

### **Exhibition Manager's report**

I am away at the moment enjoying working on the track on the Ratty. However this has given me a chance to easily pop along to the Kendal Exhibition. Like Peter, I missed the steam special as it was early!

This time of year is not the busiest period as Exhibition Manager with minimal correspondence to deal with. The visit to the exhibition gave me a chance to catch up with a few friends and to add to our layouts for 2015 and beyond. Some years ago, we had a layout at Southport from Brian Caton with his live steam layout based on the Isle of Man Railway. It was very well received by the public. I have invited him back to Southport in 2015 with a new live steam layout 'Black Road', featuring Gauge O industrial steam and again in 2016 with his Binns Road Hornby Gauge O live steam

tinplate layout. Apart from looking at potential layouts, work is progressing as normal towards our exhibition in November. **Tony Kuivala.**

## Club News & Layouts

### Redecoration of Portland Street railway room:

As noted in the last newsletter, the ceiling has been painted. The wall has also been stripped of its old paper, the plaster inspected and any damaged areas cleaned and re-plastered. This now needs to thoroughly dry before we can paper and paint. In the meantime it is hoped that Portland Street layout can be moved to its permanent position, suitably braced and its level checked. Once this is done it is over to the OO fraternity to renovate the track work (some seems to be damaged), the electrics checked out and scenery reinstated.

### Monsal Dale:

There has been slow but steady progress on redeveloping the fiddle yard. All the points are now in place and appear to be working. The next step will be to wire up the integral frog changing switches before progressing to linking the solenoids to the control panel. **Ian Shulver.**

## Forthcoming events

### February Monthly Talk

The February Talk will be a presentation by guest visitor Dave Fenton on the subject of Mega Points, as seen at our exhibition last November. The evening will commence at 19:30 on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2015 in the Directors Suite of Southport Football Club. Hot food will be available from the Swan Restaurant with a choice of either Meat Pie and Chips or Roast Chicken and Chips. If you are intending to be present and also wish to request food please let me have your order no later than 12:00 on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> February. **Note - no name means no food. Frank Parkinson.**

### The programme for the next few months is as follows:

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| February 17           | Mega points - a demonstration. David Fenton.                |
| February 20-22        | Modelrail Scotland.   |
| March 17              | Amtrak: Trains and Travel. Allan Trotter.                   |
| April 04-06           | York Model Railway Exhibition.                              |
| April 14              | A life in 86 minutes. The work of Geoffrey Jones. Jim Ford. |
| May 12                | Chicago, South Shore & South Bend Railroad. Allan Trotter.  |
| June 16               | Quakers and Railways in Great Britain. Ian Shulver          |
| June 20-21            | Woodvale Rally.   |
| July 14               | Painting backscenes. Hilary Finch                           |
| August 11             | Statfold Barn. Tony Kuivala                                 |
| September             | No talk (depleted membership)                               |
| October 03-04         | Wigan exhibition  |
| October 13            | A celebration of the North American tour. Members' photos.  |
| <b>November 07-08</b> | <b>Southport Model Railway Exhibition</b>                   |
| November              | ?   |
| November 22-23        | Warley NEC exhibition.                                      |
| December              | ?   |

**Ian Shulver.**

## **Member' News**

### **A dissertation from Dalegarth**

The excitement of the New Year is behind us now, but the festive break did give me the impetus to get cracking on my home project. I always think that this time of year lends itself to model railway activities too. The weather outside isn't great for walking Syd and we are suffering intermittent snow showers in these parts in between the gales. So there is plenty of opportunity to get modelling indoors. My recent attempt at Frank Spencer impressions has slowed me up with a double fracture to the arm, but it still hasn't stopped me doing some basic planning for my project at home.

The Internet is a great source for research and getting a comparison. Because getting best value for money is important now. Track, points, controllers etc all cost a lot of money and model railways has to vie for my pennies like everything else. With Allan, I have created a list of my track requirements and have emailed three or four shops asking for quotes. The only minor problem was the big national supplier in Liverpool needed product codes to give an accurate quote! Other shops didn't have that problem. They happily used common sense and supplied quotes for what I wanted. It didn't stop me using the telephone also, I contacted one of our loyal traders at the exhibition and they responded with the best quote. So using the traders at our exhibition can work for you too, getting to know them through our model railway club has helped build up a rapport with the traders over many years. For me, it adds a bit of moral fibre to the process, he's supported us over many years and this is a way of thanking him for his support and yes, the best price for me too. It is one of the many advantages to being a member of a model railway club.

So I hope that you will all take advantage of the bad weather outside and get stuck in to your project indoors. I will keep you posted on the progress of my project at home in future issues. **Peter Mills.**

### **Visit to the Italian Railways Society meeting, 17<sup>th</sup> January 2015.**

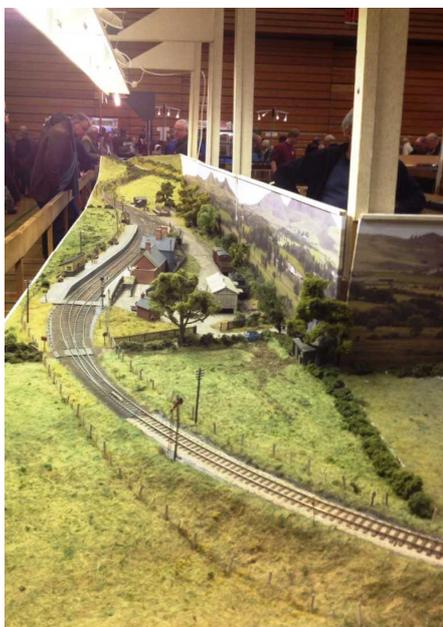
Yet again on 17 January two hardy members of Southport Model Railway Society set out for the London bubble to attend the winter meeting of the Italian Railways Society. Fortified by the free nibbles in Virgin's first-class, we arrived in a timely fashion despite the presence of some snow in the Chilterns. During the morning we were able to fly the flag on the model railway club test track (Allan emphasises that it is the "London Model Railway Club" not "*The Model Railway Club*" as it chooses to describe itself) at Keen House, with Allan providing a Night Ferry consist and myself offering an Italian goods train and single unit ALn668 railcar.

It was especially interesting to compare my 623 class Franco-Crosti boilered loco with the current offering from Hornby-Rivarossi which is the correct 1 to 87 ratio whereas mine is 1 to 80 and much closer to 00 scale. Following a lunchtime snack (and in my case a sizeable lunchtime snooze, worthy of our exhibition manager), we enjoyed a slideshow of featuring the Ferrovia Nord Milano, a PowerPoint presentation on the Night

Ferry train from none other than our own Mr. Trotter concluded by some steps of the summer trip to Florence from Slovenia by some society members.

The trip was concluded by a return to Southport via a good supper at the Doric Arch and was again well lubricated by Italian red and white wine before we reached the safe haven of Southport. **Jim Ford.**

### **Visit to Kendal Model Railway Exhibition, 24<sup>th</sup> January 2015**



The Kendal Exhibition is one of the first to attend after the Christmas break in the new year. It gives you an opportunity to visit one of the best exhibitions in the area. It normally has good quality layouts and good trade support. The last two to three years, the exhibition has also coincided with a steam special up the West Coast mainline, so you can combine the two and have a great day out. Some of you may know that I have an uncle who lives above Oxenholme Station, so I made my way there in plenty of time to enjoy a coffee with him and wait for the excursion to come through. Two years before, it was a stunningly beautiful bright day with the ground all white with snow which made for spectacular photographs. Well this year, there was no snow, but again, it was a pleasant sunny morning to watch steam trains. To be blunt, I just managed to get a glimpse of it come through the Station as it was nearly ten minutes early and I was not in position. Although not a total disaster, but I didn't really get the best view of the train, anyway it could have been worse and I could have missed it all together!

As I said it was a pleasant morning, so we set off to walk to the exhibition in warm sunshine. The sports centre where the exhibition is held is just about a mile from Oxenholme Station and on the edge of Kendal town centre. It represents probably the best venue in the Town where a model railway exhibition can be held and It has be here for several years now after the exhibition went to a two day exhibition. The exhibition is held in two rooms in the sports centre. The first is a similar size to our sports hall at Birkdale and a second much smaller room with small layouts and supporting societies and support groups within.

We paid our money and bought a programme for 50p. I always like to buy a programme; it helps me identify potential invites for our exhibition and is an aid memoir for me for my own project at home. There's nothing wrong with getting inspiration from other modellers and using their ideas as inspiration for your own project. It Always makes me think of our experiences with trying to sell a programme even when it was 10p. The programme at Kendal is functional but basic; it is no where near as good as ours which we give away for free! They also still have a voting slip where visitors can vote for their favourite layout. I must admit, even though it may be considered a bit of an effort, it gives visitors an added interest in their visit. That being said, I like the idea of a public vote, but, as in our experience, I would be interested in know the total amounts of votes cast against the number of visitors etc.

The exhibition itself is laid out in the tried and tested method, trade on the outside and the layouts in the middle. Kendal always has a healthy supply of their own club and members layouts at their show. There was a good choice of gauges to see from O to N with a live steam layout too. There were several DCC layouts there which is good for me as I am looking at various DCC systems for my project at home. There was only one layout which I thought was poor; every other layout was of good quality. Although one or two enjoyed intervention from the giant finger to push start the train, something that is always annoying. But on the whole the layouts were of excellent quality and were presented well with lots of things moving.

Like our exhibition 20 years ago when all our trade were specialist, the economic reality of trade at exhibitions has changed things. The trade were numerous and on the whole again good quality where you could buy locomotives, coaches, wagons, track etc. Like a lot of exhibitions, if you need anything specialist, you have to go one line or go to a major exhibition to get it. But that's they way things are these days.

The only down side to the venue is the catering. It is outside the control of Kendal club and I believe it is organised by the sports centre. The cafe was overwhelmed at times with visitors wanted a drink or a sandwich. However the staff there did wonders with the facilities that they had. It showed to me how good our catering is and how lucky we are to have the facilities that we can use. This is only a minor point that should not distract from an excellent quality exhibition and Kendal should be congratulated for their efforts. On reflection, a visit to the Kendal exhibition is well worth the effort. It is an early start on the 2x bus and train from Preston to Oxenholme, but you can get there and back easily in a day. The exhibition is of high quality and is well worth a visit from Southport. **Peter Mills.**

## Short Circuits No. 18.

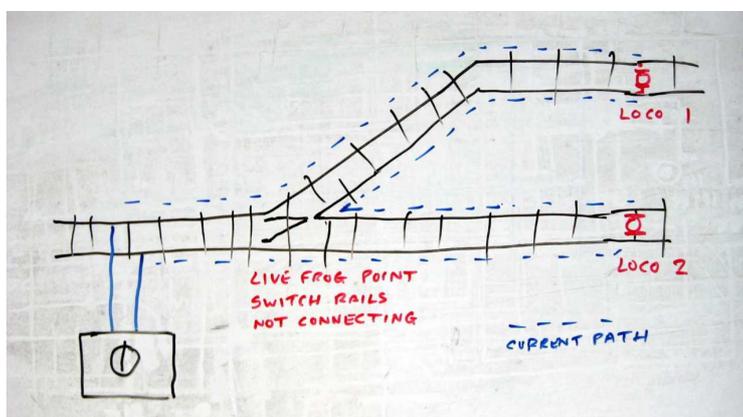
### Points (out) of Order.

With dead frog points, if contact between the switch rail and the stock rail is broken then current does not pass and all that will happen is that the train will stall on the point. This problem has now become more prevalent as on the latest issue of Peco points as they now do not have the self cleaning under rail wiper contacts fitted between the switch and stock rails. This self cleaning wiper system has been in use since the days of Tri-ang Railways and Hornby Dublo and was a well proven method of ensuring good connectivity. Whether this deletion by Peco is for manufacturing economies or to promote sales of accessory switches will be left to the more cynical amongst you to evaluate. However, simply cleaning of the contact area will resolve the problem.

If you are using live frog points, another and possibly unexpectedly strange fault condition can occur. If the point is fed from the toe end as normal and splits into two sidings each containing a train then under normal circumstances and as you would expect only the train on the switched track would be live. If however the contact between stock rail and the adjacent switch rail is disengaged then both trains will move simultaneously. Why does this happen? Being a live frog point, both switch rails are permanently connected to the point frog. Under this fault condition the current goes to the outer rail only, then via the train, back through the point frog, via the other train and back through the inner rail. The result being that both trains move simultaneously as they are now effectively connected in series and a collision will result at the point. This is not a good circumstance to be in, especially if you have an audience watching. This is a somewhat embarrassing situation.

Can anything be done about it? Well, yes. The first and easiest solution is to make sure the location where the rails make contact is kept scrupulously clean. If that does not solve the problem then you have to resort to the complication and added expense of installing point frog switching with either an accessory switch or independent track section switches.

If you have been having unexpected collisions at your points, you now know why and what you can do about it. **Allan Trotter.**



## Tri-ang Railways Nostalgia.

### Tri-ang Railways R499 Water Trough.

*Water water everywhere, the level it does shrink,  
Water water everywhere, the loco needs a drink,  
Water water everywhere, how to quench this drought?  
The answer is R499, a Tri-ang Water Trough.*

Tri-ang Railways, much more than any other model railway manufacturer supported their model railway range with a vast range of accessories and line side enhancements. One item offered and something seldom if ever seen on a model railway layout was a water trough.

To explain the background to this accessory, the range of a real steam locomotive is governed not by the fuel supply, coal or oil, or even the physical endurance of the driver and fireman but by its carried water capacity. Steam locomotives therefore have to stop quite frequently to refill their water tank. To circumvent the necessity for these water stops, a way was devised to collect water on the move. The solution; an open water trough installed between the running rails. All that was required was a water supply, a dead level section of track and an adjustable scoop beneath the tender. This scoop was lowered at the critical time and the movement of the train forced the water, well most of it anyway, up into the tender. If you were standing line side, you got a free cold shower. If the fireman got the timing wrong lowering the scoop, he got a tender full of ballast and a right earful from the driver. Don't think that it is only steam locomotives that could pick up water on the move; some early diesels were able to replenish the water supply for their train steam heating boiler too.

The Tri-ang Railways water trough was first illustrated in the 1962 catalogue with a price of 1/6 (7½p). It was a two piece item, the trough with a fixed ramp at one end and a separate short ramp to attach at the other end for use singly. This design feature was also to allow two troughs to be put together to extend the trough. One trough and additional ramp fitted within a double straight section of Super 4 track which was 13¼ inches long. The original troughs were brown in colour to match the Super 4 track base. A later issue had the troughs in grey, no doubt to make them more conspicuous.

The water troughs also appeared in the 1963 catalogue and were still at the same price but by 1964 they had gone. No doubt they were not the most popular and best selling item in the catalogue. Illustrated are two troughs installed on two Super 4 double straights and a single trough with the ramp attached.

The water troughs were sold individually and unboxed to the public as single units but were supplied to retailers in a Tri-ang Railways BF box which containing six water troughs and six ramps.

Surely a most unusual and at the time inexpensive (they're definitely not that now!) addition to your train set. **Allan Trotter.**

**Two troughs installed back to back on two Super 4 double straights**

**Single trough with the ramp attached and the box as supplied to retailers**



**END**

