



Quarterly Newsletter

Issue 213

Spring 2023

CHAIRMAN'S NEWS

Hello all, and welcome to the first quarterly newsletter of 2024.

The first thing I would like to say is a big thankyou to Chris Hughes for all he has done throughout his time as chairman. From overseeing the club through transition from Barton Road to our current premises, and for leading the club through the COVID pandemic it certainly hasn't been all playing trains! Despite standing down as chair, Chris will continue to be an integral part of the club by officially taking over the club treasurer position.

Being elected chair has to be one of the proudest moments of my life, and I will endeavour to always do my best for the club and put the club first. I still remember my first club night, 7 years ago now, and walking in having no idea what to expect from a model railway club. But immediately I was made so welcome and have never looked back.

We would like to welcome John Guesterson and Mike Biss to the committee. John has proven himself as a valued club member by being a real "fixer upper". Whether it be loco repairs, adding lighting/extras or anything else that needs to be done to any train or layout, John will always give it a go. Mike has also have proven to be a real "doer" being heavily involved in the work on Brinklow as well as always offering assistance to any other projects.

At the AGM it was decided by members to increase the subscription fee by £1 a month to £14 monthly or £168 annually. This will help to neutralise the costs of taking on the second club room. The second room is already being used with the Junior Layout, Dyffryn y Rhaeadr, Recently Departed and a recently donated N Gauge layout being set up in there as well as tables and chairs for workstations and meetings. The library will shortly be moved over also.

Work is progressing on the layouts in the main clubroom as well with Wayne, John and Mike doing a superb job on adding the goods holding loop to Brinklow and also improving the layout in several other areas (See article).

Frimingham is on the final push ahead of it making its exhibition debut at our show this year (Saturday 8th June) being led by Gerhard. Both fiddle yards are now operational and the layout is really coming together. Barton Crossing is also being worked on with some of the bare boards having scenery added, especially around the crossing/platform area. A new Z21 DCC system is being tested on it as well which should help improve the functionality of the layout.

I hope to see most of you at the club and if anyone has any suggestions, please feel free to speak to either myself or any other committee member, as the club belongs to us all.

Tim Byrne
Chairman

Meet Our New Member

Seb Loose



Seb

I have had a keen interest in trains since the age of 2, starting with Thomas and Friends but quickly moving to other wooden trains and track layouts. I used my grandad's N-gauge layout for several years before he sold it and upgraded to 00-gauge, which he is currently building a layout for.

I enjoy going to the Severn Valley Railway and Great Central Railway with my grandad. My family holidays usually involve at least one day at a train track. I have recently bought my own 00-gauge train and I am keen to add to my collection and use the layouts at the club.

Richard (Dad)

I used to own a 00-gauge Hornby layout while I lived with my parents but soon realised I did not have space for it. I am a keen modeller and my recent interests have included miniature Star Wars and fantasy football figures. I enjoy building and painting terrain for these, using my airbrush and other model paints.

I expect that if Seb decides to have his own layout in the future, I will aid him in building and decorating the layout for him, I do not currently have space to do this at home.

I will primarily be accompanying Seb to the club.

DCC Courses

By Gerhard Novak

The objective of these courses, is to introduce you to Digital Command Control (DCC), the courses are in small groups of maximum 8 participants. No fear, if you can't get a space in the first one, we can hold another one...

DCC Course Part I

This mainly a course for people who do not own a DCC system, to inform them of what it is, what it can and cannot do. I think even If you are not planning to use DCC- you should know what DCC is and what it can and cannot do. The course starts with a presentation followed by some practical examples of using DCC and basic programming.



Agenda:

- What is DCC
- A look at the myth
- What is the right system
- Programming-the basics
- Wiring, chipping
- Accessory control

DCC Course Part 2

This second course is for people who already participated on Part 1 of the course and who want to know a bit more about DCC. This course is also good for current users of DCC but want to improve their understand of all the features that are



available. Also, here we start with a presentation followed by some practical examples on the test track

Agenda:

- Function mapping
- ABC-asymmetric brake control
- Double header and other consists

Next dates for DCC courses:

Part 1 22nd February 2024

Part 2 9th May 2024

Enrolment:

There is a list on the notice board in the club room for you to book a place on these courses. If the course you want to attend is full booked then please add your name to the Waiting List for future courses.

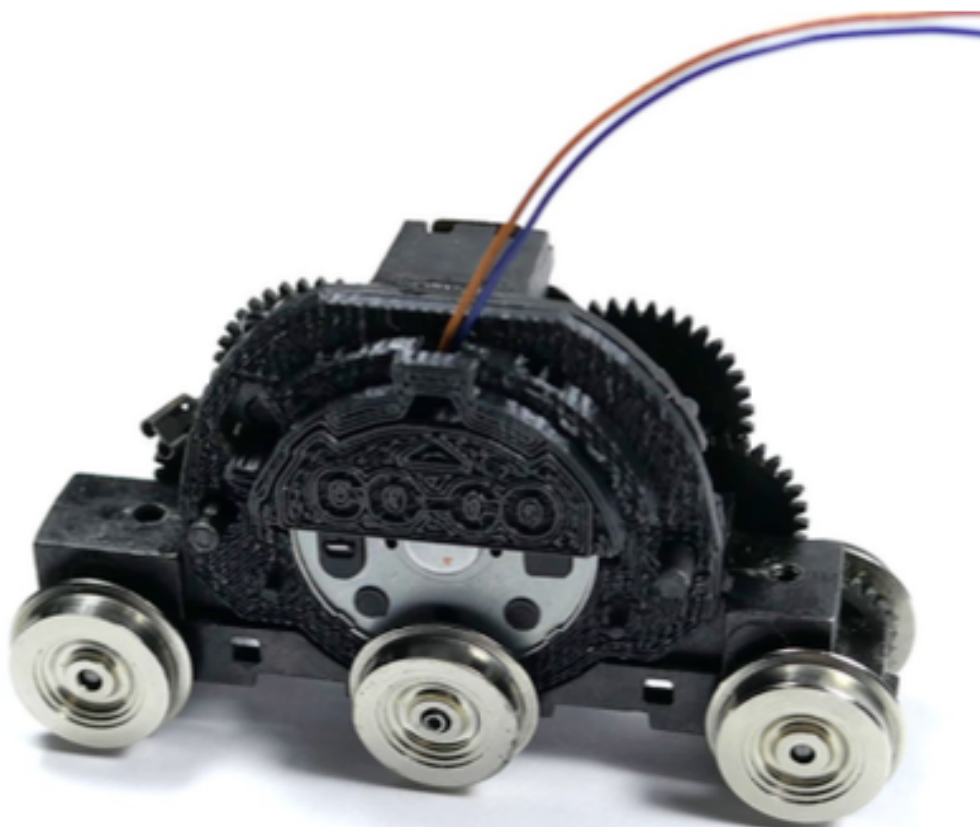
Note from the Editor

By the time you read this Part 1 of the course will have taken place. Never fear if you would like to attend Part 1 or Part 2 then please add your name to the Waiting List in the club room as Gerhard does intend to run further courses during the year.

Ringfield Motor Adaptors

By John Gusterson

If you need to upgrade your Hornby and Lima Ringfield motors, for increasing the efficiency and reliability. Then have a look at the [Hornby-Ringfield-Motor](#) article by clicking on the link.



HA1 (6V) motor adaptor in a Hornby Class 37 bogie

I have done this myself, which has increased the spread on running. There are several different types that you can get. Which even includes Hornby silver seal motors.

Editor's Note

For those members that receive a printed copy of the newsletter, but would like a printed copy of the article please contact me and I will arrange that for you.

Building Bramble Hill Tunnel

By Peter Hoare

Once I decided on the location construction commenced early December 2023. *(Figure 1)* I used Cereal Box Card Board to build the framework. It's amazing what can be done using Cereal Boxes Hot Glue Gun and P V A Glue. *(Figure 2 & 4)*

One problem I had was part of the Tunnel was on a curve. *(Figure 3)* As I'm using Setrack, the ready-made Tunnel Portal was not wide enough to allow Locos and Rolling Stock to pass through without hitting the portal.

I decided to have a go at Scratch Building using off cuts of Photo/Picture Mounting Card. I made the Tunnel portal allow enough clearance for Locos and Rolling Stock to pass through without fouling. I Have to say for a first attempt the Tunnel Portal looks good. *(Figure 5 & 6)* As you can see in photo with Pannier Loco hauling passenger coaches. I got things right. *(Figure 8)* I have also left a couple of Access slots for recovery if needed of derailed Rolling Stock. *(Figure 7)*

The next task was to use Plaster Cloth to cover the framework, which wasn't as messy as I expected. *(Figure 10)* Once it had dried. I gave it a thin coat of Pollyfiller to smooth the surface. Now all that is left to do is Paint the landscape Green using non-oil-based Fence /Shed paint (Ronseal or Cuprinol) I will soon be busy with Scatter materials and vegetation etc. Just to say. The Tunnel is on the lift up section and I'm surprised that I have not made things too heavy to lift up.

Oh! As you can see. I also have a Railway Cat. *(Figure 9)*



Figure 1 First mock-up of the tunnel



Figure 2 Track level view of the tunnel



Figure 3 Tunnel with the ready-made portal

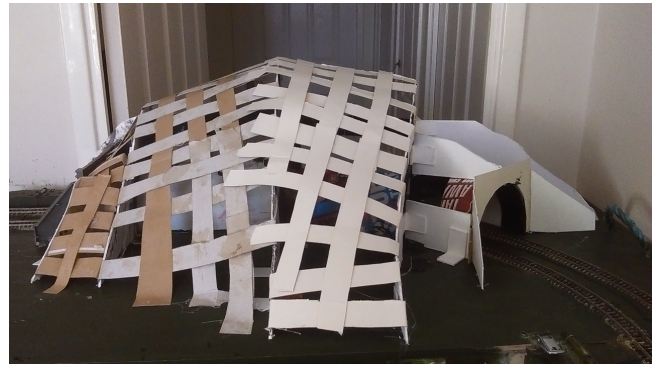


Figure 4 Forming the hill



Figure 5 The scratch-built portal



Figure 6 The painted portal

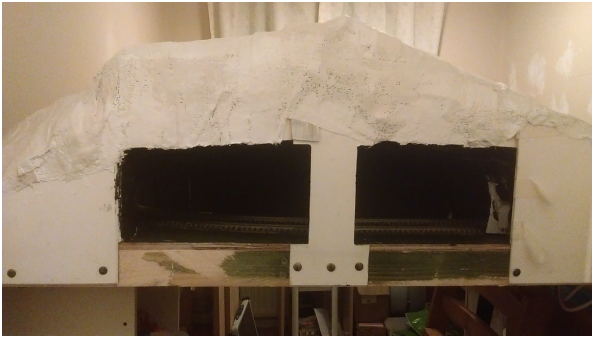


Figure 7 Tunnel Access



Figure 8 Tunnel in action



Figure 9 The Railway Cat



Figure 10 Tunnel formed

MODEL RAIL SCOTLAND

By Paul Egerton

A first for me, and I suspect many other members of our Club as being 368 miles from home, it requires some logistical planning to not only travel up to Glasgow, but also to find a reasonably priced hotel not too far from the Scottish Event Campus (SEC) where the event is held over three days which this year is or was by the time that you read this, 23rd – 25th February.

It was no surprise that our own Dennis Lovett should be found on the Locomotion Models stand which he claims will be his last ever exhibition. Just to prove that he does what he says he does, I took a photo. You will see him earnest engaged in conversation with a prospective customer.

To help out sales, I purchased one of the Bachmann GWR 94XX Pannier Tank models produced for Locomotion Models but I'm sure it wasn't needed, as sales seemed to be pretty brisk. Anyway, you can never have too many Pannier Tanks and as this one is a model of the preserved 9400, it would have been a crime to have ignored it.

I could have spent a small fortune on this stand alone, but I remembered that I had set myself a budget beforehand and was determined to try and keep to it. In the event, I was exceptionally good as my purchases only extended to the locomotive and five wagons most of whom, sourced from the Ellis Clark stand.



This exhibition was for me about the right balance between the number of trade stands and layouts with layouts being fairly well represented by a mix

of N, 009, 00, 0 and G scale which to those of us used to modelling in either N or 00, seemed enormous.

The best layout in show for me was Ddualt, exhibited by the Greenock Model Railway Club in 009. But that's just my person preference. An almost continuous movement of stock depicted the scene from the Ffestiniog Railway. The model depicts the spiral constructed when the Ffestiniog was forced to build a diversion as a result of the hydroelectric scheme at Tanygrisiau which flooded the original track bed in the Ystradau Valley.



Would I come again? Unquestionably, yes. Inevitably you find layouts turning up down our end of the country that you have seen before, but in the main, most of what I view was new to me at least.

Lastly, I couldn't come all the way and not try out Glasgow's famed subway system known locally as the submerged orange I believe.

A bit like the London Underground but running on 3rd rail electrification rather than the four-rail system of the London Tube. Platforms are of shorter length taking a maximum of 1–2-minute intervals.



Sandy Falant

By Andy Culham

Progress has been slow of late due to household management requiring me to re-decorate the hall, however I have been able to do a bit to the layout in the evenings.

As far as this half of the High Street is concerned, I feel that it is about finished as I think to add any more would make it look over populated. I have, however, put a mirror at the end to give the impression that the scenery carries on into the distance rather than just stops abruptly at the board's edge.



I have now started on the scenery around the end of the station, the signal box at the "North" end is now in situ with the surrounding greenery done. The box is fully fitted, and, being a busy one, is double manned, although Charlie has currently left Albert covering whilst he has a quick smoke out on the external walkway.

Also now in place are the cattle dock and the coal staithes and office. The cattle Dock, like the signal box is lit, one end occupied by a flock of sheep whilst a cattle truck load of cows is being herded into the other pen. The truck has yet to be glued in place as the roadway has yet to be finished and more greenery "planted" around the Dock and along the base of the ramp wall.



Alongside the coal staithe I intend to park a lorry looking as if it has just been loaded, but again, I need to paint the road first, and of course there are relevant wagons to be put in place.

So, that's it so far, hopefully by the next newsletter I shall have this side of the board well on the way to being finished, ready to start on the other side.

Brinklow Updates – Part 2

By Mike Biss

The upgrades have been going quite well so far and we have the board extension cover in place and painted. This is removable, if it was necessary for any reason.



The removal of the old track was fairly straightforward, as the existing ballast was wetted in the areas, we wanted to remove it, and after a short wait, the ballast could be removed easily, with or without track. This left the cork surface in a good condition.

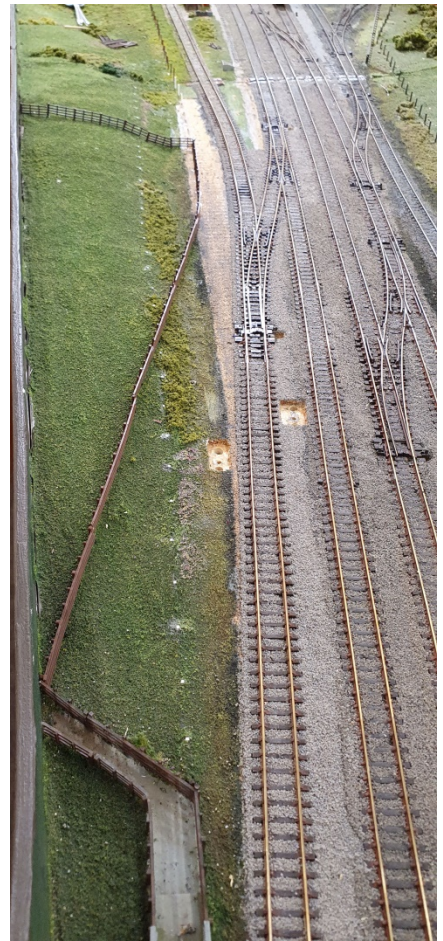
The two new cross-over points and associated track are now installed and ballasted. The baseboard joint is going to be redone later, to improve the alignment and at the same time we can also get the scenic joints repaired to better hide the join.



(The original track design)

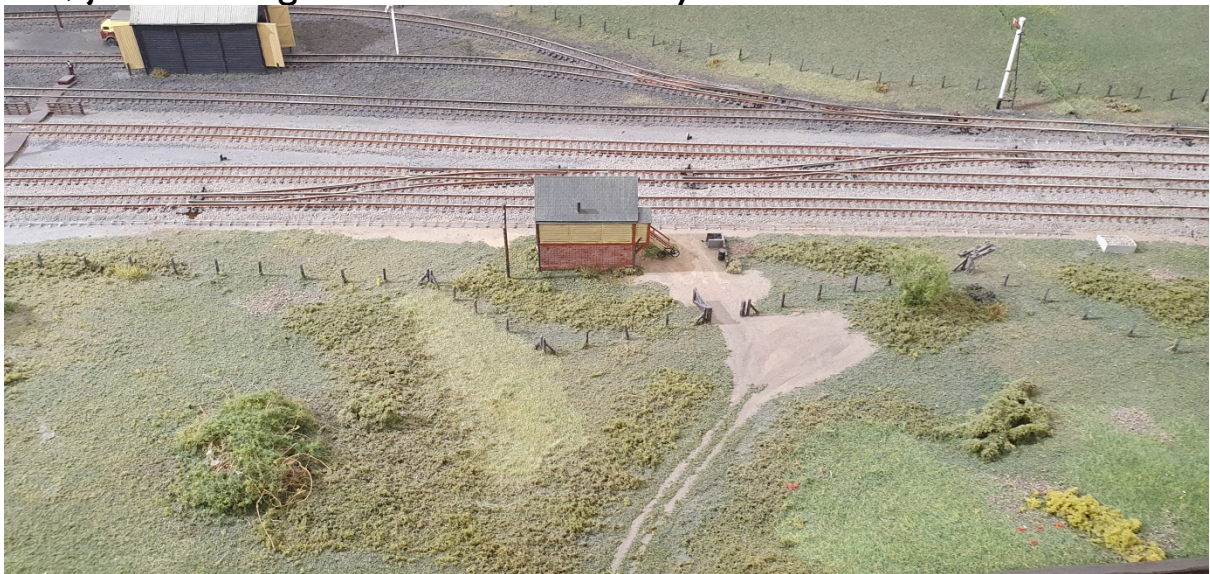


(Old track work removed)



(New track work installed)

There has been a lot done with the scenic area, but with the new grass down, it has shown up how badly the rest of the existing grass has got dirty and dulled, especially from what leaked through from the next-door unit a few years ago. This means we will now have to give the rest of the layout a refresh as well, just to bring it back to the vibrancy it used to have.



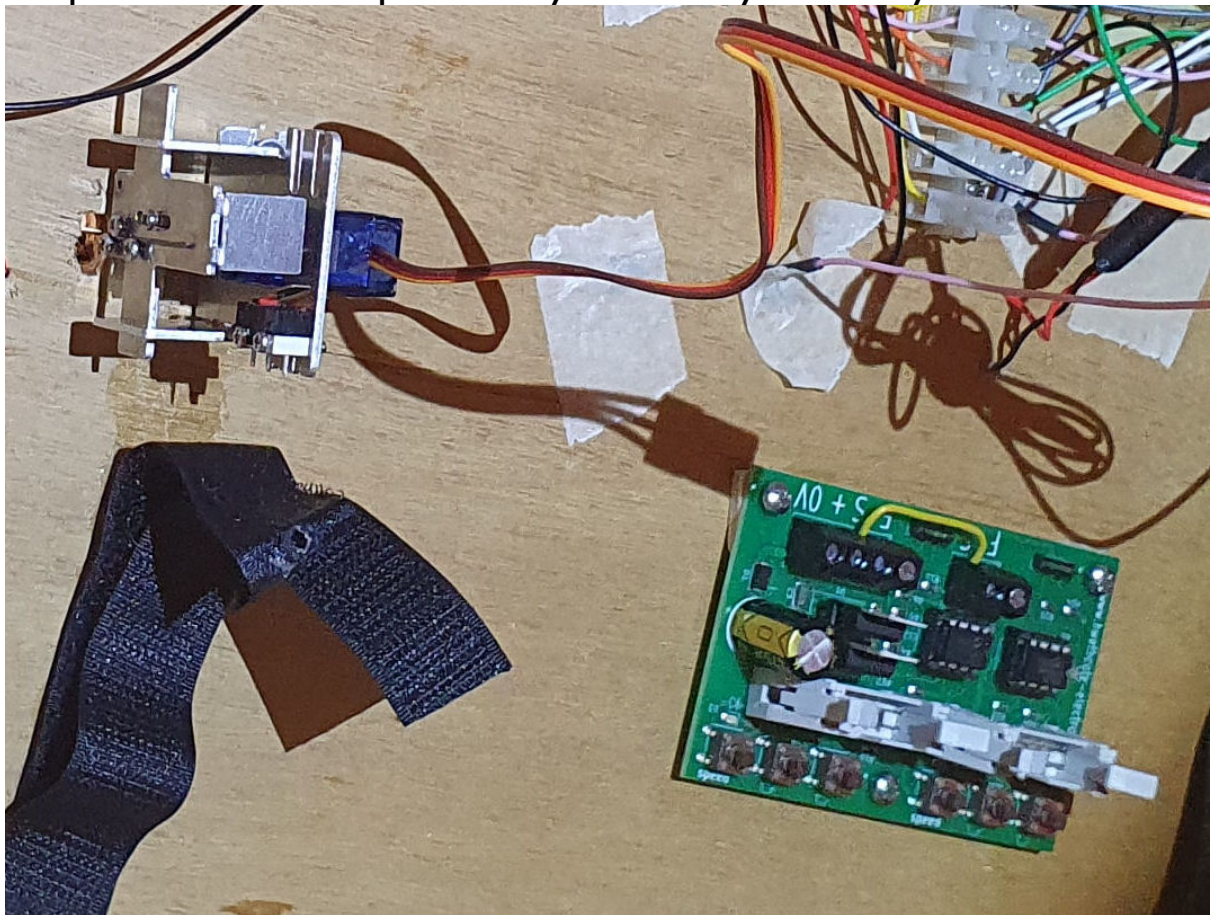
(The original signal box scenery)



(The new signal box scenery)

All the tracks have had dropper wires fitted and tested and we are now in the process of getting the wiring back to the control panel. This will require a new link cable to be installed, but the mounting point for the connector has already been cut into the back of the control panel.

The points are operated by two servo motors mounted in servo mounts, which have been installed, and the control boards for them have been set for the required travel and speed. They work very smoothly.



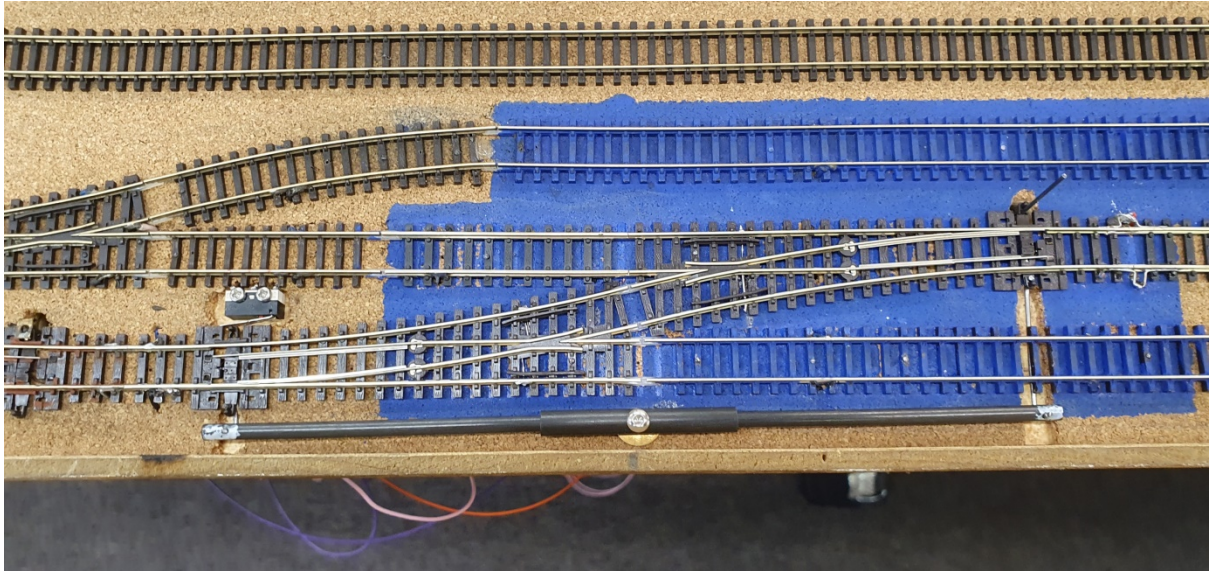
The two signals are nearly finished and will soon get painted. They are also operated by servos, mounted in servo mounts, but the signals can be removed if required, as the operating wire is only connected to the servo via a magnet. This operating wire is only 0.2mm thick, so is very fiddly to work with, but it does have the advantage that it will bend very easily if something goes wrong with the travel of the servo, rather than wrecking the signal arm. With the servo control boards, we have control of the speed of both upward and downward travel, plus the amount of bounce.



(The new Down Slow and Down Fast Signals)

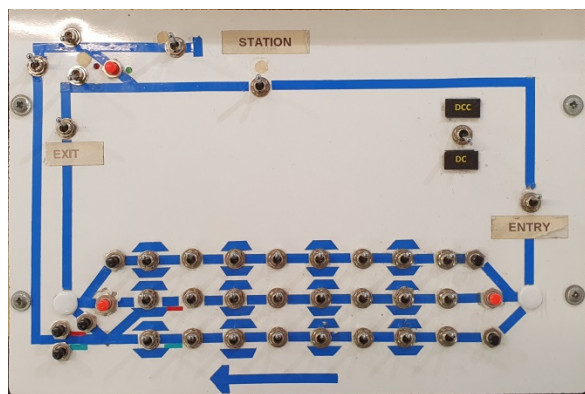
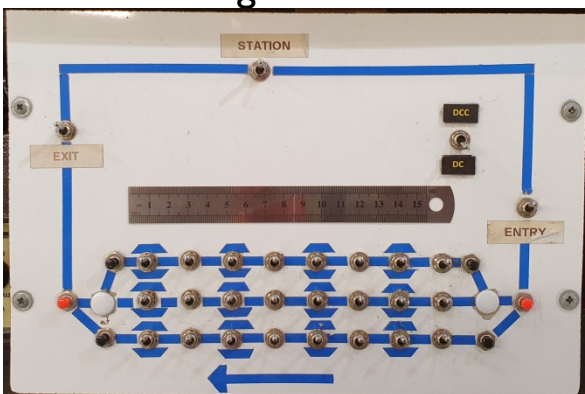
The fiddle yard has also seen an additional pair of points fitted at the exit end, which allows the option of trains on the central storage road to also exit onto the new Down Slow line. This gives the operators access to more train selection. The pivot rod shown in the picture has been removed, as it was found the point motor wouldn't operate it in one direction, and another point motor installed on the second point. This entailed another bit of thinking on how to mount it, as it is too close to the board edge. In the end we used a surface mount adaptor underneath, with a machined down bolt

clamped to it, with the other end going through the board to operate the point.



(The new points in fiddle yard)

The next thing on the list is to wire up the control panel to get the new switches for the points, signals, isolating sections and the direction indicator LED's working.



Hopefully we will have it completed for the next Club open day, but if not, it should have enough connected up to have the original three lines running. The revised layout is planned to be featured in a future edition of Model Rail magazine, which will be interesting to see what reaction it will attract to the changes.

Boats & Trams & Trains – Part 2

The Manx Electric Railway

Dennis Lovett travels back in time to visit the Isle of Man

In the last issue we visited the Isle of Man Steam Railway and took a ride along the sea front at Douglas on one of the horse trams. In this issue, we investigate one of the two electrically operated tram systems which form an important part of the island's transport network.



The Manx Electric Railway running shed at Derby Castle, Douglas. The friendly member of staff gave me a personal conducted tour, the maintenance sheds stand off to the left.

The Manx Electric Railway runs from Derby Castle adjacent to the horse tram terminus located at the northern end of Douglas Promenade. It provides a 17-mile ride between the island's capital Douglas and the northern port of Ramsay.

Like the steam railway and the horse trams described in the last issue, the Manx Electric Railway runs on 3ft gauge track. Today it is the oldest operating

tramway in the world, still using two of the original three cars built for its opening! Additional vehicles were ordered as and when demand required it. The original 1893 built line ran from Derby Castle to Groudle Glen and was built by the Douglas Bay Company. The following year the line was extended from Groudle Glen to Laxey and this resulted in a name change to the Douglas & Laxey Coast Electric Tramway Company.

In 1898 a further extension north from Laxey to Ramsay opened but stopped short of the town itself, the line into Ramsay was not completed until 1899 in time for the summer traffic. Another name change took place with the trams now carrying that of the Isle of Man Tramways and Electric Power Company. Construction of the lengthy extension resulted in the company having considerable financial issues, having overstretched itself taking the bank who had provided the loans to it following liquidation in 1902. A group of Manchester businessmen acquired the assets and began operations under the Manx Electric Railway name alongside the Snaefell Mountain Railway.



Manx Electric Railway No. 1 Tram carrying the name of an earlier operator runs around Trailer No. 48 at the Ramsay terminus.

Leaving Douglas, the line climbs towards Onchan Head and runs alongside the road on reserved track towards Laxey. Beyond Laxey it crosses an impressive viaduct and then takes its own segregated formation through the

countryside to Ramsay offering good sea views. There are numerous road crossings all of which are ungated and unsuspecting motorists, usually from the British mainland, can and do get caught out from time to time. I am told that cars usually come off second best!

After World War 2, the system went into decline and in 1957 was nationalized by Tynwald, the Isle of Man Government. Such was the state of the infrastructure that the Government under the Isle of Man Passenger Transport Board that the newly formed company began a program of track renewals between Douglas and Laxey which took some ten years to complete.

The section beyond Laxey to Douglas came under threat when it lost the contract to convey mail from Douglas to the various communities enroute to Ramsay. This section was immediately closed, and no trams ran beyond Laxey for two years. The service was only reinstated following protests and work began on renewing the track in 2008 rather than permanent closure of the Laxey – Ramsay section favored by some politicians at Tynwald which fortunately was abandoned.

The line has seen 34 trams operate over it of which 27 still exist, although some were stored off site but depot improvements at both Laxey and Douglas saw them returned in 2009 to the line. Four trams and seven trailers were lost in a serious fire at Laxey 1930 and were not rebuilt, this included No. 3 which had been delivered for the opening of the line in 1893. One tram, No. 22 was rebuilt in 1990 following a fire which required a new body to be built in the original style, returning to service in 1992. In 1996 Lisbon tram No. 360 arrived at Ramsay aboard a ship and following trials was deemed unsuitable for the line and did not enter revenue service. The body is now privately owned and stored at Ballasalla. There are some 24 trailer cars available for use most of which are of the open toast rack type. Some of the trams also have open sides but in adverse weather and at the start and close of the season, the winter cars which are fully enclosed operate the service.

The main shed at Derby Castle was rebuilt on the site of the former shed in 1996 which was by then in poor repair and failed to offer the protection that the historic fleet required. The other shed on site is used for repairs and

maintenance and stands at 90% to the main running depot. It also houses a small museum which is free to enter.

The Manx Electric Railway operates between Easter and the end of October.



***The maintenance sheds at Derby Castle also houses a small museum
Changing the direction for the trolley pole at Laxey on a Douglas
shuttle service***





An Oxford Die-cast model of Tram No. 21 poses on the club OO layout. These models are non-powered and are sold in various booking offices, tourist information offices, the railway shops at Douglas and Port Erin.

The Snaefell Mountain Railway

At 2034 feet above sea level, Snaefell is the highest point on the Isle of Man and is said from which you can see seven kingdoms – The Isle of Man, England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Heaven and Earth! The Summit station proclaims it is higher at 2036 feet!

Such views are of course weather dependent and whilst the sun may be shining at the bottom, it can be misty at the top. Likewise, the opposite can be true. On my first visit the Summit station and restaurant was surrounded by mist. Fortunately, a second visit two days later allowed us to partake of the views.



A misty view of the Summit station and tram no 1

Whilst the Snaefell Mountain Railway shares its Laxey station with the Manx Electric Railway, the two systems are incompatible due to the track gauges and for the need for the Mountain line to use a rack system to get to the top.

The Snaefell line is built to a gauge of 3ft 6", six inches wider than the other main rail systems on the island and is 5½ miles long.

It was opened in August 1895 with five of the six original trams remaining in service. Car No. 3 was destroyed in 2016 when it ran away from Summit station and was derailed. Car 5 was damaged by fire in 1971 and has a replacement body. The parts salvaged are currently in store but most of the body was destroyed and scrapped. The cars have the Fell braking system fitted which engages with the cogs on the centre rail and is essential on the steep descent from the Summit station.

There is one intermediate station at the Bungalow where the trams cross the A18 Mountain Road which forms part of the famous TT motorcycle racing route. During race days the line terminates either side of the road and passengers cross between the two sections using a footbridge.

During construction 'Caledonia' was used to assist with construction requiring a temporary 3ft gauge rail to be laid inside one of the 3ft 6" rails. Built by the Snaefell Mountain Railway Association but sold it to the Isle of Man Tramways & Electric Power Company in December 1895. It was sold again in 1902 to the Manx Electric Railway. It was nationalised in 1957.

There is no road access to the top of the mountain and supplies for the restaurant/café/shop are transported on a wagon which is pushed up the mountain by the first tram up in the morning which also conveys the staff that work there. They return on the last down tram at the end of the day bringing the wagon with them.

The SMR provides good views of the Laxey Wheel and the valley which once housed the Great Laxey Mine which up until its closure in 1929 was the source of silver, lead ore and zinc. Water was pumped from the mine using the large water wheel named 'Lady Isabella' which remains in use as a visitor attraction.



Tram No. 1 leaves Summit station. The Bungalow station and the TT route can be seen to the right of the left-hand trolley pole. Taken on the second visit when the sun shone!



*Snafell Mountain Railway
Tram No. 4 poses in the
sunshine at Laxey. These
trams have bow collectors
whilst those of the Manx
Electric Railway have
trolley poles fitted.*



***Sitting on top of the island, the Summit station, shop and café sits at
2036 feet above sea level***

Member Updates

Please join us in welcoming the following new member to the club. If you see him in the clubroom, please introduce yourself.



Seb Loose

Returning Members



Dan Deathe



The MKMRS Newsletter will only survive with your help, we need you to provide articles -

- ❖ These can be write-ups on exhibitions you have attended, modeling titbits, or anything that you think other members would find interesting.
- ❖ The articles need to be sent in by email to MKMRSNewsletter@courtmk.co.uk they need to be the words that you want to appear, include any pictures that you want in the article. All can be sent to the above email address for inclusion.

Deadline for articles for the Summer Edition is the 22nd May 2024 with the Newsletter being published by the 1st June 2024.