

This is the second May newsletter intended to get us in sync. with when we should have been having our meetings. That means the next one will be towards the end of June so contributions by Friday 26th June would be very much appreciated.

As with the first two, this is a random mix of news, chat and snippets, hopefully similar to that which we get at our meetings. As such, there is no structure to it and if you feel we have not got the right balance then please send me your contribution!

More Gn15 Emmett style from John Burton:



John sent in two more photos this time of a brake van he has just finished for Cleo. The guard is Trumptonish and, as John didn't know what he would sit on, he has given him a deck chair!

The New O14 Layout by Rowland Binns:

I have been getting on with making baseboards and laying track these last few weeks when the weather has been nice and warm.

The photo shows the first train to reach the present 'head of nickel silver' on the LMS line; a works train consisting of a bolster set and some empty slate wagons. The following passenger train did not reach the end as, apart from the vacuum pipes getting tangled up and derailing a coach, the loco (the FR England 'Princess') slipped to a standstill on the gradient. Double the weight in the loco and some white-metal passengers ousted from their carriages sorted that out.



The baseboard frame has been cut down from the one that I brought to the meeting in February 2018 and again in September 2019 when it had the trial wagon unloading chute tacked onto it. Since the photo was taken the bridge over the river has been completed and the land mass (chicken wire) has been tacked in. Next is the viaduct over the doorway!

An Arduino Controller by Simon Coward:



Over the last year I have been doing a number of experiments using programmable controller board called an Arduino. They come in a number of sizes and over the last year I have used them to control light, sound, point control and even a fully indexing turntable.

They also make a very cheap DCC base station; you can build it for about £12 with commands being sent via a computer or even from a mobile phone. I didn't want to haul around a computer and so started to work on my own controllers and at the last club meeting brought along one I had built that would control 4 locos as well as controlling points via the old fashioned stud and probe system that the

controller then turned into DCC commands. The reason for this was that one of the biggest issues with DCC is that it feels like you are endlessly typing in numbers for both loco and turnout control. The new controller worked well but still had the drawback of people needing to know the loco number to select a new engine.

It was then that I noticed it was possible to buy touch screens as used on mobile phones very cheaply so I bought a small one and did some tests and very quickly had a nice proof of concept running, but as soon as it ran I realised that with a bigger screen I could do a lot more so finished up spending a bit more and buying a 5" touch screen that is very slightly wider than a normal mobile phone screen and about the same height.



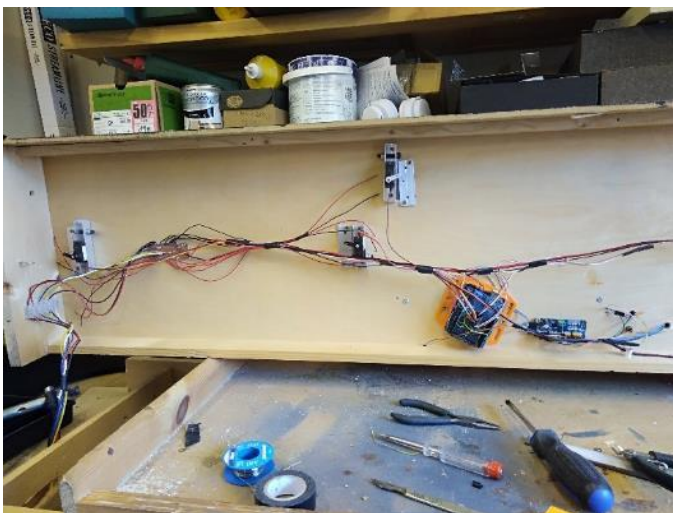
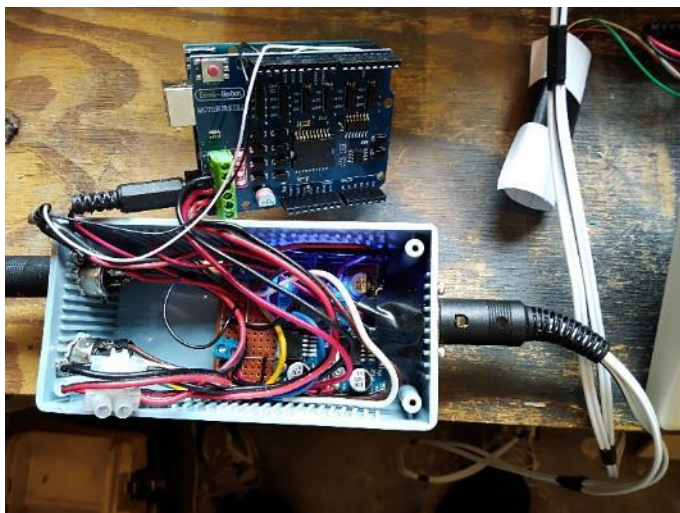
With this size screen I could have a track diagram at the top that allows points to be changed by touching the point. It also allowed me to have 2 locos controlled at the same time and uses a loco selection method that allows the operator to choose a loco using its description rather than a number to make it more logical for the operator.



The new controller takes up far less space and has the added advantage of a small battery operated controller that can take over either loco and send controls back to the main controller via a Bluetooth controller that I added. The loco can also still be controlled from the base station meaning that when my Grandchildren are playing trains I have the ability to override anything they do.

Another goal of the controller was to reduce layout wiring. The layout module I build in the past have use 6 pin plugs with 2 pins for DCC track feed, 12vAC for powering point motors and 12v DC for other items (I separate the point motors from the lights as the lights can flicker when a point motor is activated). This has meant needing 3 transformers and has always been an annoyance for me. The new system uses a single 18v DC power supply that feeds into the base station unit. In there are 2 buck convertors, one reducing power to 5v, the other to 12v. 12v powers any Arduinos on the layout as well as power for the items the Arduino is controlling such as DC or Stepper

motors. The 5v supply is used to feed power into some of the PWM lighting control units. As a security measure the power comes in to the base station through a 3 pin DIN plug, the connection to the controller is a 7 pin DIN plug while a 6 pin version connects to the layout. This way I can't plug anything in the wrong way.



This has meant changing the point control system on the station I had built, this now uses cheap servos but has also allowed me to control the lights through the same Arduino so that I can adjust the individual brightness by altering a number in the code, rather than having to get the soldering iron out and add a different resistor.

One of the really nice features of a controller like this is that if I want to add extra items or change the screen layout around I can do it without having to rebuild anything as the changes are just a software update.

From Test Track to Layout – An O9 Rolling Stock Update from Dave Dyer:

Dave's conversion of a circular test track to his Estate layout featured in our first newsletter. He has sent in a couple of photos showing a new engine and coach that he has recently built for his new small layout.



Welshpool in 7mm scale – June's Railway Modeller Layout of the Month

Those of us who read Railway Modeller will have been pleased to see Ralph Seymour's 0-16.5/O gauge layout of Welshpool featured as the Layout of the Month in the June issue and on the front cover. Ralph has been to our club nights at Twynning a few times and Neil Smith has been a couple of times to his house to see the layout under development. Those of you who are members of the 7mm NGA will have already seen an article about his layout in Narrow Lines. The pictures from Ralph show the layout far better than words can describe it. Ralph has offered to host visits by up to 5 people to see the layout when social distancing is relaxed.



Llanfair station



Crossing the Montgomery canal



Seven Stars crossing, Welshpool



Church Street, Welshpool



Welshpool terminus

Unfortunately space precludes the inclusion of the other two photos from Ralph which I hope to include in a later newsletter.

Ralph has not been well recently having had an operation on his spine which then got an infection, he is now waiting for a second operation but the current virus crisis has rather scuppered that so, as well as having mobility issues, Ralph has found this delay quite hard to handle. I'd like to pass on all our best wishes to Ralph and his family and to hope that the second operation goes well and that he makes a speedy recovery.

Kingston Flyer, South Island, New Zealand by Neil Smith:

Our journey through New Zealand moves on to South Island. The now defunct 3' 6" gauge Kingston Flyer originally ran from Invercargill to Kingston but was closed and the line truncated to only run 14 km from Kingston to Fairlight. As the photos show there was nothing at Fairlight except a station platform and a triangle of track to turn the engine for the return run. The line closed in 2011 but there are plans to reopen it.



Train arriving from Kingston



The loco turns using the triangle



After the loco backs up to the coaches, the train is ready for the return

Talyllyn Railway Rolling Stock by Neil Smith:

Here are a few pictures of restored rolling stock on display at Tywyn station on the Talyllyn Railway, they are useful as modellers' reference photos. They were taken when my son and I went on a long day trip from Droitwich to Abergynolwyn ostensibly to have lunch at the latter, only two changes - Smethwick Galton Bridge and Tywyn.



Edward Thomas at Twywn



4 Wheel Open Coach



Wooden Slate on Display



Wagons on Display

Trade News:

Andrew Jeffcock has opened an online store at <https://custom-model-decals.com> to sell a range of exclusive waterslide lining in several styles and colours. He has a special opening offer of a complete 4 sheet lining set in 0.5mm wide black-yellow-black with inverse and normal curves in 0.5, 1.0, 1.5 mm radii and a sheet of extra lines for £30. All orders are on back order for delivery to you within 14 days within the U.K.

I hope you are all keeping well and using your time to good effect if you are subject to the lock down constraints. Thank you to the contributors to this issue and don't forget to send us your news so that we can all stay in touch. Stay safe and happy modelling

Robin Edwards

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