



North West Area Group

NEWSLETTER APRIL 2025

As I began drafting this Newsletter in February there were signs of green shoots heralding warmer weather. And I could sense the start of members getting ready for the prospect of running trains outside. My own modest running area was being refurbished, after the weather gave it a battering, and in early March I managed to make the most of a few bits of sunshine. Here's hoping you have also been able to get out there with trains in your garden. As you prepare for Summer, have a thought that if you feel disposed to have an Open Day John Hulse would be delighted to hear from you. The area group did marvellously well last year, let's make this a good'un too!

Well now, a special message from Richard:

AGM 19th April To be held during the regular meeting.

There's something to look forward to! (Don't worry! We get through it as quickly as we can so we can get back to running trains!)

Also from Richard:

I have received from the national G-scale Society a large advertising banner we can use to promote the hobby. It was free of charge, so I saw no harm in getting it! Nice piece of work actually, I rather like it. It will be made available to anyone taking part in an exhibition or any other event. I will bring it to the April meet for folk to see. Any NWAG member can borrow it. Please contact Richard to do so.



JANUARY MEETING

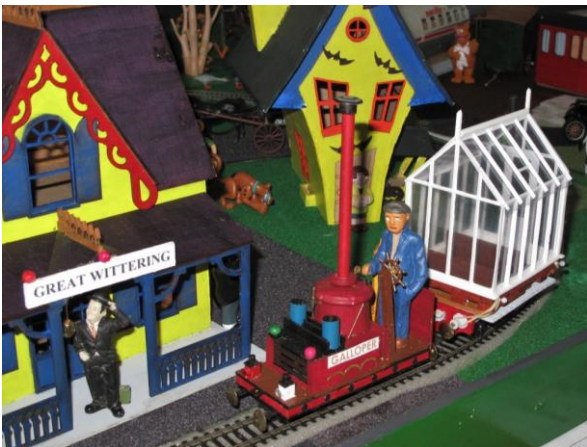
Phew! Andrew Jolley and I just about made it to this one. We normally come via the Warburton Bridge but got there to find the road closed, Satnav took us all round the houses before it got us to the meeting, by which time most of the morning had gone. Here are some photos I did get in the remaining time,



EMMET AT CLEVELEYS BY TONY WARING

Our local club's annual open day gave me a chance to run some of my recently completed models inspired by the cartoons of Roland Emmet. Two new side baseboards provided extra scenic areas compared with its previous outings. The buildings reflect the period after the war when accommodation was short and Emmet was suggesting many imaginative alternatives to the houses that were in short supply. And the coastal baseboard reflects the rush to the seaside which followed the opening up of the beaches after they had been closed during the war. Modesty here has the bathers using the old time bathing machines and all enveloping bathing costumes. Well, that's history for you!

Oh, and the mobile greenhouse is his answer the Devon Belle Observation Coach.



FEBRUARY MEETING

Oh excellent! The Warburton bridge was open again and we got here in good time. A meeting notable for clouds of diesel smoke!





From Peter Ainley



NEWS FROM PHIL VOSE:

New fencing made from reeds out of the pond in the our local park. They are made using a hot glue gun and given a coat of clear varnish. Each set of three is 12 inches wide and 3 inches high. (Pound coin for scale).

Repainted my old warehouse and tidied up the saw mill. Still a lot to do to get the railway set for Spring.



The Mysteries of DCC (Digital Command Control) By Derek Chapman

Occasionally we get asked questions about digital operation of G Scale at the meetings at St Albans, so I've been asked to do a write up on what it is all about.

Principles of DCC operation

Unlike DC operation where the voltage to the track controls the speed of a locomotive and you can only run one train at once without breaking the track up into sections, with DCC the track is powered at a constant 23v/24v AC and electronic signals are sent through the rails to control individual locomotives. In order for this to work a decoder must be installed in each locomotive which amongst other things holds the unique number of the locomotive so that it can be controlled separately from other locomotives on the tracks. Most new locomotives these days will come with a decoder already installed. Only one feed from the DCC controller to the tracks is required, although in practice several feeds may be run to a complex track layout if thought necessary, provided that the track polarity is maintained. Depending on the system in use, any number of locomotives can be run at the same time and in either direction so beware, head on crashes are a distinct possibility as I know from personal experience!

The decoders installed in locomotives can hold a host of information in what are called CVs (Configuration Variables) to control how a particular locomotive operates, for example:-

- Maximum speed. Useful to stop a train overturning on R1 curves (personal experience again)
- Rate of acceleration, gives a smooth start from a stop
- Rate of deceleration, gives a smooth stop when pulling into a station, but be aware that a train will not stop immediately if the speed controller is set to 0.
- 14 or 28 speed steps, 28 giving a smoother mode of operation. Some systems will allow 128 speed steps.

If a loco is fitted with sound, DCC will give more control over how the sounds are played e.g. to play certain sounds when a locomotive starts or stops, and the volume of sounds.

Specific Systems

There are any number of DCC systems available but I will restrict this article to just 2.

The LGB MTS system was the original DCC offering from LGB and is still in common use but can only be bought second hand these days. It is limited to locomotive numbers of 1 to 22. A single analogue locomotive can also be run on an MTS system and is accessed through locomotive number 0. Points and signals can also be controlled. An LGB 55025 turnout decoder is required for this. Each decoder can operate 4 points

and simply needs wiring to the track for power and a pair of leads to each point. The 55025 decoders need protecting from the elements and can be put inside lineside buildings if available, or alternatively a small protective box can easily be constructed. I take my point decoders inside for the winter to protect them from the more severe weather conditions. MTS systems are limited to an overall load of 5 amps.

The other commonly used system is the Massoth 1210Z controller. This is a newer and more sophisticated system than LGB MTS. Locomotive addresses can be anything between 1 and 10239, so can be set to something more relevant to the running number of the locomotive. There is a limit of 32 locomotives that can be controlled simultaneously and running characteristics of up to 128 locomotives can be stored in the central station. In practice, these restrictions would never be reached by the average G Scaler, so should not present any problems. The load on the controller can be set up to a maximum of 12 amps and the track voltage can be set up to a maximum of 23V. The CVs on decoders (see above) can be easily set through the Navigator hand held controllers. As with the MTS system, points and signals can be controlled in a similar manner. There is also a facility for automatic train control. This is achieved by the use of Massoth feedback modules which have simple reed switches, placed on the sleepers between the rails, connected to them. By means of a magnet placed under the locomotive, when a reed switch is triggered different commands can be given, for example to stop or start a locomotive, reverse its direction, change points and so on. Several commands can be given for one triggering of a reed switch so that stopping one train and starting another can easily be achieved. End to end shuttles and intermediate station stops are all possible to set up. The setting of the rates of acceleration and deceleration can make the automatic running quite realistic compared with some systems where trains stop and start abruptly.

As I said above, there are a lot of DCC systems available, some a lot more sophisticated than those I have described, having Bluetooth installed on the decoders so that trains can be controlled from smartphones and similar devices.

If anyone would like more information on the use of DCC, please feel free to get in touch with myself either at the monthly meetings or via email.

Derek Chapman. derekanddorothy@btinternet.com

MARCH MEETING





From Peter Ainley





HAPPY DAYS FROM PHIL:



MEANWHILE, DON'T MISS:



LLANGOLLEN
GARDEN RAILWAY FESTIVAL
www.lgrf.co.uk

Festival 2025

Saturday June 7 2025
10-4pm
Llangollen Pavilion, Abbey Road, Llangollen, LL20 8SW

Adults
£14
Accompanied
Children FREE

www.lgrf.co.uk
Llangollen Garden Railway Festival

FIND OUT MORE

QR code

The poster features three small inset photos showing people at model railway displays. A large photo at the bottom shows a man working on a model railway layout.



LLANGOLLEN
GARDEN RAILWAY FESTIVAL
www.lgrf.co.uk

The Llangollen Garden Railway Festival is one of the UK's premier model garden railway events.

- Set in the beautiful Vale of Llangollen in Northeast Wales, it is a great day for families and kids as well as hobbyists and enthusiasts!
- Showcasing the very latest releases and products for those with an interest in garden railways.
- A range of large scale model layouts showing railways from different periods and countries.
- Nearly 50 stalls with traders will be displaying and selling everything you would need for your garden model railway.

Advanced Tickets £14 (Accompanied children free) from the Llangollen Tourist Information Centre, who will post them out to you OR by calling 01978 860 828 (On the day tickets sales start at 10.00am)

www.lgrf.co.uk

The poster includes three small inset photos showing various model railway displays and people at the festival.

NWAG Diary 2025

19th April Altrincham The regular monthly meeting. 10.00 onwards including the AGM.

17th May Altrincham The regular monthly meeting. 10.00 onwards

7th June Llangollen Garden Railway Festival 10.00 See advert above.

21st June Altrincham The regular monthly meeting. 10.00 onwards.

NO MONTHLY MEETINGS IN JULY AND AUGUST.

20th September Altrincham The regular monthly meeting. 10.00 onwards

18th October Altrincham The regular monthly meeting. 10.00 onwards

15th November Altrincham The regular monthly meeting. 10.00 onwards

20th December Altrincham The regular monthly meeting. 10.00 onwards

Contributions

Many thanks to those of you who have contributed material for this edition.

Please send your article or photographs for the Newsletter to me via: anthony.waring55@btinternet.com. It helps greatly if photographs are sent separately as attachments as jpg files; and for text to be in Word attachments or alternatively in the body of the email. Deadline for the next Newsletter is 28th June.

G-Scale Society North West Area Group Committee Members

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Group Leader: Richard Waller nwageditor@gmail.com

Secretary & Membership Secretary: John Hulse gscalenw@yahoo.com