

NORTHAMPTON & DISTRICT

# NEWSLETTER

MODEL RAILWAY CLUB

Between the Lines

7 8 9 10 11 12

**SPRING 2023**

**ADMIT ONE to Platform**

NOT VALID ON TRAINS

Issued subject to the Bye-Laws, Notices  
Regulations and Conditions of the Railway

1 2 3 4 5 6



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## From the Editors Cab Window

2023 marks the 100th anniversary of what has become known in British railway history as "The Grouping". In this newsletter there is an article to mark this occasion.

2023 also marks the 100th anniversary of the LNER Flying Scotsman and the GWR Castles. If you want to mark the occasion of the Flying Scotsman's entry into our railway history in the newsletter, then please do an article. I can't do it as it wasn't built at Swindon. However in a later newsletter this year I will do one on the Castles.

On the club uniform front, there is some good news in that most of the prices have gone down. Some items have gone down by only a £1 whilst others have gone down by as much as £8. Something very rare these days.

We are sorry to learn that Trevor and Liz can't come to club anymore due to personal issues.



*Colin*

# Club Torque



The Club is pleased to welcome the following new member(s):

Harvey Perry-Small

## Club Exhibition 2023 — Roade

There is a supply of flyers advertising our club exhibition in August that you can take to distribute where you think fit. Just ask Colin or Craig for some.

# TOMBOLA

Its that time again when we must appeal for items for the Club's Tombola that we operate at our annual exhibition. Please bring in any new items or items that are in very good condition as prizes. If you wish to donate anything that is edible or drinkable will you please make sure that it has a use by date not expiring before 1st October 2023. Also if you donate anything that is breakable or delicate, then please mark this clearly on the bag or box you bring it in please so that it does not get broken. Unfortunately in the past some glassware was donated and it got broken.

## Club Handbook

We now have a Club Handbook, that can be found with the signing sheet on a Thursday evening. The newsletters are now in a separate binder. The Handbook contains forms for joining the club, the Rules & Constitution and other administrative information. Additionally it will hold information on railway modelling as a reference guide. Currently included in the handbook is the Hornby Magazine guide to beginning a model railway along with a guide and information on DCC.

# Chairman's Ramblings

As I sit here at my computer looking out of my workshop window, I am hoping that the weather will finally now get a little better and we will be able to get out and about a lot more. I have also noticed the usual return of all the Spring flowers is finally happening, which is a good sign. Hope this newsletter finds you all as well as can be expected, and a warm welcome to all our newer and younger members.



We have had a fairly good start to the year, and we have also had some progress with our club layouts. We were luckily given permission to use the entrance hall to work on the Kingsthorpe layout, which we hope will be ready for our show in August. This then allows us to have space available in the main hall every week to run the main demonstration track.

The N Gauge "boys" Bill, Ray and Parry and others, have a new layout build planned shortly and have just purchased some pre made base boards for this purpose. If anyone is interested in joining the N gauge project, then please have a chat with any of them.

We are having some minor problems on the Demo track which is mainly due to normal wear and tear. Hopefully we can get these sorted out over the next few weeks. I am very glad to say that the Junior track is now being used every week and the members using it seem to be enjoying it thoroughly.

Working on layouts in storage and in the care of members, at the moment, is not a priority for the club, and sadly as we have very limited space to put them up, this situation will have to remain in place at the moment.

Thanks again, go to John for providing a sales table every week which adds another interest for all members attending on the Thursday evening.

Sorry to grumble BUT here are a few small things we have noticed recently that are not being done.

- 1 Please will you clean and put away your cups after your use. Michael is usually the one that ends up doing this for all of us (me included I am sad to say)
- 2 Please keep the hall and toilet area clean, as we wish to show that the club has a responsible attitude.
- 3 If you use a layout then please if you can, stay around to help put it away at the end of the evening.



If you do know of anyone interested in joining the club then please let them know there is NO charge for the first couple of weeks, hopefully this will encourage them to visit. We are still looking for an alternative venue for the club, but so far have not been successful. If you do see a likely candidate for us then please let us know.

All the best for 2023 and I do hope you find that elusive model railway bargain you have always been looking for.

Best wishes

*Les Pace*

Chairman NDMRC

## Garden Railway Show

*by Les Pace*

I was lucky enough to be at Garden Railway show at the weekend in the Exhibition Centre in Warwick.

On Saturday I was assisting Dale Gillard on his Hampton End G Scale layout which is a large colourful layout, and a joy to operate. On the Sunday I had a chance to run my Gauge 1 live steam Jubilee loco, which performed fairly well, but has gone back to have some minor steaming problems rectified. Overall a fun event, but only one O gauge and no smaller scale layouts. It seemed that most garden layouts are built to the larger scale.

Here are a few pictures from the show.

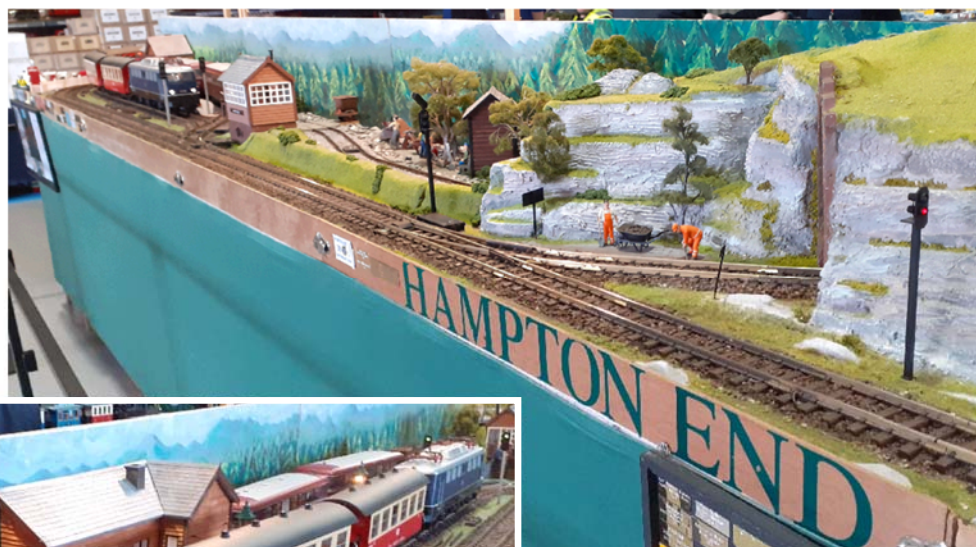


THE MODEL RAIL SHOW FOR LARGER GAUGES  
**MIDLANDS GARDEN RAIL SHOW**  
O GAUGE, G SCALE, GAUGE 1, 16MM & MORE...





# Garden Railway Show continued



THE MODEL RAIL SHOW FOR LARGER GAUGES

**MIDLANDS GARDEN RAIL SHOW**

0 GAUGE, G SCALE, GAUGE 1, 16MM & MORE...



# Caption Competition

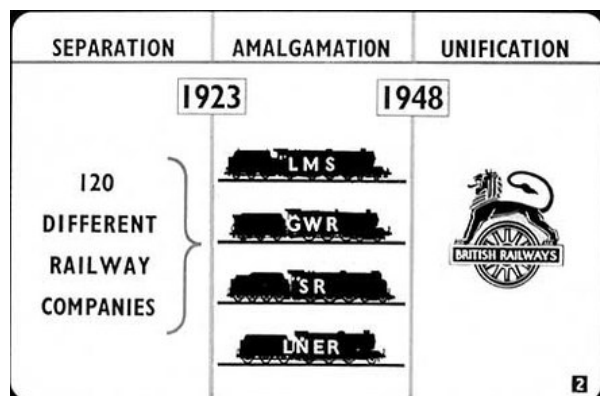


If you can think of a printable caption for this photo then please submit your offering to the editor. No prizes I'm afraid, just a bit of fun.



# The 1923 Grouping

by Colin Tarry



Under the Railways Act 1921 the majority of the railway companies in Great Britain (along with a few in Northern Ireland) were grouped into four main companies, often termed the Big Four. The grouping took effect from 1 January 1923. The Big Four remained until nationalisation came in 1948, although the state took control of the railways during the Second World War.

I'm not going into any great depth on the grouping, its virtues and failings here. There are plenty of publications out in the public domain to satisfy your thirst for further information. However as a model railway club we can't let this anniversary slip by and not mention it, in one of our newsletters. Many of our club members model or own locomotives and rolling stock from this period. I'm just going to give a synopsis here.

## Ownership of the railways before and during the First World War

Before the first world war, the railways were built, maintained and run by over a hundred different companies. Locally, competition was fierce, and there was the duplication of lines between the same locations. During the first world war, the Government took control of the railways which they ran until 1921.

## Railways Act 1921

In 1920, Sir Eric Geddes, the Minister of State for Transport, published a white paper called 'Outline of Proposals as to the Future Organisation of Transport Undertakings in Great Britain and their Relation to the State'. It put forward reorganising the railways into a number of groups.

After the usual parliamentary haggling, Geddes provided a memo to the cabinet on his Railways Bill. In a nutshell the final act listed four groups across England and Scotland. The Railways Act 1921 received royal assent on 19 August 1921. Its aims were to reorganise the railways and make them more efficient and economical. The principal railway companies in each group would be amalgamated, along with absorbing other smaller companies into what became the Big Four.

The four groups listed in the act were:

- the Southern Group (Southern Railway);
- the Western Group (Great Western Railway);
- the North Western, Midland, and West Scottish Group (London, Midland, Scottish Railway); and
- the North Eastern, Eastern, and East Scottish Group (London and North Eastern Railway).

The GWR was the only company to retain its name, from its birth in 1833 (being incorporated in 1835) until nationalisation came on 1st January 1948. No relation to the GWR of today.



What is TU-MYL St JAMES you might well be asking yourself. All will be revealed here.

TU-MYL St JAMES is the name I have given to the N gauge layout I have been working on since the middle of last year. The name will become apparent as you read on. The Tu-Myl part you should have worked out by now. If not, then the N gauge scale is 2mm to the foot, hence Tu-Myl.

What are the origins of this layout? Unfortunately this layout came into my possession by a sad occurrence, namely the passing of our club member Jim McMaster. Jim was an N gauge modeller; and in fact built the N gauge Test Track that we use on Thursday evenings at club. Jim passed away in July 2021 after a brave fight with cancer.

Initially Jim's family gave the club his N gauge Test Track, and some other projects that Jim had been involved with from the club. Then in later in 2021, Laura one of Jim's daughters, contacted me to see if I or the club would be interested in a layout Jim had started, but they didn't have the time to get running. They had put the layout into store, where I then met Laura and Jim's wife to see if I was interested. Having looked at the layout, I said I would like to take it on and develop it as an exhibition layout. So that is the story of how this layout came into my procession. The James part of the layout name I thought would be a fitting tribute to Jim. The saint part just gives a flow to the whole name.

The track plan and sceneics of the layout were based on the Graham Farish Magnum II plan. Jim had stuck to their actual track layout but had done his own thing with regards to buildings and the general urban design.

Jim had fully motorised all the points/turnouts using Peco solenoids and had built numerous colour light signals which operated via relays depending how the points/turnouts were set. Unfortunately a lot of the wiring under the baseboard connecting all this together had become disconnected or severed.

After going over the remaining wiring that was in situ, I decided it would be quicker and easier to start from scratch. Also my vision for the layout was that it would be operated by DCC.

My plan was to get the layout back into working order in these four stages:

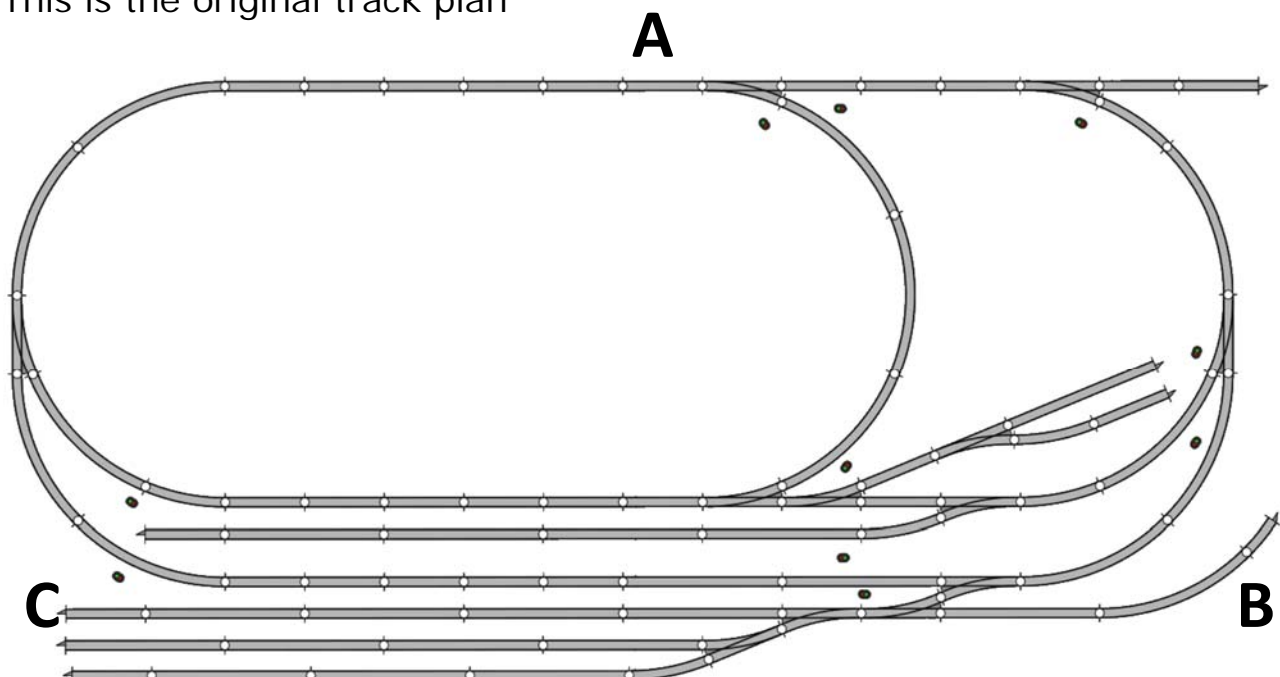
- 1 Track power bus
- 2 Point motors
- 3 Colour light signals on posts or gantries
- 4 Colour light ground signals

During the winter of 2021/2022 I worked on the first three of the previously mentioned stages and got them working.

Now one of the short comings of the track plan, was that you could only run one train at a time. Although there were three ovals of track, they all shared a common straight, down the rear of the layout, marked by an A below

In order to run two trains simultaneously, add more interest to the layout and improve operational flexibility, I looked at ways of adding another continuous circuit of track. The only way I found practical was to extend two sidings into an oval, which would include it having a raised section to pass over the existing tracks. The two tracks to extend are marked B & C

This is the original track plan



In the next newsletter I will go into detail on the raised section of track that I added.



# Forthcoming Events

## Soar Valley Model Railway Club Exhibition

12th/13th August 2023

This exhibition clashes with our club exhibition this year. However we understand at this point in time that we will be invited to take the Demonstration Layout. On the Saturday it will need to be operated by club members who are not required for exhibition duty. On the Sunday those who couldn't attend on the Saturday will be able to attend.

The venue as last year will be Loughborough Grammar School.

Nearer the time we will be seeking the names of members who wish to attend.

## Rushden Historical Transport Trust—Model Weekend

14th/15th October 2023

We are going to be invited to take the Demonstration Layout to this event. We will be asking for volunteers to help nearer the time.

## Silverfox DCC MRC Visit

*by Colin Tarry*

On Tuesday 7th February last, 11 club members paid a visit to the Milton Keynes Silverfox model railway club at their club rooms at Bletchley Cemetery. They had two large layouts in OO and N gauges. There was also a smaller layout in O gauge.

I've included some pictures on the next page. You will note the grills on the window. This is to stop club members escaping.

Refreshments were provided for those who wanted them.

You can see from the pictures what can be achieved when the members decide to do something and get stuck in. Something that is sadly lacking in our club. Most of our membership just seem to want to run trains round. I did say most and not all.

The nice thing about having a club room in a cemetery is you don't get any trouble from the neighbours.







The OO gauge layout  
Watkin Magna

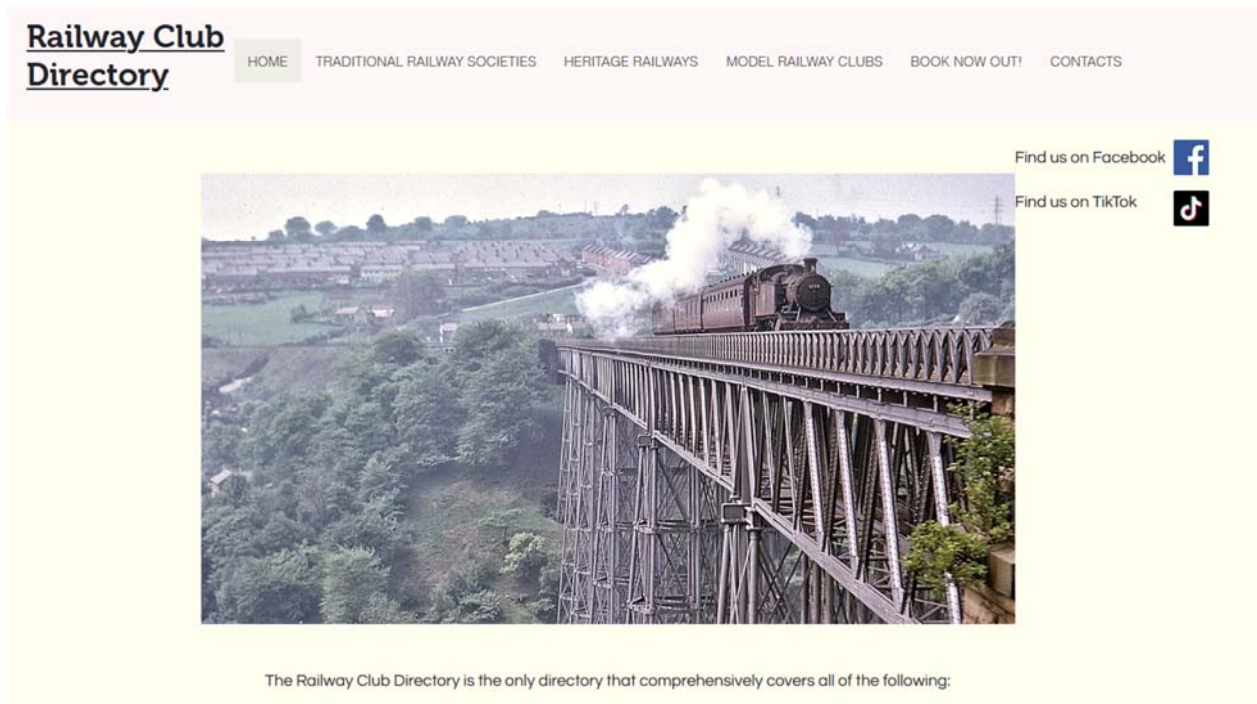


The N gauge  
layout  
Foxborough



# Railway Club Directory

The Railway Club Directory (RCD) have emailed us, to advise that the Railway Club Directory has expanded its scope to include Model Railway Clubs. The RCD is enthusiast led and all entries are free. Don't confuse this web site with 'The UK Model Shop Directory' which is a different entity.



The following is what appears on the Railway Club Directory for our club:

Northampton & District Model Railway Club

Hardingstone Village Hall, High Street, Hardingstone, Northampton NN4 6DA

Meet Days: Thursdays: 7.30pm to 10pm

Website: [www.ndmrc.org](http://www.ndmrc.org)

Email: Use contact box on club website

*Traditional railway society nearby: RCTS (Northampton branch)*

*Nearest listed Heritage Railway: Northampton & Lamport Railway*

<https://www.railwayclubdirectory.com/home>



# British Outline Locomotive DCC Decoder Sockets (Interfaces)

*by Colin Tarry*

**NOTE: This article is about MOBILE decoders & not accessory decoders.**

With the Club having had several new members join over the last few months, I feel it would now be appropriate to do a series of articles on the basics of DCC (Digital Command Control). Several of our new members have been asking me DCC related questions. Also a number of our more established members are also now going down the DCC road (or should that be track).

After the article have appeared in the clubs newsletter, I will then put a copy into the club manual , which you should find by the signing in sheet on club night.

What is DCC? In a nut shell, Digital Command Control (DCC) is a standard for a system to operate a model railway digitally. When equipped with Digital Command Control, locomotives on the same electrical section of track can be independently controlled, without the need for power isolated sections of track, plus simplified wiring.

New locomotives that you purchase these days should be fitted with a DCC interface, normally in the form of a socket. These make fitting decoders relatively easy. Details of these sockets can be found on the following pages.

Decoder sockets come in a variety of types depending on the size and the potential number of functions on a locomotive. All DCC decoder sockets are specified by the NMRA (National Model Railroad Association). This body sets out standards in order that all differing manufacturers products are compatible with each other. On the whole this is the case; however there anomalies in some areas. More details about them can be found at <https://www.nmra.org>

The decoder sockets (interfaces) permit manufacturers to support both the 12v DCC and DC options within the same model. The new PluX decoders have been designed to permit some flexibility for customers to add functions such as cab lights, smoke generators, inspection lighting and speakers for PluX sound decoders. The 21 pin Marklin socket was originally adopted for this purpose but there are several pins that are not used on 2-rail models. MTC 21 pin has the ability to connect up 5 auxiliary functions whereas a PluX 22 allows you to connect 9 auxiliary function outputs as well as motor and speaker connections, adding greater flexibility and realism. Like the MTC 21 pin, the PluX 22 decoder is difficult to install incorrectly.

Hornby typically used the 8 pin socket (NEM 652) in their OO gauge models for many years but are now diversifying to use the NEM651 (6-pin) and the (21MTC 21-pin) in their ranges

Bachmann early on used the 8 pin socket (NEM 652) but have been using the 21MTC (21-pin) for quite some time now. This decoder has no trailing wires and fits securely. It is also very difficult to install wrongly, but not impossible.

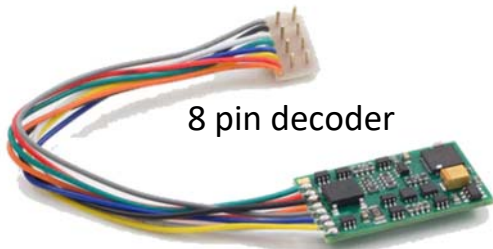


Bachmann Liliput N is trying the NEXT18 (NEM662) decoder (Keuhn Digital and Elektronik Solutions Ulm). NEXT18 has a positive location and can control a large number of additional electrical functions with a very small decoder.

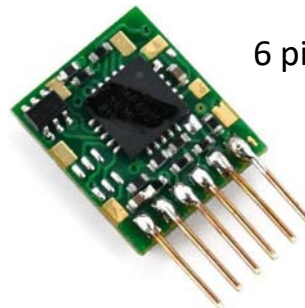
Minitrix N gauge used the NEM 651 (6-pin) from around 2011/2012 time, but I have heard that they now developing a 14pin socket.

Fleischmann N use the NEM651 (6-pin) as it is small.

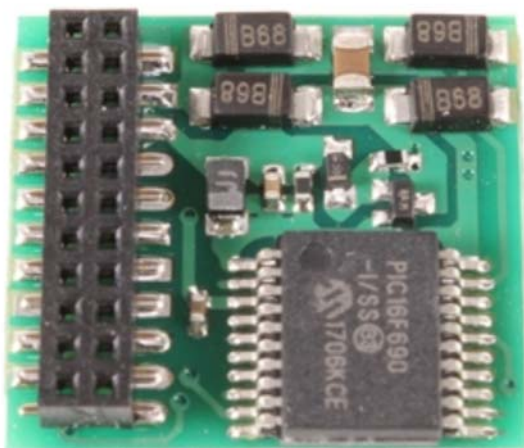
The key thing to remember when installing decoders, is not to force them into their sockets. Particularly with decoders that have pins, as these can be easily bent and even broken off.



8 pin decoder



6 pin decoder



21 MTC

21 pin decoder



NEXT18  
decoder

## NEM 651

The 6-pin decoder socket is used in most N-gauge, TT and some OO/HO models

It is a compact socket with all the main functions.

The table below shows the 6 pins and the related colour codes for wired decoders.

Contact 1	Motor connection	Orange
Contact 2	Motor connection	Grey
Contact 3	Power connection Right	Red
Contact 4	Power Connection Left	Black
Contact 5	Lights forward	White
Contact 6	Lights rear	Yellow

**SYMBOL**



## NEM 652

Is a medium size decoder socket used mainly in OO/HO locomotives.

The table below shows the 8 pins and the related colour codes for wired decoders

Pin1 / Wire colour	Motor connection	Orange
Contact 2	Rear light (-ve)	Yellow
Contact 3	Aux1 <sup>1</sup> (-ve)	Green
Contact 4	Track power Left	Black
Contact 5	Motor connection	Grey
Contact 6	Front light (-ve)	White
Contact 7	Common wire for lighting <sup>2</sup> (+ve)	Blue
Contact 8	Track power Right	Red

**SYMBOL**

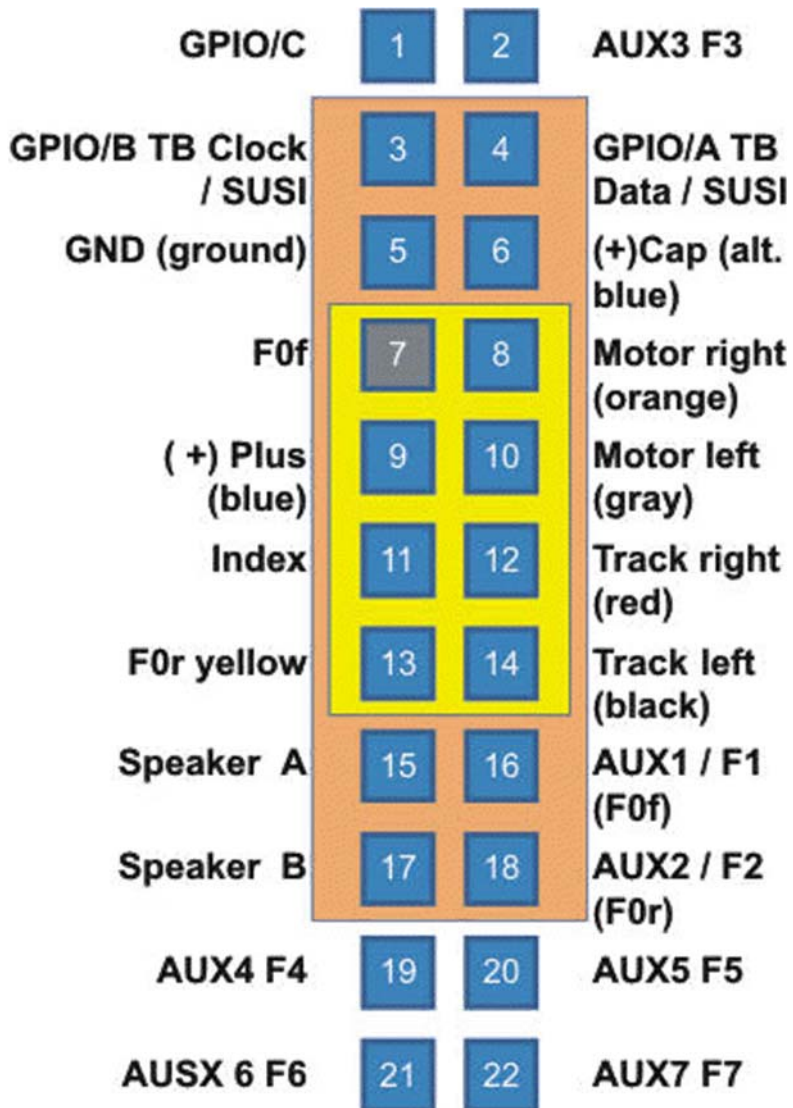


## NEM 660 21pin (21 MTC)

The specification for the 21MTC socket/interface is that it gives control of AC (alternating current), DC (direct current) and coreless motors. A big advantage of this interface is that it holds the decoder very securely and is much more difficult to install incorrectly.

This is the layout of the 21MTC interface (NEM660):

**SYMBOL**



**Orange**

Plux16 connector

**Yellow**

Plux8 connector

See Nem658 below

**SYMBOL**



## NEM 658 PluX22

The PluX22 connector consists of two rows of 11 pins. PluX16 and PluX8 connectors consist of two rows of 8 pins and 4 pins respectively. The smaller connectors are subsets of the larger interface. PluX8 offers no advantages over the NEM 651 interface, so it not used. The interface is designed for direct plug-in installation. Connection via a cable is not provided for, and are outside the PluX Standard. The Standard sets maximum dimensions for the decoder, both footprint and thickness. This allows for small, drop-in decoders. The PluX interface supports one motor, up to 9 function outputs and one sensor input. Also defined are the installation space and size of the decoder. Packaging must be labelled indicating a PluX16 or PluX22 device.



## NEM 662 NEXT18

This new interface is designed for N, TT and small OO/HO models.

The NEXT18 interface will control both DC and Coreless motors and provides electrical connections for up to 7 function outputs (F0 + AUX1-AUX6). Manufacturers are free to use as many of these connections as they choose. Connections not used can be left unconnected in the loco circuit board.

The 18 pins are arranged symmetrically so that if a decoder is installed the wrong way round then no damage will occur. This arrangement also means that track power and ground connections are duplicated to increase the current that may flow through them and for a more reliable connection. Each pin can carry 0.5amp so track pick up can be 1.0amp and ground can also be 1.0amp (Because 2 contacts are used) all other connections will be 0.5amp maximum.

At the time of writing this article no DIY sockets/interfaces are available.

Connection	Contact No.	Contact No.	Connection
Track right	1	18	Track Right
Motor+	2	17	F0 r
AUX1	3	16	AUX5 (L/Spkr A)
AUX3	4	15	U+
GND	5	14	GND
U+	6	13	AUX4
AUX6 (L/Spkr B)	7	12	AUX2
F0 f	8	11	Motor-
Track Left	9	10	Track Left

For models designed to accept a sound decoder then AUX 5 becomes Loudspeaker A and AUX 6 becomes Loudspeaker B

### SYMBOL



Some continental manufacturers use other sockets/interfaces. For example Roco HO from about 2011 onwards use the PluX interfaces.

# Uniform

If you wish to, order any items of Club Uniform then please get in touch with Colin Tarry.

In order to help you gauge (pun intended) the size of item(s) you require there is information available in the club folder.

The following items are available:

A price list is also in the club folder.

All body clothing has the club logo on and your name.

The cap only has the club logo.



**Please note that a £5 deposit will be required for EACH item ordered. As these items are personalised, we are unable to give refunds or do exchanges where incorrect sizes have been ordered.**

ITEM	GENDER	PRODUCT No	SIZE	PRICE
Polo shirt	Mens	R539M	S,M,L,XL,2XL	£20.00
Polo shirt	Mens	R539M	3XL, 4XL	£26.00
Polo shirt	Ladies	R539F	8,10,12,14,16,18	£20.00
Polo shirt	Ladies	R539F	20,22	£26.00
Polo shirt	Childs	R539B	S,M,L,XL,2XL	£19.00
Sweat shirt	Unisex	R762M	S,M,L,XL,2XL	£24.00
Sweat shirt	Unisex	R762M	3XL, 4XL	£32.00
Sweat shirt	Childs	R762B	S,M,L,XL,2XL	£23.00
Fleece	Mens	R870M	S,M,L,XL,2XL	£32.00
Fleece	Mens	R870M	3XL, 4XL	£38.00
Fleece	Ladies	R870F	8,10,12,14,16,18	£32.00
Fleece	Ladies	R870F	20,22	£38.00
Fleece	Childs	R870B	S,M,L,XL,2XL	£30.00
Cap	Unisex	BC015	One size fits all	£17.00

These prices are correct as at 1st March 2023. These prices are subject to change. When ordering please bear in mind that the cost may be greater than shown here.

# Club Information

## Committee Members

Les Pace (Chair Person)  
Richard Deacon (Secretary)  
Craig Dawkins (Exhibition Manager)  
Cliff Simpson

Colin Tarry (Treasurer)  
Michael Castledine

Web site: <https://ndmrc.org>

Email: [feedback@ndmrc.org](mailto:feedback@ndmrc.org)



Club Night: Thursday

Meeting Time: 19:30—22:00

Venue: Hardingstone Village Hall

High Street, Hardingstone,  
Northampton, NN4 6DA

Secretary: tel: 01604 890275

email: [rjd156@btinternet.com](mailto:rjd156@btinternet.com)

## Non Committee Positions

Newsletter Editor - Colin Tarry	email: <a href="mailto:wizzo@hymek.net">wizzo@hymek.net</a>
Sales Officer - John Walker	email: <a href="mailto:pamjohn38@btinternet.com">pamjohn38@btinternet.com</a>

## Club Membership Rates

Club membership runs from September to August or part of the calendar year, and ALL expire on the last calendar day of August, becoming due for renewal on the first of September.

Adult membership £60 per year, Junior membership £10 per year.

For adult members easy payment terms available. Please enquire.

## **DISCLAIMER**

Any views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Northampton and District Model Railway Club, its Officials or Members unless so stated.