

## **GREYSTONES CENTRAL**

The track plan is based on a Cyril Freezer design, found in his N-gauge planbook (Layout #9), with slight increases in both length and width, and additional sidings adjacent to loco and goods sheds. We chose this plan because it offers the opportunity for continuous running on the lower level and operational interest on the upper. The former features a twin-track main with hidden crossover tracks, whilst the latter boasts a terminus with five platform faces, loco shed, turntable and goods yard. The British outline layout is nominally set in the late 1950's/early 1960's, providing the opportunity to run both steam and diesel motive power.

This is our first venture into DCC, prompting us to join the then newly-formed Silver Fox DCC MRC, which was established to cater for DCC-minded modellers, both experienced and those new to this form of control.

We have opted to use DCC only to control the motive power, using an NCE Power Cab controller, supplemented by a Procab extra throttle. Pointwork is operated from a panel with mimic diagram incorporating centre-off toggle switches and LED indicator lamps. Five Heathcote "Point indicator relay modules" link the 24 sets of points to the panel switches, operating the LEDs and changing point frog polarity. Two Heathcote relay boards provide additional switch contacts to deal with the need for paired frog polarity switching on three crossovers on the upper level. A pair of Tam Valley "Twin Frog Juicer" modules takes care of automatic polarity detection/reversal on the two reverse crossover tracks on the lower level.

The loco turntable is a standard Peco kit, but the method of powering it is non-standard. Mounted directly below, on the underside of the upper baseboard, is an old HO scale Atlas powered turntable, with built-in indexing mechanism. An extension shaft connects the two 'tables together. The Atlas unit is controlled by a standard DC controller.

Motive power is at present drawn exclusively from the Graham Farish stable. Steam power is represented by ex-LMS, LNER, GWR and Standard classes; Oil burners are BR Classes 08, 24, 37, 47 and 55, and Class 101 and 108 two-car DMUs. All except the Class 08 are fitted with Digitrax DZ 125/6 decoders. The exception is fitted with a very small CT DCX75D decoder. A variety of both passenger and freight rolling stock is steadily being amassed.

Currently, all stock retains original Rapido couplings – in the future it is hoped to replace the majority of these with Micro-Trains couplers which, together with strategically placed permanent magnets, will facilitate hands-free coupling and uncoupling.

The majority of buildings seen on the layout are (predictably) Metcalfe card kits, supplemented by representatives from Ratio, Kestrel and Peco. Signal boxes are from Farish, plus Metcalfe and Miniscene kits. Vehicles are mainly by Oxford and BT.