



# MERG East Midlands Area Group News

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Joint area group coordinators - Brian Norris and Pete Brownlow

To send us an email, use the [MERG East Midlands Area Group contact form](#).

For MERG members, you might also like to look at our [area group forum](#).

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## SUMMER 2017 MERG East Midlands area group meeting

**Saturday 15th July 2017 from 10:00**

Kindly hosted by Julie and Brian Chapman at their place in Skegness.

Collection can be arranged from Skegness station for those who would like to come by train.

Full details and directions to the venue will be confirmed to those attending.

### AGENDA

The meeting will be informal and flexible, so these are approximate times:

- 10:00 Arrival, Informal chat and get to know the other members
- 10:30 Introductions, Group news, future meetings etc.
- 11:10 Locketown Control Panels - by Nick Locke - progress update and demonstration
- 11:45 Short tea/coffee break
- 12:00 Discussion about our plans for MERG@50 meeting in September
- 12:30 What's new in CBUS - by Pete Brownlow - new modules, CANMIO daughter boards, firmware news
- 13:00 Lunch - From the local fish and chip shop who will deliver, or bring your own.
- 13:45 Making it work - practical sessions and problem clinic on any members projects, MERG kits or anything else.
- 16:00 Final discussion, confirm next meeting and thanks to our hosts

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As always, if you have built something and would like any help and advice, please bring it along and we'll work on it with you during the afternoon clinic as a demonstration for everyone.

If we didn't quite have time to get your project properly sorted at the last meeting, please bring it along again and you will be top of the list.

Judi has decided to desert us and go on holiday 🤔, so she won't be at the meeting this time. So if you need kits, you will need to order them from the kit locker and have them posted to you in the usual way.

Julie and Brian can accommodate a maximum of 20 people, so it will be first come first served for booking a place.

Parking is quite limited, with double yellow lines on all roads nearby, Brian and the next door neighbour can accommodate about 10-12 cars max on the driveway. So please car share as much as possible. If it looks like we will have too many cars, then we will identify a car park in the vicinity where people can meet up and come on to the venue in one car.

The venue is accessible. There are two steps but wheelchair ramps are available if required. If you need a parking space reserved on Brian's drive, please let us know.

Tea/Coffee and biscuits will be available all day, with cake in the afternoon.

Brian has kindly offered (and presumably Julie knows about this? 😊) to provide bacon butties, so we'll need to give numbers of who would like those.

Let us know if you need a lift from the station. If arriving by train, please plan to arrive at Skegness station no later than the 9:48 arrival so that whoever picks you up does not have to miss any of the meeting.

If you would like to come, please send an email to [eastmids@merg.org.uk](mailto:eastmids@merg.org.uk) or post a message in the East Midlands Area group section of the MERG forum. You will get a reply, in due course, with full address details, directions to the venue and parking information.

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## SPRING 2017 MERG East Midlands area group meeting

**Saturday 8th April 2017 from 10:00**

Kindly hosted by The Rushden Historical Transport Society (RHTS) at Rushden Station, Northamptonshire. See <http://www.rhts.co.uk>

Collection can be arranged from Wellingborough station for those who would like to come by train.

Our highlight is a talk and demonstration by the Nelevation team: see <http://www.nelevation.com>

I'm hoping that, once again, we can have the buffet car open serving tea, coffee and refreshments, as well as the bar on the platform which is generally open on Saturday lunchtimes.

We will ask for £2 per head to cover the use of the room, which will go to RHTS funds.

Full details will be confirmed to those attending.

## AGENDA

The meeting will be informal and flexible, so these are approximate times:

- 10:00 Arrival, Informal chat and get to know the other members
- 10:30 Introductions, Group news, future meetings etc.
- 11:00 The Nelevator by Richard Farrar and Allen Pearson
- 12:00 CBUS Update - Pete Brownlow
- 12:30 Lunch - From the buffet car, or bring your own. RHTS bar should also be open.

Rushden high street is close by if anybody wishes to buy food locally.

There may also be a chance to see the RHTS '00' gauge layout housed in an ex-Royal Mail TPO van.

- 13:30 Making it work - practical sessions and problem clinic on any members projects, MERG kits or anything else.
- 16:00 Final discussion, confirm next meeting and thanks to our hosts

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As always, if you have built something and would like any help and advice, please bring it along and we'll work on it with you during the afternoon clinic as a demonstration for everyone.

If we didn't quite have time to get your project properly sorted at the last meeting, please bring it along again and you will be top of the list.

The venue is accessible, with disabled parking close by. If you need a disabled parking space reserved, please let us know.

If you would like to come, please send an email to [eastmids@merg.org.uk](mailto:eastmids@merg.org.uk) or post a message in the East Midlands Area group section of the MERG forum. You will get a reply with full address details, directions to the venue and parking information. Let us know if you need a lift from the station. If arriving by train, please plan to arrive at Wellingborough station no later than 9:30 so that whoever picks you up does not have to miss any of the meeting.

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# JANUARY 2017 MERG East Midlands area group meeting

**Saturday 28th January 2017 from 10:00**

Kindly hosted by the Syston Model Railway Society at their clubrooms at The Old School Community Centre, Thurmaston, Leicestershire

Thanks to SMRS and MERG member Mike Collins for arranging this venue for us.

We have chosen a date when we can have the use of the larger room all day - so that I can bring the Missenden St Mary's layout again and do part 2 of the JMRI automation demos.

Please either bring your own packed lunch or alternatively, there is a chip shop nearby.

Collection can be arranged from Syston station for those who would like to come by train.

We will ask for a donation of £2 per head to cover the room hire.

The meeting room is on the ground floor and easily accessible. The clubrooms housing the SMRS layouts are upstairs.

## AGENDA

The meeting will be informal and flexible, so these are approximate times:

- 10:00 Arrival, Informal chat and get to know the other members
- 10:30 Welcome to SMRS - by Mike Collins
- 10:35 Introductions and group news
- 10:50 Rolling road speedo, a simple introduction to using the Arduino by Graham Clark
- 11:15 Thoughts for my new layout by Colin Head
- 11:30 Short tea/coffee break (or recovery time if we are running late)
- 11:45 JMRI automation - Part 2 by Pete Brownlow
- 13:00 Lunch - Bring your own or find a local chippy
- Also a chance to see the SMRS layouts on site
- 14:00 MERG kit news by Judi Rastall - News on new/updated kits, availability, what is coming soon.
- 14:30 Making it work - practical sessions using members projects, MERG kits or anything else.
- 16:30 Wrap-up discussion, confirm next meeting and thanks to our hosts
- 16:35 Carry on with anything else we haven't fixed yet until we get thrown out!

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Kits will be available for purchase. If you have specific requirements, then it would be best to pre-order what you want from the kit locker for collection at the meeting, as Judi can only bring a selection of stock to the meeting.

For the practical sessions, as we have done before, if you have built something and would like any help and advice, please bring it along and we'll work on it with you as a demonstration for everyone.

If you already know what you want help on for this session, please email the details in advance so we can gen-up on it and look like we know what we are talking about!

If we didn't quite have time to get your project properly sorted at the last meeting, please bring it along again and you will be top of the list.

If you would like to come, please send an email to [eastmids@merg.org.uk](mailto:eastmids@merg.org.uk) or post a message in this East Midlands Area group section of the MERG forum. You will get a reply in due course with full address details, directions to the venue and parking information. Let us know if you need a lift from the station.

# DECEMBER 2016 MERG East Midlands area group meeting

## Saturday 10th December 2016 from 10:00

Kindly hosted by Lincoln & District Model Railway Club (L&DMRC) at Scampton and Aisthorpe Village hall, near Lincoln.

Thanks to Richard Joyce for organising the venue for us, and to Chris Langdon for the use of his layout, Missenden St Mary's, for the DCC and JMRI demonstrations.

Tea and Coffee will be available all day, please bring your own packed lunch as there are no other facilities nearby.

## AGENDA

The meeting will be informal and flexible, so these are approximate times:

- 10:00 Arrival, Informal chat and get to know the other members
- 10:30 Introductions and group news
- 10:45 A test and development CBUS. Godrey Stuart will describe how he put together a number of CBUS modules to test, develop and learn about CBUS
- 11:15 MERG kit news by Judi Rastall – News on new/updated kits, availability, what is coming.
- 11:30 Short coffee break
- 11:45 The MERG DCC system - John Gowers will describe and demonstrate the MERG DCC system
- 12:30 Automation with JMRI - Pete Brownlow will describe how to go about automation using JMRI with CBUS, plus demonstrations using the Missenden St Mary's layout.
- 13:30 Lunch – Bring your own packed lunch
- 14:30 Practical session: Our usual problem solving clinic and continued demonstrations of DCC and JMRI on Missenden St Mary's
- 16:30 “Wrap up” discussion, confirm next meeting and thanks to our host

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Kits will be available for purchase. If you have specific requirements, then it would be best to pre-order what you want from the kit locker for collection at the meeting, as Judi can only bring a selection of stock to the meeting.

For the clinic session, as we have done before, if you have built something and would like any help and advice, please bring it along and we'll work on it with you as a demonstration for everyone. If you know in advance what you would like to get sorted, let us know in advance so we can get on it.

For those who would like to come by train, we can arrange to collect you from Lincoln station, which is about 6 miles from the venue.

If you would like to come to the meeting, please send an email to [eastmids@merg.org.uk](mailto:eastmids@merg.org.uk) or post a message in the East Midlands Area group section of the MERG forum. You will get a reply soon with full address details and directions to the venue.

If you have already let us know that you will be coming, you should have received a confirmation email. If you have not, then please email again.

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## NOVEMBER 2016 MERG East Midlands area group meeting

**Saturday 5th November 2016 from 10:00**

Kindly hosted by the Historical Model Railway Society (HMRS) at their Museum and Study Centre located at The Midland Railway Centre, Swanwick Junction. (See <http://www.hmrs.org.uk>)

Thanks to the HMRS for hosting us at their study centre.

Collection can be arranged from a nearby station for those who would like to come by train.

We will ask for a donation of £2 per head to cover teas/coffees and a donation to HMRS for our use of the room.

The buffet on site will be open on that day, serving refreshments, they have a range from light snacks to full meals. Alternatively, you can bring a packed lunch if you prefer.

Steam trains will be running on the day between Butterley and Swanwick Junction, however the first train is not until 11:00 so too late to use it as transport to the meeting. Details of the timetable can be found here <http://www.midlandrailway-butterley.co.uk/events/>, it will be the blue A timetable.

In the evening, The Midland Railway Centre have a fireworks event with regular shuttle trains between Butterley and Swanwick Junction, between 5.30pm and 9.30pm. I don't know if these will be steam or diesel. I suspect you have to buy a ticket for the fireworks event to use those trains. It might make an interesting evening if you want to stay on after our meeting. Details here: <http://www.midlandrailway-butterley.co.uk/events/fireworksnight.html>

The meeting room is upstairs, but HMRS have just had a new stair lift installed which I am advised is all tested and working, so step free access is available as long as you can transfer to the stair lift.

### AGENDA

The meeting will be informal and flexible, so these are approximate times:

- 10:00 - Arrival, Informal chat and get to know the other members
- 10:30 - Welcome, group news and Introductions \*
- 10:45 - "DesignSpark - quick and dirty" by Alan Turner

Alan will show how to design your own Printed Circuit Board (PCB) from a circuit design, using the popular free Design Spark program. He will take a useful model railway circuit and design a PCB for it. For those who then want to take it on to the next level, this is a useful precursor to Martin Perry's Design Spark masterclasses that he will be running at Keen House.

- 11:30 - Short tea/coffee break
- 11:45 - Design Spark Continued by Alan Turner
- 12:30 - Design Spark - Taking the PCB layout to ordering the boards by Judi Rastall

Judi will show how to take the PCB design that Alan has created, process the design ready for manufacture and place the order online with one of the cheap Chinese PCB manufacturers.

- 13:00 - Lunch - at the Buffet on site or bring your own.
- 14:00 - CBUS Update - Pete Brownlow
- 14:15 - MERG Kit locker Update - Judi Rastall - News on new/updated kits, availability, what is coming soon.
- 14:30 - 16:30 ish - Making it work - Practical session and problem clinic

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\* During introductions, we like to go round the room and each member can give a very brief summary (about 30 seconds max) of who they are, where they are from, what they are modelling in. Also please tell us what subject you would like to see at a future meeting.

For the practical sessions, as we have done before, if you have built something and would like any help and advice, please bring it along and we'll work on it with you as a demonstration for everyone.

If you already know what you want help on for this session, please email the details in advance so we can gen-up on it and look like we know what we are talking about!

If we didn't quite have time to get your project properly sorted at the last meeting, please bring it along again and you will be top of the list.

If you would like to come, please send an email to [eastmids@merg.org.uk](mailto:eastmids@merg.org.uk) or post a message in the East Midlands Area group section of the MERG forum. I will add you to the list and, in due course, you will get a reply with full address details, directions to the venue and parking information. Let us know if you need a lift from a nearby station.

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## SUMMER 2016 MERG East Midlands area group meeting

**Saturday 16th July 2016 from 10:00**

Kindly hosted by Judi Rastall at her place in Sutton on Sea.

Come to the seaside for our Summer meeting!

The venue is about 5 minutes walk from the Prom, so you might like to bring the family for a day by the seaside, whilst we get on with the far more important stuff! Partners and families are welcome to use the other room for teas/coffees etc. whilst we are having the meeting.

Judi can accommodate up to 20 people, so bookings are first come first served. If we become fully booked, we will keep a waiting list in case of cancellations. Note that the 20 limit is for the room where we have the meeting, any partners or family who would like to come along for a day at the seaside are additional to the 20 limit.

If you would like to come, please let us know as soon as possible. If you do decide at the last minute, it is still worth getting in touch as, with the longer distance that most have to travel, the numbers are usually less than more centrally located meetings.

Most of you will know that Judi is our Kit Sales Manager. This is an opportunity to see the huge MERG kit operation, how Judi manages the stock, processes the orders and sends out all those kits.

Sutton on Sea is on the east coast of Lincolnshire between Skegness and Grimsby. Parking is available on street near the venue. We have scheduled this meeting before the start of the peak summer season. Once the school holidays start, from late July, parking becomes much more difficult and there will be long queues on all roads into the resort on a Saturday morning – so come and enjoy the seaside before the mad summer rush.

This venue is less convenient for arrival by train. The nearest railhead is Skegness which is at the end of a long branch line and is an hour round trip from Sutton.

Tea and Coffee will be available, lunch can be purchased from local fish and chip shops, or bring your own if you prefer.

Weather and “leaves on the line” permitting, Judi's outdoor railway build is progressing, and visiting trains to run on the outdoor loop are welcome. It is '00' gauge, “dead rail” - so your train will need to carry its own power source (battery, clockwork, fuel cell etc).

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## AGENDA

The meeting will be informal and flexible, so these are approximate times:

- 10:00 Arrival, Informal chat and get to know the other members
- 10:30 Introductions and group news
- 10:45 CAN4DC and CCMR by Ian Hogg – A CBUS system to operate analogue DC trains ++
- 11:45 Short coffee break
- 12:00 CBUS developments – Pete Brownlow
- 12:30 MERG kit news by Judi Rastall – News on new/updated kits, availability, what is coming
- 13:00 Lunch - Fish and chips from the local shops or bring your own
- 14:00 The MERG kit locker by Judi Rastall – guided tours

in parallel with:

- 14:00 Making it work - our usual problem solving clinic
- 14:00 Help with soldering and kit construction



- 16:00 "Wrap up" discussion, confirm next meeting and thanks to our host
- 16:15 onwards - continue with practical clinic

++ Ian will provide an update on progress of CAN4DC and CCMR. This will cover the system design, hardware choices and firmware of a CBUS module to control Analogue DC layouts along with the software to manually and automatically operate the layout.

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Kits will, of course, be available for purchase. If you have specific requirements, then it would be best to pre-order what you want from Judi for collection at the meeting, as popular kits can go out of stock quickly.

For the clinic session, as we have done before, if you have built something and would like any help and advice, please bring it along and we'll work on it with you as a demonstration for everyone. If you know in advance what you would like to get sorted, let us know in advance so we can get on it.

The venue is reasonably accessible, there are a couple of shallow steps up through the front door and a step down into the kitchen of 5". The width of the kitchen doorway is 29". Please advise if you need any assistance.

Please note that Judi is owned by her two Kit Cats who will be in attendance, so anyone who has any feline allergy or intolerance should be aware of this.

If you would like to come, and have not already done so, please send an email to [eastmids@merg.org.uk](mailto:eastmids@merg.org.uk) or post a message in the East Midlands Area group section of the MERG forum. You will get a reply in due course with full address details and directions to the venue.

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## **NOVEMBER 2015 MERG East Midlands area group meeting**

**Saturday 7th November 2015 from 10:00**

Kindly hosted by the Nene Valley Railway in their modern meeting room at Wansford

Thanks to Russ Jenner for organising the venue for us.

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### **AGENDA**

The meeting will be informal and flexible, so these are approximate times:

- 10:00 Members arrival, Informal chat and get to know the other members
- 10:30 Introductions and group news
- 10:45 Types and positioning of signals - Michael Keck (NVR signalman)

- 11:30 Short coffee break
- 11:45 Leamington Spa - Pete Waterman's model railway and its use of CBUS - Roger Healey and Les Fram
- 13:00 Lunch - bring your own or use the Nene Valley Railway cafe
- 14:00 MERG Kit news - Judi Rastall
- 14:30 Practical session: Our usual problem solving clinic - bring along anything you need help with
- During the afternoon Russ will arrange tours around the NVR engine shed and the signal box
- 16:30 "Wrap up" discussion, confirm next meeting and thanks to our host

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We will ask for £2 per head to cover the room hire cost and £1 each in the "honesty box" will cover as many teas and coffees as you want all day. This money will all go to the Nene Valley Railway.

Kits will be available for purchase. If you have specific requirements, then it would be best to pre-order what you want from the kit locker for collection at the meeting, as Judi can only bring a selection of stock to the meeting.

The NVR cafe will be open from 8:30 for bacon butties or full breakfast, and also open at lunchtime.

One NVR engine, probably a Black 5, will be in steam as it is a driver experience day on the NVR.

The meeting room was built from new last year and is step-free accessible.

For those who would like to come by train, we can arrange to collect you from Peterborough station or, if you can get there early enough, I can collect from Wellingborough station on my way to the meeting about 8am.

If you need collection from Peterborough station, please plan to arrive before 9:30 so that the person picking you up does not have to miss any of the meeting.

If you would like to come, please send an email to [eastmids@merg.org.uk](mailto:eastmids@merg.org.uk) or post a message here in the East Midlands Area group section of the MERG forum. You will get a reply in due course with full address details and directions to the venue.

Members from outside the East Midlands are always welcome at our meetings, as are visitors. Please just let us know you are coming so we can plan for the numbers expected.

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## **AUGUST 2015 MERG East Midlands area group meeting**

**Saturday 15th August 2015 from 10:00**

Kindly hosted by David Straker at his place in Leicester.

As we won't be having a meeting in September or October, due to so many other exhibition and course events taking place, rather than wait until November we are having a meeting in August.

Those who came to the last meeting at David's place, a couple of years ago, enjoyed seeing and operating his 'O' gauge garden layout, Victoria to Beckenham Junction.

Collection can be arranged from Leicester station for those who would like to come by train.

Tea and coffee will be provided, please bring your own packed lunch, .

The meeting is on the ground floor and easily accessible with no steps.

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## **AGENDA**

The meeting will be informal and flexible, so these are approximate times:

- 10:00 Arrival, Informal chat and get to know the other members
  - 10:30 Introductions and group news
  - 11:00 Designing PCBs using Design Spark - Mike Collins
  - 11:45 Short coffee break
  - 12:00 CBUS - setting up the CANMIO using SLiM - Pete Brownlow
  - 12:30 Lunch - Bring your own packed lunch (tea and coffee provided)
  - 13:00 A chance to view and operate David Straker's 'O' gauge garden railway, in parallel with:
  - 13:00 Making it work - our usual problem solving clinic
  - 16:00 "Wrap up" discussion, confirm next meeting and thanks to our host
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Judi will be on holiday, and cannot make this meeting, so we will not have our usual stock of kits for sale at the meeting. If you want kits, you will have to order them and get them posted to you from the kit locker as usual.

For the clinic session, as we have done before, if you have built something and would like any help and advice, please bring it along and we'll work on it with you as a demonstration for everyone. If you know in advance what you would like to get sorted, let us know in advance so we can get on it.

If you would like to come, please send an email to [eastmids@merg.org.uk](mailto:eastmids@merg.org.uk) or post a message in the East Midlands Area group section of the MERG forum. You will get a reply, in due course, with full address details and directions to the venue.

If you would like to come by train, please let us know if you need a lift from the station. If coming by train, please plan to arrive at Leicester station by 09:30 so that whoever comes to pick you up does not have to miss any of the meeting.

Visitors, and MERG members from outside the East Midlands, are always welcome at our area group meetings.

# JULY 2015 MERG East Midlands area group meeting

## Saturday 11th July 2015 from 10:00

Kindly hosted by Judi Rastall at her place in Sutton on Sea.

Come to the seaside for our Summer meeting!

The venue is about 5 minutes walk from the Prom, so you might like to bring the family for a day by the seaside, whilst we get on with the far more important stuff! Partners and families are welcome to use the other room for teas/coffees etc. whilst we are having the meeting.

Judi can accommodate up to 20 people, so bookings are first come first served. If we become fully booked, we will keep a waiting list in case of cancellations. Note that the 20 limit is for the room where we have the meeting, any partners or family who would like to come along for a day at the seaside are additional to the 20 limit.

If you would like to come, please let us know as soon as possible. If you do decide at the last minute, it is still worth getting in touch as, with the longer distance that most have to travel, the numbers are usually less than more centrally located meetings.

Most of you will know that Judi is our Kit Sales Manager. This is an opportunity to see the huge MERG kit operation, how Judi manages the stock, processes the orders and sends out all those kits.

We also have the rare treat of a double act from our kit team, Judi Rastall and Martin Perry, describing the new PTP-Lite layout control system.

Sutton on Sea is on the east coast of Lincolnshire between Skegness and Grimsby. Parking is available on street near the venue. We have scheduled this meeting before the start of the peak summer season. Once the school holidays start, from late July, parking becomes much more difficult and there will be long queues on all roads into the resort on a Saturday morning – so come and enjoy the seaside before the mad summer rush.

This venue is less convenient for arrival by train. The nearest railhead is Skegness which is at the end of a long branch line and is an hour round trip from Sutton.

Tea and Coffee will be available, lunch can be purchased from local fish and chip shops, or bring your own if you prefer.

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## AGENDA

The meeting will be informal and flexible, so these are approximate times:

- 10:00 Arrival, Informal chat and get to know the other members
- 10:30 Introductions and group news

- 10:45 MERG kit news by Judi Rastall – News on new/updated kits, availability, what is coming
- 11:15 CBUS developments – Pete Brownlow
- 11:45 Short coffee break
- 12:00 PTP-Lite by Judi Rastall and Martin Perry
- 13:00 Lunch - Fish and chips from the local shops or bring your own
- 14:00 The MERG kit locker by Judi Rastall – guided tours, in parallel with:
- 14:00 Making it work - our usual problem solving clinic
- 16:00 “Wrap up” discussion, confirm next meeting and thanks to our host
- 16:15 onwards – continue with practical clinic

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Kits will, of course, be available for purchase. If you have specific requirements, then it would be best to pre-order what you want from Judi for collection at the meeting, as popular kits can go out of stock quickly.

For the clinic session, as we have done before, if you have built something and would like any help and advice, please bring it along and we'll work on it with you as a demonstration for everyone. If you know in advance what you would like to get sorted, let us know in advance so we can get on it.

The venue is reasonably accessible, there are a couple of shallow steps up through the front door and a step down into the kitchen of 5". The width of the kitchen doorway is 29". Please advise if you need any assistance.

Please note that Judi now has a couple of resident cats (see [Kit-Cat forum topic](#) for a full list of all the puns!), so if you have any allergy to felines you may wish to take precautions.

If you would like to come, please send an email to [eastmids@merg.org.uk](mailto:eastmids@merg.org.uk) or post a message in the East Midlands Area group section of the MERG forum. You will get a reply, in due course, with full address details and directions to the venue.

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## SPRING 2015 MERG East Midlands area group meeting

**Saturday 21st March 2015 from 09:00**

At the Nottingham Model Railway Exhibition, Hadden Park High School, Harvey road, Bilborough, NG8 3BB.

MERG member and exhibition organiser Graham Clark has kindly arranged this venue.

The exhibition is located at a school, and we have been allocated a whole classroom.

This classroom will be closed to the public for the first part of our meeting in the morning. We will then open to the public for the main talk. Then we will have our usual clinic session in the afternoon, whilst also being open to the public as the “Electronics Zone”.

We will be joining MERG gurus Gordon Hopkins and Bob Vetterlein who regularly exhibit at this show.

We will set up the usual MERG exhibition stand and demos in the same room as well as having our meeting there.

Our meeting will start a little earlier than usual at 9:00 in order to ensure that we can get the room open to the public at a reasonable time.

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## AGENDA

- 09:00 Arrival, Informal chat and get to know the other members
- 09:30 Introductions, Group news, future meetings etc.
- 09:45 Kit locker update - Judi Rastall
- 10:15 ATC dual mode - Gordon Hopkins
- 10:45 Short break and open to the public
- 11:00 Controlling points - types of point motor and how to control them - hardwired vs DCC vs CBUS - Pete Brownlow
- 12:00 Lunch - bring your own or use the exhibition facilities
- 12:45 Re-arrange the room for clinic & Electronics Zone demos
- 13:00 Our usual "making it work" clinic (and a chance to look round the exhibition)

The afternoon session will go on until the exhibition closes.

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The arrangement we have with the exhibition organisers is that members coming to the meeting on the Saturday, will get a special reduced admission price of £5 compared to the usual £8 entry fee. To get this special price, you must book to come to the meeting at least 2 weeks in advance. You will then be put on a list for free entry, which will get you in before the main show starts so that we can start the meeting promptly. We will then collect the £5 per head during the meeting.

If you book to come later than 2 weeks before, we will still try to squeeze you in, but you will not be able to get the reduced entry fee as there will not be time to get you added to the early entry list.

Please let us know promptly if you would like to come by posting on the East Midlands area group forum or by email to [eastmids@merg.org.uk](mailto:eastmids@merg.org.uk) The deadline for getting the reduced admission is that you must book by Friday 6th March.

If you would like to come by train, there is a frequent bus service, no. 28, from Upper Parliament Street in the city centre, to the show venue.

However, Upper Parliament Street is about 3/4 of a mile, 15-20mins walk, from the station, so if you are unable to manage that distance, or are bringing too much stuff to lug that distance, then we can arrange a pickup. In that case, please let us know what train you will be arriving on. As the meeting starts at 9:00am, if you do need a pick up, please arrange to arrive at Nottingham station by 8:30 so that those doing the pick up do not have to miss part of the meeting.

On the Sunday of the exhibition, Doug Harper will be doing a re-run of his "Towards Automation" talk that he gave at our November meeting at Wansford. Gordon will give an introductory talk on the ATC

DC shuttle. These are mainly aimed at the general public visiting the exhibition, but also provide an opportunity for those members who may have missed the talks previously.

There is no reduced admission for MERG members on the Sunday, so unless you are helping to man our exhibition stand all day, you will have to pay the normal exhibition admission price.

## **FEBRUARY 2015 MERG East Midlands area group meeting**

**Saturday 7th February 2015 from 10:00**

Kindly hosted by the Syston Model Railway Society at their clubrooms at The Old School Community Centre, Thurmaston, Leicestershire

Thanks to SMRS and MERG member Mike Collins for arranging this venue for us.

We have the use of the smaller meeting room downstairs during the morning, because the larger room is in use by a coffee morning. We can move into the larger room for the practical session in the afternoon.

The benefit of this arrangement is that Tea and Coffee will be available to purchase from the coffee morning during the morning. Last time we did this, bacon butties were also available, so I'm keeping my fingers crossed!

Please either bring your own packed lunch or alternatively, there is a chip shop next door but one and a sandwich shop across the road

Collection can be arranged from Syston station for those who would like to come by train.

We will ask for a donation of £2 per head to cover the room hire.

The meeting room is on the ground floor and easily accessible. The clubrooms housing the SMRS layouts are upstairs.

### **AGENDA**

The meeting will be informal and flexible, so these are approximate times:

10:00 Arrival, Informal chat and get to know the other members

10:30 Welcome to SMRS - by Mike Collins

10:35 Introductions \*

11:00 MERG kit news by Judi Rastall - News on new/updated kits, availability, what is coming soon.

11:30 Short break (or recovery time if we are running late)

11:45 What is a PIC? and how to get firmware onto a PIC by various methods - Pete Brownlow & Mike Collins

12:45 Lunch - Bring your own or find a local cafe

Also a chance to see the SMRS layouts on site

13:30 Making it work - practical sessions using members projects, MERG kits or anything else.

16:00 Wrap-up discussion, confirm next meeting and thanks to our hosts

16:15 Carry on with anything else we haven't fixed yet!

17:00 Finish

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\* During introductions, we like to go round the room and each member can give a very brief summary (about 30 seconds) of who they are, where they are from, what they are modelling in. Also please tell us what subject you would like to see at a future meeting.

For the practical sessions, as we have done before, if you have built something and would like any help and advice, please bring it along and we'll work on it with you as a demonstration for everyone.

If you already know what you want help on for this session, please email the details in advance so we can gen-up on it and look like we know what we are talking about!

If we didn't quite have time to get your project properly sorted at the last meeting, please bring it along again and you will be top of the list.

If you would like to come, please send an email to [eastmids@merg.org.uk](mailto:eastmids@merg.org.uk) or post a message in the East Midlands Area group section of the MERG forum. You will get a reply with full address details, directions to the venue and parking information. Let us know if you need a lift from the station.

## NOVEMBER MERG East Midlands area group meeting

**Saturday 1st November 2014 from 10:00**

Kindly hosted by the Nene Valley Railway in their new meeting room at Wansford

Thanks to Russ Jenner for organising the venue for us.

### **AGENDA**

The meeting will be informal and flexible, so these are approximate times:

The theme of this meeting is layout control using the JMRI software package.

10:00 Arrival, Informal chat and get to know the other members



10:30 Introductions and group news

10:45 Quick update on CBUS developments - Pete Brownlow

11:00 Demonstration of Raspberry Pi running JMRI - Charles Orr

11:30 Short coffee break

11:45 Towards Automation - Doug Harper will describe the progress with his layout with the eventual aim of automatic running using JMRI 12:45 MERG kit news by Judi Rastall

13:00 Lunch – Bring your own or use the Nene Valley Railway cafe.

14:00 Eagle PCB design Q&A session - Pete Brownlow - following on from last week's talk, for those who have had a go and have some questions.

14:30 Practical session: Our usual problem solving clinic - bring along anything you need help with

During the afternoon Russ will give tours round the NVR engine shed and possibly the signal box also.

16:30 “Wrap up” discussion, confirm next meeting and thanks to our host

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We will ask for £2 per head to cover the room hire cost.

Kits will be available for purchase. If you have specific requirements, then it would be best to pre-order what you want from the kit locker for collection at the meeting, as Judi can only bring a selection of stock to the meeting.

The NVR cafe will be open from 8:30 for bacon butties or full breakfast, and also open at lunchtime.

One NVR engine will be in steam for 3 service trains starting at 10:00. At moment it is rostered as 6041 the big American 2-6-0 loco.

The meeting room is new and is step-free accessible.

For those who would like to come by train, we can arrange to collect you from Peterborough station or, if you can get there early enough, I can collect from Wellingborough station on my way to the meeting about 8am.

If you would like to come, please send an email to [eastmids@merg.org.uk](mailto:eastmids@merg.org.uk) or post a message in the East Midlands Area group section of the MERG forum. You will get a reply with full address details and directions to the venue.

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## AUTUMN 2014 MERG East Midlands area

# group meeting

## Saturday 20th September 2014 from 10:00

Kindly hosted by Lincoln & District Model Railway Club (L&DMRC)

at Scampton and Aisthorpe Village hall, near Lincoln.

Thanks to Phil Busby and Paul Ransome for organising the venue for us.

Tea and Coffee will be available all day, plus hot bacon rolls at lunch time.

The theme of this meeting is designing and making printed circuit boards (PCBs). Several members will show different PCB design programs, and we'll etch some real PCBs during the afternoon practical session.

### **AGENDA**

The meeting will be informal and flexible, so these are approximate times:

10:00 Arrival, Informal chat and get to know the other members

10:30 Introductions and group news

10:45 Designing a PCB by Pete Brownlow

- Taking a very simple design, we will go through drawing the schematic, laying out the PCB and preparing the board for either home etching or commercial manufacture, using the CADSoft Eagle program.

11:45 Short coffee break

12:00 Using DesignSpark to design PCBs by Judi Rastall

- A summary of the main features when designing PCBs using the DesignSpark program

12:30 Using DipTrace to design PCBs by Nick Locke

- A summary of the main features when designing PCBs using the DipTrace program

13:00 Lunch – Bring your own and/or bacon rolls cooked for us by Linda Busby.

- Phil and John also hope to set up some working layouts for us to see in their clubroom.

13:30 MERG kit news by Judi Rastall – News on new/updated kits, availability, what is coming.

14:00 Practical session

- We'll have a go at etching some circuit boards from the design created in the first session
- Our usual problem solving clinic

16:00 “Wrap up” discussion, confirm next meeting and thanks to our host

Kits will be available for purchase. If you have specific requirements, then it would be best to pre-order what you want from the kit locker for collection at the meeting, as Judi can only bring a selection of stock to the meeting.

For the clinic session, as we have done before, if you have built something and would like any help and advice, please bring it along and we'll work on it with you as a demonstration for everyone. If you know in advance what you would like to get sorted, let us know in advance so we can get on it.

For those who would like to come by train, we can arrange to collect you from Lincoln station, which is about 6 miles from the venue.

If you would like to come, please send an email to [eastmids@merg.org.uk](mailto:eastmids@merg.org.uk) or post a message in the East Midlands Area group section of the MERG forum. You will get a reply with full address details and directions to the venue.

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## SUMMER 2014 MERG East Midlands area group meeting

**Saturday 28th June 2014 from 10:00**

Kindly hosted by Judi Rastall at her place in Sutton on Sea.

Theme - Control Panels

Come to the seaside for our Summer meeting!

The venue is about 5 minutes walk from the Prom, so you might like to bring the family for a day by the seaside, whilst we get on with the far more important stuff! Partners and families are welcome to use the other room for teas/coffees etc. whilst we are having the meeting.

Judi can accommodate up to 20 people, so bookings are first come first served. If we become fully booked, we will keep a waiting list in case of cancellations. Note that the 20 limit is for the room where we have the meeting, any partners or family who would like to come along for a day at the seaside are additional to the 20 limit.

If you would like to come, please let us know as soon as possible. If you do decide at the last minute, it is still worth getting in touch as, with the longer distance that most have to travel, the numbers are usually less than more centrally located meetings.

Most of you will know that Judi is our Kit Sales Manager. This is an opportunity to see the huge MERG kit operation, how Judi manages the stock, processes the orders and sends out all those kits.

Sutton on Sea is on the east coast of Lincolnshire between Skegness and Grimsby. Parking is available on street near the venue. We have scheduled this meeting before the start of the peak summer

season. Once the school holidays start, from late July, parking becomes much more difficult and there will be long queues on all roads into the resort on a Saturday morning – so come and enjoy the seaside before the mad summer rush.

This venue is less convenient for arrival by train. The nearest railhead is Skegness which is at the end of a long branch line and is an hour round trip from Sutton. Please let us know with plenty of notice if you need a pick up from Skegness station.

Tea and Coffee will be available, lunch can be purchased from local fish and chip shops, or bring your own if you prefer.

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## AGENDA

The meeting will be informal and flexible, so these are approximate times:

The theme of this meeting is control panels. Several members will describe and demonstrate their approach to building control panels.

10:00 Arrival, Informal chat and get to know the other members

10:30 Introductions and group news

10:45 Pentre Road control panel by Howard Watkins

11:30 Short coffee break

11:40 Locketown control panel by Nick Locke

12:20 Deting control panel by Richard Spoors

13:00 Lunch - Fish and chips from the local shops or bring your own

13:30 MERG kit news by Judi Rastall – News on new/updated kits, availability, what is coming soon.

14:00 The MERG kit locker by Judi Rastall – guided tours

in parallel with:

14:00 Making it work:

- Our usual problem solving clinic
- Further discussions and demonstrations of the various control panels

16:00 “Wrap up” discussion, confirm next meeting and thanks to our host

16:15 onwards - continue with practical clinic

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Kits will, of course, be available for purchase. If you have specific requirements, then it would be best to pre-order what you want from Judi for collection at the meeting, as popular kits can go out of stock quickly.

For the clinic session, as we have done before, if you have built something and would like any help and advice, please bring it along and we'll work on it with you as a demonstration for everyone. If you know in advance what you would like to get sorted, let us know in advance so we can get on it.

If we didn't quite have time to get your project properly sorted at the last meeting, please bring it along again and you will be top of the list.

The venue is reasonably accessible, there are a couple of shallow steps up through the front door and a step down into the kitchen of 5". The width of the kitchen doorway is 29". Please advise if you need any assistance.

If you would like to come, please send an email to [eastmids@merg.org.uk](mailto:eastmids@merg.org.uk) or post a message in the East Midlands Area group section of the MERG forum. You will get a reply with full address details and directions to the venue.

Please note again that this meeting is limited to the first 20 who let us know. If we are already fully booked, we'll put your name on a waiting list and advise if there is a cancellation.

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## SPRING 2014 MERG East Midlands area group meeting

**Saturday 15th March 2014 from 09:00**

Pictures from this event can be found [here](#)

At the Nottingham Model Railway Exhibition, Hadden Park High School, Harvey road, Bilborough, NG8 3BB.

MERG member Graham Clarke has kindly arranged this venue.

The exhibition is located at a school, and we have been allocated a whole classroom.

This classroom will be closed to the public for our meeting in the morning. Then we will have our usual clinic session in the afternoon, whilst also being open to the public as the "Electronics Zone".

On Sunday, we're looking for volunteers to continue the good work, manning the MERG "Electronics Zone" as an exhibition stand throughout the day.

We will be joining MERG guru Gordon Hopkins who regularly exhibits at this show.

So we will set up the usual MERG exhibition stand and demos in the same room as well as having our meeting there. Gordon will have the ATC demo and Colin will have his Silicone Valley BC3 controlled layout.

Our meeting will start a little earlier than usual at 9:00 in order to ensure that we can get the room open to the public in the afternoon at a reasonable time.

**The agenda for the day is as follows:**

09:00 Arrival, Informal chat and get to know the other members

09:30 Introductions \*\*

09:45 Group news, future meetings etc.

10:00 Some new CBUS developments - Pete Brownlow

10:15 Kit locker update - Judi Rastall

10:30 Short break

10:45 Developments of the ATC DC shuttle kit - Gordon Hopkins

11:45 Re-arrange the room for clinic/open room to the public

12:00 Lunch - bring your own or use the exhibition facilities

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13:00 A quick intro to basic soldering techniques

Then our usual "making it work" clinic, including getting started with Pocket Money Projects

(and a chance to look round the exhibition)

The afternoon session will go on until the exhibition closes.

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The arrangement we have with the exhibition organisers is that members coming to the meeting on the Saturday, will get a special reduced admission price of £5 compared to the usual £8 entry fee. To get this special price, you must book to come to the meeting at least 2 weeks in advance. You will then be sent a free pass for entry, which will get you in before the main show starts so that we can start the meeting promptly. We will then collect the £5 per head during the meeting.

If you book to come later than 2 weeks before, we will still try to squeeze you in, but you will not be able to get the reduced entry fee as there will not be time to send you the special entry pass.

So please let us know promptly if you would like to come by posting on East Midlands area group forum or by email to [eastmids@merg.org.uk](mailto:eastmids@merg.org.uk) The deadline for getting the reduced admission is that you must book by Friday 28th February.

If you would like to come by train, there is a frequent bus service, no. 28, from Upper Parliament Street in the city centre, to the show venue.

However, Upper Parliament Street is about 3/4 of a mile, 15-20mins walk, from the station, so if you are unable to manage that distance, or are bringing too much stuff to lug that distance, then we can arrange a pickup. In that case, please let us know what train you will be arriving on. As the meeting starts at 9:00am, if you do need a pick up, please arrange to arrive at Nottingham station by 8:30 so

that those doing the pick up do not have to miss part of the meeting.

# **NOVEMBER 2013 MERG East Midlands area group meeting**

**Saturday 16th November 2013 from 10:00**

Kindly hosted by The Rushden Historical Transport Society at Rushden Station, Northamptonshire.  
(See <http://www.rhts.co.uk>)

The theme for this meeting will be the pocket money projects, as designed by Davy Dick and featured in recent journals.

Collection can be arranged from Wellingborough station for those who would like to come by train.

I'm hoping that, once again, we have the buffet car open serving tea, coffee and refreshments, as well as the bar on the platform which is generally open on Saturday lunchtimes.

Full details will be confirmed to those attending.

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## **AGENDA**

The meeting will be informal and flexible, so these are approximate times:

10:00 Arrival, Informal chat and get to know the other members

10:30 Introductions<nowiki>

10:45 Group news, future meetings etc.

11:00 The MERG pocket money projects - led by Pete Brownlow but with input from all those who have had a go at these

12:00 Lunch - From the buffet car, or bring your own. RHTS bar should also be open.

- - Rushden high street is close by if anybody wishes to buy food locally.

- - There may also be a chance to see the RHTS 'OO' gauge layout housed in an ex-Royal Mail TPO van.

13:00 Making it work - practical sessions building packet money projects or working on any other members projects, MERG kits or anything else.

16:00 Final discussion, confirm next meeting and thanks to our hosts

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During introductions, we like to go round the room and each member can give a very brief summary

(about 30 seconds) of who they are, where they are from, what they are modeling in.

Judi is unable to make it to this meeting, but I will have some of the pocket money kits available to purchase on the day.

Please note that if you wish to purchase any other MERG kits, please pre-order these online NO LATER THAN 6th November, enter the option for collection and specify the East Midlands meeting in the comments. I can then collect them from Judi the Saturday before at the London meeting.

For the practical sessions, the theme will be the pocket money projects but not excluding all else. As always, if you have built something and would like any help and advice, please bring it along and we'll work on it with you as a demonstration for everyone.

If we didn't quite have time to get your project properly sorted at the last meeting, please bring it along again and you will be top of the list.

The venue is accessible, with disabled parking close by. If you need a disabled parking space reserved, please let us know.

If you would like to come, please send an email to [eastmids@merg.org.uk](mailto:eastmids@merg.org.uk) or post a message in the East Midlands Area group section of the MERG forum. You will get a reply with full address details, directions to the venue and parking information. Let us know if you need a lift from the station.

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