# MERG East Midlands Area Group News

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Joint area group coordinators - Pete Brownlow and John Gowers

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 2019 East Midlands area group meeting

**Sunday 7th July 2019 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.
- 10:45 Driving and firing a steam locomotive, and how to apply this to correct use of a steam sound decoder : John Gowers
- 11:45 Short tea/coffee break
- 12:00 Report on a recent visit to Minatur Wunderland with some photos and video - Pete Brownlow
- 12:45 Kit locker update - Judi Rastall
- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:00 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.

There will be some kits available to buy, but if you want something specific, I would recommend ordering it from the kit locker now and marking it for collection at the meeting.

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, bacon butties will be available in the morning. Please indicate when booking, if you would like a buttie, so Julie has a idea of numbers.

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 10am 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 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.

For those who have already indicated you would like to come, I will be sending out confirmation emails over the next few days.

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# EASTER 2019 East Midlands area group meeting

**Saturday 20th April 2019 from 10:00**

Our next meeting is Kindly hosted by the Kingsway Model Railway Society (KMRS) in Wellingborough.

KMRS is a small club that has a room in the Kingsway Centre in Wellingborough, where a small 00 gauge layout is under construction. They also have portable N gauge and 009 layouts at various stages of development. The society uses the meeting room in the centre for their weekly club meetings.

Normally it is not possible to hire the meeting room at weekends, as there are regular weekly meetings on Saturdays and Sundays by a language class and a dance school.

However, neither of these organisations are meeting on Easter Saturday 20th April, so we have been able to hire the room.

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

We will ask for a donation of £2.50 per head to cover the room hire, and £1 each in the pot to cover teas/coffees biscuits etc. for the day. Any excess over the costs will be donated to KMRS.

There is a Sainsbury's with a cafe less than 5 minutes drive away, and a local convenience store about 350yds away, or bring your own packed lunch.

The venue is level access with no stairs. If you need a disabled car parking space reserved close to the door, please let me know.

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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 - Welcome, group news and Introductions
- 11:00 - CBUS update, developments and news - by Pete Brownlow
- 11:30 - Tea/coffee break
- 11:45 - Setting up JMRI routes with CBUS by Graham Clark

JMRI is a free software program for computer control, Graham will show how he used it to set up routing using the MERG CBUS system. Graham is bring a demo board, and invites questions and discussion after his presentation.

- 12:30 MERG DCC and CBUS on the KMRS 00 layout

Pete will describe his experiences, tribulations and future plans installing the MERG DCC system and CBUS accessory control on the layout at KMRS, together with live demos on the layout itself, which is in the room adjoining our meeting.

- 13:15 - LUNCH BREAK
- 14:30 - 16:00 ish - Making it work - Practical workshop session and problem clinic

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For the practical sessions, as we have done before, if you have built something and/or 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!

Although the main presentations are quite CBUS-centric this time, we will of course cover anything and everything during the afternoon workshop session.

If you would like to come, please send an email to 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.

If you are planning to come by train, let us know if you need a lift from Wellingborough station. Please plan to arrive at Wellingborough station no later than 10am so that whoever comes to pick you up does not have to miss any of the meeting.

# FEBRUARY 2019 East Midlands area group meeting

**Saturday 23rd February 2019 from 10:00**

Our next meeting is 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)

Firstly an apology for the clash with the Newark show, which I missed when booking the venue for this date. If anyone is not planning to come to this meeting, but could help with the MERG stand at Newark on the Saturday, or if anyone can help at that show on Sunday, then please contact the exhibition manger on exhibitions@merg.org.uk

For our area group meeting, collection can be arranged from a nearby station for those who would like to come by train.

Visitors are always welcome at our area group meetings.

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.

I will check and confirm if 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/event/

The meeting room is upstairs, but HMRS have platform stair lift which I will double check is working, so step free access is available. The platform should accept a standard wheelchair, but will not take the larger mobility scooters. When confirming your place, please let us know if you have any mobility requirements.

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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 - Welcome, group news and Introductions
- 10:45 - Decoder Pro - by Colin Head

- Decoder Pro is part of the JMRI software program, and can be used to set up the CV settings on DCC locos. Colin will show how this is done with live demonstrations.

- 11:30 - Tea/coffee break

- 12:00 - CBUS on Kimble - by John Gowers
- John will describe his trials and tribulations implementing MERG DCC and CBUS on the 'O' gauge “Kimble” exhibition layout at the Leamington & Warwick Model Railway Society.
- 13:00 - MERG Kit locker Update - Judi Rastall – News on new/updated kits, availability, what is coming soon.
- 13:30 - LUNCH BREAK
- 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 you would like to come, please send an email to 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.

(Those who have already let me know that you are coming, I will be sending out confirmation emails in the next day or so.)

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# AUGUST MERG East Midlands area group meeting

**Saturday 11th August 2018 from 10:00**

Kindly hosted by David Straker at his place in Leicester.

Weather permitting, there will be an opportunity to see and operate David's '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.

**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 - David Straker
- 10:45 Introductions and group news
- 11:10 Kit locker Update - Judi Rastall
- 11:30 Short coffee break
- 11:45 What I'm doing and planning with DCC and CBUS - Pete Brownlow
- 12:30 Lunch - bring your own packed lunch (tea and coffee provided)
- 13:30 A chance to operate David Straker's 'O' gauge garden railway
- in parallel with:
- 13:30 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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This will the last meeting organised by me as area group leader, so hopefully somebody would like to step in and take over that roll.

Judi will have some kits for purchase, but can only bring a selection so If you want any specific kits, you would be best to order them in advance from the kit locker and specify collection at the Leicester area group meeting at the checkout page.

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 gen up on it.

If you would like to come, please send an email to 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. (If you have already done so - you should have received your confirmation email - please contact us if you have not received it)

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.

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

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# SUMMER 2018 MERG East Midlands area

# group meeting

**Sunday 15th July 2018 from 10:00**

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

Come to the seaside for our Summer meeting! The weather forecast is hot and sunny.

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 (which are open on a Sunday), or bring your own if you prefer.

Judi has been progressing her loft railway, so you can have a look at how it is getting on. It is OO gauge DCC, visiting locos and stock are welcome.

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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 The Great Model Railway Challenge - TV Series - my experience By Marcus Dawson
- 11:45 Short coffee break
- 12:00 Update from the committee – Martin Perry
- 12:30 MERG kit news by Judi Rastall – News on new/updated kits, availability, what is coming

- 12:30 Progress on my layout - Judi Rastall - an update on progress with the loft layout
- 13:15 Lunch - Fish and chips from the local shops or bring your own
- 14:30 Afternoon sessions:
- - The MERG kit locker by Judi Rastall – guided tours
- - Running session on Judi's loft layout
- - Making it work - our usual problem solving clinic
- - Help with soldering and kit construction
- - Or just relax in the sunshine in the garden

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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 gen up 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.

To access the loft layout, you do need to be able to climb up the loft ladder, so this will not be possible for everybody. Judi will give a talk about her progress during the morning session, with the option to visit and operate the layout in the afternoon for those who can access it.

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 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 have already emailed or posted that you are coming, you should get your confirmation email in the next few days.

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# MAY 2018 MERG East Midlands area group meeting

**Saturday 26th May 2018 from 9:30**

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

Thanks to Russ Jenner for organising the venue for us.

These arrangements are provisional, as some details still have to be finalised with the speakers.

**AGENDA**

With lots of good stuff on the agenda, We've gone for a slightly earlier start - since most people usually get there early anyway!

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- 09:00 Members arrival, Informal chat and get to know the other members
- 09:30 Introductions and group news
- 09:45 Introduction to the CBUS CANMIO - Pete Brownlow
- 10:00 The Universal CANMIO firmware - Ian Hogg
- 11:00 Coffee Break
- 11:30 MERG Kit news - Judi Rastall
- 12:00 Lunch (early as the NVR cafe may be busy)
- 13:00 3D printing - Howard Watkins
- 14:30 Split out for afternoon practical clinics:
    - Setting up the Universal CANMIO with Ian Hogg
    - 3D printing with Howard Watkins
    - General kit problem solving with the usual team

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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 about 8:30 for bacon butties or full breakfast, and also open at lunchtime. However, as it is a bank holiday running weekend at NVR, it may be very busy. For that reason, we have scheduled lunch early, and we may make arrangements to pre-order during the morning.

The meeting room is step-free accessible. If you need a disabled parking space reserved close up, please let us know.

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 7:30am.

If you would like to come, please send an email to 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.

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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# FEBRUARY 2018 MERG East Midlands area group meeting

**Sunday 4th Febrary 2018 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.

Due to when the venue is available, we are trying a Sunday this time. The Pros are that members who have Saturday commitments, such as football fans or those working in retail, might be able to get along. The downside is that the local chip shop is not open on a Sunday, so you'll need to bring a packed lunch, and arriving by train might be more difficult due to Sunday services starting later than on a Saturday.

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

Tea and coffee will be available.

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
- 11:00 Update on progress with my new automated layout by Colin Head
- 11:30 Tea/coffee break (or recovery time if we are running late)
- 11:45 Kit locker update - Judi Rastall
- 12:15 What's new and coming soon in JMRI latest versions - Pete Brownlow
- 13:00 Lunch - Bring your own

Also a chance to see the SMRS layouts on site

- 14:00 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 havn't fixed yet until we get thown 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 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. Let us know if you need a lift from the station.

MERG members and visitors from anywhere are always welcome at our meetings, you don't have to live in the East Midlands to come!

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Details of previous East Midlands Area Group meetings

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