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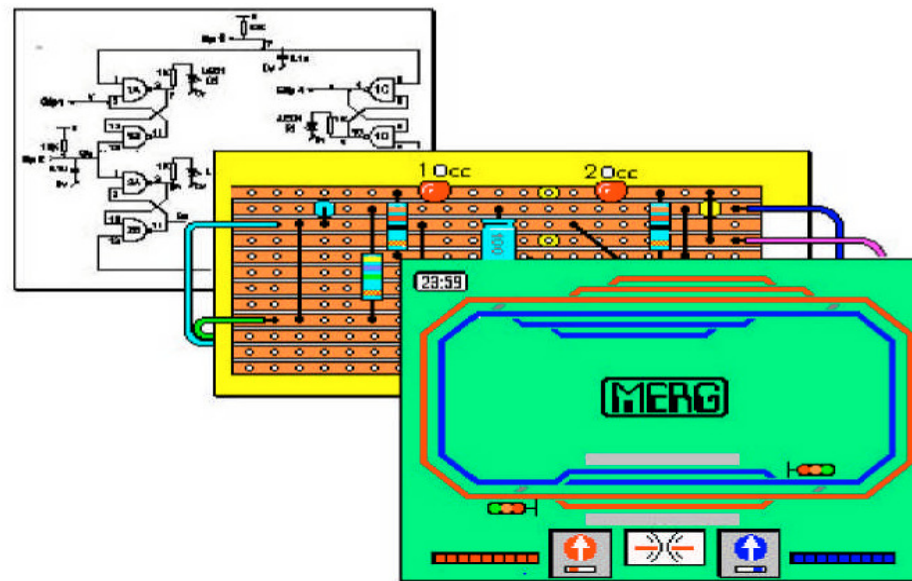
**I have read and accept the conditions overleaf**

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For MERC Administration purposes only

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# Model Electronic Railway Group



Established 1967

**Model Railway Electronics for All Ages,  
All Gauges, & Modellers at All Stages.**

**The leading international forum  
for all railway modellers  
interested in the application of  
electronics to the hobby.**

[www.merg.org.uk](http://www.merg.org.uk)

**MERG** is a friendly and informal 'first names' group and new members are encouraged to present their ideas, as well as share those already available via the Technical Bulletins. We try to cater for all-comers:- beginners (which is where we all started from), semi-experienced, and professionals.

**Benefits include :**

**Website**

This provides access to a large range of resources and our forum.

**Technical Bulletins**

Currently over 250 available on a wide selection of topics.

**Kits**

An increasing range of low cost, self assembly kits available to members.

**Assistance**

Through meetings, the forum, courses & training days, & Local Area Groups, as well as informal one-to-one contact with experienced members.

**A Regular Journal**

Distributed at least four times a year to all members, containing new ideas & developments along with notification of the latest Technical Bulletins.

**Meetings**

These are held at least four times a year in London, as well as the meetings held by the Local Area Groups.

**Local Area Groups**

There exists, around the country, an increasing number of regional groups for those members who find it difficult to attend the London meetings.

**Training**

We provide tutors for weekend courses run at Missenden Abbey, Bucks., which are also open to MERG members. MERG Local Area Groups arrange mutual assistance meetings in their areas.

**Discounts**

Discounts are available to members on selected commercial products.

**Publications**

Some model railway electronics publications available at reduced cost, including six volumes of *Model Railway Electronics*, and the *Comprehensive Guide to DCC* by Rutger Friberg ( in English ).

**Exhibitions**

MERG appears at several major shows each year, as well as a number of smaller ones, often attended by the Local Area Groups.

**To join MERG** and take advantage of all that the group has to offer, please read the following and then fill in the form overleaf and post to the Membership Secretary.

*I agree to abide by the Rules of the Group and I confirm that I am 18 years of age or over. By applying for membership of MERG I consent to the data supplied on the application form being used for the promotion of MERG's aims and for membership administration purposes. I understand that the data will be included in a Membership List that is provided to other members. Once a year the list may also be viewed on the password protected members only area of the MERG website. I understand that the Membership Secretary will hold my details on a computer. I also understand and accept that my data and that of other members may not be used for any commercial purpose. Should I not renew my subscription, my full name and membership number will be retained, for the purpose of allowing the re-allocation of the same number if I rejoin at a later date, other membership data will be deleted 24 months after last renewal. Members are responsible for advising the Membership Secretary of any changes in their data. I also agree to indemnify MERG, its Officers and Members against any claim arising from any use or misuse of any publication, kit or other goods supplied to me by MERG.*

**Current Membership Rates :**

The basic subscription runs from April 1<sup>st</sup> each year. For new joiners, there is a one-off joining fee of £4. Please note, that if you join part way through the year, vouchers will be issued to cover the elapsed part of the year, which may be exchanged for kits or publications.

For countries in the UK it is £14. New members pay £18 in their first year only.

For countries in the Royal Mail European area it is £15. New members pay £19 in their first year only.

The rest of the world pays £18. New members pay £22 in their first year only.

The higher subscription rates outside the UK are to offset a proportion of the higher postage cost.

Payment may also be made by PayPal at [paypal@merg.co.uk](mailto:paypal@merg.co.uk)

NB. If using PayPal you still need to send in the form.

Cheques should be drawn on a UK Bank and made payable to 'MERG'. If you have any questions, please contact the membership secretary for details before sending in the form. [Email: memsec@merg.info](mailto:memsec@merg.info)

Unfortunately, at present, we are unable to accept payment by credit card (except via PayPal) or to handle direct debits.

## CAN I MEET OTHER MEMBERS?

About four times a year there is a members' meeting in Central London open to anyone who can make the journey. Where possible, a copy of the presentations made is posted on the website.

We encourage members to get together locally and at present, there are several established Local Area Groups, based in various places throughout the British Isles. Area Group co-ordinators are given details of new members in their area.

## TRAINING AND COURSES

New members are often interested in the basics of electronic circuits. A series of 12 articles, which appeared in the Journal between 2004 and 2006, is available collected together on a CD from the Kitmaster.

MERG also participates in weekend residential courses on model railway electronics at Missenden Abbey, Bucks. Announcements about these are made in the Journal, on our website and on the forum, as well as the Missenden Abbey website.

If there is sufficient demand, Local Area Groups can arrange courses for their members.

## CAN I HELP?

MERG is entirely run by volunteers and no member of the group receives any financial remuneration for the time and expertise that they contribute to our activities. This applies to those who provide the administrative support, to those who design the kits and to those who write Technical Bulletins and provide advice on the Forum.

MERG can only function if we have volunteers to help with the work. Most jobs do not require you to be an electronics expert (generally their time is better used designing new things for us) and you do not have to be in the Southeast of the UK.

MERG attends national and local exhibitions and we are always seeking help to man the stand for a few hours - it is a good way to meet other members and some of the Committee. Members can also buy kits at these exhibitions and discuss any matters relating to them with knowledgeable people.

## WHEN AND HOW DO I PAY MY SUBSCRIPTION?

The annual subscription covers the direct costs involved in the running of the Group (e.g. printing, postage and out of pocket expenses) and to provide some finance for funding new kits. Members who buy the kits cover the costs involved in sourcing the kits and making the circuit boards, plus a small mark-up that also provides some funding for new kits.

All subscriptions are due for renewal on April 1st each year and can be paid in cash, or by cheque, standing order, bank transfer or PayPal.

## WHAT IS MERG?

### MERG – MODEL ELECTRONIC RAILWAY GROUP

MERG members are model railway enthusiasts who are interested in applying electronics to the operation of their model railways. The Group enables members to exchange ideas and information, and provides kits covering a number of interests including DC operations, DCC, Radio Frequency Identification, computer control and CBUS. Members have a wide range of knowledge and capability, and include beginners and those who work in the electronics and railway industries.

We are always pleased to welcome new members and this leaflet will explain the benefits of membership.

### HAS MERG BEEN AROUND LONG AND HOW IS IT RUN?

MERG started in the UK 1967 and is now over 40 years old. In the early days just two or three simple MERG kits were made available. The advent of the Internet enabled the Group to expand rapidly and geographically and today we have more than 1,200 members across all continents. All gauges, from 'Z' to at least 7 ¼" (passenger-carrying) have made use of our expertise and kits.

MERG is managed by a Committee with members who are elected each year at the AGM. The Committee divides the work up into functional areas and each area is the responsibility of an individual committee member.

### WHAT'S ON THE WEBSITE?

The MERG Website ( <http://www.merg.org.uk> ) has two parts; the public area and the "members only" area.

The contents are always being adjusted and added to, currently the topics covered include train control (with and without computers), route setting ideas, controllers, DCC, turnout and signal control, and a glossary. The glossary provides a simple explanation of many terms used in model railway electronics. There is also a very extensive set of links to other websites covering electronics manufacturers and suppliers, computer software, DCC, memory wire, MERG member's own pages and non-commercial pages providing model railway and / or electronic information.

The "members only" area is accessed using an ID and Password. This is the most valuable resource because it includes the archive of all MERG documents, going back many years, and our interactive Forum. Copies of all past and current Technical Bulletins (see overleaf) and the MERG Journal ( see page 5 ) can be downloaded from here. There is also information about the MERG Kits available (see overleaf). The site is also used for members' news and information.

## WHAT ARE TECHNICAL BULLETINS?

Technical Bulletins (TBs) are formal records of information relating to MERG designs, solutions and the theory behind the kits. The Technical Bulletin Editor strives to ensure that TBs are error free and written in a straightforward manner avoiding as much “jargon” as possible. As new TBs are prepared they are issued in the members’ area of the MERG website, notification being given in the Journal. At a small cost, “hard copies” may be obtained from the Technical Bulletin Editor.

The TBs cover a wide range of topics, but there are three large sections. (1) The RPC System (Remote Panel Control) provides a range of kits for controlling/monitoring different elements of a model railway. These can be used with or without a computer and can apply to large club layouts or a small home layout, depending upon the elements used and how they are put together. There are TBs dealing with the software that can be interfaced to the RPC system. The RPC system contains one approach to train detection but this subject is also covered under the sections on Signalling and Traction. (2) The SuperBloc concept provides a model railway controlling/monitoring system that does not involve computers but the individual control of block sections, and the passing of information from one block to the next. These TBs can be found in the Traction section. (3) There is a separate section dealing with DCC. It is worthwhile considering the various control options before implementing a strategy on your layout.

## WHAT KITS ARE AVAILABLE AND HOW DO I GET THEM?

MERG Kits usually come as complete packages with the circuit board and all the components needed. To achieve this the Kitmaster is supported by a small team of Kit Producers who select the components and pack them up.

Full instructions for making the kits are available and our experience is that anyone who has reasonable skill with the soldering iron can build them successfully. It is not necessary to understand how the kits work in detail to be able to build and use them successfully.

For overseas members it may be possible to just provide circuit boards or partial kits to reduce their weight for shipping purposes (e.g. you can source a transformer locally). The Kitmaster is also able to accept payment by PayPal.

## HOW DO I GET SOME HELP?

Personal support and information is readily available from your Local Area Group or individual members (possibly living close by).

The MERG Forum (an interactive forum, or bulletin board, on our website) is the place to raise queries and questions. It is a friendly and civilised place but naturally it is appreciated if new members have made themselves fully conversant with the contents of the MERG website, since that may often contain the information you need. Instructions for getting on to the Forum are in the Members’ Handbook and on the website.

New members are invited to introduce themselves when they make their first posting. Do not be afraid to ask basic questions and do not be surprised if these result in a multitude of responses and if opinions are not always fully convergent. If you have particular technical expertise in a relevant area, please make it known and contribute as soon as you can. New blood and fresh ideas are critical to the success of MERG.

The forum provides facilities to include drawings, photographs and other attachments in your messages to better illustrate your ideas. Even videos can be included provided the actual video file is uploaded to Youtube. It is expected that the forum will develop into a valuable archive of information in its own right, supplementing the more formal ‘resources’ on the website proper. Some of these discussion topics later get formalised into Technical Bulletins. Any member can post items to the forum. New members are particularly encouraged to review the forum topics for items of interest, and not to be afraid to add more questions to the topic, or to contact the person who posted the file by email or private message if you want further information.

If you run into problems during the building or testing phase of building a MERG kit, post a question on the forum and you are almost guaranteed a response from another member, the original kit designer or the Kitmaster.

## WHAT IS THE MERG JOURNAL AND HOW DO I GET IT?

The Journal, usually published four times a year, contains short technical articles that are developments of topics discussed on the email group, additions to previously published ideas, Technical Bulletins or ideas that are not yet developed to the point to warrant the more rigorous approach of a Technical Bulletin. The Journal is a very appropriate medium for recording members’ experiences with the practical application of MERG kits and any other matters relating to electronics and model railways.

The Journal carries notices and information about the group, changes to the Committee, papers relating to the AGM, membership list updates, information about new kits and the availability of old kits. Also included is news from and information about some of the Local Area Groups of MERG.

Until 2006 the MERG Journal was called the MERG Newsletter but the scope and content is the same. As a new member you can access old copies of the Journal (and Newsletter) on the MERG website and you are encouraged to do this. For some periods an index is available.

The Journal Editor is always looking for material to fill each issue and is particularly interested in practical articles that illustrate how members make use of MERG resources. Do not feel that as a new member you have nothing to offer, because the reverse is more likely to be the case. You do not need to be an expert in electronics to contribute.

The Journal is sent to every member by mail (airmail for non-UK members) and a mailing house handles the distribution. Notification of any new TBs is sent at the same time, together with any administrative documentation – AGM papers, subscription renewal etc.