OCTOBER 2021

Guild News

New South Wales & Queensland

Area News

Latest News:

I have been holding back with the distribution of this newsletter to be able to give members some latest news. Following a zoom meeting between Ian Allen, Phil Harding and myself it has been decided to appoint an additional representative for New South Wales. We are now joined by my son Graham Plowman who resides in Kellyville and is better located to look after the interests of members in Sydney than I am able to from here in Queensland.

We recognise that there are members living in northern NSW who are a long way from Sydney and might be more interested in our activities over the border in Queensland. We have therefore decided that we will continue to distribute a joint NSW/Qld newsletter. This has the added benefit of a greater number of members able to contribute to this newsletter.

In addition, the Guild is seeking someone to become the area representative for Western Australia, preferably residing in or near Perth.

Graham writes:

My background is in the IT industry where I have over 24 years of experience, starting in software engineering and having progressed through to startup, business management and now consultancy roles in a wide spread of corporate organisations.

Now 53, my interest in railways goes right back to when I observed my father building a layout in the loft when I was about 2 years old! From then on, I was (and still am) heavily invested in 4mm scale. I built my Ashprington Road layout shortly after I migrated to Australia in 1995. I was NSW area representative for the British Railway Modellers of Australia (BRMA) for several years.

I commenced 7mm scale modelling when I was a member of the Crawley Model Railway Society (UK) in the early 1990's, starting with an RJH conversion kit for the Big Big Train Hymek, which I still run, and the usual 'Lima Mark 1' conversions. During that time, I also built a fleet of kit 7mm wagons from ABS, Slaters and Parkside as well as an EasyBuild Mark 1 coach for fellow GOG member and very good friend, Steve Rowe.

In more recent times, I have invested in the Heljan BR(WR) 43xx and Dapol B set, representing my interested in the early-mid 1960's BR steam period.

I have long term plans to re-use the boards of my 4mm layout to build a 7mm layout. A feasibility study and design have been undertaken to confirm viability.

I do a lot of railway modelling and article writing on my 'Model Railways On-Line' website.

Outside of railways, I have been a scout leader and took flying lessons for a few years on real light aircraft, although fancy hobbies like that had to take a landing when I got married and bought a house!

I look forward to serving the NSW membership.

Graham Plowman

Meetings:

There are no meetings currently planned for the Queensland Area. However, I am looking at the possibility of arranging regular monthly meetings here at my home in Boyland, near Canungra. I was putting off hosting meetings until I had made some progress with my new Ashburton layout, but I feel that there is a need for us to begin having meetings as soon as possible.

My intention is to hold regular meetings on the first Sunday afternoon of each month beginning on Sunday 5th December. Unfortunately, I will not have an O gauge layout on show. My shed is currently occupied by Littlehempston a P4 layout, which is shortly to be dismantled. So, for anyone interested, this will be a last chance to see the layout in operation.

Please let me know by email if you are interested in coming along. I will provide full details of where to find me in the November newsletter.

Voluntary Contact Register:

Unfortunately, I have received contact details from only nine members so far. The list will not be circulated to members at this time. If you wish to be included in this list details can be found in the September newsletter.

This Month:

This month I have provided a review of the Dapol signals. These signals are a significant advance on previous products. In particular I commend their electrical versatility. I intend to operate these signals by relays on my new Ashburton layout which will enable me to have a hard-wired interlocking. Having said that the real Ashburton in Devon did not have any interlocking. The signals were not even interlocked with the points in front of them!

I have two bracket signals on pre-order and hope to provide a review of these when they become available.

More variations on the Dapol Mk1 coaches were due to become available by the end of October. No sign of them so far. When they arrive, I will be able to add to my previous review regarding the corridor connectors.

We would be pleased to include articles in this newsletter from members. If you have a project in progress, please send us a few lines and some pictures to share with others.

Regards

Paul Plowman

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David Mcphee has sent me this photograph of two LNER coaches which he is building.

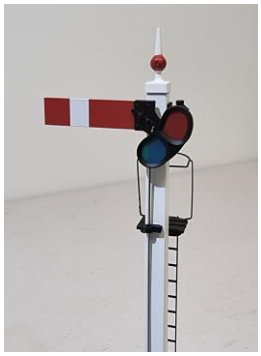
I have now completed the construction of all the pointwork needed for my Ashburton layout. The picture shows the track laid out on the garage floor. This view is looking towards the bufferstops in the distance.

The turnout in the foreground is a B8 with an A7 in the siding. The curved turnout, which gives access to the engine shed is a D10.

In the background the release crossover located in the platform is a pair of B8's.

Review:
The Dapol GWR Square Post Home Signal [7L-001-001]

by
Paul Plowman

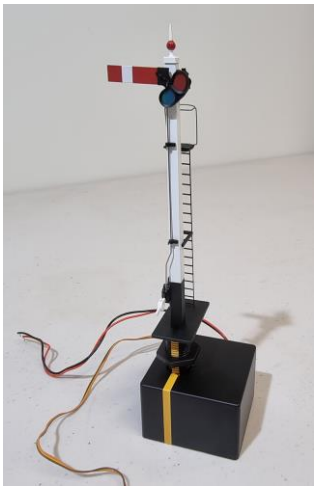


First Impressions

I have to say that to my mind these Dapol signals are a whole new ball game for model railway signalling. The detail is supurb and electrically they are very versatile.

The Model

Signals are probably the one major item on a layout that are at risk of easily being broken. Dapol have clearly given this some thought in their design. The signals are attached to the baseboard through a 15mm diameter hole. The part that goes into the hole is threaded and the signal is secured by a nut screwed on the underside of the baseboard.

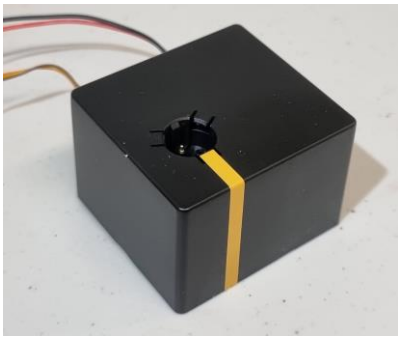


Above the baseboard the signal sits on a rectangular base 41mm x 23 mm. Provided that this base is not buried in glued ballast or other scenic material the signal can easily be removed from the layout for transportation by undoing the nut on the underside of the baseboard.

Operation of the signal is by a black box which clips on under the baseboard. The fit is neither too loose nor too tight. The box can easily be detached from the signal without any need to fiddle with wires, thus allowing the signal to be removed.

The Black Box

This is a “black box” in the true scientific sense. We know what goes into it and we know what comes out, but we know next to nothing about what goes on inside.



In-going is a power supply which can be either between 9V and 12V DC or 14VAC, it can also be powered by DCC track voltage up to 18V. In addition, there are three wires for control of the signal. More about them later.

Out-going is a mechanical drive to move the signal arm and two sprung connectors to power the spectical lamp.

So, what goes on inside this black box? The instructions tell us that these are servo-controlled signals. There is provision to adjust the end positions of the arm movement. The signal shown in my pictures has not been adjusted. It probably will not be necessary.

However, there is something more than just a servo in this box. Clearly there is some sort of digital processing going on. When the signal is pulled off the arm drops slowly but when the signal is returned to danger the arm moves upwards quickly and ends with a bounce. The realism of the bounce will be subject to an individual’s view, but I feel that it lacks the inertia of the real thing. However, it is better than nothing. Perhaps one day they will come with sound, an audible ”clank”.

Electrics

As mentioned previously the signal is controlled by three wires. These wires are connected to the black box by a mini plug of the type used to connect power from a loco tender. These wires are supplied with a two-way switch already attached.

The wires are rather short to reach far enough for the switch to be mounted onto a control panel. Additional lengths of wire will need to be inserted.

The switch provided is described in the instructions as a "Latching, single pole, double throw (SPDT)". However, the instructions which come with the signal offer four alternatives:

- Latching SPDT push button (push – push)
- Single pole, double throw (momentary)
- Double pole passing contact switch
- Two momentary SPST (push to make) buttons

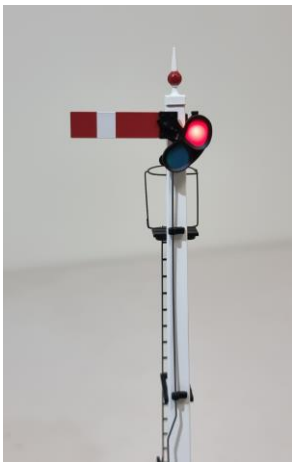
These alternatives enable the modeller to incorporate these signals into a variety of systems. The ability of these signals to work with a latching switch or button enables them to be controlled by relays as part of a hard-wired interlocking.

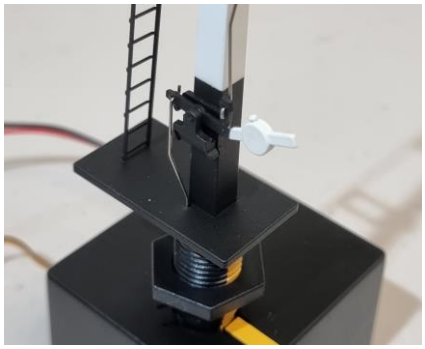
Impressions

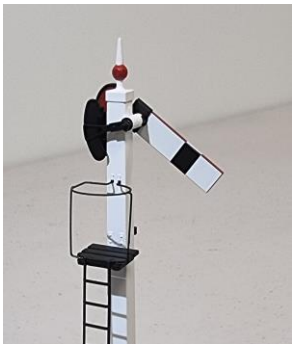
These signals are well detailed, the design has been carefully thought through to eliminate problems of possible damage, they make use of modern technology to make the movement of the signal arm a realistic as possible and electrically they a very versatile.

What are the possible negatives? Only three issues:

- The signal bounce effect is subjective. To me it seems to lack the inertia of the prototype.
- The signal lamp appears much too bright. In daylight oil lights can hardly been seen and even at night they do not show up very brightly.
- The red paint of the signal arm seems a little too dark.







Conclusions

I can highly recommend these signals by Dapol. They are a significant advance on previous ready to use products. I am sufficiently impressed to have placed an advance order for most of the signals I will need for my new layout.

Upper quadrant signals are also available.

It occurs to me that these signals might be easily modified to represent examples of Australian types.