



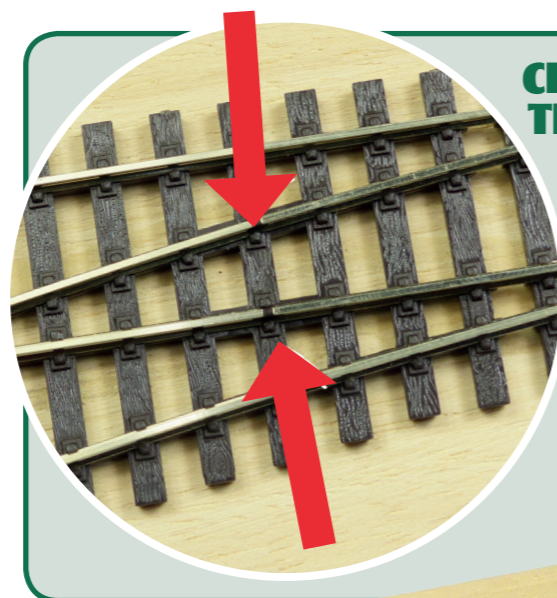
HOW TO USE...

DCC CONCEPTS POINT CONTROL

Howard Smith tests DCC Concepts' products for layout point control.

Controlling a layout has never been as easy as it is today – the sheer variety of different methods on the market to operate your model has never been better. The same can be said for their quality – dodgy components and cheap looking parts tend to be a thing of the past. But with such a multitude of products to choose from, where on earth do you start?

I'm not going to try and influence your decision in this article, merely test one of the more modern methods of switching points using products from DCC Concepts, kindly supplied by Gaugemaster. Yes, there are other methods out there, but never having used DCC Concepts' system before, curiosity got the better of me! **BRM**

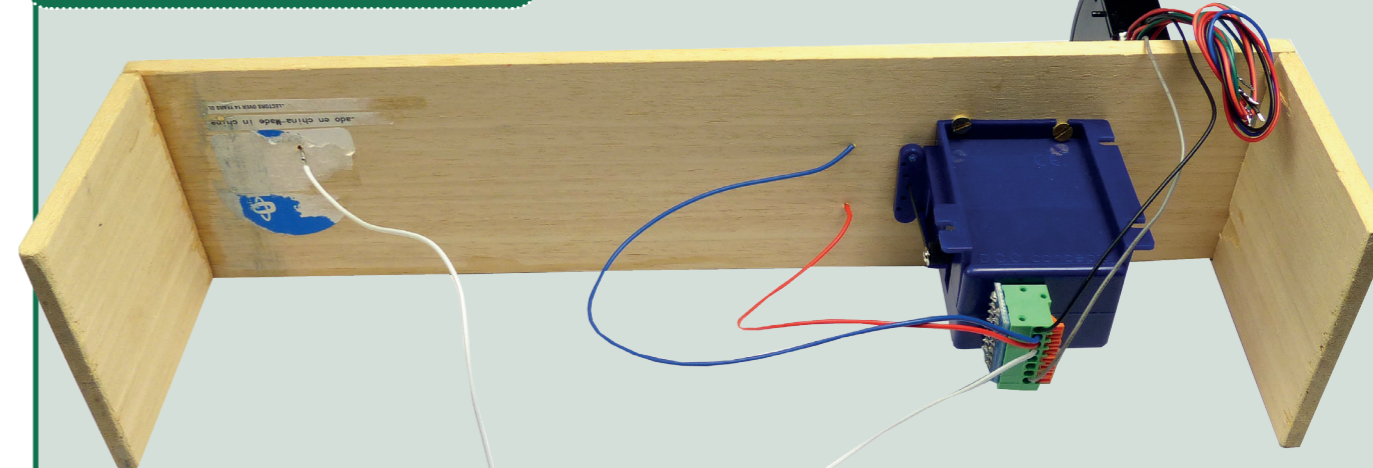


CREATING THE FROG GAP

Don't forget to cut the wires underneath the Peco point that join the frog to both rails! This must be isolated as we are now switching the frog polarity via the point motor.

All of the accessories were duly applied and the lever as a whole was sprayed gloss black with a can of multi-purpose DIY paint. The top of the ribs were polished with a little wet and dry and the lever soon looked a little less 'plasticky'. Once mounted to a makeshift plinth along with point and motor, it was time to test!

HOW I WIRED IT



Luckily the motors and switch are provided with quality instructions, so wiring isn't too much of a problem, but just in case you are unsure, here's how I wired mine: Blue wire from rail one to pin 2 of motor. Red wire from rail two to pin 3 of motor. White wire from point frog to pin 4 of motor. Black wire from switch to pin 1 of motor. Grey wire from switch to pin 8 of motor. Red (pin 1 on switch) and blue (pin 6 on switch) to power positive (7-12 V DC). Green (pin 2 on switch) and Orange (pin 5 on switch) to power negative (7-12 V DC).

COBALT-S LEVER



The Cobalt-S lever can be considered as three different switches in one unit. It can be used for momentary switches such as solenoid point motors, ON-ON applications or for 'double-pole double-throw' switches. As such, it is one of the most versatile switches ever made – specifically designed for use in a model railway environment. The way that the lever closely mimics its real mechanical counterpart is an added bonus.

The inside of a Cobalt-S lever. All contacts are solid brass. A plug to the rear of the lever and wire harness ensures that all wiring to the control panel is as tidy as can be. Cobalt-S levers are also available in six and 12 packs for those who have larger layouts.

Inside the lever packaging along with a spacer for people with large fingers, three fixing screws, a nine-wire harness and a connection PCB, are a series of etched brass lever plates numbered from one to six and two radial metal castings to affix to the top of each lever for a more realistic look.



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CONCLUSION

What to make of such a system then? Well, the motor functions as it should – it is fairly quiet, and its design (top or side mount) makes it equally useful for operating signals as points. It did operate a little slowly at 9V though, so I'd suggest putting the full 12V through them and for each Peco point you use, removing the over-centre spring from under the tie-bar cover.

As for the lever, operating such a device just seems more tactile and 'hands-on' than an ordinary standard small micro switch. Clearly there have to be some compromises in scale for it to work, but once overlooked, it makes the task of layout operation so much more enjoyable!