

A real hands-on modelling challenge!

This newsletter is a little different: It announces a modelling competition, and we invite you all to take up the challenge – or – if you'd prefer... Just join us on the sidelines and cheer on those that do.

You will need to be a member of the FOCUS FORUM to participate though... so if you are not a member yet, please do join us by popping in to the Focus form and registering.

To join FOCUS FORUM, go to <https://www.dccconceptsforum.com> and click on the REGISTER link.

The story behind the competition:

We are all modellers at DCCconcepts and we appreciate the skills and knowledge that underpin the hobby.

Most importantly, whilst some of us are also reasonably skilled, we are very aware that while part of what we can do is because we have done our best to grow our own skills, we are also deeply indebted to those all around us at shows, clubs and on forums who share what they do, because without them, our hobby would be far less satisfying.

Finally, we put a huge amount of effort into just “doing it differently”, which is why our brand’s by-line is “Thinking outside the square” ...and we love to see our products, or the concepts behind them, being used on layouts and perhaps bringing something a little extra, new or different to your hobby.

So... ..we created a modelling competition that covers all of these things.

We recently added [working point rodding](#) to our range. We have therefore set the theme as:

“Believable Modelling” and included the need for realistically working point rodding as part of each entry.

(However, because we understand that modellers work in varying scales and have varying approaches, we have NOT made use of our products mandatory – in fact the sources used will not be part of our judging).

We do however suggest that you take a look at our rodding range... and the exceptional surface mount micro-sized turnout motors within the Cobalt-SS range, as they work together smoothly and silently together in a way few products can. You will find these products on these website links:

<https://www.dccconcepts.com/product-category/the-cobalt-collection/cobalt-point-motors/cobalt-ss/>

<https://www.dccconcepts.com/product-category/the-cobalt-collection/cobalt-point-motor-accessories/workingpointrodding/>

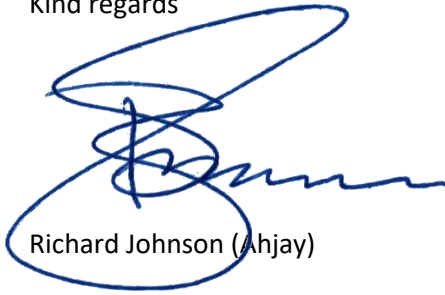
This competition has significant rewards: We value what you do. We value your time and effort. Therefore, the competition reflects that valuation and the possible return for participation is set accordingly.

We will judge the workmanship and therefore the skills and energy that go into the creation will be valued. We will also judge the story of the creation of your and the way you share your approach to modelling... all via your Focus Forum postings.

Therefore, if it goes to plan... ALL modellers who pop in to see will also learn, and we will, together, help to ensure the continuation of our hobby.

That's enough from me: The rest of this newsletter will tell you about our competition. Please enter it in the spirit of its creation so we can all continue to enjoy our hobby together.

Kind regards



(All of the following is also available as a downloadable PDF file from the FOCUS FORUM)



A proper hands-on modelling competition: With working Point Rodding...

The challenge:

(Please also read our notes in relation to this later in this competition release)

- **Part 1:** “Believable modelling”. Create an example of working point rodding within a diorama or as part of a layout of any size, in any scale or any appropriate prototype. (Of course – it is about overall believability, so the WHOLE of your entry will be important, not just the rodding)
- **Part 2:** Share the creation of your entry with the forum, maintaining a proper progressive and instructive forum thread as part of your competition entry. (As “Share-Inform-Advise-Encourage” is our Forum by-line, it is also be part of every entry! Your photographs, commentary and videos will all be judged).

Please see later in this document if you may need help with video or photography

The PRIZES:

ONE winner of £1000. Chosen by the judging team.

The winning entry will also form the basis for a modelling article to be published in a leading model railway magazine – who will ALSO reward the winner with payment for the article. (We will negotiate this for you.)

ONE winner of £500. Chosen by the judging team.

And... 4 weeks AFTER the first and second prizes are announced, there will be one more prize awarded.

ONE winner of £500. Chosen by you, the membership.

This will be the “forum favourite” winner, based on member survey votes... (we will create a separate survey to formalise this.)

Competition Concept and Overview:

Creating a believable model railway is much more than the rolling stock and locomotives:

Infrastructure and landscape set the stage on which the models are presented, and that stage is often the difference between a good model railway and a great model OF a railway...

While it is often difficult to super-detail an entire layout, careful composition of selected super-detailed layout scenes will draw the eye and focus attention, allowing the transitional areas to simply act as links until time and motivation give you the time to detail them to the same level if that is your wish.

Movement draws the eye and adds to the realism if it is done well.

Believable working infrastructure is quite rare, but entirely possible given a little effort. Working point rodding, driven by an appropriate mechanism such as the DCCconcepts Cobalt-SS motor, is most definitely in that category, as the drive is exceptionally smooth, quiet and gentle on point-work and rodding...

The competition time-period:

- 3 months to decide to enter, 4 months for total competition time.
- Entries will be accepted from November 1st, 2018.
- Final entries will be accepted on Thursday, January 31st, 2019.
- Entries will have a post/image/video submission cut-off date of March 1st, 2019. (Last forum post)
- Judging is progressive, and it will effectively commence from Day 1 as it includes several aspects. We will complete judging prior to mid-March for an announcement newsletter on 15th March 2019
- Entry within the above date span is open to all Focus forum members.

Entering the competition:

You will need to be a member of the FOCUS FORUM to enter this competition.

Please do not forget that there is more than just modelling in this competition: Posting regularly about your progress is also an important and this will be taken into account during the judging of your entry.

- Visit the Competition section here: <https://www.dccconceptsforum.com/?forum=696813>
- Go to the competition announcement, entry form and rules thread and download an entry form
- Complete the form and email it to rejohnson@dccconcepts.com

(This is a high value competition and a proper entry process is important. Please complete all areas of the entry form. If you have questions about it, please email rejohnson@dccconcepts.com)

- We will register your entry and send you back a copy with your entry number on it. (You will need this entry number if you wish to claim a participant discount for any DCCconcepts items that you use in creating your entry for the competition)
- You can start your “Entry related thread” at any time after your entry has been submitted.
- Your thread should be set up in the area “COMPETITION Entries – a Work in progress”.
- That area can be found here: <https://www.dccconceptsforum.com/?forum=696816>

In case you are wondering...

- *The motivation for the competition is to stimulate interest in hands-on modelling and to encourage the sharing of skills and knowledge, so entries will be judged on both these things.*
- *Judging will be by two groups and their results will be combined to find the winners. Judges names will remain confidential.*
- *Primary competition judging - DCCconcepts will coordinate it with the following:*
 - *Two known and respected hands-on modellers who are totally independent.*
 - *Two forum members who have been active, respected posters on this and other model railway-related forums.*
- *Secondary competition judging will be “Forum Favourite” judging by members. Result will be based on a member poll plus an assessment of “likes” generated as the competition progresses.*
- *The competition is, to be honest, primarily targeted at 4mm scale and UK modelling as that is where rodding was most common, but we respect all of you very much, so it is equally open to all scales and all prototypes and we invite all modellers to participate...*

(N, O and other modellers... this may be easier or harder in your “preferred scale” than it will be for OO/4mm scale modellers, but of course modelling skills are not specific to a scale...
We do not suggest that you change direction to suit the competition, but why not do something different and showcase your skills anyway by entering a diorama in 4mm scale!)
- *While finer-scale modelling will be respected, there will be no “points associated” difference related to specific gauge or scale. For example, OO, EM and P4 entries – or for that matter, HO, 2mm fine or N, O or O-fine OR narrow gauges... all will all be judged on an equal footing.*
- *Materials and sourcing are your choice – we’d love you to use DCCconcepts working point rodding, Cobalt-SS or Cobalt iP series motors, or other products we offer, but what you decide to use will be 100% your choice, and the judges will not pay any attention to the sourcing of items used – modelling and its presentation/quality are the sole judging criteria.*

When we say ALL members may enter, we mean it.

- *This competition is created in the same spirit as the FOCUS forum and it will be judged in that way, so it is all about modelling, not personalities. It will offer all those who enter a chance to contribute via the posting of their progress and that will include all members of our forum without exception. It will, therefore, be equally open to the forum moderators, our clients and our staff.*
- *Please note: We understand the need to be seen to be fair, so where our staff choose to enter, we will judge them just as we will judge you, with no decision related to who they are.*

However; while we will judge them in the same way as others, they WILL be excluded from the general prize pool and so will not take away from your potential result or affect your ability to win. Of course, if they DO happen to do well, we will make separate arrangements for their reward.

- *We will start a forum category for this competition. Its topics will include competition timetable, rules, questions and answers related to the competition and of, because the sharing of progress will be of interest to all, we will have a thread related to each entry. (We can add to topics if you wish).*

About the potential for “Negatives or Static” during the competition...

- *All competition-related comments on the forum will be watched quite closely. Neither entrants nor forum members want to see negativity... so let's just avoid it.*
- *While others will help in the monitoring, there will be ONE point of actual moderation action on this subject – and that is Ahjay. MY wish is to need to do nothing at all. Please help me with that.*
- *Robust comment, delivered respectfully will be fine as modelling can and perhaps should, generate passion – but there will be zero tolerance for personalised nonsense, negativity or anything nasty. If guilty, there will be no warnings but... depending on severity, you will probably be able to tell your insurer it was Ahjay that threw the lightning bolt that killed your phone/tablet/computer. 😊*

Help and Advice in relation to the competition:

We want you to enter but we do understand you may have questions that this document may not answer. Please feel free to give us a call, and we will do our very best to explain or help you.

- YES, you can call us on +44 (0) 1729 821 080 during business hours. We are here 7 days a week.
- We will discuss the competition and do our very best to help or advise in relation to entry and activity requirements, but we will NOT discuss competition rules or the judge's decisions of course.
- Because it is part of what we do, we WILL give advice on the application and use of our products in the same way that we would if the competition did not exist. This is just good customer service.
- YES, if you are a forum member AND have already entered the competition, you can ask for a “Competition special offer” that is exclusively available to forum members if you will be using our product for the build. A list of qualifying products AND a specific contact structure (as in WHO can process this offer for you) will be placed within the competition thread.
- We DO understand that a skilled modeller is not necessarily a skilled photographer. We do NOT want this to stop you entering. If you are worried that your photography or video skills will compromise your entry, we will do our best to help – DO ask if this is something that bothers you as we will either arrange to visit you with a camera ourselves OR arrange a third party to do so.
- We do want to be sure that all is as it should be because the Focus Forum expects us to manage things appropriately, so we may well choose to ask questions of entrants via phone or message or perhaps even arrange to pop in and see winning entries for ourselves. I hope that will be OK.

The Competition Rules:

We want to make this as simple, easy, clear and clean as possible. Good, honest arrangements do not need complicated rules and structures. We think this is enough... so please read nothing between the lines!

Basic conditions:

- The rules are clear and not bendable. (If you are unsure, you may ask us for clarification)
- All decisions related to eligibility and judging will be final.
- You may enter between November 1st and January 31st (Inclusive)
- Your “Final entry posting” must be online prior to March 1st, 2019.
- Your entry (or entries) may be a diorama or an area of your layout. It can be any scale or prototype.

- You can enter as an individual or on behalf of a modelling team if you wish, however you cannot be a team member AND an individual entrant.
- A modelling team entry may have several forum members in it, and all can of course still post on the forum, but a “team Entry” should nominate ONE “On-Forum” representative for all posts related to that specific competition entries.
- You may enter more than once.
(i.e.: enter 2 dioramas, 1 diorama and 1 area of your layout or 2 areas of your layout if you wish.)
- Each entry must include no less than 3 operating items/turnouts etc operated via working rodding. (Rodding was used for more than turnouts - so your animated items could also include working crossing gate locks, working facing point locks and detonator placers to name just 3 other options)

The RULES are continued next page...

Interactive entry requirements:

- You must post your progress on the forum at least 6 times during the build of each entry.
- The progressive posts should match the theme of our forum - “Share, Inform, Advise & Encourage”. (we will be judging the quality of forum interaction, the build and the completed entry)
- Your final entry should be posted when you are finished and happy with your entry. It should be titled “Final competition entry” and it must include:
 - A narrative that explains the concept, the build, what you did, how you did it.
 - At least 6 photographs set within the narrative
 - At least one video showing the entry in action, with the rodding operations clearly seen.

The last rule: Keep smiling, keep up the positive FOCUS FORUM Spirit.

The prize money is significant, but the objective really is to positively encourage hands-on modelling!

- Do not feel intimidated and do have confidence. You can do it if you try!
- If you see an entrant struggling, it’s OK to offer to help... on-Forum, by Forum message or even in person. We should not suspend help and encouragement for any competition!
- If you are stuck at any point – you should not hesitate to ask. Competition or not, both Focus Forum and DCCconcepts customer service will do their best for you.
- And... the Forum should always be a pleasure to visit and we do not want anyone over-stressed.

So: If you can’t enter with a smile... That’s OK. Just cheer those who can from the sidelines 😊

