

Background Philosophy Settle to Carlisle Railway Challenge



Entering the double-line northbound at the Start of our Journey

QRS IFC was not intended to be an experiment, but that's how it turned out. We made mistakes and gauged interest and listened to feedback. Overall IFC was a success as a training exercise. Competitor feedback brought to light some valuable suggestions, some of which have been embodied in CW STC.

The STC challenge is open to all CW operators and provides many more opportunities to expand one's field of knowledge and sharpen CW skills than the QRS International Flight Contest was able to do.

For a start the QNCs are longer to create a more realistic CW environment. Finding answers by using Google Maps as the primary research tool demands a new level of determination to discover relevant facts. Frequent use of search engines will be useful to reveal context and improve general knowledge.

Essential to good CW training is regularity of practice; attendance on a nightly traffic handling net is an excellent way to ensure regularity, responsibility to attend being driven by a feeling of *esprit de corps*. CW STC provides a reasonable simulation of a traffic net with its five-question format. If participants listen to, research and answer one question per night, for each of five week nights, one can enjoy a QRM-free, near-perfect training environment.

The QRS IFC was largely technical, structured and repetitive. We saw the need to provide more varied subject matter and promote a wider range of opportunities. Although STC is nationally constrained, it looks for fine details obtainable at ten different sites along the 73 miles of what is claimed to be Britain's most scenic railway as it threads through the Yorkshire Dales, the North Pennine Fells, and the Eden Valley. It's an historically significant route on modern permanent way over which one million passengers are carried annually in modern DMUs, and on special steam-drawn excursions consisting of authentically restored rolling stock.

The challenge in STC is to make sure your QTC answers are concise while still delivering the detail needed to earn full points. It is a rare opportunity for contestants to develop an unambiguous, economical writing style leading up to formal CW traffic handling in the future.

Like IFC, STC is a multi-tasking exercise which provides experience in managing several disciplines simultaneously: comprehension; research; logical thinking; data handling and composition, in addition of course to the 'Golden Goose', confident CW competence.



Arriving at Carlisle station spells the end of our Journey

