



# West Midlands “N” Gauge Club NEWSLETTER

## Len Bane

It is with sadness that we must inform members and friends of the club that Len Bane sadly passed away in mid May.

Len had been a member of the club from the early days. As an electronic engineer he had played a major part in the control system for Waterstock, our original layout with help from Edgar Mason. Edgar tells me that he laid in the cable runs but the marvelously efficient control panel was the work of Len.

A regular visitor to the club right up to the end, Len was a fount of knowledge on all matters electrical and electronic. If anyone had a query, Len was the first port of call and he usually had a simple and straightforward solution. He was also a mine of useful information and also full of anecdotes from his working life. To quote the first member who responded to my email informing members of his passing “Such a lovely man, who I found very genuine with his unselfish help and advice. He will be missed.”

The club sends its condolences and sympathy to Len’s family.

Jeremy  
Club Chairman

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## From our Chairman

I am sad to report that during May we lost long standing member, Len Bane, who had been our electrical and electronics expert. Elsewhere you will find a short appreciation of Len as a member of the club. On June 11<sup>th</sup>, a number of us were privileged to attend his funeral.

On a happier note, we are pleased to confirm that the club will be attending the new 'Warley at Statfold' exhibition in October with Gibben Quarry. We also had a provisional invitation to show Whartson Hall in 2025 and Tipton Hills in 2026. From information that I have gleaned, the Warley club are aiming to create a slightly different exhibition to the normal type. Whilst the number of traders is quite high, they are aiming for niche, specialist and smaller traders rather than the 'box shifters' and plethora of 'second hand' stalls at many exhibitions.

We're currently in the summer hiatus for exhibiting in the Midlands. Our next event is on July 21<sup>st</sup> at Aldridge Road Transport Museum where we have been asked to exhibit two layouts (I think a first for us). We are taking both Whartson Hall and Gibben Quarry. Following this show we have a number, finishing at Blackheath in November. On a similar note, we are supporting the Tipton Canal Festival, which falls on a club meeting day, by opening the clubroom to the public whilst the church provide refreshments downstairs. Later in the year we are hoping to run a small Open Day in conjunction with the church Christmas Tree Festivals in December.

Layout wise, we are working on our two 009 projects, Minchin Vale and Sally Junction. These are layouts that have been donated to us and are being worked on as restoration projects. Minchin Vale has already been exhibited in May at the Bournville Industrial and Narrow Gauge event – very much as a work in progress – and has a booking at Blackheath in November.

I can also report that club meetings continue to be vibrant, with social activities, modelling and general running on layouts. Attendance falls slightly during the summer with holidays and members exhibiting at shows but attendance is healthy.

## Ken Jones' New Project by Ken Jones

Here's the first picture of the main building of my new project - "The Bus Station". I've decided not to have a railway or moving bus system on this project but space for buses in service and others in a diorama I can take to exhibitions. I'm waiting for some back scenes to arrive. The bus station building is from eBay - a card kit produced by Johns Model Railways, also available in OO gauge. The default lettering is National Express in appropriate colours but I've had Jones of Taunton done for this scenario.



## B.N.S.F Metra Chicagoland by Nigel Harrold.

Just a short piece, on my new American Modern Era layout which is roughly based on one of the many Metra commuter, Amtrak, freight lines running in to and out of Chicago.

The layout is nearly finished with just a lot of small detail to add (figures, street signs, vehicles etc) ready for it's debut at the Aldridge Show in July.

Once completed I will at last have my Saturday's free to attend club meetings, which I have really missed (not just for the CAKE). Also I will have time to put pen to paper and write up some articles for future Newsletters on details and construction of the layout.



But just to finish off this small piece here are some photos of the nearly finished layout, also exhibition dates for 2024.





## Where to see Nigel and his layout this year

July 21st - Aldridge Transport Museum.

July 27th - 28th - St Johns (Stoke on Trent)

August 10th - 11th - Battlefield Line (Mkt Bosworth)

August 24th - Bournville (Longbridge)

September 21st - Trent Valley MRC (Lichfield)

October 5th - Telford (pending confirmation)

October 12th - Cradley Heath (pending confirmation)

October 26th - Hinckley Show

November 9th - Solihull - (pending confirmation)

## Bournville show 4/5/24 by Ken Jones

I took my new Nn3 layout "Fontaine Quarry" with our previous editor Vince to the above show, only the second time out since building it from a 20-year-old z gauge layout in 2023. It had been out to another local show in March but the Bournville show is a specific industrial and narrow-gauge exhibition.

Here is a summary of what we found out during the day.

1] Very few people knew what Nn3 is and probably no-one had seen such a layout before. Some had difficulty realising what Nn3 is trying to compare it with 009.

2] Some exhibitors with 009 layouts recognised what my stock was - that was very good news

3] We didn't run the Microtrains stock, that was a good idea, the place to run it is quietly at home

4] Keeping the lower loop free was a good idea – meant we could stop one train and have another one pass it

5] We used one track on the upper loop to have a static display including the transporter vehicle – I liked that idea and we could still run trains up to the loop but only the railcar behaved itself, running other trains in reverse

back down to the main circuit was a bad idea. Changing engines on top loop is too messy even if they went up top and tail, but could be done if we have something running around the main circuit

6] We could have run a double header but not many suitable vehicles to make a long enough train.

7] The fabrication of stories like H & S went down well, when we needed to explain why nothing was running – portaloos seemed to be more of a talking point with visitors – many spotted we had two different types on the layout

8] A few visitors asked about the rolling stock but as there is virtually no RTR stock available and things like the PECO kits are longer made plus the cost of things like Marklin chassis, means it is not going to be a scale that grows. This is reflected with few second-hand items coming up for sale.

9] The layout went down well, we included the 20-year-old history, and Vince was happy to run trains while I chatted to the visitors. Number of visitors was down on last year and we assume people went away for the Bank Holiday weekend. I'm happy with the way the layout ran, and it's not out again this year.



# Constructing Petite Properties N Gauge Kit Buildings

by Jeremy Edwards

Petite Properties are particularly known for producing items for the Dolls House collecting and building hobby and produce a lot of their kits using laser cutting on either card or wood. Having had a few issues with Scalescenes kits, which I am still working on overcoming, I thought that I would have a go at something laser cut. Petite Properties market a range of kits for model railway fans in variety of gauges. At the time of working on this project a number of items in the N Gauge range are out of stock.

I purchased ‘Marshalswick House’ which is a mid-market Georgian style property and two packs of Number 10 Station Road which is a narrow 3 storey shop – there are some 2 storey shops but they were out of stock at the time. I completed Marshalswick House first and made it as either a solicitor’s office or a doctor’s/dentists’ surgery. This article is mainly covering the construction of one of the shop units.

I constructed the house using Scalescenes downloadable stucco paper, aged brick paper and roof slates. Net curtains were from a pack of tissues using a single ply.



*Marshalswick House near completion. Final roof tidy up needed, bargeboards and chimney pots to be fitted.*

On to Number 10 Station Street. I’ve got a set of Sankey Scenics shop signs which will be useful for this. I intend to do the first one with a brick finish on the upper floors rather than stucco. So, what do you get?



*The unopened pack*



*The contents in a food container*

In a zip lock bag we find a detailed 2 page instruction sheet, some parts in various thicknesses of card as per their use, a couple of laser cut pieces of wood some plastic chimney pots and a set of white printed glazing. The safest thing is to put these into a freezer box or some other container with a good lid. Other materials will be needed along with a selection of tools. The main surface can be painted (Marshalswick House was recommended to be painted although I used stucco paper) or papers used. I've selected Scalescenes Aged Brick and Slate roofing. Paints need to be acrylic or watercolour; enamels aren't suitable. For glues, I use Pritt to fix papers (PVA isn't good on home printed papers), PVA in a fine dispenser for joining parts and UHU for anything where a really strong bond is needed. Scalpels and tweezers are essential tools as parts are often really fine; I also used a clamp, some jigs, magnetic clamps, felt pens, crayons and the usual painting tools.

Assembly is fairly straightforward. Initially you need to fold the back and side walls, glueing them with pva; I used a clamp to hold them in position. I covered the front wall with brickpaper, fixing it on with Pritt Stick . I used a sufficiently wide strip of brickpaper to cover the side and cut out a section so that the front window and door section was free to paint. Painting is best done with acrylic paint rather than enamel– I used a mixture of Humbrol, Revell and Tamiya colours. Window glazing needs to be applied once the window openings have been cut out. I painted the inside of the building with black paint; I'm not lighting my buildings. After that it was a case of building up the front layers as per instructions and fixing the front to the back and side sections.

I selected suitable Sankey shop signs which I fitted. I used Scalescenes slate paper for the roof– I decided to join a pair of these together as a unit and the roof lines didn't align perfectly which gave it a slightly 'used and tired' look. The paper was cut into strips and fixed with slight overlaps with Pritt again. To finish the roof, I used a selection of green crayons augmented with a little white and brown to weather the roof. This was applied lightly and then sealed with matt varnish. The chimney stacks were 'papered' and glued on.

Having completed these, I'm starting on another version of the house which will have a brick ground floor with the upper floors with stucco. This will be a 'private residence'. I've also taken delivery of a couple of 2 storey double fronted versions of the shops and four 'workers cottages' units. These are all low relief and should more or less complete my backscene. I have decided that trying to do the Scalescenes Hotel and low relief cottages and shops are a little too complex.



*The completed model*



## Ken's New Buses by Ken Jones

1. My N gauge Oxford Diecast vehicle has now been repainted in the recommended shade for Walsall livery, and the top of the radiator painted red in line with some pictures we have seen. We are not sure why Walsall painted the tops of these radiators unless it was to show it was ex LT. They had 5 of these vehicles 201 to 205 in their fleet. Shows what can be done with a commercially available N gauge vehicle

This model should be with me before the end of the month



*Nearside and Offside photos of the bus  
Painting and pictures by Malcolm Hall*

From: Dave Jessop,  
MBF Journal Editor

There is a theory that the red top to the radiator was to remind garage staff that the fuel filler on the RTLs was on the nearside - the opposite side to all other buses in the fleet, so that they

had to be driven onto the fuel filling station in the opposite direction to all the rest.

This theory has never been confirmed, but certainly fits with the facts, which can be proved by looking at photos of Walsall buses!

2. 3 D printed scrap scene from Outland Models via ebay includes bus

3. Coventry buses 3D models from Roger Bailey produced by 3 Peaks Models - painted for me by Malcolm Hall

a Maudslay and a Daimler Fleetline  
fleet number 117 to 125 (JKV 117 to 125)  
Fleet Number 23 to 40 (KWK 23 to 40F)

4. converted Replitek model converted and painted by Malcolm Hall from Bristol 5LG bus to South-

down 677  
1947 Leyland Tiger PS1/1 with ECW body



## What's in my toolbox by Jeremy Edwards

“Tools”, you say. Well, yes! “But what else?” I reply. I’m actually operating three toolboxes for various things. My main box is an old and battered box which I inherited from someone at Warley. It’s got some compartments on top that are broken and holds the general stuff that we all probably have. My main theme, however, is box number 2 and some of the things I store in that (and why I have them).

The main use of box number 2 is to keep items related to ‘colour’ with a few other bits like the remains of some air-drying clay, plasticine, blu tack etc. It’s actually where I store my paint-brushes of all sizes and styles, stirrers and associated bits like the odd palette.

More interestingly (perhaps) is the collection of other items that I keep in there: a set of ceramic pencils from hard to really soft, a cheap set of felt pens, some watercolour crayons and some pastels. These items relate to ‘weathering’ and completing kits (card in particular) and other scenic purposes. Uses include working on aspects of plastic kits too and I propose to explain how I achieve this. The key fact to note is that, at the time of writing, I do not possess an air-brush and these items are a way around that problem – or rather “how we achieved this sort of finish before we had airbrushes”.

Finishing roof and wall surfaces can be very difficult. If you use a single colour of paint or commercial printed papers (or printed card kits like Metcalfe, Superquick or Scalescenes) the colours can be monotonous, too bright and brash and not very realistic. With plastics we can use washes, sometimes these can be a little too harsh if you want a subtle effect; with cars these aren’t necessarily a good plan.

One obvious issue with commercial card kits is the issue with white edges on folds and cuts where we use felt pens, crayons or even careful applications of paint as concealment. In addition to following this practice, I use my crayons to tone down the printed surface: to give an example, I have just completed a Petite Properties kit using Scalescenes downloadable papers as a surface and I used a variety of green crayons with a brown and white lightly rubbed on the roof surface to represent algae, general grime and lime leaching (or bird droppings). Using the crayons just tones down the colour from a clean slate grey to a more realistic shade with slight irregularity; the whole thing is then sealed with matt picture varnish.



Felt pens (a cheap child’s set with lots of colours) can be useful for covering little blemishes and going a little ‘further’ with colour intensity with weathering. My set probably came from The

Works, cost very little and has double ended pens (broad and narrow points). The pastels are useful for toning down colours or changing painted colours on backscenes. They can also be ground with a sharp knife to produce powdered colours similar to weathering powder and can then be sealed in with matt varnish

Normal carbon based pencils can also be very useful. My set ranges from a slightly 'hard' 2H to very 'soft' 8B; artists who sketch often don't go softer than 4B or perhaps 6B. They can be scraped with a knife to produce a black weathering dust but the softer ones are really useful for shading and they can be rubbed gently with a finger to smudge them more. On my layout, I have used a soft pencil to create a gutter on my roads – it's just a simple dark line.

I do have loads of other bits and pieces like jigs and magnetic clamps that I've picked up from researching on YouTube and in magazines but I thought you might find an insight into how I use crayons etc. to be helpful. If you have anything different and useful in your tool collection why not write a little article about it.

## Breaking News by Ken Jones

Besides taking his rare 1960s working Eheim trolleybus system to TINGS KEn will also be taking his first scenario - The Bus Station - currently under construction

Being built in a storage box utilising some of Ken's many N Gauge buses. First time he has built such a small layout without any moving trains or buses.

Size = 38cm x  
25cm



## New Releases by Ken Jones

3 N gauge models have now gone onto suppliers website so feel free to tell others. They are unpainted 3D printed models from Ray Rimes Designs.

Mine have been painted for me by NGS / MBF member Malcolm Hall, and will be participating in this year's Royal Blue run [<https://www.tvagwot.org.uk/events-1/royal-blue-run>]

a) taking the standard LS coach [the one without the Camel Back luggage container] and painted it as a Bristol MW Mark 1

b) taking the camel back one and finishing as a rounded front window one and one with flat front windows.

All painted in Royal Blue livery for my collection this picture has just arrived and I hope to have the vehicles and more information next month.

They are based on 56 GUO. OTT 43 and MOD 973 - all preserved vehicles



Mabex have been in touch to say they still have the range of N gauge bus transfers. They can be seen at [http://www.modelbuszone.co.uk/tmb/images\\_model\\_kits/mabex/Mabex\\_Transfers\\_2019\\_Catalogue.pdf](http://www.modelbuszone.co.uk/tmb/images_model_kits/mabex/Mabex_Transfers_2019_Catalogue.pdf) but advised they are not producing new designs but have plenty of stock as per this 2019 catalogue

Three Peaks Models have not only increased their range of 3D N gauge buses but also their range of 3D printed N gauge accessories - more details at <http://www.threepeaksmodels.co.uk>

Similarly N"Tastic have increased their product range - more info at <https://www.copperminiminiatures.co.uk/n-tastic-scale-models>

The Spring issue of the Dispatch is available for non subscribers to download from <https://micromodelrailwaydispatch.com>. Please spread the work among the forums and groups that you are members of. This time it includes my box file layout "Pending"

3D Pluss have new products such a lighthouse added to their product range for N gauge items <https://www.3d-pluss.net/>

## Quiz Time



Aldridge / Transport / Museum  
Birmingham MRC  
Blackheath  
Bournville  
Cradley Heath  
Hinckley

Sutton Coldfield  
TINGS  
Trent Valley  
Warley / at Statfold  
Wombourne

# Where to see us in 2024

## Club Layouts at Exhibitions in 2024

| <b>2024</b>                    | <b>Exhibition</b>                 | <b>Layout</b>                 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> March          | Wombourne                         | Whartson Hall                 |
| 5th/6 <sup>th</sup> April      | Sutton Coldfield                  | Gibben Quarry                 |
| 27 <sup>th</sup> April         | Blackheath                        | Gibben Quarry (new date)      |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> May            | Bournville/Longbridge             | Minchin Vale (009)            |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> July          | Aldridge Road Transport Museum    | Whartson Hall & Gibben Quarry |
| 24 <sup>th</sup> August        | Bournville                        | Whartson Hall (new date)      |
| 12th/13 <sup>th</sup> October, | Warley at Statfold.               | Gibben Quarry                 |
| 19 <sup>th</sup> October       | Wombourne                         | Gibben Quarry                 |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> November       | St. Pauls Church Hall, Blackheath | Minchin Vale                  |

## Member Layouts at Exhibitions in 2024

Ken Jones

| <b>2024</b>   | <b>Exhibition</b> | <b>Layout</b>    |
|---|-------------------|------------------|
| Sat 2 <sup>nd</sup> March<br>[ aided by Peter Dale] | Wombourne         | Fontaine Quarry  |
| Sat 4 <sup>th</sup> May                             | Bournville        | Fontaine Quarry  |
| Sat /Sun 11 <sup>th</sup> / 12 <sup>th</sup> May    | Syston MRS        | Jones of Taunton |
| Sat / Sun 14th /15th Sept                           | TINGS             | Malken           |
| Sat 12 <sup>th</sup> October                        | Cradley Heath     | Seen Better days |
| Sat 26 <sup>th</sup> October                        | Birmingham MRC    | TBC              |

Full details at <https://www.ukmodelshops.co.uk/layouts/kjl.html>



## West Midlands N Gauge Club

**Chairman:** Jeremy Edwards

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**Treasurer:** Edgar Mason,

assisted by Philip Hunt

**Newsletter Editor:**

Claire Fisher

Catch up with us here:

[www.wmngc.co.uk](http://www.wmngc.co.uk)

**YouTube:**

West Midlands N Gauge Club

Scan the below QR:



**Facebook:**

West Midlands N Gauge Club

## Proposed Meeting Dates for 2024

Saturday 6th January

Saturday 20th January

Saturday 3rd February

Saturday 17th February

Saturday 2nd March

Saturday 16th March

Saturday 6th April

Saturday 20th April

Saturday 4th May

Saturday 18th May

Saturday 1st June

Saturday 15th June

Saturday 6th July

Saturday 20th July

Saturday 3rd August

Saturday 17th August

Saturday 7th September

Saturday 21st September

Saturday 5th October

Saturday 19th October

Saturday 2nd November

Saturday 16th November (AGM)

\*Saturday 7th December

\*Saturday 14th December

\*Operating Layouts for the Church Christmas Tree Festival

Meetings may be subject to local or national restrictions and guidelines. For information about the meetings contact Jeremy Edwards on 07720 902490 or via the website.

Any changes will be circulated via the newsletter, email, text, Facebook posts or if necessary by text or phone call

