
The West Midlands N Gauge Club



Chairman's Bit (and editorial)

Editorial bit first, this is quite a difficult task; I'm not unfamiliar with producing newsletters as I edit the Trent Valley Model Railway Society newsletter but following on from a 'live' editor rather than after a hiatus is more of a problem. Vince did a brilliant job as did his predecessors the late Tony Butler and Rock Battye; their work is available to view on the website. I can't match Vince's humour and will not try. At this point I must say that this is an 'inter-regnum' period whilst we find a new editor. One advantage of trying to edit this newsletter compared with the one I've been editing on and off since about 2019 is that I don't have to write it all myself. Thanks to the various contributors. Editorial bit – over.

Last year we were able to access a bigger and more comfortable clubroom courtesy of the church which has enabled us to work, run trains and chat in much more comfort. This year the launch of our new website, courtesy of Jules – our webmaster, is probably the big news. A great deal of effort has gone into the design and testing of the website so that not only does it look good and work well but also it tells our story to the wider world. Currently I'm not sure whether Instagram and TikTok are perhaps our scene, but then again, we're on Facebook and YouTube.

Further club developments involve updating Whartson Hall to make it easier to use, DCC friendly and better presented. This is documented elsewhere. We have gained a fifth layout; Tony Minchin has donated his earliest 009 layout for club use. It becomes our smallest layout and whilst scenery is 00, the track is 9mm gauge so I think we can get away with that. I suspect we have members with an 009 interest but even so it makes another test track for N Gauge stock. I would add at this point that we are not attempting to become the 'Tipton Model Railway Club' and will remain an N Gauge organisation.

We seem to have quite a busy exhibition schedule, particularly towards the Autumn when many of the local West Midland Shows are on. The club's list of dates is published later along with a number of member's dates. We have a good presence at the Aldridge Road Transport Museum's "Models in the Museum" event as we submitted a job lot of club and member's layouts. We also will probably be at their Hobbies and Pastimes event in September.

We were unfortunate to miss the Warley NEC Show in November. I had contracted Covid and the after effects meant that I was unable to help to move or operate the layout so we had to withdraw. This was a blow as it would have put the club forward in a different arena for the first time since Waterstock was shown there many years ago.

West Midlands N Gauge Club

Chairman: Jeremy Edwards jeremyedwards606@hotmail.com 07720 902490

Treasurer: Edgar Mason, assisted by Philip Hunt

Temporary Newsletter Editor: Jeremy Edwards (see above)

Website www.wmngc.co.uk

YouTube West Midlands N Gauge Club

Internet Presence

On Saturday 7th January we were pleased to launch our new website on the unsuspecting world to complement our Facebook presence and our recent YouTube channel. This gives us a better internet presence since our previous website folded as run by Mike Turner. Within a day of the website opening we were able to direct a show organiser to evidence of a package of layouts that we were offering both from the club and individual members (a package which was accepted completely).

The work of long time member Jules, the website gives all of the information a prospective member might need, shows an exhibition organiser details of layouts that we can offer as a club and individual members and is a mine of useful information. Linking in two ways to our YouTube channel, visitors can see evidence of our layouts, where we meet and what sort of things go on at club meetings.

We have an archive of useful information in the form of past newsletters and we are grateful to Ken Jones for access to his archive. Unlike Railway Modeller, we can't go back right to the 'mists of time' but we have access to newsletters back to 2010.

Talking of Railway Modeller, just after Christmas I sent out a press release about our new website to all of the modelling press. In the March edition, we top the news column which is great publicity for our website. Whenever I get an enquiry, I tell people about the website and YouTube channel.

We also know that our website is making an impact. Apart from a couple of enquiries we also had a message from the furthest reaches in New Zealand where a former Black Country resident asked a couple of questions about a model shop that formerly was in Dudley. This started a correspondence trail between Jon (our enquirer) and Ken Jones, who was able to fill in lots of the important details going back about 45 years.

D

Developing Whartson Hall

Members from before I joined the club will have memories of the trials and tribulations of Water Orton, Whartson Hall 1 and now Whartson Hall 2. The layout was designed to give members who wished to run modern(ish) stock somewhere else to run it other than Waterstock. The final form (Mark 2) was a three track oval with no interconnections between running lines. Each line had three sidings at the rear and the boards were erected to form a hollow rectangle with a central operating well. The layout and scenery were based on Water Orton Station; the layout was Analogue operated and had automatic operational signalling which took into account that the central track was bi-directional. Initial plans were just for a club layout but suddenly it was going to 2018 TINGS so scenic work was pressed through to make it a presentable 'work in progress'. By 2019/2020 we were getting invitations to other exhibitions; Covid and lockdowns then stopped development and we just started to enjoy the layout on our return rather than working on it.

Operationally a few drawbacks with the design became apparent. Firstly, a number of members felt unable to crawl under the layout to get to the operating well. In addition, having three operators in the well resulted in a lot of 'After you, Claude, no, after you Cecil' discussions followed by a replica of the Quintinshill crash. Baseboard alignment issues, the desire to permit some DCC running and stalled scenic development provided further issues.

As a result we have decided to cut back the side boards to bring the fiddle yard to the rear of the scenic section – this may require some tighter curves but – and then have control from the rear where everyone can access everything. At the same time, we are going to renovate the scenery upgrading ground cover, foliage/trees, the station area etc. Electrically we plan to arrange that both the inner and outer lines can be either Analogue or DCC controlled (currently there is a problem with the bi-directional line as the automatic signalling relies on detecting the polarity of the DC in the track feed and a digital system would destroy the circuitry).

Progress:

Meeting 1, January 2023. Trees removed, track lifted on the end boards.

Meeting 2, January 2023. Carpentry completed and boards erected in the new format.



Operating well gone. Dave Evans fettling the new controller position

Meeting 3, February 2023. Track laying started at both ends of the layout. Static grass application started on embankments.



Track laying underway

Meeting 5, February 2023. Track laying at the Derby end complete and partly wired, track at the Birmingham end is not yet complete. Static grass layers are complete and ready for trees, undergrowth and varied colours to be added.

Meeting 6, March 2023. Track laying mostly complete at both ends of the layout. Trees fitted to the embankment.

DCC Ready

On Saturday 4th February we took delivery of our new NCE Powercab DCC controller. Phil Hunt organised this for us. He brought it into the meeting and checked its operation on our current analogue/DCC layout, Gibben Quarry. If members have DCC stock they can now bring it in to run digitally on the layout, rather than in analogue form, without the need to bring their own controller.

Once the track has been laid on Whartson Hall and the track feeds replaced we will be modifying the control system so that the inner and outer loops can be run digitally. Unfortunately, the central loop cannot be run digitally as the signal control system is only compatible with 12v DC. We are considering, at a later date, modifying Tipton Hills for dual operation. We will not modify Waterstock as the wiring is far too complex to take on. It will remain Analogue only.

Gibben Quarry at Wombourne



Dave Evans and Phil Hunt operating Gibben Quarry at the Wombourne Show 11.3.23, photo by Dave Griffin

An update from Phil Hunt

Having a couple of years decided to do a model of Levisham on the NYMR; I planned out what I was going to do and spend the next couple of years asking for the points and track as Christmas and Birthday presents, I decided I need to get going on this in earnest as it is due out in October for a show.

Before Christmas I managed to get the baseboards build; I did shorten the width of end the boards to make sure it could fit in the car. (Photo 1 on the floor) over 2.4m x 1m .



In an effort to make set up easier I have hinged the fiddle yard; I build up the ends and put a countertop hinge so that in future I could put surface motors on the points. This is working okay as only need to fold down and the tracks are aligning okay at present.

I have used the Modeltech rail aligners at all board joints; to start with I placed the track up to the end of the board and then tried to align the rails on the next board. A few took ages to align it doesn't help that I can't solder very well. The best method I found in the end and used in the fiddle yard was to lay the track over the joint; cut out the sleepers where the joiners were to go and fit the track down; solder the rails to the joiners and then cut the track. It helps align the track both vertically and horizontally.

I have managed to fit 90% of the track down and I am going to set it up at least once a month to run it and find out any issues and fix them as I go along. Only siding off the main line to do.

Scenery has started at both ends for the return to the fiddle yard. I know in one sense it looks funny but wanted the full curve in as when I operate it, I need to stop the trains at the station so wanted to see the trains approaching (Photo 2 scenery at the end)



I have started the various buildings on the main scenic boards; so, have got the café and workman's huts done so far; along with most of the workmen's cottages. It's strange what you get to see on Google; one of the cottages has solar panels on it. Any tips for modelling these. (Photo 3 view along main board).



Phil Hunt

New Street Progress

Having had work delayed due to Covid after effects and other pressing matters, layout work has now continued and the scenery is being further developed. The scenic break at the Docks end of the layout has been given the static grass treatment and some undergrowth is now

being added using Woodland Scenics materials. I've hidden some of the 'docks' with flat buildings from Townscenes (reduced in size to 80% and trimmed).

I'm currently building the low relief buildings for the backscene using Scalescenes downloadable kits. This is an experience as I think they are basically OO kits reduced to about 52% for N and card thicknesses cause some issues (certainly with the hotel). The roadway has a base colour courtesy of Homebase tester pots and some noticeable 'repairs' in a darker shade. Scale Model Scenery produced photo-etched drains – they are tiny and can be a bit of a nightmare to fit.

At the other end I have the park, cutting and road bridge still in flocked state with no static grass added as of yet. However, the goods yard and exchange sidings have been treated with DAS clay which is still a bit rough but has been painted and dry brushed so it doesn't look too bad. I will use varnish to create some puddles in some of the bigger hollows for effect. More work is needed here.

The area between the goods yard and the dock end has a piece of mounting board cut to shape. On this I intend to build some houses complete with front and back gardens and either allotments or an orchard at the rear. This will be constructed as a separate module, then dropped in place when completed and blended in. By doing it this way I can easily access all parts of the scene and can get a better quality of result.

I may write about my experiences with Scalescenes kits separately at some time once I've had more experience of making them up. Photographs may follow at a later date.

Jeremy Edwards

Ken Jones' New Logo

Our former Chairman Ken Jones has his first ever logo which can also be seen on his webpage <https://www.ukmodelshops.co.uk/layouts/kjl.html>

[UKMS Directory - KEN JONES LAYOUTS](#)

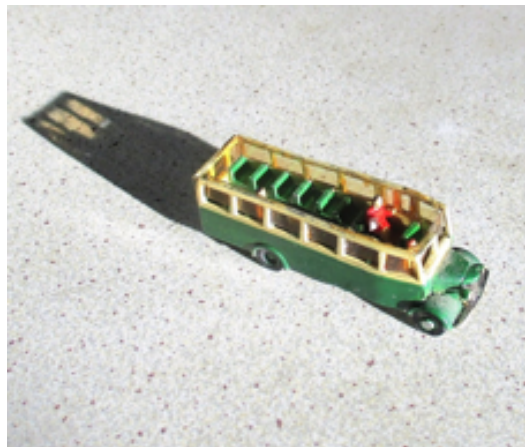
The largest resource for British Outline Model Railway enthusiasts. Providing a Model Shop & Suppliers directory, Railway Events Calendar, Clubs and Societies listings & more.
www.ukmodelshops.co.uk

which details his layouts and the exhibitions he has attended and will be attending.

The logo was created for Ken by our former newsletter editor Vince Painter who did it while recovering from his recent operation. Ken hopes to have the logo in use on layouts etc from 2023



Some more bits from Ken



Here's my latest N gauge open top bus but it's not a new model. It was on eBay and no-one wanted it, so I decided to buy it. It is actually a white metal kit, probably P & D Marsh, of a Bedford OB where it has been built without a roof. or the roof has gone missing over time. It's been painted in green and cream. glazed and people added. I've done nothing to it.

Out for a drive in the cold January weather as seen by the long shadows it will now go into winter storage. The only recent new models of N gauge buses have been 3D printed ones from Ray Rimes <https://rayrimesdesigns.com/> including some military transport ones and Replitek <https://replitek.co.uk/product-category/n-gauge/> - both suppliers providing them

unpainted and both working on further models. Replitek have produced their first motorcycle and rider in N gauge.



There are currently no new N gauge buses listed by Oxford Diecast. Their current N gauge range of all vehicles can be seen at https://www.oxforddiecast.co.uk/collections/by-scale?pf_t_by_scale=1%3A148

Ken Jones

*F*rom your roving reporter

Vince's trip to see WALSALL, by owner and joint creator Kevin Ellis.

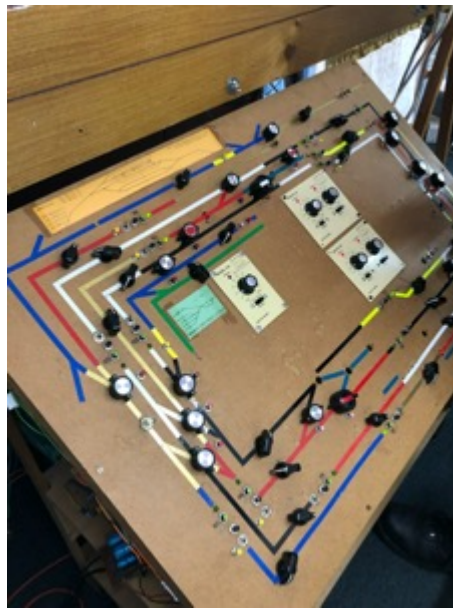
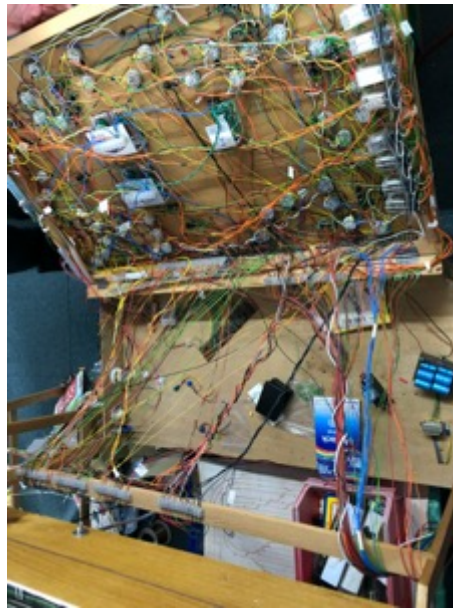
Set in the late 1960s to early 70s, this layout has been built, separated, stored and lovingly restored to full operation.

Once switched on the layout will run, and run and run to a seemingly endless timetable of passenger, mixed goods and light engines, automatically stopping at the many multi aspect signals with very little human interaction - and not a computer in sight - by the extensive use of magnets and reed switches.

During my visit, limited to just over an hour by Kevin's busy home life and my exercise rehabilitation regime, I was amazed at how simple the operation seemed and the accuracy of the representation of familiar landmarks in my home town of Walsall.

Well worth a visit, watch out for the next open day on KEV THE BUS DRIVER uTube channel

<https://youtu.be/tRUAzNCeV5E>



Vince Painter

Multi - tool

It's always nice when you get something useful you can use for modelling and my wife found this multi-tool for me in Poundland before Xmas. It's not only a ballpoint pen with excellent handgrip but has both cm and inch rulers plus a digital stylus for things like your tablet, a spirit level and a small screw driver with flat and Philips head. The packaging says it has 5 tools in one and I'm already using it as I do some work on a couple of layouts before the spring exhibition season starts. The packaging actually says for adults only on the back

which makes a pleasant change, and is available in several European countries although produced by PLDZ of Walsall.

The pictures show the packaging, the pen and it's components.



Ken Jones

Steam Locomotive 5619

5619 was built at Swindon built in 1925 at a cost of £3,988 including £906 for the boiler. During its employment under BR ownership in spent two years at Abercynon (The village was the terminus of the world's first steam railway journey when on 21 February 1804 the inventor Richard Trevithick drove a steam locomotive hauling both iron and passengers travelled from the Penydarren ironworks in Merthyr Tydfil to the basin of the Glamorganshire Canal at Abercynon) before moving to Barry in 1950. It remained at Barry depot until withdrawn from service in June 1964 by which time it had covered 778,263 miles.

5619 was originally purchased in 1972 by the Telford Development Corporation from Barry scrapyard for static display at Horsehay goods shed. Telford Horsehay Steam Trust, which was formed in 1976, decided to restore the locomotive to operational condition and it was first steamed again in 1981 making the Telford Horsehay Steam Trust the smallest railway to restore an ex-Barry locomotive which is still operating.

It ran at Horsehay and many other preserved lines until its boiler certificate expired in 1991. In 1998 lottery funding was obtained to allow a full overhaul to begin; refurbishment of the frames and fitting of the wheels, cylinders, side tanks and bunker were completed at Horsehay. Boiler work and final reassembly of the locomotive took place at the Flour Mill work shop, Lydney. Returning to traffic after passing its final steam tests, it moved to the Avon Valley Railway for two weeks' running-in in February 2008. It's been hired out to various preserved railways since then and was repainted in BR Black livery in 2017. During Christmas period 2022 it was stored in the West Midlands before returning to Telford Steam Railway in January 2023. Ken Jones had special permission to go and photograph the locomotive whilst it was in open storage.

Picture below by Ken Jones WMNGC



Puzzle Time

Continuing, for now anyway, with Vince’s tradition of finding some sort of puzzle or competition for readers who want to flex their ‘little grey cells’, Jules has provided a couple for you to try. Answers have been promised for the next edition.

The West Midlands N Gauge Club



Find the following words in the puzzle.
 Words are hidden ↑ ↓ → ← and ↘ .

ANNIE
 BI-MONTHLY
 CLARABEL
 DAVID
 GIBBEN QUARRY
 JEREMY
 JULES
 KEN

LEN
 METHODIST CHURCH
 NEWSLETTER
 N GAUGE
 PARK LANE WEST
 SATURDAY
 TEA
 THOMAS

TIPTON HILLS
 TONY
 TWO THIRTY
 WATERSTONE
 WEST MIDLANDS
 WHARTSON HALL

And now this one

What's the Link?

Try this on for size!

Rail travel, is all about linking one station to another. Take a look at these three words. Each needs a word to complete it to become a British Railway Station location **AND** a word theme that connects them all!


Can you work it out?

BURN

2. **CAR**

3. **HAVEN**

Answers in next months Newsletter!



Club Layouts at Shows 2023

11 th March	Wombourne	Gibben Quarry *
29 th April	Bloxwich	Whartson Hall
22 nd July	Aldridge Transport Museum	Tipton Hills & Gibben Quarry *
9 th /10 th September	TINGS, Nr Leamington	Whartson Hall *
16 th September	Lichfield	Whartson Hall *
24 th September	Aldridge Transport Museum	Club Stand
	Hobbies and Pastimes event	
7 th October	Cradley Heath	Whartson Hall
28 th October	Birmingham (Castle Brom)	Gibben Quarry *
25 th /26 th November	Warley MRC, NEC	Whartson Hall

* Members layouts also present

Members Layouts at Shows 2023

Ken Jones has the following dates in his diary:

11 th March	Wombourne	Malken
29 th /30 th April	Syston MRS	Seen Better Days
13 th May	Bournville	Pending (that's the name of the layout)
22 nd July	Aldridge Transport Museum	Jones of Taunton
9 th /10 th September	TINGS, Nr Leamington	Jones of Taunton
16 th September	Lichfield	Le Club 143
7 th October	Telford	Waterfall Junction
21 st October	Hinckley	Layout TBC
28 th October	Birmingham (Castle Brom)	Jones of Taunton

11th November Solihull Kenstadt (Z Gauge)

Jules has the following dates in his diary:

11th March Wombourne
 22nd July Aldridge Transport Museum
 26th August Bournville
 9th/10th September TINGS, Nr Leamington
 16th September Lichfield
 28th October Birmingham (Castle Bromwich)
 11th November Solihull TBC

Nigel Harrold these dates provisionally in his diary. All bookings are for 'Sugar Creek Missouri'.

14th/15th April Sutton Coldfield
 22nd/23rd April Americana, Burton on Trent
 6th/7th May Severn Valley Railway Open Day
 3rd June Craven Arms MRC, Ludlow Racecourse
 9th/10th September TINGS
 16th/17th September Redditch
 7th October Telford
 11th November Solihull (provisional date)

Philip Hunt has the following dates in his diary.

22nd July Aldridge Road Transport Museum Greenwood Garden Railway
 17th September Lichfield Greenwood Garden Railway
 7th October Cradley Heath Levensham
 21st October Hinckley Greenwood Garden Railway

Jane and Tony Minchin currently have these dates in their diary.

11th March Wombourne Ashburton
 22nd July Aldridge Road Transport Museum Ashburton

Jim Webster currently has two dates in his diary for Tipton Garden Railway.

22nd July Aldridge Transport Museum
 16th September Lichfield

Piers Milne is exhibiting on the following dates.

4th March Cromford Oberdorf
 11th March Wombourne Frazal d'Ardeche
 6th/7th May Highley (Severn Valley) Trifoulou
 7th October Cradley Heath Trifoulou

Proposed Meetings Dates for 2023:

Saturday 7th January Meetings commence at 2pm and end at 5pm.
Saturday 21st January
Saturday 4th February
Saturday 18th February
Saturday 4th March
Saturday 18th March
Saturday 1st April
Saturday 15th April
Saturday 29th April *This date is in place of Saturday 6th May (Coronation Day)
Saturday 20th May
Saturday 3rd June
Saturday 17th June
Saturday 1st July
Saturday 15th July
Saturday 5th August
Saturday 19th August
Saturday 2nd September
Saturday 16th September
Saturday 7th October
Saturday 21st October
Saturday 4th November
Saturday 18th November
Saturday 2nd December (AGM)

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.

Please visit our website www.wmngc.co.uk

And our YouTube channel 'West Midlands N Gauge Club'

In deference to Vince, no nuts or raisins were harmed in the production of this newsletter. (That's the last time this 'in house' joke is used)