



# West Midlands “N” Gauge Club NEWSLETTER

## From our Chairman

Not too long ago we said goodbye to current member Len Bane, when he passed away. I have the sad duty to report the passing of two former members in recent weeks. Former member, Derek Purves, who was also well known in the 1:1 narrow gauge railway world, sadly passed away. Just as we heard this sad news, we also learned that another former member, Mike Blakesley, had also passed away.

On a happier note, I can report that Ken Jones, our former chairman, is well and active after his illness in the autumn. Ken is back on the exhibition and vintage bus scenes with a vengeance, albeit being somewhat careful not to over-extend himself. Whilst there are some after effects of his illness, he has been restored to his former self in many ways. I think it was a shock for all of us when he was taken ill but we are amazed at his recovery and determination.

Life continues within WMNGC as usual. We are out exhibiting regularly at shows; this year our focus seems to be Gibben Quarry after the re-vamped Whartson Hall took the limelight last year. Work on our donated 009 layouts, Minchin Vale and Sally Junction, continues at pace. Minchin Vale is running reliably and the scenery is being upgraded with new tunnel mouths and a re-profiling; Dave Griffin is masterminding this and it is due to be exhibited again at Blackheath in November. Sally Junction is having its control system renewed so that the original system can be returned to its original owner. Jim Webster is currently building a new control panel with a better point control system and a new controller.

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This layout will also need to have some form of storage siding arrangement for better operation.

At this point in time we are starting to investigate the construction of a new and different N Gauge layout. Although we have a larger clubroom, we still need to take into account space limitations. We are at the stage of taking proposals for a design with potential costs and operation requirements. We have a number of newer members who are interested in increasing their skills and in being involved in projects. Watch this space.

For personal and health reasons, I have sadly taken the decision to withdraw from active exhibiting at shows. I'm content to continue with show organisation duties and management with clubs but not the actual nitty gritty of standing or sitting with a layout and running trains. This does not impinge on my ability to be club chairman but just my show involvement. My last show was due to be 'Warley at Statfold' but family needs mean that it was actually TINGS 2024.

At the time of writing, we are supporting Tipton Green Methodist Church at the Tipton Canal Festival by running trains all day for visitors. We are planning a couple of 'open days' in December to coincide with the church's Christmas Tree Festival – something we trialed on a small scale last year. We're hoping to have a larger involvement in this for 2024 to aid the church and to publicise our club.

Watch this space for developments.

Jeremy

## Purves Halt by Ken Jones

Purves Halt is my new layout under restoration. I hope to have it running by the start of next year. It's an 009-layout built many years ago by the late WMNGC member Derek Purves in a plastic wheel clamp box, the clamp being bought to protect his caravan from theft. The main layout shows a small terminus on probably a narrow-gauge line not surprisingly as Derek used to drive locomotives on the Welshpool and Llanfair Railway.

The main board with buildings in place but some minor damage to fences etc is 33 cm x 97 cm and still has the original artwork / label for the wheel clamp underneath. Some may remember this at early exhibitions we did like the Wonderful World of Trains and Planes.

He was often joined by his wife Pam and was often seen running it near to my suitcase layout. The small station has run round facility, a siding and another siding next to the goods shed.

Since those early days he has added a 26cm x 54 cm rear board which holds 2 small sidings as a fiddle yard and what we think is a shuttle control unit. Not all the sidings appear to be isolated, mainly because in the early days he only ran one engine on the layout. The points are all manual operated by push / pull rods.

I'm thinking of bypassing this shuttle unit in the short term to see what sidings are isolated or not. I have no 009 rolling stock so will have to start look-

ing for some, but because the track is 9 mm one of my N gauge locos can be used as a test loco. It is my first 009 layout although my wife had one which was donated to the club earlier this year. I like the fact that Derek built it in a wheel clamp box whereas most people would have thrown the box away.

The picture shows this quiet station and track. It was never designed to run long trains.



## Playing Trains by Ian Bosworth

Many years ago, my Dad made a baseboard (or was it two) roughly 8 feet by 4 feet for our motley collection of OO stock; this included a Princess converted from 3-rail to 2.

He also did a decent job of a "rabbit warren" N-scale layout using Arnold? track and some German-outline locos which ran well. Regrettably, the layout went to someone in the mists of time - it'd have been an easy job to complete it, though less easy to clean the track in the several tunnel sections.

More recently I started and failed with several various N-scale baseboard- one of which was so immense I'm embarrassed to describe it.

Vince has donated a layout for me to do with as I wish - I'm sorting out some flexi-track replacement and trying to understand how to operate the various tracks.

But today, I was pleased to "help" my friend's 4-year old complete an epic track plan. We tried operating 2 trains simultaneously which caused operating issues at the level (flat) crossing. I tried to explain how to avoid collision by choosing the correct route - maybe he'll be a modeler of the future.

The picture below shows the finished track plan with a few scenic bits in place.



*Multitasking! When I took this photo, I had a 4-month-old baby on my arm, and had been waiting for his brother to move out of shot so I could get the whole layout. (After that severe talking-to we had at club about GDPR.) The funny thing was, everyone in the room assumed I'd got my phone out for a selfie with the baby! Shows where my priorities lie.*

## Trojan Minibus by Ken Jones

Trojan OVB 345

New to English Electric (Napier Division) Stafford 9/54 after being a Trojan demonstrator. It has a Strachan C13F body. A unique one-off vehicle

After disposal by Napier it went to a scrap yard (Loampit Vale Motors, Lewisham) where it was used as an office with engine removed.

In the 1970's it was acquired by Ray Reid of London who over time restored it & rallied it during the 1980's. It did the HCVS London to Brighton Run in May 1980 & also made various rallies including St Albans in 1988.

It would appear that Mr Reid moved to Tywyn in Wales sometime later and the Trojan's last tax disc expired 1st Feb 1997.

Not sure what happened to it, maybe Mr Reid died & the bus fell into disrepair before being acquired by John Macdougall [of Peco] of Seaton, Devon circa 2009.

Rescued by Roger Burdett [Coventry] 2022, Restored by Stephen Morris - Somerset Roger has given it a bespoke livery. named [Hector] and hand painted sign writing.

3D printed model produced by Replitek in 2024 <https://replitek.co.uk/product/n-gauge-1954-strachan-bodied-trojan-dt-bus/>

A very small unique model for your N Gauge layout



*My model painted by Malcolm Hall and seen at TINGS 2024*

## TINGS 2024 by Jeremy Edwards

For many years we have had a formal club presence at this show as well as having members' layouts present. This year we did not have a club layout there; having been last year with the revised Whartson Hall, we didn't have anything fresh to bring them. Flying the club flag, literally after an intervention from Vince Painter – you never know when military training comes in useful – was Ken Jones with his Malken trolley bus layout and making its debut his bus station diorama complete with rock band (The Q's).

I attended with a Trent Valley layout, aided and abetted by club chairman, Rob Hambridge and vice chairman, Andrew Huson. We had one of the two non-UK themed layouts, Bad Durkheim Ost. The other non-UK themed layout was 'Somewhere in Germany' which was a giant modular German based layout from an international N Gauge organisation. This layout was pearly staffed and built by German modelling groups and partly by UK based groups. There was an interesting language mix. Several of their members came over to inspect our layout and confirmed that it was German in character (the builder spent many years in the area depicted serving with BAOR). There were no other continental or US based layouts present which had been commented on.



*A scene from 'Somewhere in Germany'*

Our layout was a fictional station in a real location, Bad Durkheim in the Rhine Palatinate. John Cattell, who built it, donated his layout to the Trent Valley club as he could no longer get in the loft where it was built. The main layout is not suitable for exhibiting but there are two extensions, Bad Durkheim Ost and Bad Durkheim Betriebshofe (diesel shed) which can be connected to small fiddle yards and operated as stand alone layouts. The layout we used was basically a traditional branch terminus to fiddle yard layout. It has some freight facilities and is a good shunting puzzle layout.



*Rob Hambridge and Andrew Huson operating Bad Durkheim Ost*

What of the show itself? There have already been comments that it was smaller than usual. Several regular traders weren't there; P.D. Marsh was the example that I knew of and Paul Andrews had made his views about the show as a trader quite well known on social media. However, many of the regulars were there and there was the usual rugby scrum around the British outline part of the Anoraks Anonymous stand. Revolution and Rapido had some interesting items to view (engineering prototypes and mock ups). Martyn from War World Scenics was on the Malcs Models stand doing demos and giving advice.

Large modular layouts seemed to be a major theme; some were more contrived than others. We were in the minority in several ways: small layout, terminus to fiddle yard layout. There were plenty of examples of good scenic work; Rob and I were particularly interested in the Brinklow WCML layout. We're planning Lichfield TV Low Level in N. Brinklow was a good example of what we had in mind and we picked up one or two key ideas. Brinklow had operating interest without being crammed with track. Scenery was realistic.

One of the old favourites present was the Warley MRC Broadwater Junction of which I am quite fond having operated it at Warley Open Days – sometimes solo. Whilst fictional, it is atmospheric but also not the only layout of the genre that was effective. A key task for someone like Pauline McKenna who books the layouts is to ring the changes, bring in new layouts and to look to be innovative. For a show like TINGS, there is often a large field to choose from but also the organiser needs to look at the economic side of things

In conclusion, I enjoyed TINGS 2024; I met several people that I knew from other shows. The layout we operated involved sitting down for most of the time which helped me. I made a few purchases – not many – and my compatriot, Rob, kept nipping off to the Dapol stand before he bought a broken 9F for a song (£20 for a coreless motor and £10 to a friend to fix it seemed a good buy).

Jeremy

## 'Hector' at TINGS 2024 by Ken Jones

My model of Hector the Trojan arrived at TINGS this weekend and took a rest at my trolleybus museum. It was the 20th anniversary of the exhibition. and I've been there most years with a layout, either from our club or one of my own or both.





## The Stage by Ken Jones

All my small layouts have always had a working train, bus or trolleybus system, so in 2024 I decided to build a diorama with no such moving parts but utilising some of my N gauge buses when needed. I found a suitable container with lid, already in our home but not used, the idea came to build a bus station. Opposite the bus station is a community stage and playing tonight will be the Q's. Yes, I know many of you have already seen queues at bus stations, but not like this.

Then a friend who is a musician, and a fine N Gauge model maker of small layouts [see his layouts at <https://www.ukulelerocks.co.uk/SWL3/> ] offered to put on appropriate amplifiers, speakers, microphones for the musicians. Sometimes even if you have an idea for a project in your head it's better to let someone else do it. So, I handed over the 3D printed stage from 3D Pluss, the rock band from Noch and side lights from DAPR,

24 hours later he had done the entire project for me and emailed me the attached pictures.

He's built an upper stage for the drummer and sax player before spraying the whole lot black and adding all the extra equipment and nice touches like the lead singer holding the mic stand.

The Bus Station with the stage has made its first public appearance at TINGS in September.

The stage is L60mm, W40mm, H30mm



# New Releases from Oxford Diecast by Ken Jones



NESC001  
**Ford Escort Mk2  
Canival Red**

**NEW TOOLING**

Scale: 1:148  
Price: **£7,45**



NHI003  
**Hillman Imp  
Firebrand Red**

**NEW LIVERY**

Scale: 1:148  
Price: **£6,95**



NMOS007  
**Morris Minor  
Saloon  
Trafalgar Blue**

**NEW LIVERY**

Scale: 1:148  
Price: **£6,95**



**Ford Fiesta Mk1  
Nevada Beige**

**NEW TOOLING**

Scale: 1:148  
Price: **£7.45**  
Code: NFF002



**Jaguar XF  
Polaris White**

**NEW LIVERY**

Scale: 1:148  
Price: **£6.95**  
Code: NXF005



NDIS006  
**Land Rover  
Discovery 4  
West Midlands  
Police**

**NEW LIVERY**

Scale: 1:148



**Bedford CA Ice  
Cream Van  
Hockings**

**NEW LIVERY**

Scale: 1:148  
Price: **£6.95**  
Code: NCA030

## Review London Transport FS - Ford Transit Minibus by Ken Jones

During the 1970s and 1980s London Transport under some pressure from the Greater London Council, acquired Ford Transit minibuses from new for certain routes, they had either Strachan or Dormobile bodies, and details can be found at [http://www.countrybus.org/FS/FS\\_a.htm](http://www.countrybus.org/FS/FS_a.htm)

Nigel Coward of Replitek <https://replitek.co.uk/> has produced one of these models, designated FS by London Transport as a very nice 3D N gauge model with separate mirrors to add.  
<https://replitek.co.uk/product/n-gauge-ford-transit-strachans-dp16f-1fs1/>

As with all of Nigel's buses he does not glaze these models but the internal seating forms part of the model. Just added to his list of vehicles he hopes to produce the MK1 and MK2 versions of these Ford Transits which became very popular with smaller operators. I hope to paint mine when the warmer weather arrives.

FS 8 was sold by LT to Emsworth and District and is still listed as preserved although not seen for many years. It was painted in green and cream livery

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/dave58282/51918427597/in/photolist-2n6RvHp-koFasu-2egigji>

FS 19 was also preserved but has since been scrapped.

You can find pictures of some of these FS Transits at

<https://www.flickr.com/search/?text=LT%20FS%20transit>



## New Street Update by Jeremy Edwards

Currently not a lot to report as the layout went into the garage for a while earlier in the summer but it's back indoors now. When we last had an update, I had finished constructing low relief buildings from Petite Properties kits for the backscene. This area needs a bit more work and some detailing (lamp posts, Belisha beacons, people etc) – this is a 'backburner job' to be tackled 'as and when'.

Having got the layout back indoors, much of what I have been doing has been operational. I've been slowly expanding my DCC fleet – I think it currently stands at 8. This means that I can run a sort of running schedule but it is quite limited; running analogue has many more permutations. To be able to run a schedule digitally, I need some more locos and also an additional handset as I prefer not to try to control two or more trains on one handset – it's a recipe for disaster. The fiddle yard is a little restrictive with 3 mainline sidings in each direction. I've decided to split the shortest one on each side in half so that I can run short multiple units and autotrains. This is fairly simple as, for analogue, all I need to do is to split the feed wire and add a switch.

When I started giving talks to local church groups I purchased a cheap laptop (£200 including case and mouse). I'm planning to use this for setting up a running sequence in Powerpoint to give me a ready to see set of instructions. There is a section at one end of the layout where I will put a cover over the non-scenic part as a laptop stand. This is all very much a work in progress and not much further than the idea stage.

Rolling stock development is the other main feature. I now have a rake of 6 Southern Region green Mark 1 coaches so I can run 'diversions' etc. I have a 'spam can' and a rebuilt West Country plus a 4MT 2-6-0 that was based down south. I've also enlarged my van fleet but they will need repainting as they are in GW dark grey.

At the time of writing, I am constructing the island platform building from a Kestrel kit plus Ratio canopy kits. The other building, on the Down platform, is made from a similar kit 'sliced in half' on the angle with one section missing. I've bought a second £23 kit for the waiting room and buffet walls (butchered so that I can add a flat roof). It's going to be an expensive building where most of the parts end up in the spares box. I am working on developing the yard area next; there is a brick wall around part of it but this needs extending, gates adding, perhaps a hut or two or grounded wagon, some mud and weeds (already started) and anything else I can think of.

Sorry no pictures this time; I'm saving them for next time and an article about the station buildings.

Jeremy

## Quiz Time

This edition we have some cryptic clues sent in by Ian Bosworth, so get your brain cells warmed up ready! Answers are on the last page.

1. Troublesome trucks joined mocha in 22 yds? (5)
2. I shall ink in great detail of part and complete loco (4 & 4)
3. Railway company using wrought iron (3)
4. Organiser ends up casting it in reverse (5)
5. Seven hundred ways to control things in Roman empire? (3)
6. Use salt cure for baseboard (5,3)

# 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
5 <sup>th</sup> /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)
12 <sup>th</sup> /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

<b>2024</b>	<b>Exhibition</b>	<b>Layout</b>
Ken Jones		
Sat 2 <sup>nd</sup> March [ 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 14 <sup>th</sup> /15 <sup>th</sup> 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

Answers: 1. Chain; 2. Link, King; 3. GWR; 4. Resin (end of 'organiser' backwards); 5. DCC (500+100+100 in Roman numerals); 6. Laser cut

