
West Midlands "N" Gauge Club

Newsletter

Volume 17 Issue 1

Spring 2014

EDITORIAL ADDRESS

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HEADCODE

Welcome to the Spring issue of 2014.

This issue, we have the updates on the club layouts, an interesting piece from Derek P on his adventures in 12" Foot, Chairman's notes as ever with an article on billboards, and a layout article from Vince. Thank you Vince. (More to come?)

My mailbag was completely underwhelmed with entries for the shunting puzzle competition set last issue. Not a single entry, though I know some of you have considered it, and another club even layed some track to try it for real. I suppose it could make an interesting shunting puzzle for the public to try at shows. Anyway, I give you the solution to that in this issue.

Ed.

Volume 17 Issue 2 *should* appear in June 2014.

Copy deadlines are notional and don't really exist, but if they did they would be as follows for the next four issues.

Summer '14 Issue: 11th May
Autumn '14 Issue: 17th August
Winter '14/15 Issue: 8th November
Spring '15 Issue: 7th February

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

A wedding and a sixtieth birthday event at Burton Brewery Centre means I've missed two meetings already this year. However I did spend time admiring the large N gauge layout at the Burton Brewery Centre and also have submitted updates for my website. The group probably hasn't missed me – I haven't had any urgent emails or phone calls which is good news – time for me to remind them I'm still here. I've also gained my bus pass since the last newsletter which means I can use public transport in the Network West Midlands area which includes trams and trains as well as the buses. Whatever your mode of transport you are always welcome at our club – map and directions are on our website.

Ken Jones

Chairman

Chairman: Ken Jones

0121 777 7062

Email: westernsultan@hotmail.co.uk

Treasurer: Edgar Mason

THE CLUB LAYOUTS

Waterstock . . .

We have decided (apart from the lighting rig) not to do any work for the first three months of 2014 with this layout. This has allowed members to run all manner of stock on the layout ensuring the electrics and track remain in top condition.

The problem with the lighting rig is that the parts are too long to fit into conventional vans and the bulbs probably cannot be replaced now. Mike Turner who has done much of the carpentry work on all three of our layouts has offered to reduce the size of the lighting rig into more easily managed parts and at the same time change the bulbs. After this, work will start on tidying up the layout where people have gone "walkies" and scenery has been damaged. After several months, the top of our Land Rover from the layout has been found. It needs a repaint.

Tipton Hills...

The group is concentrating on getting this ready for its outing on April 6th. Lead by Rodney, Phil, David E and David G we have made changes to the layout as a consequence of it attending exhibitions last year. The small radius track in one hill has been increased to give better running; a Perspex front has been put in place to stop poking fingers from children and adults; we now have a signal box, station names on the platform and signage for the caravan park.

The electrics have been changed to allow the outer loop to have facility as a storage loop or for continuous running. The layout has also been invited out for Easter Sunday and Monday but currently we don't have anyone able to take it. Any offers?

Whartson Hall...

Mike continues to try and line up correctly the 14 lines on the fiddle yard of the traverser and recently Len and Derek P have been trying to help him. It's a slow progress and reminds me of the trouble we had with the fiddle yard of the now moth balled Water Orton layout.

You will find a more complete update I'm sure on our website at...

www.wmngaugeclub.co.uk

CLUB MEMBERS

Derek Purves

Derek is active in the 12": Foot Scale narrow guage with the Welshpool and Llanfair Railway. He sends us word and some interesting pictures of his 'goings-on'.

"I had a day in the workshop on Monday, during Workshop week. There were at least 14 of us in the Workshop, and more were expected later in the week because there were comments that later on they would have to have first and second sittings for tea breaks.

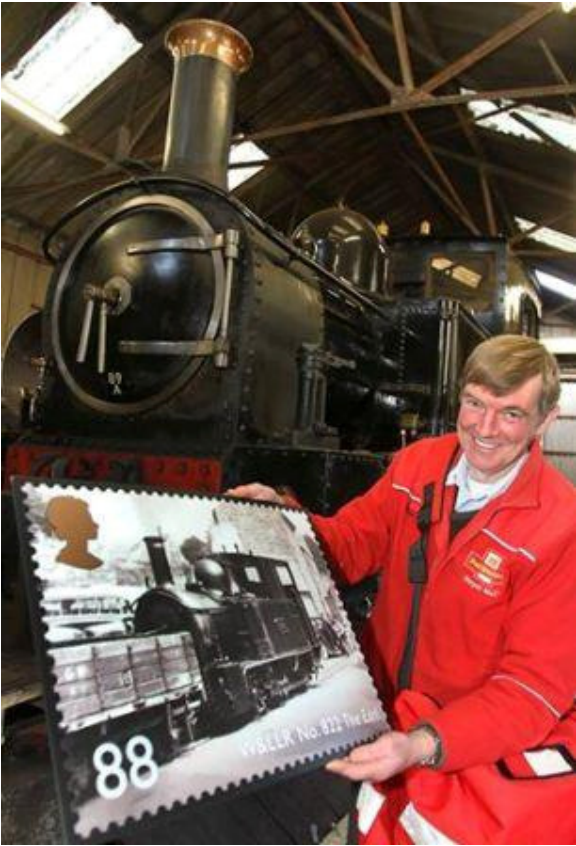
I had the job of removing remaining glass fibre insulation from behind the cylinder covers for 699, with baked on grease etc which had to be finished in the degreasing tank.



699 stripped right down with a new smokebox being constructed.



The Earl (foreground), beyond it is Resita loco No18 which is being reduced to a chassis so that we can use any bits from it to rebuild Resita No 19 which failed again last year.



A new stamp has being issued showing 'The Earl'



Above 699 boiler loaded for delivery to the SVR

Since the end of the running season in October 2013, a lot of track work has been done relaying about ½ mile of track and cutting down a large tree across the line. This had to be completed before the Santa Specials in December. Since then, work has progressed on rebuilding a turnout and modifying the layout at Tanllyn where rolling stock is kept. When this work is completed, the Track Gang will move on to Cyrfrondd to replace a turnout at the Welshpool end.

In the meantime, we were asked for our opinion on which loco should be restored next. Should it be 'Monarch', 14/85 which is up at the NRM at Shildon, (under cover and being looked after), should we look for a suitable ready to run loco to boost our capability for heavy trains, like 'Chevallier', which came to us for running in from the Flour Mill in the Forest of Dean, should we restore 699, which we know is a good loco (one that I used to drive), or do nothing!.

We need a heavy hauler to help the Earl and Countess so that they will last longer. 699 won and as it had been taken from Welshpool exhibition shed to the Workshop for assessment, work started straight away. It is dismantled, the boiler went to the SVR at Bridgnorth and the wheel sets have gone for checking and profiling. The membership have not been asked for thoughts before.

BRANCHLINES AND BYWAYS Ramblings off the cinder path

Billboards Ken Jones

I like billboards on layouts and am equally keen to see scaled down versions of the real thing or imaginary bespoke ones. I bought 2 with working lights from the USA many years ago for my Cinema Sidings layout. Appropriately they are advertising old blockbuster films.

Producing bespoke ones has often meant creating your own from scratch; it hasn't been viable for a company to make them one off. That has now changed thanks to Trackside Signs www.tracksidesigns.co.uk Many, I'm sure, will have seen their excellent portfolio of N and OO gauge billboard signs at exhibitions. They produce them as billboards or as sheets for you to create your own billboard.

But would they produce 5 one off ones for me? The answer came by return email from James, a director of the company. Yes if the pictures I wanted to use were of the correct quality. Two are pictures of Royal Blue advertising posters and three are fictitious coach adverts based on pictures I had taken so no copyright issues.

The results can be seen in the attached pictures. Two are going on my new layout "Salverton" and three are going on my "Tennis Court Sidings" layout. In this day of high volume output it is nice to find a company that will make you just one item not just once but for five separate ones.

Ken has no connection etc. other than being a satisfied customer.





Oxford News

The first Oxford N gauge articulated lorry is out under the brand Oxford Haulage. It's Eddie Stobart S777 ESL Scania - name Kerry Jane fleet number H 777 with trailer ET4144 at RRP £13

The following N gauge items have just been released in the shops and include the Royal Navy Bedford bus

| | |
|---------|---------------------|
| NBED001 | Ambulance |
| NMN001 | Mini Union Jack |
| NMOS001 | Morris Lilac |
| NOWB001 | Bedford Navy |
| NSCA001 | Stobart Curtainside |
| NVWB001 | VW Beetle Herbie |

My website www.kenjonestrains.co.uk has just been updated to include my new layout on a tray and details of exhibitions I'll be at this year

Other News

London Midland Great Escape is back - order on line £15 for anywhere on the LM network. Ken.

TRIP WORKINGS

Ken Jones, Rodney & Christine Hodge and Tony Minchin have all had layouts accepted for this years International N gauge Show (TINGS) in September.

The main priority for the club will be the appearance of **Waterstock** at the Warley Show.

BLOCHESCWIC

An Introduction | Early Days | Health Benefits

History

I became interested in trains at the age of 8, being brought up with my family in the late 50s through the 60s. Our house backed on to the railway line from Walsall to Cannock.

With pocket money, wages from a paper round and birthday presents, I tinkered with various constructive hobbies. Meccano, Plastic model planes, boats *or* ships - does anyone care about the difference (controversial) - eventually leading on to Hornby Railways' OO Gauge layout-in-a-box on the dining table. At this stage I knew very little about groupings, company colours, ballast, scenery or headcodes, and OOO was a mystery.

Nothing serious developed during my teens except for an interest in girls, cigarettes & alcohol, football & snooker.

By the time I started earning, I was married with a young son and not in a position to allocate funds, time or space to the hobby of my dreams - sound familiar?



Space, Time and a Plan

Eventually, settling down in my Walsall home, with my own garage and a space allocated to me by the good lady – leaving room for an exercise bike, the freezer and various garden tools - I decided to make a start, funded by the cash I had saved from stopping both smoking and drinking alcohol on 21 December 2012. The only item remaining from my OO days can be seen in the background of the above image - the H&M Duetto analogue controller - still working.

I did some research, visits to the Local History Centre, using the internet and a book on *BR Layout Plans and Signalling of the 1950s* from the Ian Allan shop in Brum.

I chose Bloxwich Railway Station, Post-War to mid 60s Period, as a basis for my N Gauge project.

Having learned how to use basic CAD software, I mastered the application AnyRail and ‘drew’ my trackplan. It was around this time that I decided to join a Club in the local area - a search using the obvious engine (no not steam!) led me to Tipton and a certain Ken Jones. Having joined, I struggled to balance regular attendance with my family commitments and trying to build my own layout.

I have found that working on my layout lowers my stress levels which, in turn, seems to have helped lower my blood pressure - which was becoming a problem.

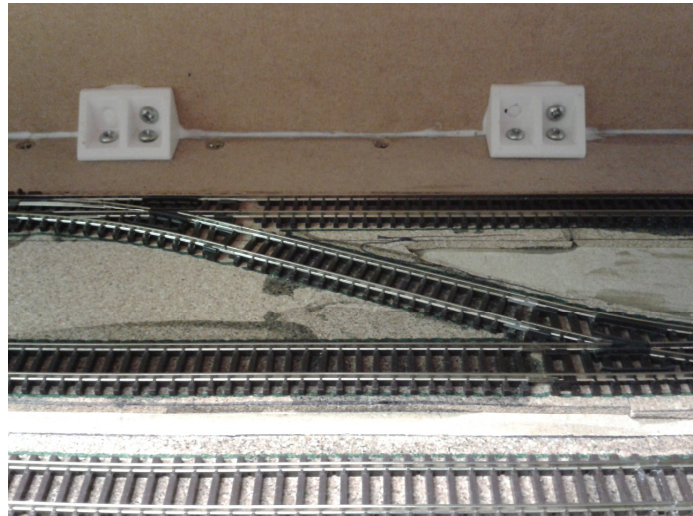
Baseboard & Track Laying

I had originally only wanted one MDF board 4ft x 2ft, but when I costed it up, it was not much more for a whole 8x4ft sheet cut to various sizes - needless to say the extra will come in handy later! I made use of the free cutting service at a local DIY store, and bought the softwood strips and a sheet of hardboard (cut to various sizes) at the same time.

The baseboard for Blochescwic was assembled with PVA glue, screws and clamps - my excitement was growing. Holes were drilled at strategic places, in the softwood battens, for cabling and hidden rods for manually operated points - I had decided to keep electrics down to a minimum at this stage.

Next to transfer the track plan and cover the board with 3mm cork sheet - I read somewhere that it cuts down noise, maybe it does - if you dont stick it down with PVA!

Track laying started with Code 80, I was advised not to jump in, as a novice, with Code 55, I now wish I had, lessons learnt.



Peco Code 80 Flextrack and a mixture of Peco pointwork.

I learnt by trial and error how to align track, realising that I needed some stock to test the 6 foot gap and plan out a platform or two, or three - it's all getting too much - stress levels back up again - nooooo!

Bought a Prairie Tank and a Collett coach.



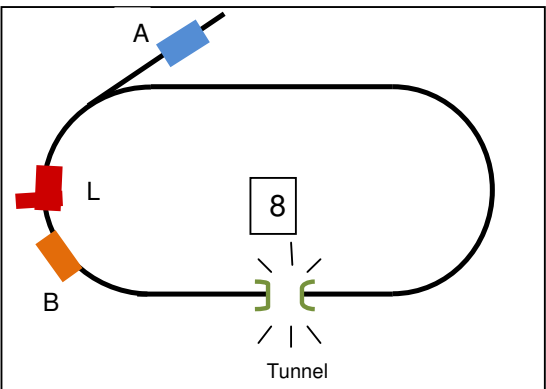
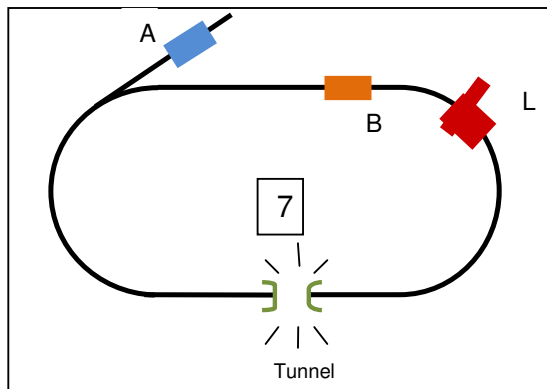
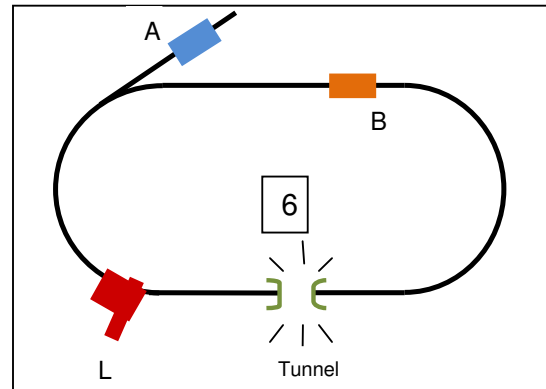
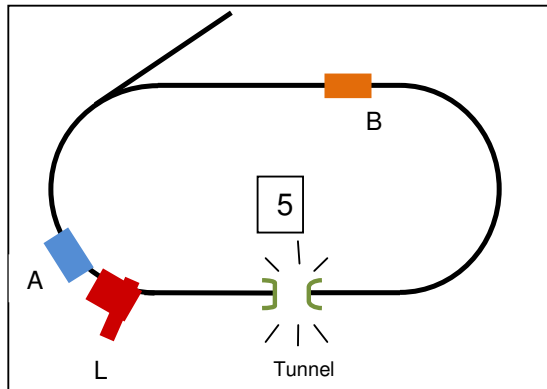
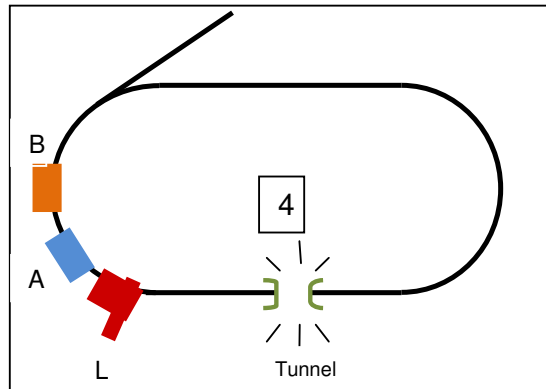
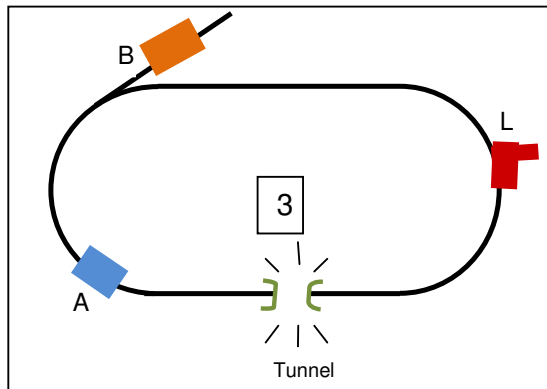
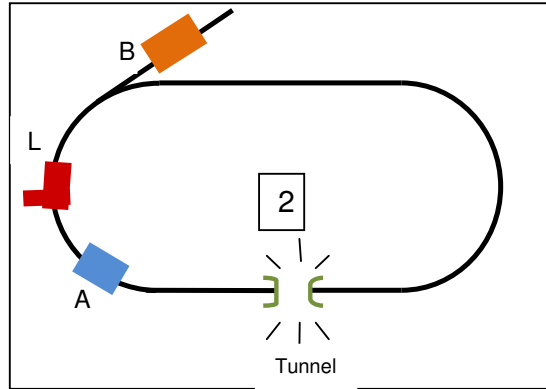
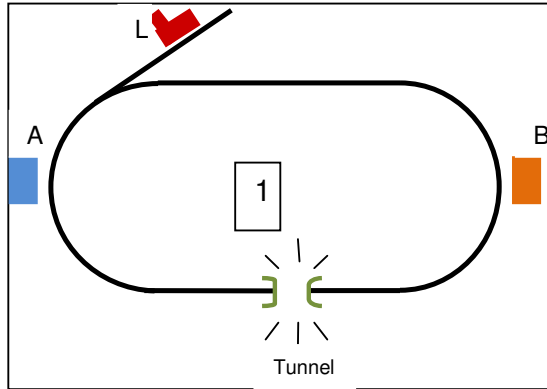
Back to reality i.e. Cup of tea, a few biscuits - sound familiar?

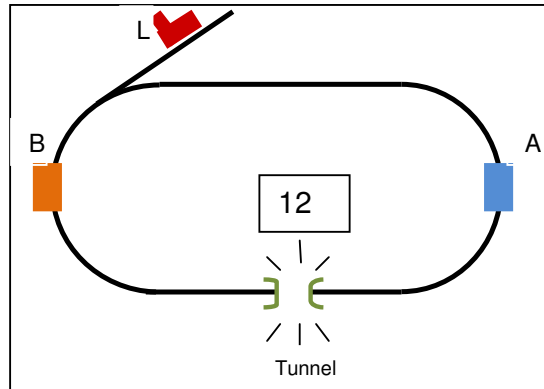
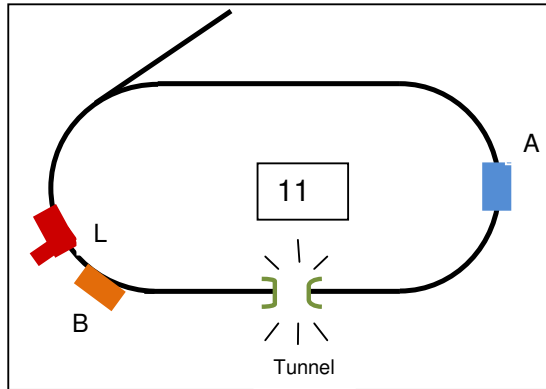
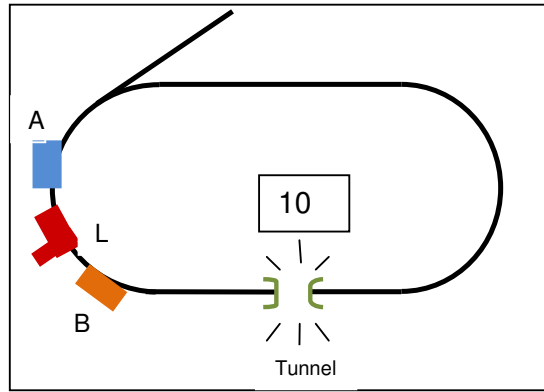
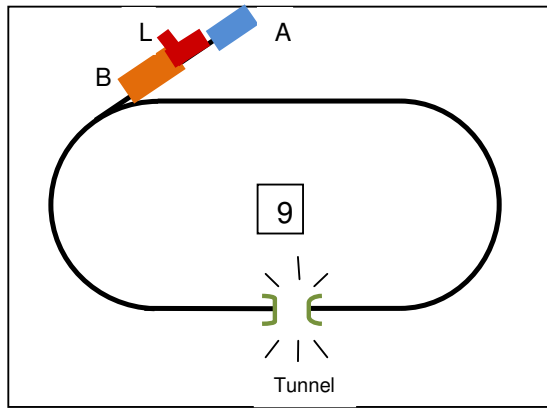
"How's the rusty look coming on?" - I asked myself, mainly because I am on my own, in the garage - *my* thoughts, *my* plans, *my* mess ups - learning and enjoying.

What shall I do next? - go to bed, the wife's missing me!

Next report: Things to do - where will it all end?

SHUNTING PUZZLE from last issue Solution in twelve stages.





2014 PROGRAMME

All meetings are held at Tipton Green Methodist Church Hall, Park Lane West, Tipton, West Midlands, DY4 8LD, On the 1st and 3rd Saturdays in each month, from 2pm to 5pm.

Remaining meeting dates for 2014:

| | | | | | |
|--------|-----------------|------------------|-----------|---------------------|------------------|
| March | 1 st | 15 th | September | 6 th | 20 th |
| April | 5 th | 19 th | October | 4 th | 18 th |
| May | 3 rd | 17 th | November | 1 st | 15 th |
| June | 7 th | 21 st | December | 6 th AGM | - |
| July | 5 th | 19 th | | | |
| August | 2 nd | 16 th | | | |

Any changes to these dates will be notified on our website or in our (mostly) quarterly newsletter.

For more information, contact
 Ken Jones: tel: 0121 777 7062
 Email: westernsultan@hotmail.co.uk
 Website: www.wmngaugeclub.co.uk

Please use the **rear entrance** to gain access to the church hall. If you are in doubt, please ring first, especially if you are travelling any distance.

TAIL LAMP by TB

There are dozens of ways to build a model railway and often the best layouts are built by modellers who regularly sample different construction materials and techniques. For example, I know a guy who is fond of using alcohol (not the drinking kind) to wet down scenery material before applying a certain brand of scenic cement. He either sprays or dribbles (again, not drinking) - depending on the area being modelled - 70% isopropyl alcohol onto ballast, ground foam or whatever material is in use, then carefully applies scenic cement using an eyedropper to stick the stuff down. The alcohol breaks the surface tension of the glue so that the glue sinks right into the scenery material rather than beading up on the surface. It works well, I've tried it myself. Mostly though (and I suspect in common with most modellers) I use a different technique. I use water with a few drops of washing up liquid added. Why? because I can always get more squeezy from the kitchen if I run out. Getting more isopropyl means a trip to Boots the chemist or Maplins (and they both charge *the earth* for it) or a couple of days wait after an online order. Myself and many others also use a different glue - plain old PVA white glue diluted around 50:50 with water. I've got a plastic disposable pipette that I use (I've got stacks of them so let me know if you want one) to drip this stuff out, but an old glue bottle or somesuch works just as well to direct the flow. I'm sticking with squeezy and PVA for now - it works for me.

The same goes for wiring. Many old hands will painstakingly solder each and every connection and I used to think that soldering was the only way to go for reliable running. But these days, and in particular for connecting droppers to main feeds, I will use insulation displacement connectors - IDC's. Typically known as suitcase connectors or sometimes Scotchblocks (although Scotchblock™ is really a brand I think), these have been used by the motor industry for many years now, and are also used by telephone companies, so I think it is pretty well proven technology. I'll not be going back.

These are just two examples, but you can see my point - we all become smarter railway modellers and build better layouts by continually sharing and sampling different techniques.

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor, the Chairman or indeed any individual club member. On the other hand - they might. May also contain nuts.

DISTANT SIGNAL

The 39th Leamington & Warwick Model Railway Exhibition

Sat 8th - Sun 9th March 2014

VENUE - Hall 2, Stoneleigh Park Exhibition & Conference Centre

OPENING TIMES: SATURDAY 10am to 5pm, SUNDAY 10am to 4pm

ADMISSION: Adults £7 Concessions £6 Children £4 Family (2+2) £18 tbc

INCLUDING: Working layouts in many scales, extensive range of trade support & refreshments all in one hall.