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# *West Midlands "N" Gauge Club*

# *Newsletter*

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Volume 18 Issue 1

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Spring 2015

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## HEADCODE

Welcome to the Spring issue of 2015. Happy New Year to you all.

This issue, in our anniversary year, we have the updates on the club layouts, some updates on Club members and their various activities, Chairman's notes as ever, an anniversary article from Ken and confirmed dates for our meetings in 2015.

I hope to get to see more of you either at the club or around the shows this year. Some members have a few outings lined up already.

See you around. Ed.

**Volume 18 Issue 2 should appear around June 6<sup>th</sup> 2015.**

**Accordingly, Volume 18 Issue 3 should appear around September 5<sup>th</sup> 2015 and Volume 18 Issue 4 should appear December 5<sup>th</sup> 2015.**

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

Summer '15 Issue: 11th May  
Autumn '15 Issue: 17th August  
Winter '15/16 Issue: 8th November  
Spring '16 Issue: 1st February



## FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I know I don't have any excuses why I am late writing this for my editor. Okay the truth is I became unemployed today [Friday February 13<sup>th</sup>] in a throw away society that also includes experienced staff.

But I and other members of the club have been busy as the club celebrates its 20th birthday in September and we've decided to celebrate all year including a logo for this year only.

So the good news certainly out weighs any bad news, and the club doesn't want to make me redundant so as their chairman may I just say we hope to see you at the club or at exhibitions we are attending this special year.

*Ken Jones*  
Chairman

**Chairman: Ken Jones**

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**Treasurer: Edgar Mason**

## **THE CLUB LAYOUTS**

### ***Waterstock . . .***

In January at our first meeting of 2015 “Waterstock” was re-erected having stood in its transporting mode since the return from the Warley show where it was well received. Minor things like connecting the wrong lead were soon dealt with and the layout has been in use at club meetings ever since. It will continue to be used by club members and visitors, with some minor maintenance until its next outing [appropriately in September] when it goes to TINGS. Thanks to everyone who made the trip to the Warley show so successful.

### ***Tipton Hills...***

Trains have been running on all tracks of this layout which will be out as much as possible during this year. It will be at the West Bromwich Show, the model show at AMRTM, and is scheduled to be at the Birmingham and Solihull shows in the autumn. Exhibition managers please note that this layout is available at short notice for ‘filling in’ or to cover ‘no shows’ if need be.

### ***Whartson Hall...***

I was there recently when a visitor helped Mike to fix the entire track down in the fiddle yard, having lined everything up. Yes, too true to be believed as Mike is now unscrewing track by track, cutting sleepers to fit copper board under each fiddle yard line.

You will find a more complete update I’m sure on our website at...[www.wmngaugeclub.co.uk](http://www.wmngaugeclub.co.uk)

*Ken Jones*

## **CLUB MEMBERS**

**We are glad to say** that all those who were not so well in 2014 have re-appeared at the club including Len, Derek P, Jane and Sylvia to name but a few. Welcome back, it is so good to see you again.

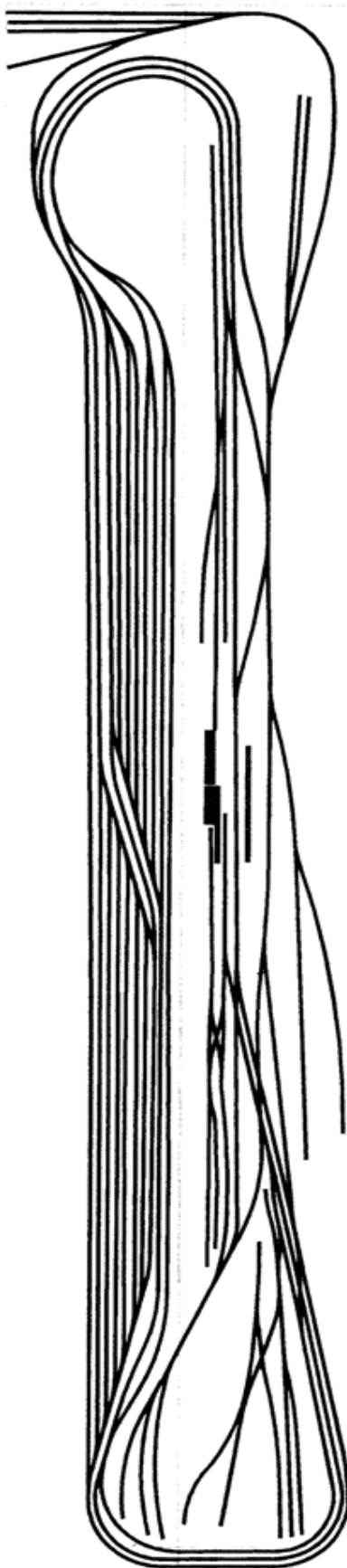
**Ken Jones** promises to have his website updated soon.

## **LINESIDE MILEPOST**     **A short article about the club by its chairman Ken Jones.**

The West Midlands N Gauge Club celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary during 2015.

The club, an area group of The N Gauge Society, was formed in September 1995 by Geoff Waters, and meetings were originally held at Langley Hall, although in those early days it was a case of talking and planning rather than building. These meetings were held the afternoon of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in each month but these days the club meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays in each month with only a meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday in December, and since 2004 we have been based at Tipton Green Methodist Church Hall where we have 3 layouts,

Between these venues we also had a period at the old school kitchen behind St. Michael’s and All Angels Church. Bitterly cold, but at least we had storage for the boards of our first layout “Waterstock”

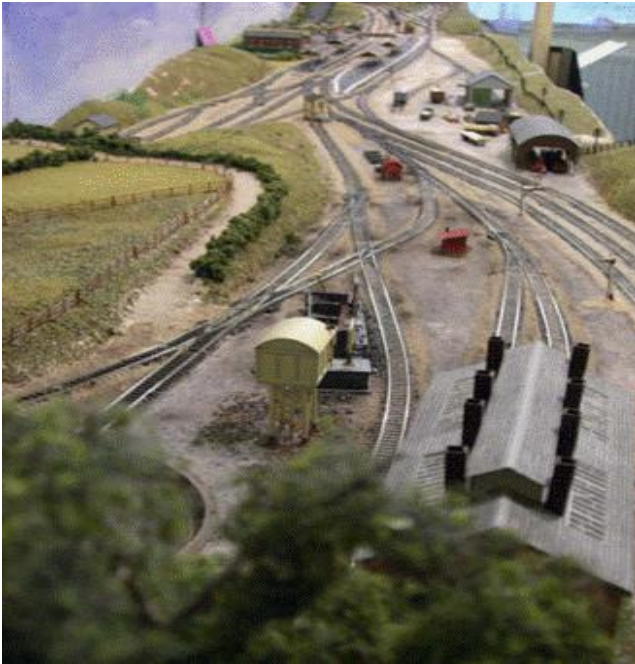


The aim of the club from the start was to build a large N gauge exhibition layout.

“Waterstock” is some 20ft long and comprised of 6 (4'x2') boards as the main "scenic" model with 4 (4'x1') boards for the rear "fiddle yard". The track plan is based on an amalgam of Hatton Junction and Yeovil Pen Mill, Hatton being moved Southwards to rest between Oxford (Tiddington) and Thame, and became part of the GCR/GWR joint improvement / expansion of 1897. This saw a better/faster/shorter line for the GWR to Birmingham and access to Marylebone avoiding the Metropolitan line for the GCR.

Our model shows the junction at Waterstock, with the engine shed at its' Western end and the single line to Thame at its' Eastern with the new GWR/GCR triple line heading North East to Quainton Road. As we enter the junction from under a road bridge on the left is the engine shed, which is larger than would be expected as it services engines for the Waterstock Town branch, the junction marshalling yards, trip workings to the iron-ore extraction site, and a considerable number of “visitors”. Travelling on we see the timber yard and sidings on the right, and approaching from the left the branch to Waterstock Town and the ore fields. There is a regular service to Waterstock Town, and a continuing freight service from the ore-fields of full and empty wagons. The ore is tripped from the extraction sites to the sidings on the Southern side of Waterstock where it is formed into large trains for haulage to their destinations, either North or South.





After this we enter Waterstock station. The Waterstock bay platform is on the left, the two main-lines are in the middle, while local services for both the GWR to Oxford-Princes Risborough (via Thame) and the GWR/GCR joint line Quainton Road to Didcot/Oxford leave from the platform to the far right (this leaves the main line free for express passenger and freight services to overtake). At the Eastern end of the station to the left is a bay for freight, postal services and cattle traffic. As we travel further East to the left is the coal merchant's yard, and then the head shunt for the bay platform and coal yard. To the right are sidings for marshalling freight, with the GWR single track line to Thame heading East on the far right. We exit the model along the main-line to Quainton Road under the A418 road bridge with the outskirts of Shabbington village to the left.

During the construction, in fact in 1997, Geoff Waters died and Ken Jones took over as chairman and has remained in situ ever since. The layout was ready in 2007 to attend the N Gauge Society anniversary exhibition at Kettering and a full article with colour pictures appeared in *Railway Modeller* a month or so before the exhibition detailing the layout. We had reached our goal some 12 years after we had had those initial ideas which is really good for a small club with a big idea.

"Waterstock" has appeared twice at The International N Gauge Show {TINGS} and in 2014 it was at the Warley exhibition. It will be back at TINGS in September 2015 to truly celebrate our birthday.

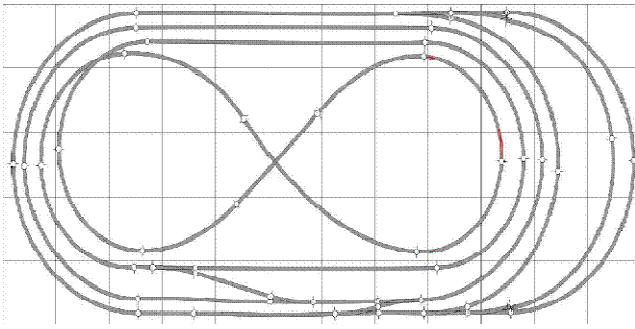
Our 2nd model is called "Tipton Hills" a small and easily portable rabbit warren type layout. Two large hills provide cover for much weaving about, appearing and disappearing. The model itself was built many years ago, probably before the club started. It was rescued from Swindon by Ken Jones and given the working name of 38DD. This proved to be too big for Ken to handle so it's on long term loan to the club.



It was decided to renovate it in the style it had been built, with no polystyrene or other plastics but actually cardboard and things from a "Blue Peter" era. Work began to overhaul the scenics; that bit needed redoing, that bit had suffered in storage, that bit had sagged etc. We should look at the electrics. Dodgy running here, struggles there, no power at that bit, voltage drop over there! If we moved that over slightly we would have better running, if we had an extra siding there...

Suffice to say most of the scenery disappeared, so did the track, the trackbed was improved, gradients made easier, saggy bits "un-sagged", curves eased etc. After much soul searching, prayer, fasting and mumbling (traditional railway modelling), the team had the model back to its "original" condition and ready for running to begin and all that had been done was to replace some of the scenery, replace the track bed, replace the track, replace the electrics and I think "beef-up" the baseboard!!! Still, it did retain the feel of the original, but was greatly enhanced. Two outer ovals of track and an internal oval come figure of eight are now linked by connecting points and an extra

board has been added to the side to give storage for locomotives or extended running for longer trains. A caravan park and scenery was built on this board and the centre left for various displays at exhibitions, including a small bus rally and a display of American cars.



It's been at many local exhibitions in recent years including Chasewater, TINGS, The Wonderful World of Trains and Planes to name just a few. In our anniversary year it will be at AMRTM at Aldridge, Solihull and Birmingham exhibitions.

Both these layouts are on the e layouts page of UK Modelshop Directory and we are grateful for the support Adrian and others give us, especially as we are relatively small in numbers compared to many other clubs.

The third layout [now mothballed] was going to be a scale model of Water Orton, but it became too complex especially the electrics for the group to finish, despite having laid much of the track. It's been removed off site to a garage and may return one day. So we are instead building "Whartson Hall" a cut down version of Water Orton retaining the basic station area & the intensive services, but nothing else, it being just a "round and round" for public entertainment, which allows the fiddle-yard to be merely "in and out" without the complications of the original model.

Why Whartson Hall? The concept behind the model was that it had to be built from items which were already held in the "useful" cupboard/draw to put it in simple terms, only materials which were already held or could be recycled or "wombed" were to be used. The model is three circles of track, to which any part of the fiddle-yard may be connected. No points, few electrics and all very basic; operation is everything. The inner track runs only left to right, or Birmingham to Derby. The outer track runs right to left or Nuneaton to Birmingham, while the centre track runs in both directions. A large traverser will be used to move the entire fiddle yard en bloc.

In addition many of the club's individual members have exhibition layouts most of which are N gauge ones. We have a dedicated website at [www.wmngaugeclub.co.uk](http://www.wmngaugeclub.co.uk) and produce a free newsletter four times a year which now has an electronic circulation of nearly 300, small when compared to this newsletter.

We would never have got to our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary without help from members and others who have given and continue to give much of their time and materials for free. I don't want to list them as everyone has played a part including many reading this article. Thank you for helping us get this far and we hope to see you at our club or one of the exhibitions we will be at during 2015. It seems appropriate to end with our special logo for the year. Let the celebrations begin. *Ken Jones*



## **BRANCHLINES AND BYWAYS   Ramblings off the cinder path**

The following B-T N gauge models are now available:

NAN004 Leyland Atlantean Ribble NBC livery c1975 to 1990 - registration NRN 393P fleet number 1393 - destination 158 Blackpool.  
NAN005 Leyland Atlantean Tyne & Wear Transport c1980 to 1995 - registration AUP 366W fleet number 3466 - destination 522 South Shields.  
NAN006 Leyland Atlantean Maidstone & District c1992 to 1995 - registration KPJ 264W fleet number none - destination 101 Maidstone.  
NB003 Leyland Leopard Duple Dominant 11 Ribble NBC c1978-1993 - registration number KRN 99T - fleet number 1109 - destination 000 Private.  
NB004 Leyland Leopard Duple Dominant 11 Grey Green c1978-1993 - registration number XYK 764T - fleet number none - destination 083 Yarmouth via Ipswich.  
NB005 Leyland Leopard Duple Dominant 11 Maidstone & District c1979-1994 - registration number JKK 163V - fleet number 2163 - destination 900 Gillingham Bus Station.  
N023 Foden DG Ballast Tractor & Low Loader GWR c1946-1950 - registration number HGP 728 - fleet number S.421 - trailer H T-1101.  
N032 AEC Monarch Flatbed & Drawbar Trailer - Wynn's Heavy Haulage c1946-1956 - registration DDW 340 - fleet number 133.  
N037 AEC Matador Flatbed & Drawbar Trailer - Pickford's c1950 -1960 - registration KYE 193 - fleet number M5963.  
N040 Foden DG Ballast Tractor & Low Loader British Railways c1949-1957 - registration number HGP 728 - fleet number 421W - trailer T2005W.  
N042 Karrier Bantam dropside - M.G Williams - coal merchant c1977-1987 - registration number DHG 221S

Ken.

## **TRIP WORKINGS**

**Waterstock** goes to TINGS in September

**Tony Minchin** will have a layout at the West Bromwich show

14 March	Exhibition	West Bromwich MRC	Wednesbury Town Hall, WS10 7DF
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and at AMRTM.

29 March	Exhibition	Aston Manor Road Transport Museum	Aldridge, West Midlands, WS9 8TP
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**Ken Jones** will take one of his layouts to AMRTM

**Rodney & Christine Hodge** will be at many exhibitions this year and are now truly on the exhibition circuit.

Hawkins Halt will be appearing at various Pepper Pig themed events next year including:

May 26, 27, 28 & 29 Mid Hants Railway PP Week

June 19, 20, & 21 East Lancs Railway PP Weekend

August 29, 30 & 31 GCR Quorn PP Weekend

Charleyville will be at:

April 11th Norwich Railway Heritage

Sept 11, 12 & 13 Swindon Steam

The Quarry will be at:

April 24, 26 & 26 Sutton Coldfield

## 2015 PROGRAMME

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

**Remaining meeting dates for 2015: All confirmed.**

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March	7 <sup>th</sup>	21 <sup>st</sup>	September	5 <sup>th</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup>
April	4 <sup>th</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup>	October	3 <sup>rd</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>
May	2 <sup>nd</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	November	7 <sup>th</sup>	21 <sup>st</sup>
June	6 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>	December	5 <sup>th</sup> AGM	--

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](mailto:westernsultan@hotmail.co.uk)

Website: [www.wmngaugeclub.co.uk](http://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.

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### **TAIL LAMP** by TB      **The laws of the ‘Cussedness of Railway Modelling’.**

I guess we all have days when things don’t go well, those times when it is best to walk away from a project, rest a while and return refreshed and renewed. I put these down to what I call the “cussedness of railway modelling”. Tentatively, and after not inconsiderable research, I would like to present my findings on this important aspect of the hobby below. I feel sure that many of you will be familiar with some of these laws.

**First Law:** It will always take three times longer to finish a model than originally anticipated;

Corollary 1: if the model has been scratchbuilt, a kit will appear on the market within one month;

Corollary 2: if the model has been built from a kit, a r-t-r model will appear on the market within one month;

**Second Law:** Any component, when dropped, will roll into the most inaccessible corner of the work area;

Corollary 1: if it is heavy, it will hit your toe first;

Corollary 2: the component will be the one that has taken the longest time to make;

Corollary 3: it will also be the most delicate component;

Corollary 4: when you find it, it will be by treading on it;

Corollary 5: you will find it immediately after making a new one;

**Third Law:** The tool that you have just finished with and put away will be needed again immediately;

**Fourth Law:** Your only No 80 drill will always snap at 6pm on a Saturday;

**Fifth Law:** The necessary book or drawing was loaned to a friend last week;

Corollary 1: he has now gone on holiday;

Corollary 2: he will be away for at least a month;

**Sixth Law:** The only tin of paint of the correct colour has dried up;

**Seventh Law:** (sometimes known as the First Exhibitor’s Hypothesis): it works better if you plug it in;

**Eighth Law:** (sometimes known as the Second Exhibitor’s Hypothesis): the reliability of a layout is inversely proportional to the number and importance of the people watching it;

**Ninth Law:** (sometimes known as the Third Exhibitor’s Hypothesis or **Len’s Axiom**): the layout electricians will fail five minutes after the group sparks has gone for his lunch;

Corollary: the pub is not likely to close early;

**Tenth Law:** ( Sometimes known as Cahn's Axiom): When all else fails, read the instructions.

**Eleventh (and all-encompassing) Law;** it won't work;  
- And finally, Goodwin's Law: if it won't work, hit it with a big hammer.

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.

## STARTING SIGNALS

### **The 40th Leamington & Warwick Model Railway Exhibition**

**Sat 7th - Sun 8th March 2015**

**VENUE** - Hall 2, Stoneleigh Park Exhibition & Conference Centre  
**OPENING TIMES:** SATURDAY 10am to 5pm, SUNDAY 10am to 4pm  
**ADMISSION:** Adult £7, Concessions £6, Children £4, Family (2+2) £18

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

**PLUS:** FREE PARKING & FREE PROGRAMME (while stocks last)

### **West Bromwich Rail Model Club - 2015 Rail Exhibition**

**Sat 14<sup>th</sup> March –**

**Wednesbury Town Hall, Holyhead Road,, Wednesbury, West Midlands WS10 7DF**



#### **"Models at the Museum"**

Model layouts, Railways, Buses, Live Steam, Diecast Models,  
Children's activities, Film shows and more.

**Sunday 29th March.**

Free bus service from Walsall (Hatherton Road), every half hour from  
10:20 to 16:30

## DISTANT SIGNALS



### **SUTTON COLDFIELD RAILWAY SOCIETY**

**Annual Model Railway Exhibition**

**25th & 26th April 2015**

**BISHOP WALSH SCHOOL Wylde Green Road**

**SUTTON COLDFIELD West Midlands [B76 1QT](#)**

**Opening Times:** Saturday 10am - 5pm, Sunday 10am - 4:30pm

**Tickets:** ADULTS £5, OAP's £4

**Accompanied children under 16 admitted free.**