
West Midlands "N" Gauge Club

Newsletter

Volume 13 Issue 3

September 2010

EDITORIAL ADDRESS

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Welcome to the September issue of 2010!

As our Chairman notes in his column, your editor has decided to stand down at the end of the year. It's not so much a case of 'work expands to fill the time available', but rather that 'work (or any other activity) expands'. Just think of anything you've been involved with over the last few years, and I'd guess you're spending more time on it now than you did in the beginning. And I'll confess to a touch of selfishness here – I need time for my own modelling!

I do hope someone will be able to take over the newsletter. My years of involvement run into double figures, and the newsletter hasn't changed a great deal over time. So it's probably about due for a facelift!

As the Chairman remarks, neither myself nor my predecessor have been able to attend regularly at the club, but, on the odd occasion that I have (about once a year, I think!), I've found a friendly atmosphere, with members going out of their way to help, explain and inform. And as for the refreshments – brilliant! I hope I'll still be allowed to poke my nose in occasionally!

Your editor is just back from a visit to Canada – so excuse page 2 (and there'll be even more in the next issue!).

Volume 13 Issue 4 should appear in early December.

Copy deadline for the next issue is

6 November



FROM THE CHAIRMAN

It's always busy for model railway enthusiasts at this time of the year, as we go into autumn and the various exhibitions. Both the club and I are getting ready for our busy schedules, but our editor too is extremely busy. In fact he has announced that he is giving up the role at the end of this year. The two editors we have had since the newsletter first appeared hardly ever had time to visit the club, but their help over the years in producing the newsletter more than made up for that.

So if you are interested in being our next newsletter editor, even if you don't visit the club, then please ring me. If no-one wants to do this important role, then we will make the December issue our last one. Meanwhile, send Rock your copy for the December issue to reduce his workload.

Enjoy the rest of your summer.

Ken Jones, Chairman

Chairman: Ken Jones

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Treasurer: Edgar Mason

THE CLUB LAYOUTS

Waterstock

The final ballasting has been completed around the new trackwork, after Len spent hours at our venue in his own time to wire up the board and control panel. The track layout now allows engines to enter and leave the engine shed from both main lines, and Len has incorporated wonderful ideas such as the automatic stopping of these main lines when access to the engine shed is selected. We don't want any accidental crashes now, do we?

There were just a few minor repairs, to fences and so on, to be done ready for its appearance at The International N Gauge Show. A rare appearance this, because the layout only travels within a 50-mile radius of its home base. It was well received, and quite overwhelmed with visitors and photographers. An added attraction was a number of buses from Ken's extensive collection, ostensibly travelling to the bus rally on nearby *Tennis Court Sidings*. Congratulations indeed to the team and to the organisers for making the event so successful.

Water Orton

Mike has been soldering feed wires to track and points around the layout – so, if you think it looks complicated on top, try looking below! He's written some nice updates to the layout on the club website.

Tipton Hills

Edgar has made the electrical box containing the transformers for this layout. It has been done as a duplicate to the *Waterstock* box, in case our main electrical equipment fails. Len and Rodney now have all the points and track wired into a small compact control panel.

ON THE CANADIAN TRAIL

My 'big brother' (yes, I still think of him in those terms, even after all these years!) emigrated to Canada in his early twenties. I suspect that, after National Service, a return to his old life was just too boring to contemplate. He's now retired, and, as a Canadian citizen, draws a Canadian pension, costing us Brits not a cent! He's held a wide variety of jobs during his working life, and has lived or worked in virtually every province. Now he lives in Nanaimo, on Vancouver Island in British Columbia. Since we last visited, he's been twice over to Europe, so we thought it was really time we returned the compliment.



At Oshawa I had my first glimpse of the double-deck push-pull commuter trains that work out of Toronto. (I shot the second picture through the window of my coach.) These were to become very familiar to me during my time in the city.

The city stations have excellent modern concourses, but the platforms are bare and utilitarian (nobody waits on them) underneath old and often original architecture. My last picture gives you an idea of the claustrophobic confines of Toronto station (shades of New Street) – just a quick shot as I battled with my luggage and searched for an elevator (that's a lift to us Brits).

In the next issue, I'll board the 'Canadian', travel on the 'Skeena', and finally use the little 'Dayliner' that provides the service (one train a day) on Vancouver Island.



Rather than travel direct, it seemed a good excuse – sorry, opportunity – to add to my tally of Canadian rail journeys. So, after flying in to Ottawa, I boarded train no. 45 for the run to Toronto (first picture).

After an excellent lunch (chicken stuffed with ricotta and spinach, for the 'foodies') I needed to use the washroom ('toilet' to us Brits). There was no engaged/vacant sign to help me, so I tried the door. It was locked. So I waited, and waited . . . When the conductor came along, I explained my problem. 'These things sometimes lock themselves,' he said, producing a master key. 'This could be embarrassing,' I thought. But no – the key was turned, the door opened, and the cubicle was empty. Thanks and relief all round.



TAKING THE MICKEY

The Bachmann Farish 'Black 5'

(Perhaps the headline needs a word of explanation. In certain parts of the country, 'Mickey' was the affectionate nickname given to the 'Black 5'. The origins are shrouded in mystery, as usual. I've no idea why Ivatt's small 2-6-0 should be called a 'Mickey Mouse', or the large 2-6-0 a 'Pig', although maybe the latter relates to the iron-ore trains they commonly used to haul. However, I digress...)

The local shed, just a few miles down the line, had half-a-dozen of these engines when I was a lad. They were generally the older examples, were well-used and their general condition could be best described as 'heavily weathered'. No. 45386 was a familiar sight on both passenger and freight, and my first photo shows a typical working, the evening stopping train from Barrow to Carnforth, just about to enter Lindal Tunnel.

Later locomotives (numbered earlier in the sequence, just to confuse) had the more utilitarian Ivatt cab, as opposed to the more elegant Stanier version on the earlier locomotives. I remember following No. 44837 as the engine was prepared for its next duty. My second photo shows the loco taking water in front of the enclosed coaling stage.

There were no less than 842 of these engines, and they ranged widely over the whole railway system. So a model of one (or more) is a 'must' for many of us, and I looked forward keenly to adding one (or more) to my fleet.

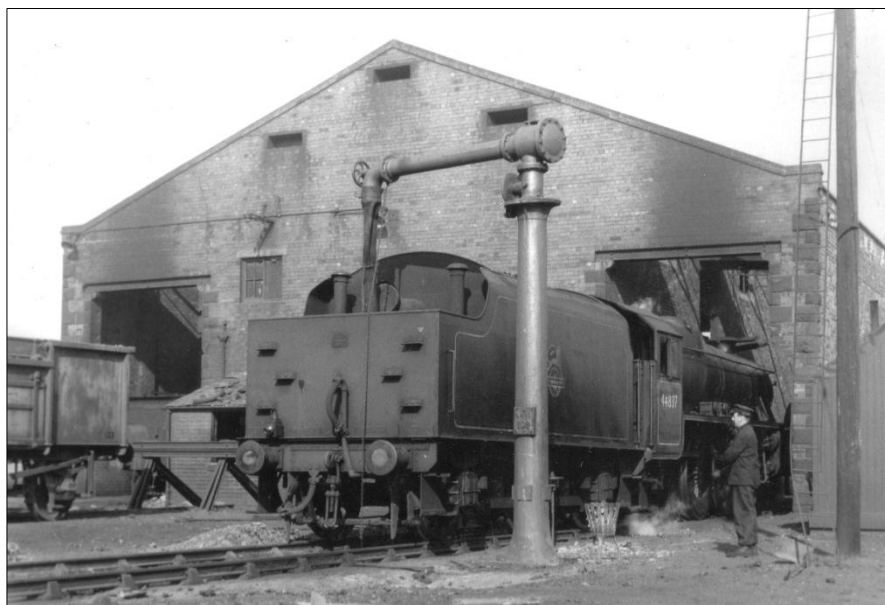


Modelling the period around 1954, I purchased a model of No. 45216 with early crest, a Bank Hall engine according to my little brother's old locoshed directory. Out of the box, first impressions were excellent. From every angle the model displayed all the characteristics of a Black 5. The impressive front end, sturdy valve gear and spacious cab combined with pleasingly correct-looking proportions to at least equal the standard set by Bachmann's previous ex-LMS 4-6-0s.

The finish is excellent in every way. The lining is extremely well-executed, and the paintwork suggests an engine well-maintained in clean condition (rather too clean for a Bank Hall locomotive, perhaps). I could not resist setting the model down on the nearest available piece of track, and photographing it there and then (see over the page).

There were two 'bags o' bits' with the locomotive. Useful for those with large radius curves are supplied a replacement front bogie with larger-diameter wheels and a shorter coupling between engine and tender, as well as front steps and cylinder drain cocks. With small-radius curves, I don't think I'll be fitting any of these. Glazing for the other cab windows was also supplied. Prototypically, this window was usually slid back to allow the driver to look out, so these will not be put to use, nor will I be fitting the wheels with traction tyres. I will remove the front coupling, as I do with all my passenger tender engines. Adding crew and loco lamps will be as much embellishment as I reckon necessary!

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'Handsome is as handsome does' goes the old saying, so it was now time to test performance on the track. Bachmann recommends an hour's running-in in each direction at moderate speed. This locomotive, as with the other Bachmann 4-6-0s, has tender drive. I haven't a mountain of stock, but I did assemble a respectable-looking passenger train (six on), and performance, as might be expected, was comparable with my 'Scot' and 'Jubilee'. Some old drivers would have said this was prototypical, as the 2-cylinder design could invariably be driven hard, whereas the 3-cylinder engines needed the kid-glove treatment on occasions.

Bachmann assert that their locos can negotiate curves down to Radius 2, and my Black 5 coped fine with Kato's second-radius trackwork, which is, I think, a little sharper than the Peco equivalent. Of course, there's a problem with appearance, but most of us, I guess, restrict their sharpest curves to non-scenic sections and fiddle-yard approaches.

Now we have three of the ex-LMS 4-6-0s, wouldn't it be splendid if Bachmann would fill the gap and produce a Patriot? *Home Guard* and *Duke of Sutherland* were common in my home area, and *Blackpool* put up a display one Sunday evening I'm unlikely to forget! (Or, if not a Patriot, an unrebuilt Scot – it being 1954, I could squeeze one in!)

Still, I'm not grumbling – who would have thought, just a few years ago, we would have the quality models available in our scale today. So my Black 5 will be rostered for the TThSO train from Blackpool to the Lakes. 'What's a Bank Hall engine doing on a Blackpool turn?' you ask. Well, I'm sure I can find some good reason, but, in any case, it's my railway and I'll run what I like – or, at least, what the manufacturer provides for me to run!

EXHIBITIONS

In addition to those mentioned in the last newsletter, the club has been invited to exhibit *Waterstock* at the Wolverhampton show on 6/7 November.

Ken will be exhibiting three of his layouts at the Wirksworth model railway show on 16/17 October.

IN THE NEWS

The club has been fortunate in gaining publicity recently. The front cover of the recent N Gauge Society Journal showed Rodney's buildings on Cragmill Trading Estate on the Chester Group layout, and three of Ken's layouts were shown inside.

Tennis Court Sidings has received a lot of interest prior to its launch at the N Gauge Show, and a photo has appeared in *Railway Modeller*. The Walsall trolleybus produced by Rodney has also received a lot of interest following its first appearance in August.

And special mention should be given to David Griffin for his award at the N Gauge AGM for his excellent model of a 72xx tank locomotive.

2010 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, except in December, from 2pm to 5pm.

Meeting dates for the rest of the year:

October	2 nd	16 th
November	6 th	20 th
December	4 th	(AGM)

There will be no meeting on December 18th.

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

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Please use the **rear entrance** to gain access to the church hall.

