

West Midlands “N” Gauge Club NEWSLETTER



From our Chairman

In some ways, I could say that club life has been quiet and uneventful since the last newsletter. Outwardly, possibly the comment is true but there is a lot going on behind the scenes which I think needs mentioning.

Whilst we haven't really been involved on the exhibition scene as a club this year, we have had one outing to the BCIMO Family Day at Dudley. Dave Griffin and Derek Gibbin took Gibben Quarry to this event as part of the model railway section of the event. From reports, it was an enjoyable show with some interest shown in our work. Currently we don't have another booking for 2025 but we are planning to build up a new exhibition team and be back in 2026.

Within the club, the layouts are getting regular use at club meetings and attendance is good. Running trains is not the only activity, neither is socialising. The first of our donated 009 layouts is getting the scenic make-over. Minchin Vale was Tony's original 009 layout and has seen better days. Last year we completely replaced the track and controls so that it was again reliable and smooth running. This year, Mick Higgins is leading a small team working on refreshing the scenery. The profile of the upper scenery has been levelled off with new polystyrene foam covered in plaster bandage. I demonstrated how to use static grass and Angie and Carl have been working on grassing the new scenic area. Jim Webster has constructed a pub (the late lamented Crooked House) which we will install with a small car park and garden. In addition, Jim has now constructed a lighting bar. Once complete we can take it to shows as a 'new' layout in our portfolio.

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Hopetown Darlington Part Two (Otherwise known as a Challenge for Jules and Ken!)

by Phil Hunt

Catching up on some Railway Modellers recently I came across an article regarding the Darlington MRC carrying out some refurbishment of a layout that they had built 50 years earlier. They had recreated the original Stockton to Darlington railway in OO gauge covering the various stations/coaling points along the route and had numerous early locomotives on it. When I saw it, work must have been still under way as the various joints wouldn't have allowed for a train to run.

I tried to get a picture but the light was reflecting too much on the glass panels; best I could get.



In looking around some of the exhibits and models I came across three unusual displays that would set a challenge for Ken and Jules; again the pictures aren't the best due to the light reflecting on the displays and trying to get a camera through a mesh cage.

We have often asked how do you get a model boat in a bottle; and can all understand how to do it. These three photos present a different challenge.



Message in a bottle—How do you get a locomotive, wagon and tank in the bottle?

Another couple of illuminating models



Hard enough to get it to fit in under a cupboard but to get the detail must have taken a lot of patience

WMNG on local Radio

In July, two members of the WMNG Club, Jules and Dave, joined Billy Spakemon on the local radio, you can find a recording of this by following the below QR codes, the



one with our logo will take you to Youtube, the other will take you to the radios website where it is available for a limited time.



Purves Halt Update

By Ken Jones

Purves Halt is my new layout, well not exactly new more like resurrected. 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 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.

Since those early days he added a 26cm x 54 cm rear board which held a fiddle yard and. The points at the station are all manual operated by push / pull rods. In 2024 /5 the fiddle yard was extended to utilise self-isolating points and isolating switches with the help of Vince Painter.

The layout and fiddle yard now measure a total of 51 cm x 97 cm [22in x 35.5 in] It is viewed from the front and operated from behind. It is thanks to Vince Painter that this fiddle yard section is now operational.

I like the fact that Derek built it in a wheel clamp box [picture attached] whereas most people would have thrown the box away. The layout came with no controller or rolling stock, so second-hand rolling stock has been acquired some dating back nearly 40 years. The intention has been to keep this station as built.

Ken Jones is a former chairman of the West Midlands N Gauge club and has a number of layouts which can be seen at <https://www.ukmodelshops.co.uk/layouts/kjl.html> The club is 30 years old in 2025 of which Ken was its chairman for 23 of those years.

Vince Painter is a former Editor of the West Midland N Gauge Club newsletter.

The layout should be out at exhibitions during the second half of 2025



A Small Project for Piers

By Piers Milne

This is a model built from a kit of laser cut card parts produced by Minitrix. It's made of 70 parts including the glazing bits. It's not really appropriate for my home layout as it's for a much earlier period and the north of Germany rather than the south where my layout is deemed to be set, but it's going there anyway as it's such a lovely structure.



3D Printing Corner – Ken Jones West Midland N Gauge Club

A new N gauge supplier was at the Midland Bus Kit Show today [22/3/25] and they have nothing to do with model buses. In fact, they produce 3D printed accessories in many different gauges. You can view their N gauge range at <https://3dprintingcorner.co.uk/product-category/1-148-scale/> and speaking to this team their product range is set to expand. Their literature says 3DPrintingCorner is driven by a profound love for 3D Printing technology, modern innovations and a passion for model crafting. With an unwavering commitment to detail, we strive to create intricate, lifelike miniature worlds that captivate the imagination. As you would expect from a new company they are big on social media but had no business cards or indication where they are based. A factor not only missed by people like me, and unfortunately no N gauge items on show.

Structure Modelling in Card—An Oddyssey - Part 2

By Piers Milne

It was necessary to limit the range of subjects modelled. In consequence, I do not build models of churches, ships, aircraft, road vehicles or other themes. I do build some models of railway subjects but only in my working scale of 1:160 - European N Scale. Some of them are just static items, but I have created a number of working models with card superstructures mounted on commercial chassis'. Two particular examples are the rolling stock on my Spanish El Cremallera and North German Langeoog Island layouts, the first of which is still on the exhibition circuit but the second one has been retired and has now been incorporated into the permanent German layout in my garage. Some of the buildings on these layouts have also been made in card.

The subjects modelled are essentially of European types although the odd stranger has occurred such as the Kremlin model mentioned in part one (of which I have also built a double size version, redrawn and coloured, and produced by an American publisher, which most helpfully provided me with the colouring for the black and white original) and a redrawn and coloured reproduction of another Micromodel, being of the United Nations building in New York and its surroundings, produced by another American publisher. Another model in an extremely small scale.

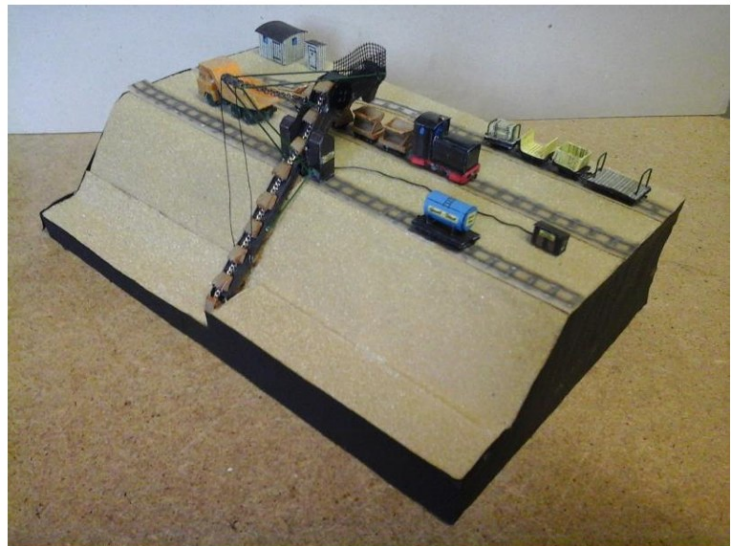


The buildings also have to appeal to me. I say this because I've encountered kits of castles and other buildings which I simply didn't like so I haven't made them. Kits other than castles have to be interesting architecturally as well.



In addition to the railway models mentioned above I've built models of the rolling stock of a number of other north German narrow gauge lines, mainly on the Friesian Islands, and produced as a hobby by a local small maker in that area. These static models are to 1:160 scale. Amongst them are models of the Wangeoog, Sylt, and Borkum islands lines. This maker also produced a kit of a very strange device called in German an Eimetkettenbagger which translates as a Bucket Chain Excavator for dredging and similar operations.

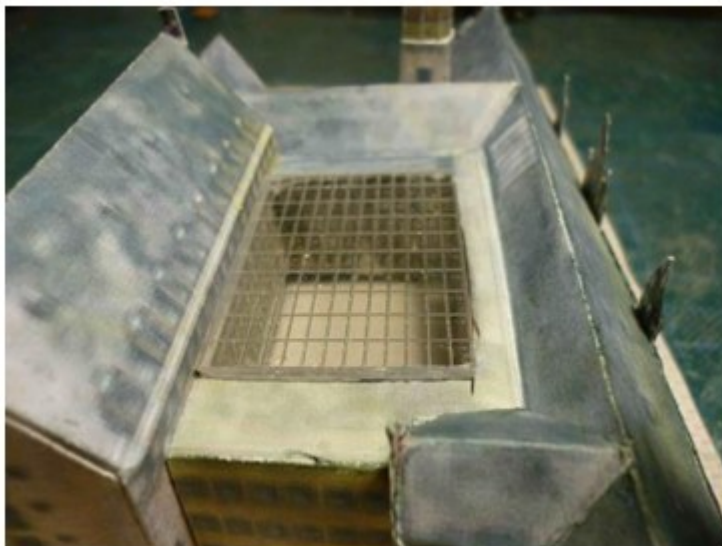
A printer named Jean Charles Pellerin who lived in the north French town of Epinal produced many hundreds of images of every conceivable subject during the second half of the nineteenth century under the title of Images d'Epinal. Amongst them, and of interest to me, are a considerable number of single sheet kits of a wide range of architectural subjects which Pinterest has reproduced on its website. Depending on the size or complexity of the structures, I have copied many of them onto A5 or A4 Card and have built some of them, with a sizeable stock of kits yet to build. Most are to fairly small scales. Here is one I particularly like of a small French country railway station which is N scale.

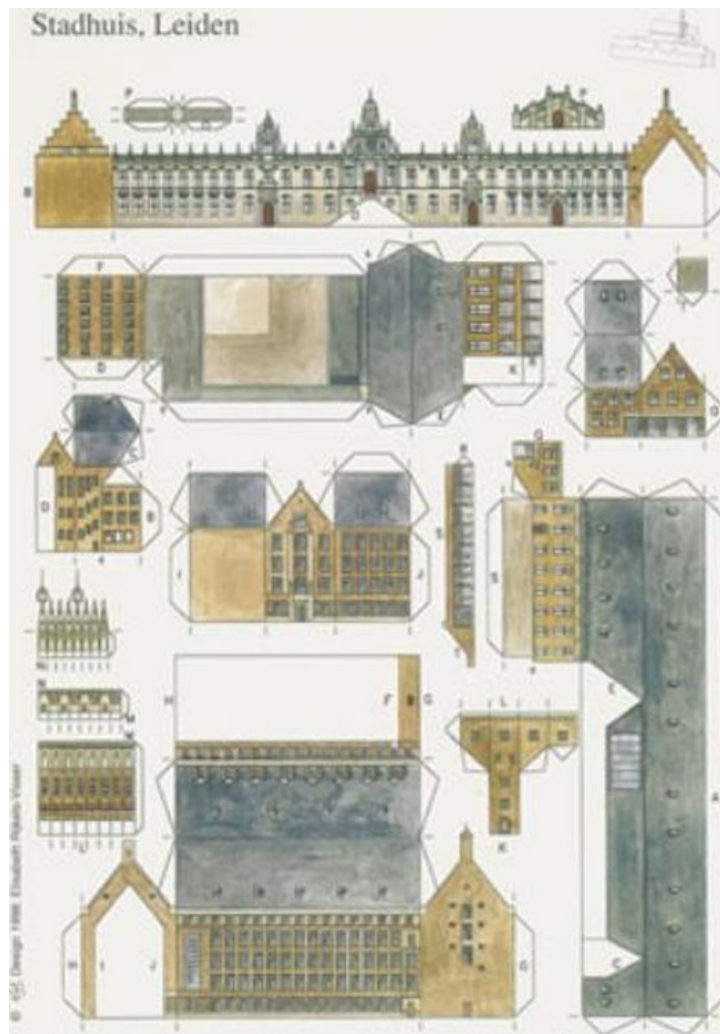


And this is my latest creation, the Stadthuis in Leiden in the Netherlands. The real one has a glass overall roof over the central courtyard. I have replicated that with a conveniently moulded piece of plastic glazing from one of my scrap boxes. I very seldom throw away bits of kits and materials left over from modelling projects. On the next page is the kit as downloaded from the internet.



I cut out the two tone brown patch on the main roof and replaced it with the embossed plastic glazing.



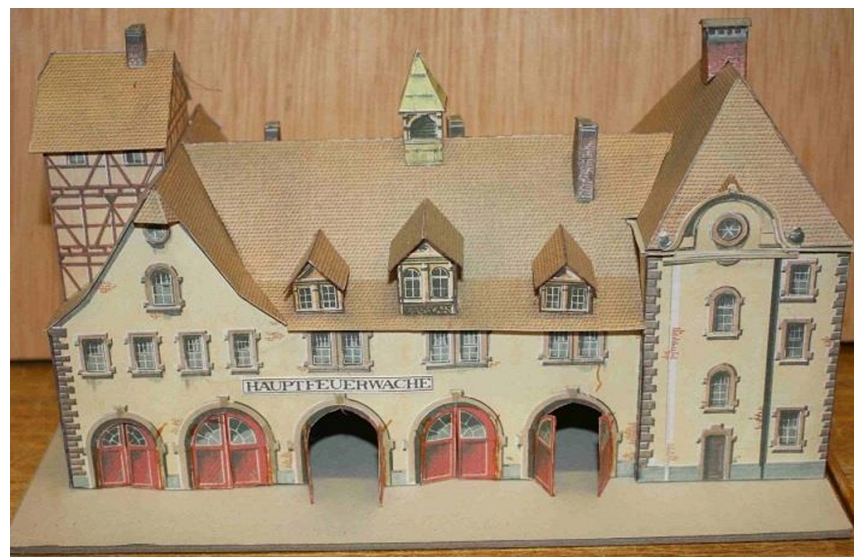


My wife is seriously into crafts and I frequently raid her parts boxes for little beads and the like to add to the finials on my buildings as on the Leiden one. This is the Hotel de Ville in Dinant in Belgium. This little one measures just 11cm to the top of the pinnacle on the spire.



And here is a very nice model of an old German Fire Station produced by the Swiss firm MZZ which is to N Scale. It was originally a very expensive kit but the retailer had had it in stock for a long time and wanted to shift it, so he offered it to me at a bargain price.

To be continued



In Another Place By Jeremy Edwards

A little while ago, I wrote about a project that I am leading with the Trent Valley Model Railway Society. I thought an update might interest readers.

The main 'member interest' at TVMRS is 00, however there are a small group of us who model in N (3 to be precise). We had a model of Bewdley in Severn Valley guise in about 2000; it was not a good layout for lots of reasons that I won't explain here. We started a replacement which had been partly built by people who didn't understand some of the nuances of N – particularly code 55 track. This was dismantled and a club member had three of the boards for a 00 layout that he wanted to build. As we were in 'The Trent Valley' and situated near the Trent Valley line, I suggested an N gauge model of Lichfield TV Low Level. It is the nearest railway station to our clubhouse although we are a few hundred yards away from HS2 construction.



Freight running through on the Down Fast

The club committee were fully in support and very enthusiastic for the project. We had also examined closely the layout of Brinklow in N and knew what standard we needed to meet. Our clubroom is very crowded; it's an ex POW camp hut from Cannock Chase and has a massive permanent 00 layout which takes up a lot of room. Final space allocation was about 20 feet in length and between 3 and 4 feet in depth. I designed a simple 10 baseboard layout

with a scenic board paired to a non-scenic board for storage. The track plan was really just blocked in to see what we could fit in without too much compromise.

Stage 2 was baseboard construction linked with detailed research. We settled on 1960/1 as a suitable era. Andy Peirce and I, the key players, both model steam and diesel around that time. There is a lot of interest within the non-N modellers for that period too. Several members have memories of that time (our 'auditor/scrutineer' remembers trainspotting from the cattle dock). The latest date was crucial as by 1961/2 OLE was being erected for electrification and that would be a bit fragile – we have a German N Gauge layout with OLE and it's easily damaged.

Baseboard construction is simple. Based on experience with Whartson Hall, I opted for 9mm ply on 3 x 1 frames. This seems quite rigid without bracing, unlike Whartson Hall and doesn't seem to sag either. We sourced timber, pre-cut to size, from a local trusted timber merchant rather than 'Bendy & Quirky'. Boards use simple steel dowels and 8mm bolts, washers and wing nuts. The back scene boards are attached to the scenic boards.

I'm not very good at drawing track plans and having the vision from paper. Several of us set to with masking tape, Peco templates and various diagrams to plan out 1:1 on the boards. Some artistic licence was used. The main issue was compression; Lichfield TV to a reasonable scale would probably need about 30 feet or so, therefore we needed to trim about 10 feet. The platform area has been shortened somewhat; we can fit a 7 coach stopping train in the platform – which is fine. We also shortened the yard sidings by a few feet but they look to be long enough to be convincing. Initially we suspected that we might need to reduce the number of sidings in the yard on the Up side but we found space. There are, at that time, sidings on the Down side; initially we decided to omit these but once tracklaying had progressed that far we decided to incorporate at least 2 of the 3 sidings – possibly unpowered and left a bit derelict.

We had a bit of a hiatus after that as there were a number of club projects with more pressing deadlines needing the space. Funding was another issue; my 'finger in the air' costing for the committee was c£10,000. Up until this point, funding had been by donation from members. Our former treasurer funded the timber, I funded the fixings and the chairman started buying track. Other members had paid in sums to the club specifically for the project.

Once we had space again, things started moving. Baseboard alignment was re-checked and things moved on from there. Trackwork in the scenic section is Peco code 55 Electrofrog but we decided to use code 80 Electrofrog in the storage area. This coincided with the donation to the club of a substantial quantity of code 80 flexible track much of which was untouched. Chairman Rob had purchased a box of flexible track from our show sponsor "Baz's Model Trains" and placed an order for sufficient points to lay the main lines in the scenic area and a pair of lines through the storage area. The idea was to lay the UP and Down slow and fast lines and wire it as a test track for club nights.

I had done the bulk of the baseboard construction with a bit of help (and hindrance from willing aids). Andy is a seriously expert tracklayer. Several of us 'mucked in' on laying cork and Andy started laying track. Currently we have just about joined up the whole loop but need to move the layout to access the storage area (one drawback of a crowded clubroom).

Although Marc (club treasurer) and I had done a reasonable job of 1:1 planning, There was a lot of consultation of maps, SRS signal box diagrams and photographs of the site as tracklaying commenced. For anyone unfamiliar with Lichfield TV, there are two stations. Low Level, which we are modelling, is on the West Coast Main Line from Rugby to Stafford. High Level is on what was the South Staffordshire Railway from Walsall to Burton or the Cross City Line. We need to model High Level as a non-working station but there is the Trent Valley Junction line which connects the two lines for freight to transfer via the larger yard. At the time there was also the Trent Valley Brewery, by that time a maltings for Lichfield City Brewery. Rob (chairman) and Marc like playing with freights and shunting so I have had to modify the design to allow these lines to pass through the backscene. The other compromise is that the real station is on a very large radius curve which we do not quite have the space to model so it is fairly straight but for the parting of the up and down lines to accommodate the bridges and Signal Box 1.



At about this time we had a bit of a windfall. We ran a second show with DBC Club for Young People in Dosthill, our takings from that plus a rather good raffle that we ran provided funding for just about all of the track we needed. We have recently taken delivery of that and are sorting out deployment.

Track is laid on 1.5mm cork sheet. We have done this in particular as we are planning to use Peco platform edges and need to raise the track to get the correct effect otherwise our N Gauge passengers won't be able to open the carriage doors. The trackbed for Trent Valley Junction



Latest progress looking Down towards Stafford.

and the brewery siding have been elevated with mounting board covered with the cork sheet. So far, Andy has laid the track and only partly driven home the track pins so that any adjustments and alterations are easily made.

Latest progress looking Down towards Stafford. Mock up of the Up Station Building on the right plus various important accoutrements including spare coffee cups to weigh down cork while the glue is setting

Over the next month, hopefully we will have all of the track laid. We've had numerous discussions about the brewery siding and other details. Once that is done, we are planning on using 2mm Association copper clad sleepers at the baseboard joins. We can then cut the tracks and separate the boards so that other projects can use the space. My job is then to sort dropper

wires etc so that we can run the main lines and set up controllers for analogue running. We have a row of three diamond crossings where the Trent Valley Junction Down crosses to join the WCML Down Slow. These will need switchable frog polarity for analogue use (bulk buy of Gaugemaster latching relays).

The target is to have a running railway with some scenery by September 2026 so that it can go to our Lichfield 2026 exhibition. In the meantime, ace building constructor, Jeff, is constructing mock ups of key buildings from the photographic evidence that we have. So far we have a Down Station Building and an initial mock up of Lichfield No1 box although we think the lower section is too wide.

The project is kindling an interest in N Gauge modelling among some of the diehard OO members. I will update when we have something running.



Ramp for the Trent Valley Junction line

Jeremy Edwards

N gauge minibus from Replitek

By Ken Jones

New N gauge minibus from Replitek - <https://replitek.co.uk/product/n-gauge-freight-rover-sherpa-banana-bus/>

Originally a Carlyle bodied Freight Rover Sherpa, the *Banana Bus*, with the registration *D70 TLV*, has a rich history in the Great Yarmouth area. Originally entering service in June 1987 with Northern Western, it was later acquired by Flying Banana, operating as Halesworth Transit, in the 1990s. In 1996, the vehicle was transformed into an open-top bus, affectionately dubbed the 'Banana Buggy', to serve along the Great Yarmouth seafront.

The 'Banana Buggy' became a familiar sight along the Golden Mile, offering passengers unobstructed views of the coastline and popular attractions. Its vibrant yellow livery and open-top design made it a favorite among both locals and tourists, contributing to the seaside town's charm. In 1998, First Bus took over operations from Flying Banana, but the distinctive branding and the 'Banana Buggy' continued to operate into the early 2000s.

After its retirement from active service, *D70 TLV* was stored in Bedfordshire until its acquisition by the Eastern Counties Bus Preservation Group in late 2022. The group is currently undertaking restoration efforts to preserve this iconic piece of Great Yarmouth's transport history.

Today, the legacy of the 'Banana Buggy' lives on through our 3D resin model reproduction, allowing enthusiasts to own a piece of this unique seaside heritage.

This model is supplied unpainted, ready to decorate and is available in final form or with it's tarpaulin like awning.



Puzzle Time

S	Y	M	Q	T	W	S	T	A	F	X	U	Q	Q	T	N	L	P
E	Z	Z	O	E	U	G	W	H	Z	M	O	G	G	H	J	H	Y
D	A	R	Y	D	N	K	I	E	N	N	P	G	G	I	I	Q	H
C	Z	Y	U	G	E	K	S	Q	E	T	A	O	S	R	O	H	T
N	F	W	V	T	D	L	V	P	G	U	U	V	Q	T	N	C	O
I	C	N	J	W	W	Y	L	R	Q	J	P	W	B	Y	J	Z	I
E	R	P	D	G	G	H	S	I	J	V	K	G	N	Y	L	E	A
A	O	G	M	U	S	G	T	N	N	F	R	F	C	E	L	R	W
P	O	Q	P	J	H	E	A	T	A	G	H	O	E	A	J	J	T
J	K	K	U	U	G	M	T	I	V	H	A	V	V	R	R	R	Y
I	E	N	D	A	R	L	I	N	G	T	O	N	C	S	F	D	E
U	D	N	K	H	A	V	C	G	U	N	I	J	E	G	K	E	K
A	H	F	X	H	S	A	E	O	U	H	C	S	Q	G	G	S	P
F	O	Q	F	L	S	W	Y	S	C	E	U	I	J	J	Z	P	E
Y	U	I	L	W	H	A	U	N	R	B	Y	D	N	U	H	Y	L
C	S	N	T	P	L	U	I	Z	P	N	H	E	Q	F	R	W	W
F	E	B	R	H	A	M	S	Q	U	S	F	L	W	U	E	X	N
V	E	L	Z	C	C	I	I	R	I	R	T	Z	L	U	J	J	U

BUSES CARD CROOKEDHOUSE DARLINGTON GRASS HALT
LAYOUT MINCHINVALE MODELLING PRINTING PURVES STATIC
THIRTYYEARS

Where to see us in 2025

Member Layouts at Exhibitions in 2025

Ken Jones

2025

	Exhibition	Layout
Sat 8 th March Bus Station – confirmed	Wombourne	Waterfall Junction and The
Sat 22 nd March Bus Station – confirmed	Midland Model Buses / Alfreton	Jones of Taunton & The
Sat 29 th March	Tamworth	Anyone for T and The Bus Station - confirmed
Mon 26 th May	MBF at Wythall	The Bus Station and maybe static display - TBC
Sun 27 th July	Aldridge	Malken and the Bus Station - confirmed



Full details at <https://www.ukmodelshops.co.uk/layouts/kjl.html>

Piers Milne

2025

	Exhibition	Layout
March 8	Wombourne	Trifoulou
March 22	Bournville I&NG +ERA	`Gottingen Sud
April 12	SRS AGM	Trifoulou
April 26	Blackheath	El Cremallera
September 13/14	TINGS	El Cremallera
September 20	Trent Valley	St. Frazal d'Ardeche
October 11/12	Warley Statfold	Oberdorf/II

West Midlands N Gauge Club

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assisted by Philip Hunt

Newsletter Editor:

Claire Fisher

Catch up with us here:

www.wmngc.co.uk

YouTube:

West Midlands N Gauge Club

Scan the below QR:



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West Midlands N Gauge Club

Meeting Dates for 2025

4th January

18th January

1st February

15th February

1st March

15th March

5th April

19th April

3rd May

17th May

7th June

21st June

5th July

19th July

2nd August

16th August

6th September

20th September

4th October

18th October

1st November

15th November (alternative date for AGM)

6th December

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

