
West Midlands "N" Gauge Club

Newsletter

Volume 16 Issue 1

March 2013

EDITORIAL ADDRESS

Anthony Butler
43, Severn Way,
Cressage,
Shrewsbury.
Shropshire.
SY5 6DS

Tel: 01952 510133

HEADCODE

Welcome to the March issue of 2013 and a Happy, if slightly second-hand, New Year to you all.

Once again I feel obliged to start with an apology. Last issue I incorrectly credited the wondrous new turntable drive to Dave Evans. Silly me! It was of course cunningly fabricated by **Mike Evans**. My humble apologies Mike. A stupid mistake on my part given that I had actually *asked* his name before leaving the club that day in order that I should get it right, spelling and all, and **written it down** too! Doh!

I hope I've just put that right. Sorry ~~Da~~..Mike.

This issue, we get a return ticket to Christine Hodges USA theme layout Charlieville to inspect the recent track re-alignments and new works. Layout Gallery takes a visit to Mynoras Farm.

As usual we have updates on the layouts, some updates on Club members various activities, Chairman's notes as ever, and the usual drivel from me. *TB*

Volume 16 Issue 2 should appear in early June 2013.



FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I'm only about two weeks late writing my piece for the editor, so apologies in the delay. I'd like to say it was due to settling into a new job but that's not the case. With a broken down car I used trains to get from Hall Green to Tipton for a meeting in February. I thought it was going quite well until changing trains at Smethwick Galton Bridge I found no trains in any direction between Birmingham and Wolverhampton meaning a bus journey then toward Dudley and a walk to get to the meeting. So my admiration for the members who make meetings by public transport, and my thanks for everyone who offered me a lift to catch my train home later that afternoon.

Best wishes

Ken Jones, Chairman

Chairman: Ken Jones

0121 777 7062

Email: westernsultan@hotmail.co.uk

Treasurer: Edgar Mason

THE CLUB LAYOUTS

Waterstock...

This layout is not being run every meeting this year to give maintenance crews a chance to touch up the back scene and scenery and to generally keep it in first class exhibition order. Then on alternative meetings members can run their stock round so that they learn the controls and keep it working. This layout is promised for the Warley show for 2014. Now, this still seems a long way off but the time will disappear incredibly quickly and I expect that Dave G, our exhibition co-ordinator will be around cracking the metaphorical whip fairly soon. I'm happy to help Dave, just find me a job.

Tipton Hills...

This layout is not running the meetings that "Waterstock" is. It needs scenery work completed as it has some exhibitions to attend. The caravan site and bluebell forest are coming on well as is the planting of a selection of trees. The centre area near the caravan park is intended for changing themes whether it is an American car show or a bus rally from Ken's collection. Mike Turner has produced a PDF flyer for this layout detailing the club and this layout. Send an email to Ken or the editor if you want a copy.

THE CLUB LAYOUTS *Cont'd*

Whartson Hall...

Mike T and others have been laying down the fiddle yard which means the layout now sticks some way out into the room so that they can use the fiddle track traverser to align the tracks to the three fixed ones. This layout has no points, crossovers etc. so we don't want trains derailing as operators use the fiddle yard traverser.

Mike has also fabricated some 'Ends' and gives details on the website in an article entitled 'An End for Whartson Hall'.

"To be more precise it should be two ends for Whartson Hall. If the [plans](#) of Whartson are examined you will notice that the dramatic and unrealistic curves at the end of the scenic section need to be hidden, hence the required two ends."

Mike also felt that it would be useful to have the layout name displayed at either end and somewhere place literature and display objects, "While helping to disguise the inevitable tea, coffee mugs and half chewed sandwiches."

A more in depth and indeed interesting and up to date description of this shoestring project can be found at http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/ngaugewmg/index_files/Page852.htm

*P.S. Appropriately, this item of news contains approximately 30% **recycled** material. No horsemeat of course, though I understand that B&Q have lately been bemired in the scandal. Apparently their flooring product has Lamb-in-it. -Ed.*

CLUB MEMBERS

We welcome **Vince Painter** to the club, and can confirm **Les Aldridge** is enjoying himself having moved to Devon and has joined the Exeter N gauge group.

Ken Jones has updated his website www.kenjonestrains.co.uk to detail the exhibitions he'll be at in the autumn plus first pictures and information on his new tray layout.



Rodney Looking very 'Aldridge Gangsta'.

Rodney Hodge has been very busy of late. He has appeared on local news video whilst helping Aston Manor Road Transport Museum move to its new home in Shenstone Drive, Aldridge.

<http://www.expressandstar.com/news/2013/02/27/transport-museum-set-to-open-as-final-decision-due-on-new-alldridge-home/>

"Keeping my arms folded prevents me taking on any more work"

he said to the reporter.

Rodney should be at the club on Saturday where "Waterstock" will be closed due to an afternoon possession order.

Tipton Hills will be running.

CLUB MEMBERS cont'd

Tony Butler has been lucky enough recently to acquire another couple of Wrenn 4300 Findus Vans on Ebay. He still does not have enough for a full train yet but he says he can make up the numbers with a horsebox or two.



LAYOUT GALLERY An occasional series featuring your layouts at home.

Mynoras Farm. By Ken Jones.

The layout is called Mynoras Farm - it started off as the coffee table layout – ‘project CTL’. I couldn't think of a name for it.

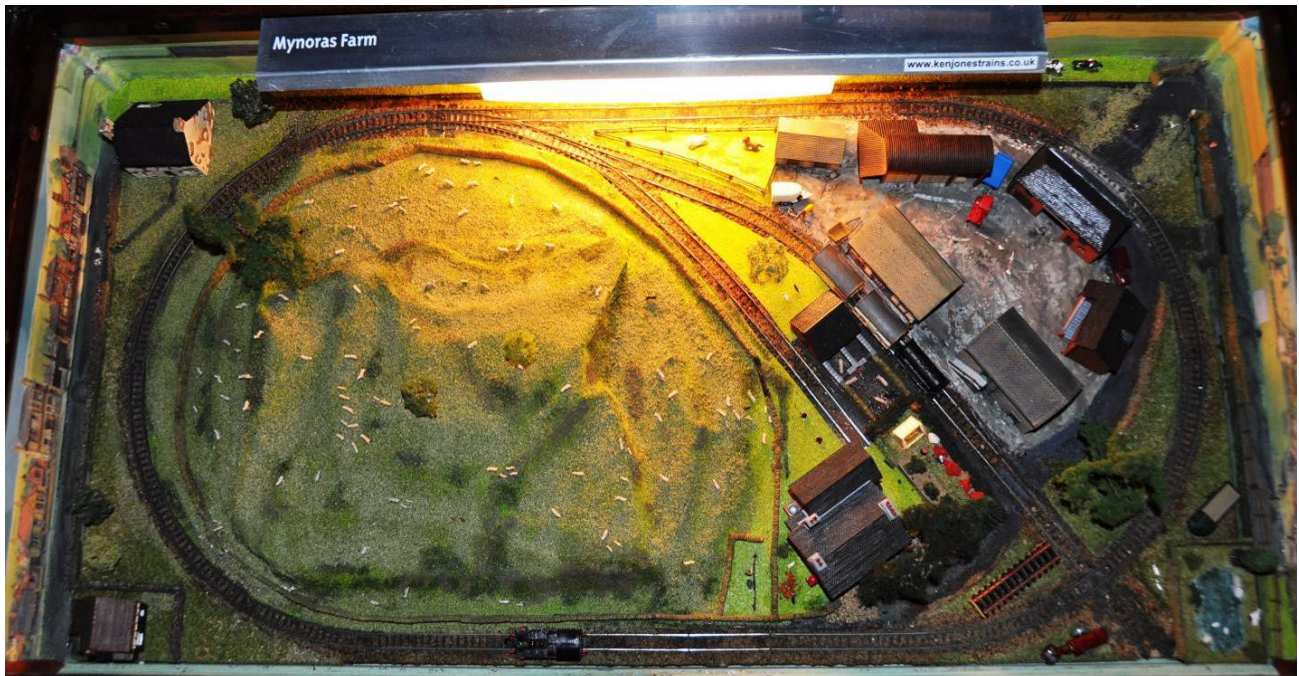
Anyway, I was working in Ireland at the time for a few days and the hotel bar was used by everyone, not just guests. I was having a bar meal and this local was saying to everyone – “My Nora won't let me do that.” “ I'll check first with my Nora” , “My Nora's going shopping tomorrow” ... etc.

I thought she must be so clever and powerful this Nora, she can have my layout named after her. Nora's Farm didn't work so it became ‘Mynoras Farm’.

Here's a picture taken from low flying helicopter of the finished layout. Others are on my website if you'd like further views.

It's a solid wooden coffee table, too heavy for me to lift on my own so has only been out once before to a small exhibition many years ago. The International N Gauge show will be it's biggest outing yet.

I need to make sure my Nora realises that.





Like most farms the buildings date from a mixture of styles as the farm was extended.



'04 and train at right angle crossing leading to planned track extension. Note the Scammell and the duck pond.

Charlieville Update

By Christine Hodge



The long awaited upgrade of 'CHARLIEVILLE' by Christine Hodge is completed.

The through line is now running without slowing down for town traffic.

The town spur line is now connected to the main line through a points crossover system, which ensures smooth connections with both lines.

The buildings have been replaced and surrounding areas remodelled.

Unfortunately the Motel was badly damaged by a fire set off by an enthusiastic plumber removing pipework, luckily "Plus Daughters Inc." came to the rescue and sourced another suitable building for the location and now Rob's Roadhouse has been transported, repositioned and opened for visitors and locals alike.

The Imex Diner in its new location, is now well established as a pit stop for homemade food, and a suitable viewing spot to watch the trains go by, especially the newly acquired Durango to Silverton stock which goes up to the mining areas in the mountains.

The help and equipment loaned by the 'Sandwell Valley Mining Company', and technical expertise from Tipton Track Team West Midlands N Gauge MRC Inc. are gratefully appreciated, without which this upgrade would have taken a lot longer.

Charlieville will be exhibited at Bloxwich 18th May 2013 and Warley NEC 23rd and 24th Nov 2013.
Some Charlieville Photo's follow.







BRANCHLINES AND BYWAYS Ramblings off the cinder path

- "Dad, what's that little red building on your railway?"
- "That's a telephone box."
- "Eh?"
- "Well, basically, a house built around a telephone."
- "Dad?"
- "Yes?"
- "The old days were nuts!"



TRIP WORKINGS

Rodney will have some of his layouts out and about this year as well as **Tipton Hills** being invited to some local exhibitions to represent the club.

Christine Hodge will be exhibiting **Charlieville** at Bloxwich 18th May 2013 and Warley NEC 23rd and 24th Nov 2013.

Three layouts are booked for the International N Gauge Show, including **Tipton Hills** as the club layout, **Tony Minchin's** excellent **Arley** layout and a rare appearance of seeing **Mynoras Farm** from **Ken Jones**.

Waterstock is booked for the Warley Show at the NEC in 2014.

2012 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.

Meeting dates for the rest of this year:

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

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

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

Copy deadlines for the next four issues of the newsletter are:

June '13 Issue:	4th May
Sept '13 Issue:	10th August
Dec '13 Issue:	9th November
Mar '14 Issue:	1st February

TAIL LAMP by TB

Far too many in the hobby, it seems, keep waiting for the perfect time to start their “dream model railway” – yet “someday” never seems to come around. Heh, I’ve been one of the worst offenders in the past. A proper ‘armchair modeler’ I’ve been.

What will it take to get these folks out of the armchair and started on building a layout?

I know what this prevarication feels like. Always more research to be done? Fearing to start without planning every last detail? Not to mention the dread of making mistakes from the word go.
All these things conspire to keep a modeler firmly sat down.

I came across a term in an American magazine a while ago: "Chainsaw railroads". Essentially, a chainsaw railroad is a layout that you'd be willing to take a chainsaw to the minute it has served its purpose.

The idea, of course, is to tell "fear of making mistakes" to take a long walk off a short pier.

Now, I've worked in a certain sector of industry all of my adult life so far and one thing I've learned is that before we roll a new product out of the door, the concept has been tested to death usually on several versions of prototype to ensure that it is as perfect as it possibly can be before it is inflicted on the general public.

As such, prototypes are 'safe' environments for experimentation with new ideas, or for perfecting techniques. Very many of these ideas are binned before they ever reach the finishing stages. Many of mine were anyway.

OK? Hold that thought. Don't fire those chainsaws up just yet!

Now. How about this: Maybe, just maybe, plan to throw the first model away one day. The thing is, it is very likely that you will anyhow. We railway modelers are notorious for changing our minds, allegiances to Railway companies or era's. Even - perish the thought - wanting to change gauge. Ultimately something sometime will drive us to start afresh. Even if you don't, just ask yourself how often you read in the model railway press a layout article that contains the phrase "Well, it started as a test track really..."

So go ahead. Jump right in and build a 'test track'. You'll want one anyway to test out any new stock you build or purchase, even if it is just a single length of straight track on a 3foot plank.

This can be your prototype. Your 'sandbox'. Your 'safe environment'.

Ultimately you may throw it away, but in the meantime you can practice your techniques. Become a ballasting Jedi or a ground foam Flockmeister. Make a simple building and stick it on your plank. - Put some stock on it, take photos. - Take more photos. - Perhaps take some in black and white and compare it with the colour pictures to asses which one looks more realistic.

Nothing is set in stone, nothing is forever. If you don't like what you've done clean it off and have another go.

Eventually, It will be the second, much smarter design, built on the learning you gained from the first attempt, that will be the greater piece.

You see, the early bird may get the worm, but it's the second mouse that gets the cheese.

We all enjoy seeing videos and reading articles written by 'the experts'. They seem to have so much skill and knowledge into how to do things and how to overcome the obstacles.

Were these folk born that way? No of course not. Yet how did these people get to be experts?

Well, there's no magic formula - it's by plain old hard knocks, making mistakes, falling over and botching things. That's what every expert will tell you.

I've come to realize every time I foul up with a modeling project (pretty often actually, but hey-ho) I'm really building my expertise. I'll do it better - next time.

So, if you are a newbie, or simply a dyed in the wool armchair kind of guy, stop and think for a moment.

Before you plan your Magnum Opus, the wisest approach is to design and build something smaller. Hell, let's even call it a 'test track' shall we? Something designed to test and improve new skills in the hobby. And, while you're at it, plan on the result being something you'd be happy to turf in a skip someday once it has outlived its purpose.

Could we use a few more 'test tracks' and 'chainsaw railroads' in the hobby, do you think?

What was that old song now...? Oh yes!

"Enjoy yourself - it's later than you think."

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.