
West Midlands "N" Gauge Club

Newsletter

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Summer 2013

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HEADCODE

Welcome to the Summer issue of 2013.

This issue, we have the 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 3 should appear in September 2013. However, such timings are never that certain these days, which does at least put us up there with another 'Quality' model railway publication I can think of ☺.

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

Autumn '13 Issue: 10th August
Winter '13/14 Issue: 9th November
Spring '14 Issue: 1st February
Summer '14 Issue: 11th May



FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I'm late again writing my piece for the editor, so apologies for the delay. I can say it is because I've found employment after looking for 9 months and many things like building my own layouts and contributing to this newsletter and other articles have had to take a back seat. I have however started putting pictures on Flickr at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/82409929@N08/> including some N gauge layouts and N gauge buses. So late at night I'm now trying to catch up with things I should have done weeks ago.

Best wishes

Ken Jones, Chairman

Chairman: Ken Jones

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THE CLUB LAYOUTS

Waterstock . . .

The plan to run this layout every other week hasn't worked so now both our layouts are run each week and stopped when the permanent way people, builders, scenery personnel and electricians want possession.

This layout continues to run well and is testament to the members who built and wired it all those years ago.

The track in the fiddle yard has moved due to a period of dry weather – yes we have had a dry spell so we will just leave it alone and hopefully it will go back into shape as it's the wood that is causing the track to move. The recent wet spell has helped in this matter. It happens because the track in the fiddle yard is not ballasted.



A prototype for everything – Ed.

THE CLUB LAYOUTS *Cont'd*

Tipton Hills...

So we now run this layout as required but with two shows booked for it in the autumn including The International N Gauge show, we are trying to finish off scenery details. Phil Hunt has made some really nice bespoke buildings including a boat house and jetty, while Rodney, David, and others have been erecting fencing and painting footpaths etc.

Whartson Hall...

Mike continues to be beset with problems with this layout, and currently is trying to line up the 14 fiddle yard lines to the rest of the layout so that a simple movement will allow trains to enter the track from the fiddle yard. He's written much more about the layout on our website www.ngaugewmg.co.uk.



However, having said that, Mike Turner kindly sent me (twice actually, I lost the first one 🤔...Ed) this picture taken by Ken J of "The first train to run on Whartson Hall". Mike reports that the platform was having a "fitting" and clearances were being tested by a DMU; if you wonder what is going on.

CLUB MEMBERS

Rodney Hodge and **Tony Minchin** have been showing their layouts recently, whereas...

Ken Jones has no exhibitions booked until the autumn which is good considering everything else he currently has to do. Ken has had his website updated at www.kenjonestrains.co.uk and hopes to get back to building his tray layout in the near future which has been on hold since April. He's been presented with a scratch built N gauge model of a Bristol SUL bus made by Malcolm Hall of Grimsby, and he's acquired a Belgium bus to paint from an exhibitor at last year's N gauge Show. More buses for his layout are also in the pipeline, the latest being a Thameshead white metal kit which Rodney found. This bus has been fitted with decals of "Hodges of Aldridge" which never existed but looks the part.

Stuart Brasier has rejoined the club – he was one of the original members and he designed the track plan that Waterstock is based on. We welcome him and his son Harry to the club. He has offered to repaint the town buildings on Waterstock originally done by Alf. Stuart will be repainting them in situ as taking up the houses could damage them and / or the layout especially the gardens and trees which many people have worked on during the years. Thank you Stuart.

Anthony Butler requests the help of anybody who can source material for him. He is building a signal gantry for Waterstock and requires some brass 'L' angle. About 2mm per side would do or smaller if

possible. He believes it should be available from the likes of K&S but can't locate any. If anyone knows of a shop or on-line source stocking this please let him know via the Editor's e-mail.

BRANCHLINES AND BYWAYS Ramblings off the cinder path

Road Vehicles

Ken Jones reports that after a time of not many new releases 8 new road vehicles are in the shops now.

Oxford Diecast

NTEA001 Ferguson tractor grey
NTRAC001 Fordson Tractor bluebird
NVW001 VW Peru Green
NVW003 VW minibus
NVW002 VW pickup
NCT001 Citroen 2CV
NBP001 Bedford Pantehnicon van

Base Toys

N034 Albion Caledonian Tanker - National Benzole

TRIP WORKINGS

Christine Hodge will be exhibiting **Charlieville** at 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.

2013 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:

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
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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.

TAIL LAMP by TB

I have noticed that, over the last year or so, a lot of criticism has been made of people who put on a display with stock 'straight out of the box'. There are many reasons for this of course, but it all comes down to one point, the critics feel that unless something has been done, the viewer has been cheated somehow.

I think we need to grasp one simple fact, the majority of recent ready to run models are a sight better on all counts, accuracy, detail, and finish and performance, to most self built efforts. I don't wish to open a debate as to whether anything else could ever have been the case, but lets look at the basic facts.

Unless the builder intends to weather the model – and not everyone is keen to do this – then there are really limited options available, to change the number and, maybe the name, adding a little extra detail (mostly supplied these days), usually at the front end. There is an option to change the wheelsets where they don't conform to BRMSB/NMRA/2FS standards adopted by the club layout, but this is an alteration that is often difficult to spot when the model is running.

The point being that only a few can actually improve on the finish, whilst modifications to the scale size are generally difficult. So what is wrong with using stuff straight out of the box if this is the remaining option?

I agree that using the wrong models can be criticised, but this is a separate issue altogether. Indeed, the wide availability of suitable models now for many popular themes in a highly finished condition has had a very significant effect on this aspect of exhibition layouts.

Again, one could criticise an out-of-the-box layout for indifferent scenery, poor track and a toy like operating pattern, as presumably one employs a valuable shortcut to enable more of one's precious, limited time to be directed towards other aspects of the hobby.

We have now reached the point where it is possible to take a model straight from the box and put it into service on a prototype N gauge layout. There is of course no room for complacency, we do have to be continually vigilant (consider the Ixion 'Manor') but equally, we must also be reasonable. If the model is correct, then that is that. There is no need to justify the use.

I am the first to admire ingenious conversions, I will praise the results of such work, and commend cases where a model has been well re-liveried. I am intrigued by the ability of some modellers to weather a model to make it look as though it has seen service for some time with little attention. Such work enhances the good groundwork of the manufacturer.

But it takes skill and experience. As I said a lot of us admit we can't improve on what we are sold, and for the vast bulk of modellers who cannot paint, who cannot modify, but who enjoy this great hobby of ours, the current work of the major manufacturers is a godsend. I think to criticise the use of such models is gross ingratitude.

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.