

# NG Sand & Gravel

## 014 Industrial Layout Part 5 – Aids to Creativity

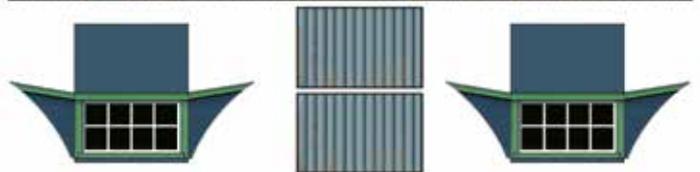
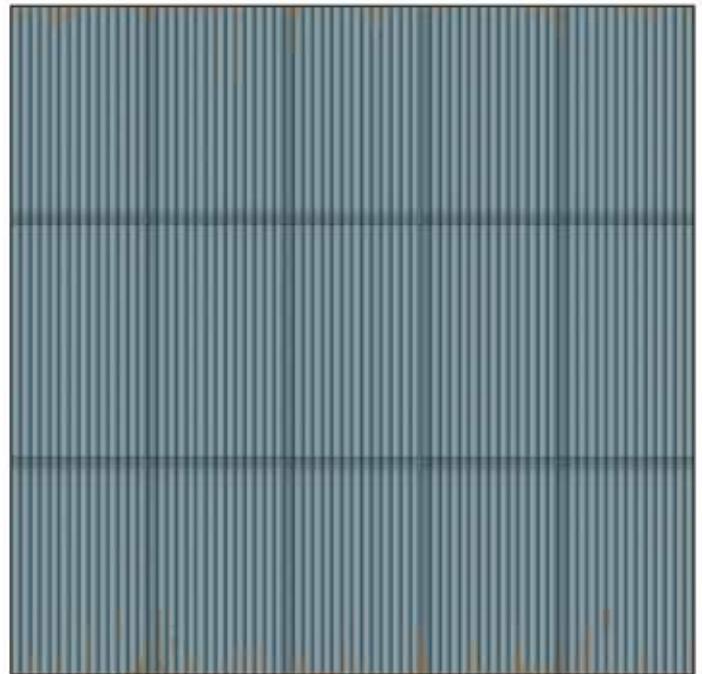


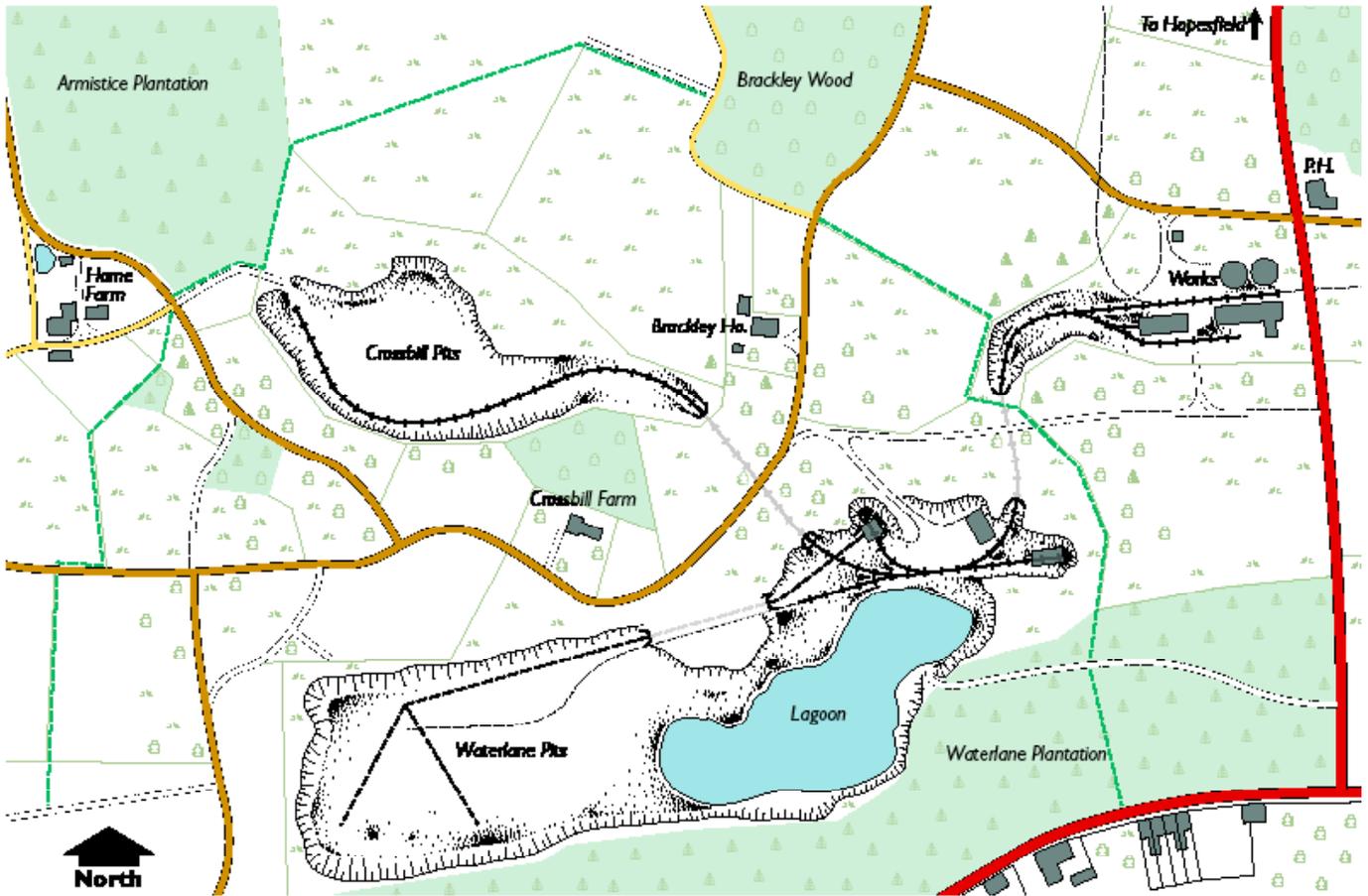
**F**OR SOMETIME NOW, the exact form that the 'workshop' would take has eluded me. Recently though, while browsing backnumbers of 'Model Railway Journal' I came across an article, by Tim Shackleton, about Nissen huts. This started the thought processes and in no time at all it was decided that a Nissen hut based 'shed' would fit the bill. But would it look right?

To establish this, I made my own 'card kit' – see right (not to scale). A happy hour or two spent in 'Photoshop' created the artwork - printed out on heavyweight matt A3 paper on an inkjet printer. The photo above shows it in place on the layout and I hope you will agree that it looks the part.

Nissen huts come in three sizes – I selected the smallest, 16ft across and, though they were more usually seven bays long, I cut mine down to five, with two side windows. Unlike the two larger types, the 16ft design has its centre set two foot above the base, making it 10ft high. This profile is interesting and more than accommodates a single 2ft gauge track plus workbenches and the like. The open ends will be partly filled in with timber and, maybe, a door on the finished model.

Suitable brass section has been purchased for the frame and vacuum formed 7mm scale 'corrugated' plastic sheet is in stock as well. All I've got to do now is actually make the model...





**CREATING THE LEGEND**

Because I want to add a front display panel, telling the ‘audience’ all about the layout, I’ve also been writing a full ‘history’. To begin with though, I first created a map of the imaginary location to help weave a (hopefully) convincing tale.

**HISTORY**

The sand and gravel deposits in the area to the North of the village of Waterlane have been exploited since the Roman occupation. Full scale excavation did not, however, begin until the late 19th century, though there is evidence of earlier, small scale pits in the area dating back to recurring periods of construction.

**1900 – 1920**

By this time, there was an extensive pit, operated by Ebenezer Goode, just Northeast of Waterlane, connected to a washing and grading plant, just across the Waterlane to Hopesfield road, by a two foot gauge tramway. Initially this was horse worked, the sand being carried in side tipping wagons. Once washed and graded, the material was transported from the works by horse and cart. Deliveries were made locally but, also, to the nearby railway sidings at Hopesfield station, from whence it was sent around the country. Steam wagons had replaced the carts by 1912. At the time of the First World War, the need for high quality sand, particularly that required for use in foundries, led to further exploration in the area. Suitable sand, of a high grade, was located just beyond Brackley House. Unfortunately, though a patriot, whose own son was to later perish on the Western Front, Sir Giles Brackley was disinclined to give a ‘right of way’ for the extension of the tramway over his land. Fortunately, Harry Fellows, who owned Crossbill Farm and land around the edge of Sir Brackley’s estate, was quite keen to provide access, albeit rather convoluted. Two tunnels were required to reach the new pit, appropriately named ‘Crossbill Pits’. The area between the two tunnels allowed

	Narrow Gauge Railway
	Narrow Gauge Railway – lifted
	Canveyer
	Public footpath
	Road – under 14ft, unmetalled
	Road – under 14ft, metalled
	Road – Class 2
	Road – Class 1, single carriageway
	Pond, Lake etc.
	Woodland – mixed
	Woodland – coniferous
	Rough pasture
	Pit or Quarry
	Building

access to a sizeable deposit of building sand so this was exploited as well. Later, there would be no less than three rail tunnels, a unique feature for an industrial sand carrier.

### 1920 – 1945

Ebenezer Goode, now in his seventies and in poor health, passed the business on to his eldest son, Victor, in 1921. Although output dropped during the 1920s, opportunity was taken to mechanise the tramway with a pair of ex WDLR 'Simplex' petrol tractors, these being cheaply available. With the arrival of the tractors, a northward extension was made of the 2ft gauge line to connect with the nearby station at Hopesfield. This enabled direct delivery of sand to be tipped into SG wagons, an extra siding being laid in for that purpose.

In 1931, a small pit was established to the Northwest of Waterlane, by Ernst Novak, an emigrant from the rising troubles then being suffered in Eastern Europe. Although worked without the aid of much in the way of machinery, the sand was found to be excellent for construction work and the business flourished. Such was Ernst's business acumen that his sales started to threaten the financial health of the Goode operation. Just before the outbreak of World War Two, the two concerns amalgamated, operating under the new name of 'Novak & Goode'. By the end of the war, only one of the two locos was serviceable, the other being used for spares. Sir Giles Brackley died in 1944, leaving his estate to his remaining son, Percival. Not wanting to live next to an expanding quarry, Percival sold Brackley House to a local businessman and moved to Home Farm.

### 1945 – 1965

Victor Goode retired in 1948, earlier than his father, at the age of 65. Heavy demands were made on the plant during the war and it emerged in a rather sorry state. Post war conditions only allowed slow improvement in equipment, although there was a good market for building and foundry sand. By 1957, Ernst Novak decided to retire also, selling out to a larger aggregate producer, who re-styled the business as 'NG Sand & Gravel'. Almost immediately, changes were noticed. The two Simplex locos were cut up on site and replaced by a new Ruston & Hornsby 'LBT'. Likewise, ten Robert Hudson 'Rugga' side tippers were purchased, replacing the existing skips, now all but rusted out. At the same time, the old workings, to the East of the works were abandoned, the track to them being lifted. This suited the local Council Highways Department very well, as it eliminated a troublesome road crossing. Some time later, the line to Hopesfield station was lifted also, as the station there was demoted to an unmanned 'halt', the signal box and all sidings etc., being removed.

By contrast, Waterlane Pits were expanded and, by 1960, a conveyor system was moving sand to a washing plant and storage hoppers, sited in the area between the two tunnels. Sand for building went from here in tipping lorries. The tramway into Crossbill Pits remained, not just to extract what remained of the foundry sand deposit but, also, as a dumping area for waste from the wet washer and elsewhere. A locomotive failure led to a second Ruston, this time an LAT, being brought in from one of the owning Company's other pits. Later, the pair were joined by a Simplex '40s', the line becoming the last resting place for much of the redundant two foot gauge equipment in the area.

Brackley House was sold to NG Sand & Gravel Co. Ltd, for use as a 'headquarters' in 1963. At the same time, Crossbill Farm and its land were purchased also, the heirs of Harry Fellows not

finding farming to their liking. This permitted an expansion of the Waterlane Pits, virtually up to the edges of the roads bordering the north and east.

### 1965 TO DATE

As the conveyor system expanded, there was less and less for the rail system to do. Both of the Rustons were sold to equipment dealers in 1967. The single remaining loco, appropriately, the Simplex, was kept in the timber framed workshop near the washer and storage bins. By 1969, only the track from the wet washer to the old Crossbill Pits area remained, taking away the 'wet waste'. No more foundry sand remained at Crossbill, it being gradually back filled and landscaped over, as required by the new laws that came into being after WW2. Early in 1970, the whole of the remaining railway plant was sold to a local scrap dealer. While the rail did indeed go for scrap, along with the poorer items of rolling stock, the Simplex and a few decent skips were purchased by preservationists.

The pits changed hands yet again in 1983, going to an 'International Conglomerate'. A new conveyor was run from Waterlane Pits under the road to the Northwest during 1986. This gave access to further sand and gravel deposits and, at the same time, the area between the wet washer site and the works was exploited also. Since then, while the Crossbill area has returned to nature, the Waterlane Pits have expanded southwards as well as to the northeast, threatening to engulf the nearby village. All the sand is removed by road, using heavy lorries, adding to the villagers woes.



### OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

I've also been busy building up more rolling stock. A second rake of four skips has been assembled and I also made up a 'Fuel Bowser' set, to supply diesel to the face machinery. The LAT (see Part 4 - REVIEW 62) is nearly finished, only awaiting a driver and cab screen to hide the edge of the speaker. *To be continued...*

