

This saga is told by the grey bearded member of the Trent Valley Area Group, and is the story of an attempt to build a layout to far too tight a deadline.

The object of the model:-

- To give the Group a focus and a reason to meet
- To give members somewhere to run their rolling stock
- To provide a model railway to publicise the Group and the Association at exhibitions and so, hopefully, to enrol new members for both.

But mainly to provide a working exhibit for our stand at the Derby Model Railway Exhibition in April,1996

NOVEMBER 1995 - a certain grey-bearded Group member, who had been "armchair" modelling a layout for far too long, finally found a track plan, in the then current edition of *Modelling Railways Illustrated*, that looked interesting to operate, would fit onto baseboards he part owned and could use track already in stock. He discussed this with two other members of the Group, one of whom was the other part owner of the baseboards, and the idea of a group layout was born. The idea was helped along by the fact that some form of working layout was needed for the Derby Show.

DECEMBER 1995 - A letter was sent to all Group members offering the boards, track and plan on indefinite loan to the Group in return for assistance with construction of the layout. The plan had now become a mirror-image of the original to suit the available pointwork. To this end a meeting was called for January 6th,1996 (About three months too late by my reckoning)

JANUARY 6th 1996 - Fourteen members had replied either by letter or telephone and all were in favour of the project. Ten of these were able to attend the meeting, and after the other Group business had been dealt with, the boards and track plan were examined and discussed. At the suggestion of the member from Gresley slight modifications were made to the track plan so that, given a large enough hall, the layout could be joined to the new Ekoms Moor layout of the Gresley Model Railway Group.

Mike then made tea, and the sandwiches and tea were consumed. Afterwards we examined the available track. This is old but sound Wrenn fibre based sleeper track in OO, probably from the late 50's judging from the price tags on some of the pointwork, e.g. 37/- (£1.87) for a double junction, with switched diamonds in nickel silver rail for about £1.70. The sleepers and spacing are really too big for 4mm scale and the rail is heavy enough for 7mm standard gauge, definitely near enough for 7mm narrow gauge! The points are very toylike, with large clearances and blades which pivoted to close the gap at the nose, but looked as if they could be re-jigged.

A reasonable excuse for a light railway from Ashbourne to Hopton, up the valley of the Henmore Brook was "imagined" by the grey-bearded member, including likely traffic. This gave the layout its name which was also accepted. Buildings were discussed and three members of the Group each took up an idea and promised to provide, between them, an engine shed, a station building and a rail-served business, these being the main buildings on the layout. Mike made more tea and the meeting broke up after a very productive three hours. The next meeting was arranged for January 14th. (I supposed we might make it if we continued building throughout the show)

JANUARY 14th 1996 - Four members plus one friend of the Group began the meeting. The shell of the engine shed was brought along for comment. Apparently it will take up to a Leek & Manifold loco, but Irish 3ft gauge locos are just a tad too big! The first modified point was also shown. It had proved possible to use all the rail from the original layout, albeit on copperclad fibreglass sleepers and to more prototypical tolerances and operation. At this point (AGH!) Mike arrived with copies of the plans and so we put the kettle on for tea.

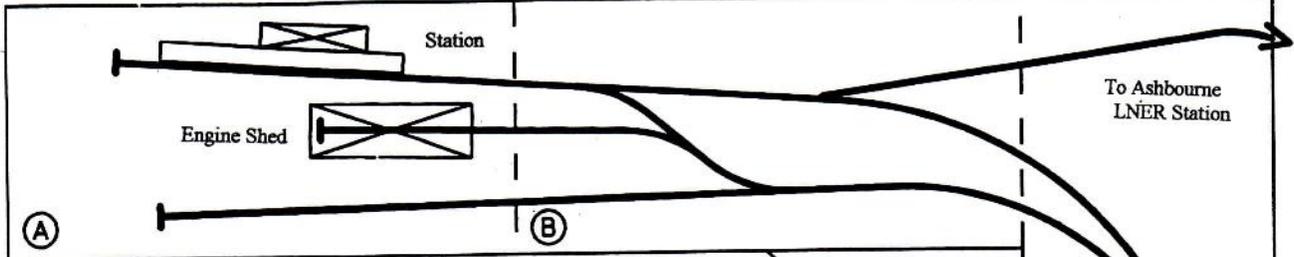
The baseboards were then taken out and tidied and modified to the sound of powered planer, saw and screwdriver. A jig was made to locate boltholes and dowels in the optional boards (see plans in Part 2 to understand this). This jig is available for any Group member who wishes to make his own module. Mike made more tea for us after which the meeting broke up. Board D was taken off to Gresley to be matched up to Ekoms Moor, to establish the board-edge to track-centre dimension for the interchangeable parts of the layout and any future modules. The next meeting was set for SATURDAY FEBRUARY 3rd and the task to lay track, if I can rebuild the points in time (It's beginning to look more probable! I hadn't reckoned on the member from Gresley's energy and enthusiasm, or Mike's excellent tea brewing)

FEBRUARY 3rd 1996 - The meeting began with four of the group present, this swelled to eleven as the afternoon wore on. The boards were set up indoors at first, but when board D arrived back from Gresley it was discovered that the accommodation wasn't as wide as thought and so the layout was re-erected outside. It's cool outside in February - even in the sun!

Track was positioned roughly and all went according to plan until board D. It looked alright on paper but when it came to tracklaying the headshunt for the industrial building only held a loco or a wagon, not a lot of use really. After some discussion the main line points were moved nearer board C and the building turned through 180 degrees and positioned at the opposite end of the board. This change had a bonus in that it released another set of points which could be used to double up the goods siding beyond the engine shed on board A. At this point we realised that we had a shortage of rail joiners.

A teabreak was declared and we returned to the comparative warmth of the railway shed. As Mike hadn't arrived I made the tea. He arrived halfway through the first cup and was promptly despatched to the local model shop for rail joiners. On his return track was pinned down on boards A and B and marked out on C. By now it was becoming too cold to work outside so the boards were packed away and moved indoors. Mike made tea and we discussed whether other buildings were needed on the model and also the group's contribution to setting up the Association Convention in May. The next meeting was set for Saturday 24th February, group members will, of course, progress various items between now and then.

FEBRUARY 5th 1996 - Whilst continuing with the trackwork it occurred to me that there was no covered goods accommodation in the yard. With the extra siding now available this could be overcome. The member from Stone (Staffs) had expressed an interest in producing some buildings and I think the goods shed and platform from Southwold would be a good basis for a model - after all we're already using Southwold's engine shed



R.SLATE : MARCH 1996

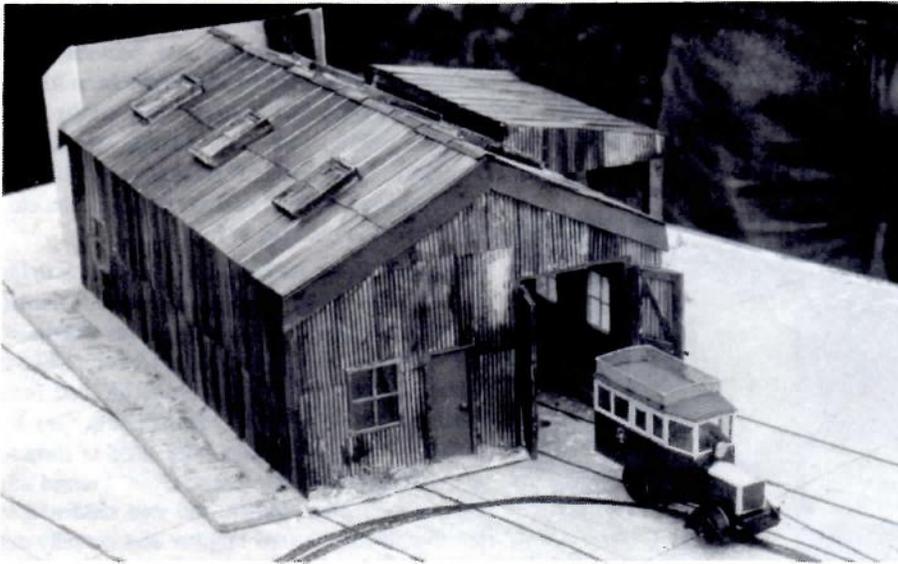
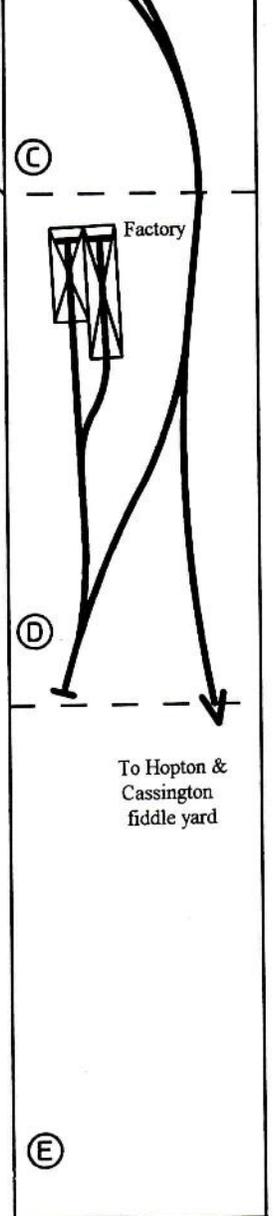
## THE HENMORE DALE LIGHT RAILWAY

### ASHBOURNE (PARK ROAD) STATION

*Presented by the Trent Valley Area Group of  
The 7mm Narrow Gauge Association*

This model depicts the Ashbourne terminus of a narrow gauge railway following the valley of the Hunmore Brook to Hopton and Carsington. Trade consists of quarried stone, various milled minerals and bricks from the brickworks at Hopton, as well as grain and flour to and from the watermills at Sturston and Atlow. A passenger service serves these places and also Hognaston.

The site of the Ashbourne terminus is now a housing estate and the upper terminus is covered by the Carsington reservoir. In fact the whole line won't be found on any map as it is a figment of the imagination of the grey bearded member of the Group. The Group meets monthly at various venues in an area bordered by Stafford, Burton-on-Trent, Leicester and Nottingham. For details ask at the layout or contact Phil Traxson at 20, Willson Road, Littleover, Derby, DE23 7BZ



**Factory with incomplete Boiler House at far end (Builder J. Beers). Track to factory not yet laid - awaiting sleeper strip.**

*Photo: Peter Swift*

and station building - besides that he suggested the extra siding! FEBRUARY 11th 1996 - During the past week drawings for the goods shed and loading platform were prepared and posted to the member in Stone to give him a base to work from, although what he produces, apart from size, is left to him. The track on the main board has been fixed in its final (!) position and most of the feed wires are in place from the rails to the terminal strips on each board. Dropper wires have been soldered in place on the points to connect to the switches for changing the polarity of

the frogs.

Point operation is to be manual based on the bicycle spoke under the baseboard system. A slightly more sophisticated system based on this has been developed by a fellow member of the Mickleover Model Railway Group and he has loaned us a demonstration unit. With his permission I will put together a diagram and description for a future issue of Narrow Lines although we are probably only re-inventing the wheel.

*(To be continued)*