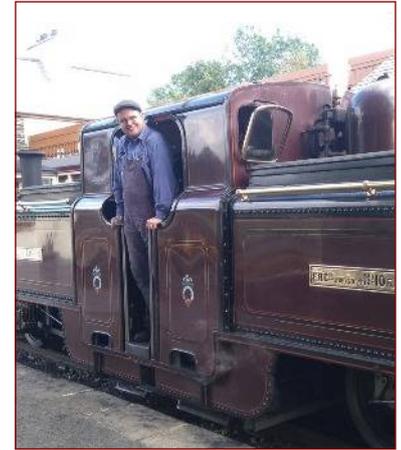


# The Henmore Dale Saga - Part 4

**Andrew Young** provides an update on the Trent Valley Area Group's activities.

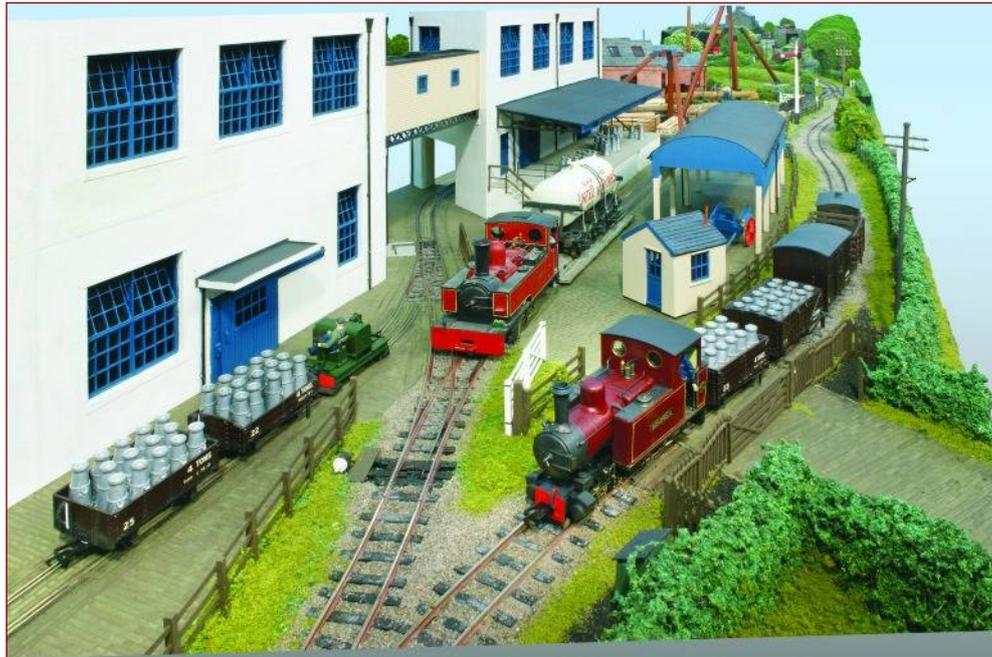
Photographs by Steve Flint, courtesy Railway Modeller.



what has kept us occupied for the intervening two decades.

## The back story

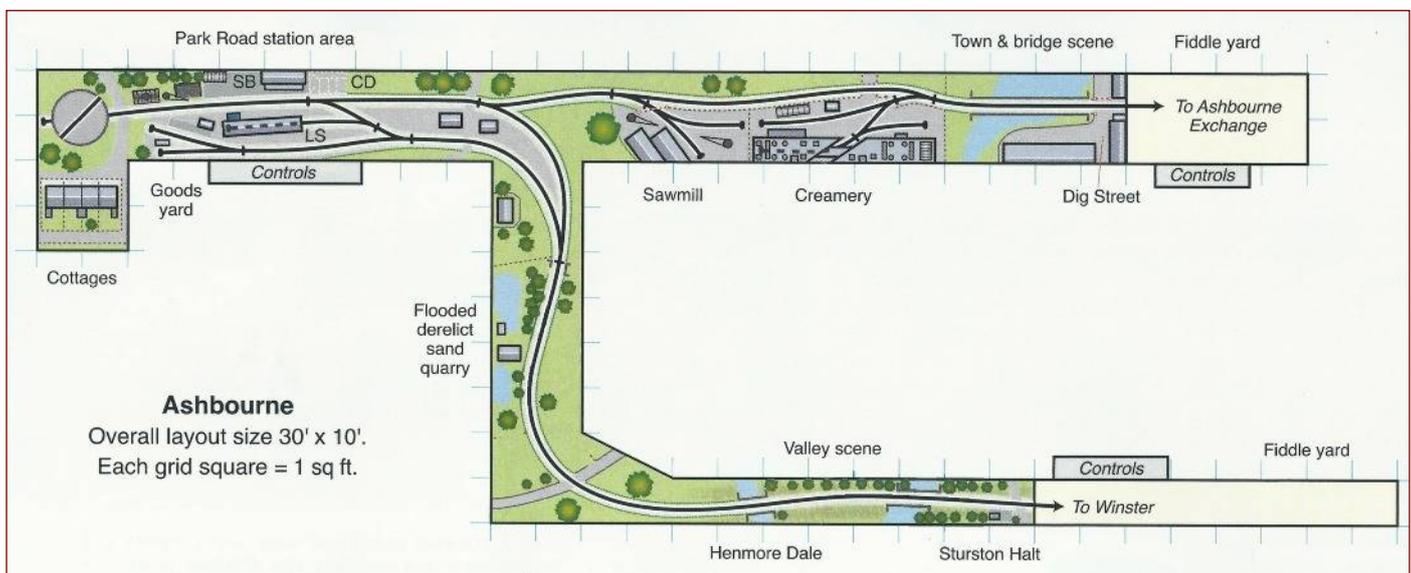
The Henmore Dale Light Railway (HDLR) has been built in and around the Derbyshire Peak District gateway town of Ashbourne and also along parts of the valley of the Henmore Brook. Originally constructed in the late 1890s, the line operated first as a general carrier up the Henmore Valley as far as the village of Hopton. Between 1905 and 1910 the line was extended northwards into the heart of the Peak District, so that the vast quantities of limestone there could be transported easily from the many quarries in the area. At the same time a branch line from Park Road

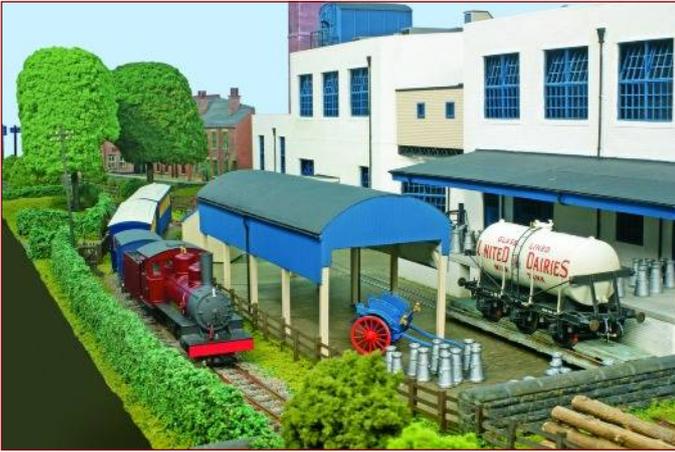


*Rush hour at the Creamery. Hunslet Mallet 'Boadicea' (as described in NL 202) approaches with a goods train. A Simplex waits to swap empty churns for loaded and a Hunslet 2-6-2 tank waits to head down to the Exchange with a standard gauge milk tanker on a transporter wagon. The stock seen here belongs to three different group members and shows what can be achieved by working to a similar standard.*

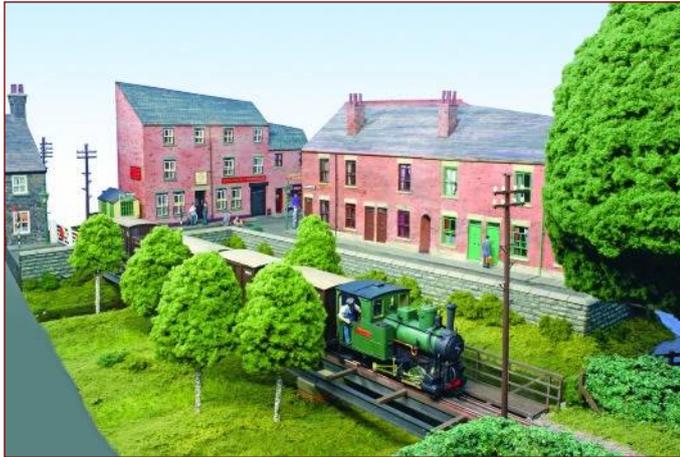
The Henmore Dale Light Railway is the layout of the Association's Trent Valley Area Group and the saga was started by Phil as an occasional series to keep other members of the Association informed of our activities. So occasional has this series been that only those with long memories will remember the first three parts of this series since they appeared in Narrow Lines 99, 101 and 102 in 1996. It is time to fill in the gaps of

Station was built through the centre of Ashbourne to the NSR /LNWR joint station on the other side of the town. Here a new narrow gauge station was built, Ashbourne Exchange, with passenger and goods interchange facilities with the standard gauge railway. Local companies took advantage of the narrow gauge railway's expansion: Cockayne & Sons built a sawmill, with a private siding connection to the branch line, which made the transportation of raw materials (large logs) and the finished





*'Ashbourne Hall', a much modified Bachmann Mogul, passes the Creamery with a passenger service.*

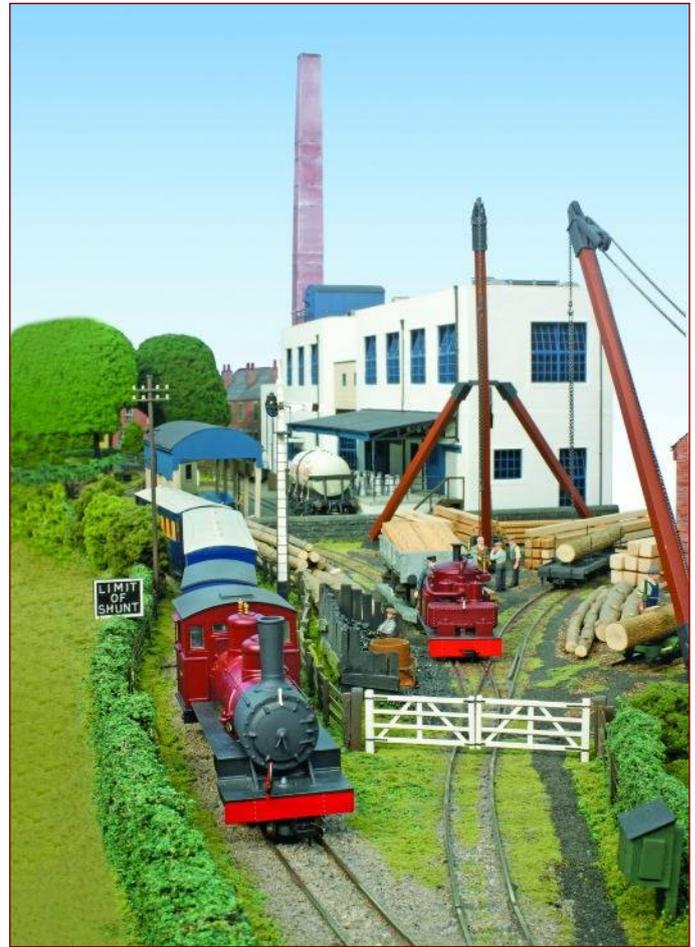


*'Hercules' brings a short goods service across the Brook at Dig Street. 'Hercules' started out as a Magic Train loco, one of many rtr models converted by members of the TVAG..*

products (sawn timber) very easy indeed. Continuing towards Exchange, the skyline is dominated by the creamery, processing milk from the Henmore Dale and sending it country wide.

## The model

The HDLR in model form matured into the layout Ashbourne (Park Road). Seeing as it's been so long, a little recap of where we left off last time seems reasonable. Our initial aim for the layout was to give the Group a modelling focus in addition to our mutual enjoyment of drinking tea and beer. Started on some baseboards which a member part owned, the basis of Park Road station emerged with a run round loop, goods yard and loco shed with two lines heading off, one through the town to the mainline station and the other up the Henmore valley past a factory. The layout being modular could be set up in a number of configurations as our whim or space requirements required, though soon after, one particular set up was chosen as we extended the layout and this is the layout shown in the plan and the one many members have seen at our annual Members' Days in Mickleover or at exhibitions. This initial layout in its usual configuration was eighteen feet long by up to eight feet wide, but was to grow to an overall size of thirty feet long by ten feet wide scenically complete including fiddle yards, or a maximum thirty eight feet long operable length if we added the other two baseboards we had running but not complete scenically.



*A few moments later, 'Ashbourne Hall' passes 'Ible' shunting the sawmill. Looks like someone will be paying into the fine tin with the signal still being at danger!*

## Growing pains

Some groups build a succession of smaller layouts over time as their skills develop; we on the other hand took the alternative path of extending the layout, which grew like Topsy. On the way, we would re-do parts which in our mind, didn't work and the scenery has also been re-done a couple of times. The result of one growth spurt was the appearance of a forest of trees on the layout.

Our first addition was a turntable and cottages on the station end of the layout, reflecting the fact that the HDLR was a serious concern, with large locos to shift the tons of limestone being quarried in the area. The gardens of the cottages, although seeing the least movement on the whole layout, would often become the biggest talking point at exhibitions.

The first casualty of our re-working principles was the factory just outside the station. A lovely model, it sadly wasn't up to travelling round to exhibitions and literally fell apart on us. Undaunted, this area was re-worked into a sawmill, an eye catching feature aided by the derricks towering above. Cockayne & Sons sawmill is named after an actual business in Ashbourne. This cameo was published in the April 2004 'Railway Modeller'.

The next developments were structural. Much sawdust was created and copious amounts of tea drunk as the overall form of the layout became a 'Y' shape with the station becoming a terminus junction. First up was to extend the valley end round



*'Sandybrooke' heads a train of limestone out of the Henmore Valley, passing Park Road's home signal and crossing the lane watched by a shepherd.*



*'Sandybrooke' brings a train of limestone to a stand in Park Road station, 'Sandybrooke' is a 2-8-4 tank which started out as a Bachmann On30 Consolidation loco.*

ninety degrees so that it ran parallel with the town section creating a layout that was six feet wide with the valley section narrowing down to baseboards one foot wide. Most of our baseboards are four feet by two feet for the town and station sections and four feet by one foot for the valley scene. Boringly practical and paired up with each other for transport, this has had the advantage of making our modular approach work so that the layout could increase or decrease in size easily depending on the exhibition space available.

Following on, the town section was the first to extend, with an extra pair of baseboards comprising the Dig Street scene and bridge over the brook on one and a Mill including an 09 internal tramway on the other. We then produced another pair of boards which fitted between these two boards comprising a street scene. This pair of boards was designed so that they could either fit into the group layout, or the home layout of the member who built the buildings for them. Parallel to this, sixteen feet of valley scene was also constructed, eight feet of this running parallel to the Mill and Dig St being scenically completed including river crossings and a halt, the Henmore version of Aberglaslyn if you like, giving our locos somewhere to stretch their legs.

About this time, we realised that with two fiddle yards back to back, it was all a bit too tight for handling cassettes full of stock. The answer was widening the layout by inserting a four feet long section which could be used when we had space to exhibit it. This section shows the HDLR passing a disused sand pit, complete with submerged wagons and digger. The only disappointment with this scene is that the substance we used for the water (discretion prevents me from naming it) has never set properly and latterly started chemically altering creating a Moses-esque parting in the middle.

The final development of the layout was the result of some members of the group becoming unconvinced by the Mill board. Whilst it could be fun, often when exhibiting the layout the Mill would sit there stationary as the operators had their hands full operating trains or too busy re-forming trains in the fiddle yard to operate it. There were several conversations about changes ranging from small tweaks to total replacement without any great decision being made by the time we exhibited the layout at the Wigan show. There a member of the public took a great shine to the Mill and asked us if we were prepared to sell it! Following an impromptu group meeting, a price was agreed and we returned home with four feet less of layout. In the Mill's place, we built a large Creamery, with 16.5mm gauge internal track and space for transporter wagons to bring in standard gauge milk tankers. Operation of this feature of the layout was transformed with a regular supply of coal inbound and dairy products in tankers, churns and dairy products coming in and vans going out. One member intends building a private owner

railcar for dairy products which was promptly christened the High Speed Cheese.

The crowning glory came when the layout featured in the April 2013 issue of Railway Modeller magazine, complete with some stunning photography by Steve Flint coinciding with our appearance at York Exhibition that Easter. Over the weekend of the show, there was much discussion about the future of the group layout over copious amounts of tea, beer and for a couple of us, a three course pork pie dinner, but with no real conclusion. This exhibition proved to be the layout's swansong as, through tiredness at the end of a long three hot days exhibiting, one station baseboard was badly damaged whilst dismantling the layout on the Monday evening. Suddenly, discussing the future of the layout and the group became more urgent.

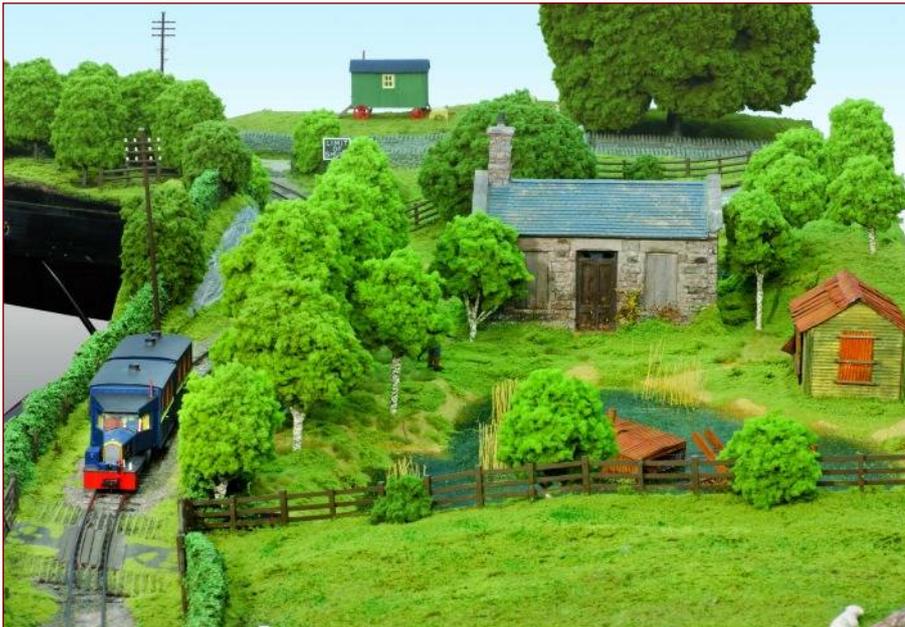
For what happened next, you'll have to wait for part five of the Henmore Dale Saga, but I promise we won't make you wait for another two decades to read it. *(Just two months – Part 5 will appear in the December NL. Ed.)*

## More about Trent Valley Area Group

The Trent Valley Area Group has its epicentre in Derby, though with some members in several far flung corners of England and Wales. Mostly known for organising the AGM & Exhibition in Burton each year, group members can also be found

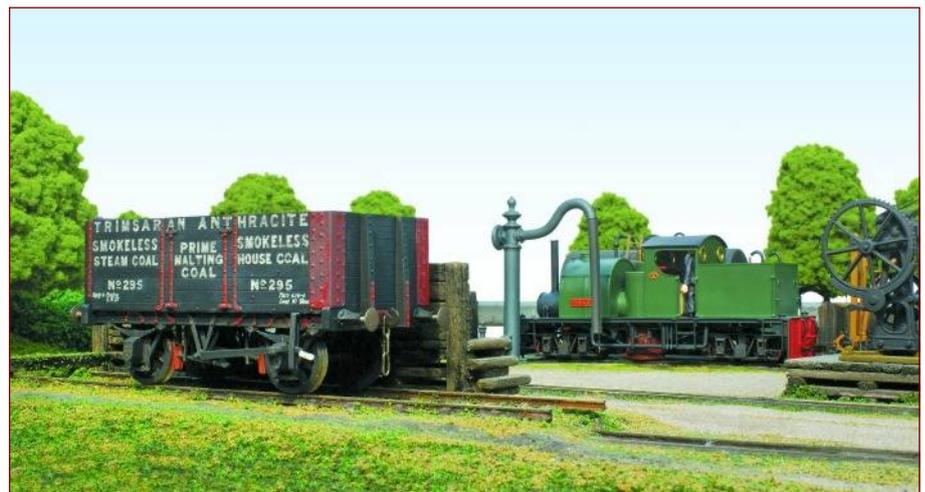
- carrying out their own and Derby Mickleover Club modelling projects alongside the group ones
- running three narrow gauge modelling businesses
- volunteering on numerous narrow gauge railways
- travelling the highways in their camper & caravans
- cruising the high seas and narrow canals

The Group meets on the third Thursday of the month, drinking beer in the Brunswick Pub in Derby and discussing almost anything. Anyone is welcome to join us at these meetings.



*The petrol railcar and trailer run past the submerged excavator in the disused sand pit. The railcar and trailer are a combination of Bachmann and Port Wynnstay bug box coach parts. This section of the layout allowed both a scenic part to watch the trains go by and some much needed elbow room in the fiddle yard area.*

*The HDLR's shay 'Typhoon' rests at Park Road to take the next load of limestone across town and the steep run up to the unloading ramp, whilst a standard gauge coal wagon waits a transporter wagon to carry it back to Exchange. One of the most talked about Bachmann conversions on the layout, the shape of the saddle tank has led some to suggest it's a Shay crossed with a George England loco.*



## Contributions for 'Narrow Lines'

Contributions for 'Narrow Lines' are always required. They can be on any subject relevant to modelling narrow gauge railways in the 0 Gauge group of scales. Everything from single photographs with captions or short tips which could be used to fill spaces of less than a page up to a fully illustrated multi-part article that needs to be spread over several issues is welcome. 'Notes for Contributors' are available from the Editor or from the Association website.

If you are planning to submit a book or product review please let the Editor know as soon as possible to minimise the risk of duplication of effort. Members who would like to be featured in an 'Interview with a Member' feature (please don't be shy) can obtain a template from the Editor.

Please note that your present Editor has impaired hearing so contact by email rather than phone is preferred where possible.