

The Henmore Dale Saga: Part 5

Andrew Young brings the Henmore Dale Saga up to date. (Part 4 was in NL 221)

Photographs by the author.



At the end of Part 4 of this Saga, it was Easter 2013, we'd just exhibited Ashbourne (Park Road) at the York Exhibition and were heading back to the East Midlands with a broken layout. This proved to be a watershed moment for the TVAG. As alluded to in the last instalment, there had been much discussion over the York show about what direction the modelling interests of the Group would take in future – understandable when you have a three-day show with plenty of time for discussions in the pub afterwards too. Some were happy to carry on expanding the layout, extending it even further. Others thought that the layout had grown too large for our group to exhibit, that some parts were worn out and that we'd be better off starting again with a new layout. Over the two decades, our modelling skills had developed. The question was how best to move forward?

Whatever happened, one thing that we could agree on is that any decisions should be made at our Group Meetings so that as many people as possible could be included in the decision making process. This might hamper one or two of our flung members but in this internet age it is easy to put ideas forward electronically for consideration. Gaining a consensus amongst a group is not an easy or quick matter, which is why it is three years on that I'm writing this! One aspect that did continue was our monthly social meetings at the Brunswick. At these meetings, members would bring along examples of their own modelling projects for discussing and after much beer had flowed under the bridge, thoughts once again turned to a Group layout. Some felt that the damage done to the baseboard could be repaired, others disagreed. The conclusion we reached was that some parts of the layout would be scrapped, mainly those where we were starting to have issues with the track or warped baseboards and anything salvageable would be kept. Other parts of the layout would be saved and possibly re-used in a new layout. Henmore Mark Two was born.

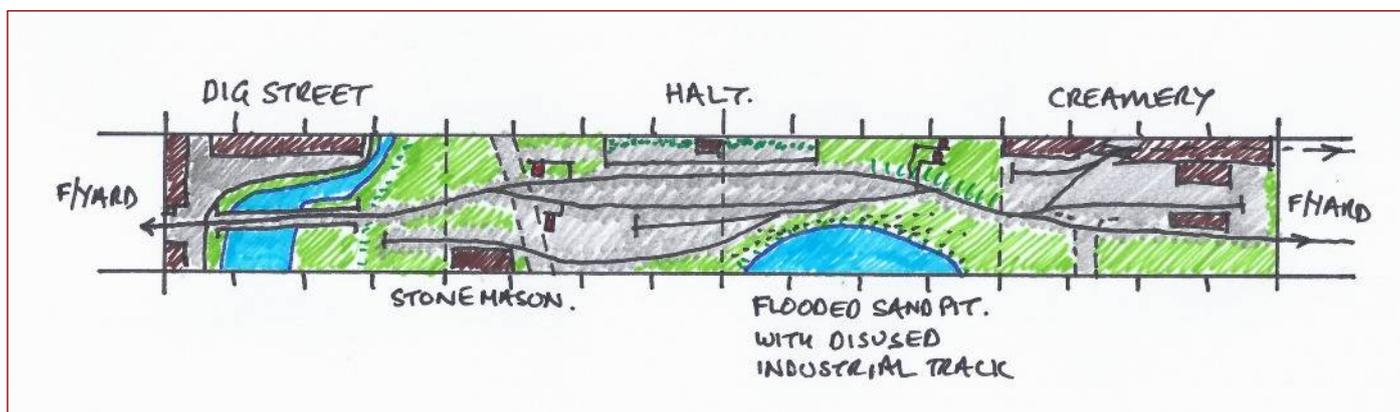
When a Mark Two is developed the result is often something bigger and better; in this case we decided that smaller was

better. Our Group has not grown in size over the years, we're all getting older and most didn't want to transport quite so much layout around each time.

After much doodling and discussion, the original design of a semi-modular layout proved to be long lasting. One aspect of the layout that we all agreed we liked was the Creamery which was also the newest addition to the layout; this would remain. We also agreed that we liked the Dig Street scene and the idea of building a new layout around these parts was born. In between Dig Street and the Creamery, two new baseboards would be inserted, giving a scenic section 16ft long, sandwiched between a pair of fiddle yards, depicting a scene in the Ashbourne town section of the HDLR. The decision was taken to build new fiddle yards with a fan of sidings rather than re-use the existing cassettes. This would be easier for some members to operate and also reduces the risk of the stock developing an earth fault.

Several ideas were put forward as to what should appear on the new baseboards, the traffic on the HDLR of stone, timber, coal, dairy, livestock and general goods giving plenty of scope for ideas. We also wanted something that would create some operating interest for ourselves and the public alike. The resulting layout, as shown in the plan, is for a passing loop with halt, the loop line being goods only, with two sidings, one for general traffic and the other leading through into a stone mason's yard. Operating interest would also be given by shunting the Creamery yard, the internal railway of which is being extended into the fiddle yard to make access easier than having to reach inside the building as was the case before.

Early on in the process, it was decided that whilst work would remain centred around Derby it would take place in more than one member's house, though at the moment, that's waiting for a member's garage to be made more habitable first. In the meantime, shortly after our annual Mickleover Members' day in 2016, a start was made on the two new baseboards to fit



between the existing boards. Track laying followed, with one new member and some of us being reminded, as to how joyful an afternoon can be when spent cutting and gapping copper clad sleepers. As I write this in June 2016, all the track is laid and a start is being made on the wiring. A small group of members meets each week to progress the layout, with any major design decisions being decided at the monthly meetings.

The layout will be completed electrically and tested thoroughly before a start is made on the scenic work. Unlike the last incarnation of the HDLR, we are planning on installing lighting and a backscene this time round, though we haven't worked out how we will do that yet. Whether the layout will be electrically complete for some serious testing/playing at the Mickleover Members' Day early in 2017, you'll have to come along to find out.

In the meantime, if anyone wants to join in with the activities of the Trent Valley Area Group, either socially or by joining us in building the layout, we can be found in the Brunswick in Derby on the third Thursday of the month. Our contact details are found in 'Narrow News'. Also, the HDLR will soon be coming to you on the web at www.henmoredale.org.uk



The two new baseboards taking shape, seen from the operating side. The mainline track is seen, along with the lightweight industrial track which will be disused and form part of the scenery alongside the old sand pit at the rear.



The Dig Street baseboard undergoing modification to the track layout to link in to the new baseboards. The scenery will be refreshed alongside the new portion.



Promoting the Association

Irvine Cresswell has submitted these two photographs of a quiet moment at the Association's stand at Guildex - the Gauge 0 Guild 's annual exhibition held in Telford in Shropshire in September. Chairman Neil Smith is on the left and Frank Sharp on the right. We are much indebted to those who give up their time to promote narrow gauge modelling and the Association in this way.

