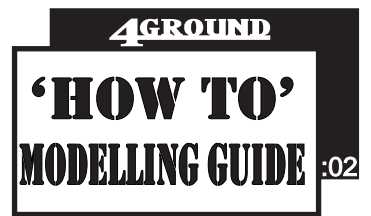


Basing Dead Man's Hand Buildings From 4Ground

By Phil Hendry



I suffer from a lack of storage - that's what comes of sharing a modern three-bedroom house with three other people! For me, a large part of the appeal of the hobby is visual - if it doesn't look good, why bother? You might as well play a board-game if you're not going to make the setup look good! Taken together those two facts make decisions about wargaming scenery quite difficult.

Terrain boards are very 'space-hungry'. I admire the ones the guys from Great Escape Games made for their Dead Man's Hand demo game, and the ones 4Ground made for Salute this year - they look great - but they take a lot of space to store, and they're only useable for games in one genre. I can't justify that.

I'm a fan of the 'undercloth' - a sheet of material, of a suitable colour, placed on the table, with other terrain items placed on top. The one I'm using for my Old West games is my 'desert' cloth. It's actually a piece of corduroy material (normally used for making trousers!), which I bought for very little money from a sort of 'remainder' cloth place in town. I actually use the 'back' - the smooth side - otherwise it'd look like some sort of strangely ploughed field! I've stuck a lot of 'blobs' of Woodland Scenics turf on, to relieve the monotony of the surface and represent the sort of low-growing scrub you get in a lot of deserts. The blobs are 'flat enough' not to interfere with the placement of other terrain pieces or the movement of bases of figures.

Figure and building bases are carefully painted to match the colour of the cloth, and I use blobs of the same turf on the bases too. It doesn't look half bad!

So I decided to base my Old West buildings in this scheme too - or, at least, the 'sub-bases'; leaving the buildings loose makes it easier to store them, and allows one a bit of flexibility in that one can use different combinations of base and building. Having the sub-bases and boardwalks stuck down on bigger bases reduces the time needed for setting up and dismantling games too - simply because there are less pieces to handle.

The bases are simply made from 3mm MDF (I wanted to use 2mm, but couldn't find any to buy around here). The sub-base, any fences, and boardwalks are placed on the MDF, and then I draw around them to produce an irregular 'blob', which is cut out using my electric jigsaw, and the edges are chamfered with a sanding disc in my Dremel multi-tool (wear a dust mask - the dust is really bad for your lungs!).



The sub-base and boardwalks are glued on, then some of my usual desert sand and grit mixture is stuck on, painted and dry-brushed to match all the rest of my 'desert' models, being careful not to get paint on the sub-base and boardwalks where it isn't wanted. A few Silflor tufts and the odd 'blob' of my Woodland Scenics 'Burnt Grass' Turf mix are applied to finish off.



The resulting bases are easy to store in 'Really Useful Boxes', along with the buildings. One useful tip is to make sure the bases fit in the boxes you're intending to use when you're at the marking out stage - it reduces the chance of screams of frustration which might otherwise result from finding your lovingly created base doesn't quite fit in any of the boxes you can buy!



The full
Dead Man's Hand
range can be viewed at
www.4Ground.co.uk

