

Snowy River Railroad: Factiously Maine USA

Terry Rowe introduces the On30 modular layout built and operated by 'The Midland Moonshiners'

Photos by the author.



'The Midland Moonshiners' ,left to right, Dale Heys,Keith Johnson ,Terry Rowe and Pete Grant,part of the Slim Gauge Circle,On30 'Track and Trestle' modular group, OTT



A view looking along the layout.

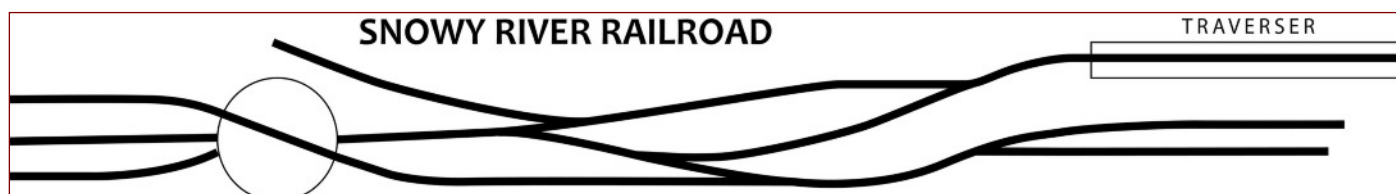
For me the name 'Snowy River' goes back to the 1982 Australian drama film based on the Banjo Paterson poem 'The Man from Snowy River'. I always thought, 'What a great name for a place!' and have kept it my memory for the right 'model railroad layout'. As an ex-Fitter on the South African Railways, narrow gauge was in my blood. I started as an apprentice in the final years of steam in the Cape changing over to electrical traction in 1983. I came across Bachmann On30 and thought, 'I like this.' It gave the option of ready to run, kit bashing and scratch building in a scale and gauge I could get my head around.

I had tried to build an On30 layout in the garage some seven years ago. Like all grand ideas it failed as it was too big and I didn't know enough at the time about how to build a layout. Since that time, I have joined the Slim Gauge Circle, the 7mm Narrow Gauge Association and the Daventry Model Railway Club. Between the three I have made some great friends who have been more than happy to share their knowledge and help with creating a working layout. I also now subscribe to the following ideas:

- build a manageable layout within one's resources
- don't be afraid to ask for help
- be part of a club or Association.

One other bit of sound advice which I took from the lads who are part of the Slim Gauge Circle is that model railroading is a hobby and it should be fun.

I started building 'Snowy River Railroad' just over a year ago. Soon after I started I talked Dale Heys, Keith Johnson and Pete Grant into becoming part of the Railroad team, combining our skills to make sure the layout was of an acceptable standard. We are all part of the groups I have mentioned. The Slim Gauge Circle has an On30 modular group – SGC OTT or On30 Track & Trestle. When planning 'Snowy River' I adapted the modular standards so that the layout can be connected as a 'short-line spur' (branch) to the main modular configuration via a corner module. SGC-OTT have based their modules on the Northern Californian Modular Group's standard, basically a four foot by two foot flat top module.





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Snowy River Railroad is somewhere 'between here, there and nowhere' in New England Maine. Although the 'two-footers' had come to an end by the 1940s in Maine, in our world 'Snowy River Railroad' survived and is still running, providing a



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passenger service from Snowy River to the main-line. The layout is set sometime in the late 1950s/early 1960s. It is apparent that the owners of Snowy River made some clever purchases, buying brand new and second hand rolling stock which can be seen working hard on the railroad.

'Snowy River Railroad' is a modular end to end 12ft x 20in layout. One end is a terminus engine depot being fed by a turntable into the two-road shed. There is refueling on-shed – water, wood and coal. The two main local industries – potato growing and fishing – are the life blood of the railroad. A spur runs into 'Chalk Bay Quay', a small but thriving little port which has a few industries around it as well as fishing. Next to the small town of Snowy River there is a run around station with a center platform,. The entrance of the cassette fiddle yard is disguised by an overbridge with a section of standard gauge track. (This helps show the difference between the gauges within the scale.)

Most of the buildings are scratchbuilt, with a number of them using <http://www.clevermodels.net/> downloads as a template. Trackwork is PECO On30. Operation is DDC for the running of trains. The turntable, <http://www.kitwoodhillmodels.com/>, is battery powered. (The layout started with a Peco On30 turntable but after its first running it was decided that this was not up to scratch and

needed to be replaced. The turnouts are controlled manually by Blue Point Turnout http://www.ngtrains.com/Pages/TRA/blue_point.html supplied by <http://www.ngtrains.com/>.

We have tried to make sure we keep things simple so that we maintain success.

The layout had its first running at the Milton Keynes Model Railway Society's exhibition on 11th February 2017 and then again at the Birtly Exhibition on 4th and 5th March 2017, the 7mm Narrow Gauge Association AGM and the Great Central Railway Exhibition. It seems to have been well received as we have a number of bookings for the future.



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Snowy River Railroad was years in the concept and planning but only took 7 months to build. Without the input from the team, Pete Grant, Keith Johnson, Dale Heys plus Paddy Davis and Peter Blackham (The Midland Moonshiners) the layout would not have got to this stage. It is still a work in progress with detailing taking place, but it is up and running, fun to operate and a dream come true. We have put some thought into planning two more modules to interchange with the terminus module and give the option of a through run to another 'fiddle yard' at the other. This would extend the layout to 16ft.

'The Midland Moonshiners' are part of the Slim Gauge Circle and of Daventry Model Railway Club.



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