

# Denver & Rio Grande Western Railway

## NEWSLETTER 13 - February 2012

This On30 layout (American 'O' Scale (1:48) running on HO 16.5 mm gauge track) portrays the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railway's Three Foot Gauge service in Colorado from Denver to Durango (450 miles) then on to Silverton (another 45 miles) plus the branch between Durango and Farmington in New Mexico (50 miles) (run here as a Colorado & Southern line) together with the addition of the Rio Grande Southern Railroad narrow gauge line between Durango and Ridgway (162 miles) – a total of 707 miles of narrow gauge line. The layout thus represents 3 of the railways and a considerable proportion of the Three Foot Gauge track mileage that existed at high altitudes (up to 10,000 feet plus) in the Rocky Mountains lying in the States of Colorado and New Mexico. The layout date is set around 1905 at the peak of freight and ore transportation for the precious metals (mainly silver) mining industry in Colorado and is physically based on Durango and its silver ore smelter.

The layout has 1.85 scale miles of track which is electrically divided into 59 sections. There are 39 turnouts ('points') and a scale 48 foot diameter turntable. One turnout is for future access to similar narrow gauge layouts. A circuit of the layout is 22 feet long, and 5 circuits make a scale mile (110 feet). In real mileage running terms Denver to Durango would be 2250 circuits, Durango to Silverton 225, Durango to Farmington 250 and Durango to Ridgway 705. Electric Dual Cab Control enables any two engines to be run simultaneously (but not on the same electrical section).

The layout shown today features metallic ores brought down from Silverton for smelting, coal for the smelter moved from the Durango City Coal Mine just south of Durango, lumber hauled from the Posta forests for the Durango Sawmills, livestock movements (sheep from Silverton, beef cattle and horses from Farmington) and the traffic arising on the Rio Grande Southern line to Ridgway (a junction on a narrow gauge line built between Grand Junction and Ouray – the 'Switzerland of America').

The layout buildings around Durango (Smelter, Station, Freight Depot, Engine House and Coaling Tower) have been modelled on the Denver & Rio Grande originals (some of which have been demolished, altered or rebuilt over the years since 1905).

The rolling stock is mostly of the period but with livery variations. The Rio Grande Southern passenger and freight stock arrived on the layout during the 2011/12 winter. Some of the Denver & Rio Grande Western passenger cars (and engine 138) have the later 'Bumblebee' (Grande Gold) livery. The other engines are in the customary Vanderbilt (black) livery but many also sport silver-grey smokeboxes and chimneys. All the engines are equipped with working headlights, and the cabooses, passenger cars and baggage cars have internal lights.

The all-steam Engine Register now totals 16 and consists of two Porter 0-4-0 coal-fired Switchers, one Porter 0-4-2 wood-burning Switcher, one coal-fired 2-4-0 Forney with tender, ten 2-6-0 coal-fired Moguls with tenders and the Colorado Mining Company's 28 Ton coal-fired Climax and 14 Ton wood-burning Shay – the latter two are geared articulated tank engines which were specifically designed for haulage along the temporary lightweight tracks typically laid in mining and forestry locations.

During the 2011/12 winter the Colorado & Southern Forney (Number 25) was converted from a 2-4-4 tank engine to a 2-4-0 tender engine better suited to the mountain conditions experienced in Colorado. This engine has been 'hired out' to the already (1905) impoverished Rio Grande Southern. In addition, we took delivery of a Mogul (Number 52) for RGS itself to use along with the hired Forney to provide the (sometimes erratic) train service on the RGS line between Ridgway and Durango.

Also running on the layout today is the 'Galloping Goose' together with the Colorado & Southern engine and stock collection (plus Climax and Shay logging engines and equipment) belonging to Group Member Bryan Spencer so do watch out for these welcome visitors to the layout.

Bryan is currently building his own layout based on the Colorado & Southern plus logging and coal mining activities. On completion his layout will appear at Group Shows together with a trestle bridge made to link his layout to this one using the new access track and turnout you can see here today installed alongside the Wells Fargo office block. Bryan and I look forward to the day soon when trains will pass over a trestle on their journeys between our two layouts. This conveniently brings us round to driving the trains today so please read the next paragraph for opportunities to help run the layout by joining in and doing some of the engine driving yourself!

If you would like to drive an engine today please just ask the Engineer Staff - they will be delighted to show you how to use the mobile throttle. If you are new to model railways the Group hopes that driving an engine today will encourage you to take up railway modelling as a hobby - one from which you can derive much enjoyment as well as acquiring new friends and the skills for construction and operation of a layout of your own. If model railroading appeals to you then come along and join us!

Although primarily (but definitely not exclusively) 'American' our Group has various 'Sections' (for example, N Scale, HO Scale, O Scale Narrow Gauge, G Scale, and British OO Scale) so there is something for just about every model railway interest. 'America' embraces the continents of both North and South America so we can cater for any railway interest you may have in Costa Rica, Cuba or Canada as well! The layout you see here today is American O Scale Narrow Gauge. If you have access to a computer then look the Group up at [www.freewebs.com/gosportrailroadgroup](http://www.freewebs.com/gosportrailroadgroup)

Bryan Spencer and I would like to thank you for coming to the Group Show today and for the interest you have shown in our joint Narrow Gauge display. Please feel free to give advice and ask questions – your views will be appreciated.

John Feltham (Member of Gosport American Model Railroad Group and the British Region's Solent Sub-Division of the National Model Railroad Association (USA))