



# The Mail Car

Newsletter of the St. Lawrence Division – NMRA

Issue no. 93– March 2017

St. Lawrence Division web site: [www.sld-nmra.ca](http://www.sld-nmra.ca)

**Inside this issue:**

**Feature Article:**  
**Hawksbury Trackside Part 4**

## St. Lawrence Division

### Executive Officers

**Superintendent:**

Chris Lyon  
Phone (613) 837-8522  
Email: cnlyon@sympatico.ca

**Assistant Superintendent:**

open

**Paymaster:** Bill Meek

Phone (613) 521-5234  
Email: william\_meek@bell.net

**Clerk:** Tom Badenoch

Email: tbadenoch@gmail.com

**Dispatcher:** Gregory Gee

Phone (613) 843-8911  
Email: gee.gregory@gmail.com

### Appointed Positions

**Inspector:** Grant Knowles

Phone (613) 825-5438  
Email: gd.knowles@sympatico.ca

**The Mail Car**

Editor: Andreas Mank  
Phone: (613) 591-9088  
Email: amank@magma.ca

**The Mail Car** is published five times a year by the St. Lawrence Division – NMRA.

Opinions expressed are those of the editor or the individual authors and are not necessarily those of the St. Lawrence Division–NMRA

**Copy Deadlines:**

May Issue - April 15  
September Issue - August 15  
November Issue - October 15  
January Issue - December 15  
March Issue - February 15

Special thanks to Beate Herzig for proof-reading and general nit-picking

## *Superintendent's Report*

**By Chris Lyon**

Well we had a great meeting in January with excellent presentations on machined parts for a live steam locomotive. In the second presentation we saw how details can bring scenes to life. This was followed by the Dave Revelia Video on painting detailed parts as a lead-in to the afternoon. From there it was all hands on. Every possible paint, powder, ink and brush was made available to the participants. They got to experiment with painting detail parts. The parts were provided and the participants cleaned, primed then mounted them on a dowel with double-sided tape. Folks tried base coat, dry brush and wash techniques, adding depth, tone and texture to make realistic looking wood, cloth, metal and glass. There was lots of expertise on hand to provide advice and assist. There is nothing like learning by doing and having the chance to try out all kinds of stuff to see what works best for you. Acrylics and oils require different thinners and approaches. Bragdon or Aim powders versus Pan pastels were applied to not only colour and weather, but provide texture. We sped up many of the drying processes using a hair dryer. This month will be a continuation and I am sure folks will return to build on their last experience.

The SLD is also looking forward to the Kinston Rail-O-Rama Show in March. We have tables where we work at projects and talk to the public about the NMRA and share some of the model railroading experience. Some of us are also off to Syracuse for the “Ops til U drop” session later this quarter. There are lots of new model railroads on the build. It may be a good time for the membership to reach out on an individual basis to help advance the progress. The social aspect along with the extra hands and experience can go a long way to help modellers take the next step or get over a problem that has brought the project to a halt.

Continued on page 7

### **Cover:**

Back in August 2014, Grant and his wife took a cruise down the west coast where one of the port stops was at Skagway. They rode the Whitepass and Yukon up to the summit. This photo shows the train, headed by a pair of GE units, approaching the 2,865 ft summit near the Canadian border.

Riding this railroader should be on every train buffs bucket list!

Photo: Grant Knowles

# *Musings from the Assistant Superintendent*

**By Bill Meredith**

It was great seeing so many out at the January SLD meeting! We had an excellent turn out that rolled into the afternoon for some hands on kit busting. John Stewart and Greg Stubbings provided two outstanding clinics on live steam modelling and detailing respectively. Thanks go to both for two simply super clinics.

After the morning program pizzas were brought in for those hanging around for the afternoon program. This is the part where I mention that life is a never ending journey in learning and school was in for me that day! Even after taking a quick headcount, the amount of food ordered came up short and some were left a little hungry. This one is on me alone and to those who did not have enough to manage on, I do apologize and promise to do much better next time.

On to other, more relevant, subjects. This past month I received my 3D print out of the N scale N&W mountain boiler from Shapeways. The model was printed in their high definition acrylic. It was an interesting experiment. The acid test in the past was how well rounded surfaces printed. If the resolution is not the best, you can see and feel “layers” and this is just not on as it were. The Shapeways printing did not have this problem. What it did have however was “wavy” vertical surfaces that should be flat. The thing is that you have to look for these and with the naked eye, you have to look hard.

Conundrum. What to do? Another 3D printing outfit in the US is Protolabs. They have a material they print with called “microfine green”. The layers are 0.0003” thick which is about 30% the thickness that Shapeways prints at. However, the cost is ~10X the Shapeways cost.

After some consideration, it was decided that Shapeways high definition acrylic certainly has its place in the repertoire. However, for high visibility items such as locos, the Microfine Green would be the way to go for the finished product. The Shapeways process is good for proofs of concept, draft exercises, and those smaller components that are less likely to be scrutinized.

I think many of us have pined for the opportunity to build that once in a lifetime, epic layout. I know I have. That one chance to “do it right” whether it’s Kicking Horse Pass, North Platte or Fraser Valley. We see the layouts in the magazines and dream. What is not so openly acknowledged is the reality that those who built that massive layout, require a boatload of work to maintain it. Some modellers I have heard muse that in retrospect, they would have preferred to have built something smaller. So the question is “how big is too big or big enough?”

Recently, I bought a house that has a massive basement. After way too long I could see my dream empire taking shape. As life takes unexpected turns, that opportunity to follow through jumped the rails. What struck however was the premise that less is more. And I downsized my dream. Life is short and I decided what it was I wanted out of a layout. What I DID know was that I wanted something manageable by me. Not something that needed an army to maintain AND run. Key word here, run.

In the UK, where space is scarce, there is a movement to smaller display or micro layouts. They do some simply amazing work. A small town scene, maybe an interchange, or a wharf... Lots of action and detail packed into a very small package. Why is this concept not more popular here?

So with that I leave you this month. A challenge even if only one that involves your imagination. If you only had say a 2’x8’ space, what would you do?

Lastly, as a final note, for personal reasons I had to submit my resignation as Assistant Super to the SLD exec. As I wrote above, life sometimes takes unexpected turns and for me, I had to make some hard short term decisions. I have thoroughly enjoyed my posting at SLD and will continue to be active in the organization all that said.

Happy trains to All!

# *Hawkesbury Trackside Part 4*

by **Bill Meek with photos by Mike Hamer**

Modern technology aside, farmers have always known the benefits of having a percentage of their fields lay fallow for an extended period of time. This same strategy can yield similar results on a model railroad layout, that is, an exceptional crop of scenery sprouting up on long fallowed plywood.

Truth is the previous upgrade to the L'Original Railway layout was completed just prior to the ByTown Bobber 2008 NFR Convention. It seems fitting that this project was conducted 8 years later prior to the Algonquin Turn 2016 NFR Convention.

Parts 1 to 3 in previous SLD Mail Car issues described:

1. Replacing the hot water heater with a tank less water heater mounted on the wall under the layout
2. Widening the layout shelf from 12 inches to an average 24 inches wide
3. Laying new roadbed, rail, and ballast that connects the side yard with the rest of the railway
4. Laying basic trackside landforms using 1 and 2 inch thick styrofoam
5. Creating the rock cut and trackside tree planting
6. Grading the residential and main street



Figure 1: Overview of the “improvement” section of the L'Original Railway

Part 4 continues with the final stages of road construction including asphalt paving and concrete sidewalk construction.

Sculptamold is appropriate for laying the fill and building the subgrade but its fibrous nature is difficult to sand smooth. Plaster of paris, however, will adhere to sculptamold and makes an ideal asphalt road surface and concrete sidewalk.

The sculptamold fill was left for more than 48 hours to completely cure and dry before paving the plaster of paris asphalt road surface.

The form for the first plaster pour was constructed using illustration board pinned and taped to the styrofoam and sculptamold subgrade. The 1/16 inch thick form outlines the road, sidewalk, and slab floors of the buildings along main street. I used three thicknesses of illustration board to fill the gap where the styrofoam steeply slopes to the edge of the layout and fascia.



Figure 2: Preparing the area that will include Main Street

I poured plaster of paris into the form. I then screed (i.e., leveled) the plaster surface with a straight edge using a back and forth motion while moving the straight edge across the surface. The edge of a metal ruler or balsa wood is a handy screen to bring the top surface to the proper grade and smoothness. I then used a wide putty knife to further smooth the exposed surface.

It is best to wait several hours to allow the plaster to cure and dry before removing the form.

I then sanded the top surface to a smooth finish.

1/8 inch balsa was glued to the plaster surface to create the forms of the final plaster pour for the concrete sidewalk and slab floors of the buildings along Main Street.

Continued on page 6



Figure 3: Preparing the form for the first plaster fill



Figure 4: First plaster fill has been poured

Figure 5: After the first plaster fill

Figure 6: Preparing the form for the second plaster fill



Continued from page 5 “Hawkesbury Trackage Part 4”

Mike’s steel weights firmly held the balsa forms in place while the white glue cured.

The final lift of plaster was poured, screened, smoothed, and allowed to cure and dry before removing the forms. I sanded the top surfaces to achieve a smoother finish. Then I put the buildings in place to check alignment.

I used several tools including a #11 Exacto knife, single edge razor blade, and stainless steel dental picks to detail the concrete sidewalk (e.g., curbs, sidewalk slabs, cracks) and asphalt road surface (e.g., cracks, potholes).

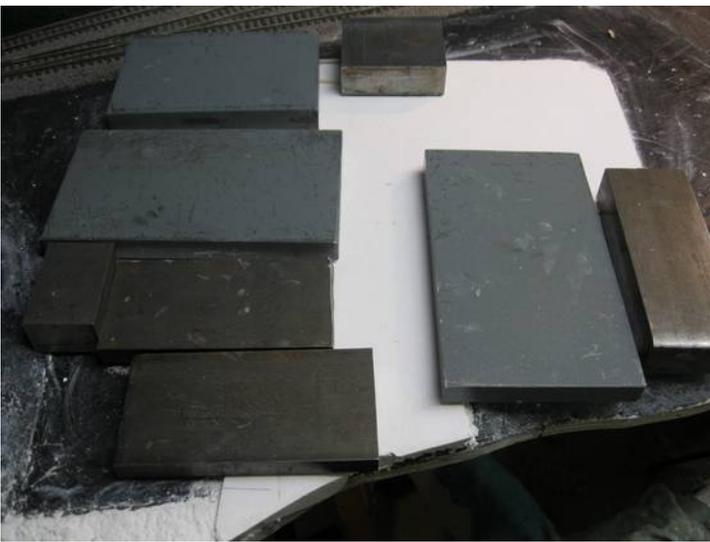


Figure 7: Weighing down the Balsa Wood form while curing

Figure 9: Finishing the ground work



Figure 8: Trial set up to check the alignment

Figure 10: Adding details



The entire plaster surface received a base coat of black paint. Subsequent coats of colour were dry brushed on the sidewalks and dry sponged on the asphalt road surface. Dry brushing and sponging avoids filling the already blackened cracks and crevices.



Figure 11: Finished Main Street

I often use an aged concrete colour for sidewalks. However this time I mixed a base of black and white to the desired grayness, and then added small amounts desert sand, light sand, and wedgewood green to achieve the concrete colour that was dry brushed on the sidewalk.

Dry sponging layers of lighter and lighter gray and sand colour achieved the look of aged asphalt where the black bitumen binder has been leached and bleached from the road surface leaving stone aggregates exposed to further weathering.

The manhole covers and storm grates are from Interaction Enterprises of Salmon Arm BC. I dry brushed both rust and steel gray to highlight raised details on these laser cut and resin impregnated board pieces. I outlined, carved, and re-blackened the plaster to

receive the covers and grates that were white glued into place.

I used a yellow pencil crayon to mark out the parallel parking spaces, and may repaint these lines later.

That is all for this instalment. Perhaps a few more ideas to share in the next issue of Mail Car.

Continued from page 2 "Superintendents Report"

The NFR convention is fast approaching. We all appreciate the extreme efforts of the organizers. When you think of all the great activities offered, the price is less than a professional sports ticket or dinner out. Register as soon as you can as it really does make a great difference to the financial logistics of a successful event.

It looks like we may be losing a number of members in the SLD due to the USA part of our Division realigning with a nearby US Division. It was suggested that we might also look at realigning some of the NMRA membership in Canada. In eastern Ontario it would not be a stretch to have some of the members from the dormant Quebec Allouette Division join us. Then folks from Montreal, Gatineau and nearby towns could easily join us and we could go there to have events: something to think about. Well that is all for now and I am so much looking forward to seeing everyone at the NFR Convention in May.

### ***TV programming note - Full Steam Ahead***

TVO is running Full Steam Ahead, a documentary on the introduction of the railroads in Britain and their effect on the society. Runs Saturday's at 8:00pm in six one hour episodes

### ***Homasote***

Three sheets (8x4) of Homasote are looking for a new home. Free of charge, but you need to pick them up!

Please contact Andreas Mank at (613) 591-9088 or [amank@magma.ca](mailto:amank@magma.ca) to make arrangements

# Display Table Report

by Grant Knowles

The theme for the January Meet was the seasonal favourite: "What Santa Brought You".

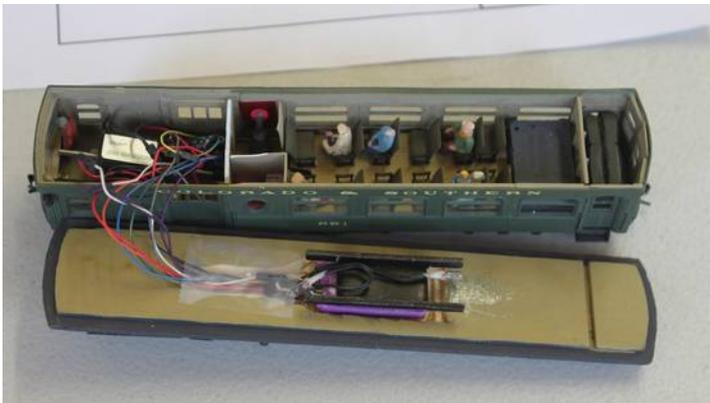
We had lots of great models on the table this month, but it was not clear to me which ones Santa had brought!

The first model on the display table is a store front which Stan Conley built from a DPM kit. Stan identified it had been painted multiple times before he ended up with a paint combo he was willing to live with. "Finally off the model bench" sighs Stan.



Figure 1: (Top) Stan dressed up this two story farmhouse kit

Figure 2: (Bottom) Adding sound to the C&S railbus



outhouses, in HO scale these are pretty tiny & cute. These went together as per the instructions but I did learn in the process to not use spring clamps to hold tiny, fragile parts together while the glue dries for the clamps will crush the parts! Fortunately I was able to repair the damage. I have built a number of Wild West Models and find them to be very well engineered, top quality components and great instructions.

Stan Conley, like most of us, cannot limit his modelling to one scale or gauge - he has been dabbling in the large scale of 7/8n2 through building a rail bus. As I recall, the parts for this project came via a coordinated effort by a bunch of modellers each responsible for specific parts of the model. This month Stan had brought out the

Stan also had completed a 2-story farm house. Stan suspects it is an Atlas kit but was not certain. Aside from building the kit as per instruction, Stan also added interior window dressing. It makes a very nice model.

I brought my scratch built Colorado & Southern HOn3 Rail Bus out. This model was completed about 5 years ago and was configured for DC operation. David Steer recently installed a Tsunami DCC Receiver so the bus is now back in regular service on my railroad. Since the interior space is rather limited due to the detailed interior we chose to carve out a space in the wooden roof and mounted the receiver there. I also removed the last row of seats and installed a sugar cube speaker there, which is small enough that it does not block the windows. The rail bus runs wonderfully, tracks well and sounds like a small internal combustion motive power, the only issue is the receiver overheats after about 20 minutes.

The motor, which is very small, is also hot. To trouble shoot the problem, I disconnected the drive shaft (yup, its mechanicals are the same as the prototype) then ran the car for 30 minutes - standing still of course. The receiver did not shut down, only got slightly warm and the motor remained cool. This leads me to believe the power truck, which was scratch built, has too much internal friction and/or the motor is not large enough. Something I need to investigate further but for now we are limiting the rail bus to local routes.

Santa brought me a Wild West Models kit (<http://www.wildwestmodels.com/>) for a pair of

wheel sets to which he has very patiently filed the spokes into a round profile - they were made from laser cut steel. I love these larger scales and cannot wait to see further progress on the model.



Figure 3: (Top) CPR Jubilees

Figure 4: (Bottom) Chris Lyon prepared this load of junk from left over parts that Alex had brought to a previous meeting



David Gardner brought out a Samhonga HO scale brass CPR F1a 4-4-4. This is a model of Henry Bowen's second batch of Jubilees that were built at the Kingston shops in 1937/38. The model is outfitted with DCC, head light and received its fantastic paint job from the late Bruce Sutherland.

A few months back, Alex Binkley brought out a bunch of "junk" parts, gears and stuff. Chris Lyon scooped up some of these and transformed them into weathered junk that appeared this month as the load in a Walthers 46ft gondola. This is a very neat transformation!

Over the past number of months, Bill Meredith has been painstakingly designing a new N scale boiler for a client. Bill has been using a CAD program to design the Norfolk & Western K-2 (4-8-2) boiler to fit over an existing N scale mechanism. This is the second 3D printed test shot that Bill has produced. The level of detail is amazing, not only are the various curves accurately replicated but also the boiler bands, a zillion rivets and various access cavities. You

certainly could not scratch build this level of detail! Once Bill has completed the tender, he will send it out to Shapeways to the final "fine resolution" printing.

Bill Meredith also brought out a family album that had many B&W photos taken around the Montreal West in 1937. It transpires Bill's dad was also a big train fan and took these photos when he was a teenager.

Peter Joyce, our Montreal Trolley fan, had an O scale model of MTC 3512 on display. This model was recently rescued out of the attic and is very heavy as it is comprised of metal castings. Peter comments it is in need of a paint job.

Thank you to everyone who brought out their pride and joy for us to examine. Additional photos are available on the January meet web page:

[http://sld-nmra.ca/meets/jan\\_17/jan\\_17.htm](http://sld-nmra.ca/meets/jan_17/jan_17.htm).

## TimeTable

Date	Meetings / Shows		SLD Workshops
March 25, 2017	Emmanuel United Church 691 Smyth Road Ottawa, ON		
April 29, 2017			Emmanuel United Church
May 5 – 7, 2017	NFR convention Conestoga College, Doon Campus Kitchener, ON		
May 27, 2017	TBA		
September 30, 2017	Emmanuel United Church		



# Next Division Meet

St. Lawrence Division – NMRA

*When:*

**Saturday, March 25, 2017**

*Where:*

## Emmanuel United Church

691 Smyth Road,  
Ottawa, ON

Door Open at 9:00 am -- Admission \$7.00

*What's on:*

### **Morning:**

*Clinics by:*

*David Steer:*  
"Two Foot Railroading in  
Wales"

*TBA*

### **Afternoon:**

*Layout Tour*

*Dave Primeau*

*Norm Levert*

