



The Mail Car

Newsletter of the St. Lawrence Division – NMRA

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St. Lawrence Division

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

Cover:

By Andreas Mank

On the cover is a picture of German Pacific Steamer 01 150. This engine was the first one pulling a 5-day steam excursion from Munich (Germany) to Locarno (Switzerland) over Gotthard Pass that I enjoyed as a passenger from March 19 to March 23 of this year. The 01-class of Pacific engines were the standard power for passenger trains in Germany between the early 1930's and the end of steam and the gradual electrification of all major rail lines in Germany. This steam engine led the train from Munich to Singen, near Lake Constance in southern Germany.

This engine has an interesting history. The engine left the erecting shop in 1935 and then participated in the celebrations of the 100 year anniversary of the beginning of the German Railways. Upon retirement it was purchased by a private individual in my home town Bielefeld. In 1985 the Deutsche Bahn re-acquired it, restored the engine and used it during the 150 year anniversary of rail travel in Germany. After the celebration the unit remained with Deutsche Bahn within the steam collection housed near Nürnberg. It was used on a number of excursions. In October of 2005 the engine fell victim to a fire in the engine house used to store the collection of the Deutsche Bahn.

At first the engine was supposed to be scrapped, but another private individual in my home town issued a call for donations and collected close to 0.5M Euro from individual, private donations. The total cost of the restoration of app. 1M Euro was augmented by contributions from the Deutsche Bahn and the model train manufacturer Märklin.

The engine was restored to full operational capability in Western Europe's only remaining steam engine shop in Meiningen, Germany. I had reported on my visit to the shop in Meiningen in a previous edition of **The Mail Car**. During the restoration it received a completely new boiler. It is now again available for excursions.

The picture was taken in Ravensburg where the local fire department provided support to supply the engine with water. You should be able to see the fire hoses in the foreground and on the left side of the engine.

The excursion used another 3 steam engines (one additional German and two Swiss engines), 2 historic electric engines (one German, one Swiss), one almost modern electric (Swiss) and one historic diesel-hydrolic engine (German) to pull up to 15 full size passenger cars during the five days of the trip.

I will contribute a full write up of the excursion to the new editor of **The Mail Car** for use in a future edition.

Superintendent's Report

By Chris Lyon

Well the snow is finally gone and it feels really great to get outside and enjoy the warmer weather. It is a good time to reflect back on all the great things that have happened in the Saint Lawrence Division this year. Our annual project was a great success largely due to the folks that volunteered to provide advice, equipment and clinics. Building turnouts for many was something most would not consider either because they had no knowledge, skill or experience. We are lucky in that some of our membership had all that background so we could give it a go. Clinics on Fast Tracks, Hand Laying from Scratch, using so many methods and turnout types resulted in everyone getting involved. The opportunity to organize the purchase of supplies was awesome.

Lending of jigs and tools went a long way to make the hands on workshops a success. I was indeed very pleased with the level of participation and the way experienced modellers stepped forward to help others with cool tricks and techniques. I think for many, this exposure really helped them to decide on out of the box approaches or doing it all yourself.

In addition to our project, we also provided a variety of clinics to expand our knowledge of railroads and the hobby. We learned about helix building techniques, Arduinos, JMRI Signal Systems, and the workings of machine shops and the detailed craftsman scale model building. All in all it is a super opportunity for everyone to expand his or her hobby horizons.

It was such a pleasure also that so many of you opened your layouts for visits. In addition, I am so please that our membership has been so generous, bringing out their projects for the display table. Our approach to discuss each item and have the audience ask the modellers about their work is a fun way to share our expertise and inspire others. On this note, our meeting "draw for prizes" is a success because of the wonderful donations from members. The stuff you do not plan to use, the unwanted bits and pieces are a treasure to be passed on. Please continue to support this activity. In this vane of thought, I am delighted that so many of you can attend our meets. The level of involvement really makes the SLD a sound strong NMRA Division.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our executive for their dedication to make this all work. Andreas Mank has been our editor of the Mail Car for the last 13 years and has published over sixty newsletters providing a detailed account of the SLD activities, news and articles. He has been stellar in this role and we each owe a lot for his efforts. Thank You Andreas.

The September issue of **The Mail Car** will be issue #100! We are looking for members who are willing to share their memories of the many programs we have run during the last 20 years, the SLD in general, and the two conventions we organized.

Elections are coming up at the end of the month and it an important time for each member to think about contributing. In particular, we are looking for someone to step up and fill the position of Dispatcher. The NMRA is built around volunteerism and maybe not this year, but in the near future, you should think about how you can help ensure the SLD is a successful group well into the future.

TimeTable

Date	Meetings / Shows		SLD Workshops
May 26, 2018	Emmanuel United Church 691 Smyth Road Ottawa, ON		
September 29, 2018	TBA		

Turning a Low-Cost Bridge into a Good Enough Model

by Steve Watson

The little Atlas plate-girder bridge was only five dollars on the shelf at Credit Valley, so on impulse I dropped it into my basket, thinking I might some day have a use for something like that.

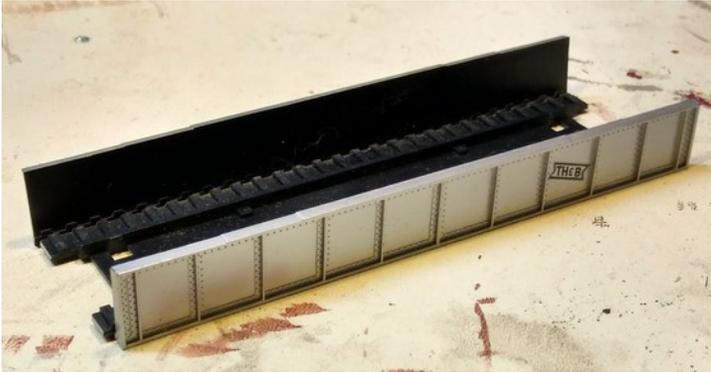


Figure 1: (Top) The Original Bridge, an Atlas Plate Girder

Figure 2: (Below) The Bridge Pieces ready for assembly into a skewed ballast deck type bridge

Picture 3: (Bottom) The Abutment mold for plaster casting



“Some day” turned out to be only a couple of months later. A creek crosses the mine property on my layout, necessitating a double track bridge to carry the ore-loading sidings across it. I checked the Atlas bridge: the outsides of the girders showed nice plate and rivet detail, but the inside surfaces were flat black plastic. The deck molding was similarly crude, but that didn't matter as I would be discarding it to widen the bridge. I placed the bridge in its eventual location in the scene and satisfied myself that the rear surfaces of the girders were invisible from anything like normal viewing angles. This meant that, if I turned the rear girder around when I rebuilt the bridge, the viewer would see only its good side. Some quick work with a razor saw liberated the girders from the deck.

I decided that this would be a ballasted deck bridge, thus saving the trouble of designing and building an under-track framework which would be almost invisible anyway. Thus, the deck could be a simple sheet of styrene, all of which would be hidden under ballast. Since the ore tracks cross the creek at an angle, the bridge would be built on a skew. Photo 2 shows the basic parts – of which there are not many. Using black styrene for the deck means that any gaps in the paint or ballast will be less obvious. After assembly, a trip to the spray booth turned the model a uniform flat black, and a coat of Bragdon powders gave it a satisfactory dirty-and-rusty look.

The ends of the bridge rest on concrete (i.e. Hydrocal) abutments. To cast these, I built a styrene mold, angled to match the bridge skew, and with a step in it so that the bridge footings sit lower than the top of the abutments. I glued the finished abutments to a scrap of floor tile to fix their separation, shimmed to bring the tops to ground level. The whole assembly drops into a cavity carved in the styrofoam scenery base, where it awaits final scenicking. A picture of the completed bridge can be seen at the top of the next page.

Moral of the story: you do not always need a craftsman kit that costs \$100 and takes twice that many hours to build to have a satisfyingly creative project with a useful end product.



Figure 4: The finished Bridge has been installed on the layout and now requires some scenery around it.

2017 Capital Region Model Railway Tour

By Dave Venables

The first annual Capital Region Model Railway Tour (CRMRT), held on Saturday, October 21, 2017, was certainly considered a success. Some 134 adult visitors and 41 children came from as far afield as Lac St-Jean, Montreal, Eastern Ontario and South-Western Ontario. Seventeen home layouts, scattered as far west as Renfrew, Orleans in the east, Gatineau to the north and South Ottawa, were open for the self-guided tour as were five other layouts at the St. Anthony's registration centre and the Gatineau Model Railway Club. The tour was planned and organised by the CRMRT Association, comprising members of CARM (Canadian Association of Railway Modellers) and several other Ottawa model groups, and was financially supported by CARM, OVAR, and SLD, primarily to cover promotion and printing costs.

Once registered, a tour guide, broken down into five geographical areas, was provided with a description of the layouts to be visited and their addresses. Maps of the layout locations were available to allow visitors to plan their journey and the five layouts at the registration centre provided visitors with an initial feel of what they might see on their tour.

Feedback from visitors was very positive, indicating that the home layouts were superb and the owners and their assistants were very welcoming.

To get an idea of how the hosts felt about the experience they were asked to respond to a number of questions while the event was still fresh in their mind. The objective was to get their immediate feedback about their experience with, and reactions of, the visitors to their layout which might help the organisers make improvements for the 2018 tour.

In addition to providing responses to the specific questions, every host provided some commentary on how they felt about the event. Overall, they were very positive. Most indicated that they found that their visitors (both adults and children) were well behaved, very respectful, interested in what they saw, and were eager to learn.

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A key comment for the future, which was both explicit and implied by other comments, was that having enough helpers is essential. As a host I was very fortunate to have two of my regular crew as helpers at all times with three at the peak which gave us time to have a quick lunch. Another was that helpers might need to attend a familiarization session a few days before the tour if they are not familiar with the layout.

Several hosts fielded questions about the materials they used for scenery, benchwork, roadbed, and sub-roadbed and one said that he was glad that he had some small samples of each handy to show. A couple mentioned that having some areas of the layout with no or minimal scenery gave visitors a better understanding of how it is built, and what is involved.

The following samples give a good indication of how the hosts felt about the experience:

I want to thank the committee for a great day. Both volunteers and visitors had nothing but positive comments about the tour and how it was organized.

It was great fun with a steady stream of visitors throughout day.

The number of visitors was amazing and comforting about the future of Model Railroading.

It was the best Model Railroading Promotional Event in years.

Lots of fun! All around a great day and a most rewarding experience.

An excellent day - congratulations are certainly due to all the organizers and volunteers.

Looking forward to the next edition.

The quantitative information from the hosts provided the number of visitors to their layouts while the registration information showed how far visitors travelled to come for the tour. Combining the two sets of information shed light on the amount of travelling visitors were prepared to undertake during the tour.

Visitors	Up to 25	26-50	Over 50
Number of hosts	6	6	4

Distance travelled	0-25kms	25-50kms	50-100kms	100-150kms	150-250kms	Over 250kms
Visitors	77	35	7	5	9	2

Layouts visited	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Number who visited	11	27	19	20	23	16	14	3	2

(The 11 who visited none of the hosted layouts were satisfied with those they saw at the registration location.)

Overall, these are useful and encouraging insights, comments and statistics for future layout hosts and helpers. The 2018 edition of the CRMRT is being planned for October 20, 2018. Please visit <http://capitaltrains.ca/> for more information.

Building a Turnout using Flextrack

by Normand Levert

My motivation to build turnouts with Flextrack was to build a yard ladder using a 90 degree corner. Why not make best use of the “wasted” space in the curve to gain as much yard as possible. Using Flextrack would give me smooth curves on both branches of the turnout.

There are two ways to approach the layout of the turnout. One can select the radius and draw the centre lines on the roadbed, or one can use the Flextrack to set the center lines. I will combine both in this article. The method requires Flextrack that bends easily and freely, thus one must use non-weathered Flextrack. It has one fixed rail, and one that can slide easily. We will take advantage of that characteristic. Let us assume we have set the radius of the main line and want to spring a spur.

We need a roadbed that will hold spikes. I have used cork road over Styrofoam successfully. Homasote is also excellent at holding spikes. One should however seal the Homasote with Shellac. (Latex paint breathes and will let the Homasote absorb humidity)

Draw the center line of the mainline. Pin a length of Flextrack over the center line, starting a few centimetres before the expected point of divergence. Mark the outside edges of the ties in the region where the turnout will be. Unpin the downstream end and swing the downstream Flextrack over to the desired alignment. Let the Flextrack seek its own natural easement curve; this will give us flowing track work. Draw the center line of the spur if you are using cork roadbed. Mark the outside of the ties to find out where the ties of each curve overlap. That will be the region where we will use turnout ties.

If cork or similar split roadbed is used, lay the roadbed using the centre lines. If on Homasote, proceed right away to trace every tie position in the turnout area on the Flextrack on the roadbed. Otherwise, lay the roadbed and repeat the process of marking the edges of tie. I marked the tie positions by drawing pencil lines on one side only of the ties, unpinning the Flextrack and moving it over to the other alignment, to extend the tie positions. We will use these marks to position the turnout ties at the correct spacing and angles.

One interesting quirk is that the points will not be exactly where the two center lines separate. Our pencil lines are very thin. Our rails are much thicker. The points will be approximately where the rails are about half to one rail head apart. This will affect the location of the header blocks (The long ties holding the switch motor or handle)

After determining where the points and header blocks will be, it is time to drill the hole for the actuator wire for the switch machine. Note that it will work equally well if the actuator is connected to the throw bar outside the rails or in between the rails. Lay all the turnout ties using the guidelines we drew earlier. Use yellow carpenter glue to prevent the glue dissolving when we ballast. Alternately, proceed by sections and lay the ties and a little bit of ballast as you go. Ballast is usually shallower on turnouts, especially near the point mechanism. After the glue has set for all ties, sand lightly to ensure all ties are level. Re-stain the ties now; it is much easier than when the rails are in place.

Prepare the first piece of Flextrack by removing all ties in the turnout region. We should keep at least 1 or 2 cm of Flextrack ties upstream of the turnout. Slide the sliding rail off the Flextrack. The fixed rail becomes a running rail (outside rails of the turnout). Mark the area where running rail needs to be notched to receive the point rail. It is the same process as when using a jig. Prepare the second Flextrack by removing ties in the turnout area, including the 1 or 2 cm of ties upstream of the turnout. As for the first running rail, mark the area where running rail needs to be notched to receive the point rail. Notch the rails as needed. Lay the first Flextrack with the upstream ties, using spikes to fix the rail to the turnout ties. (You may need to drill pilot holes to prevent ties from splitting). Lay the second Flextrack, sliding its fixed rail into the few Flextrack ties upstream of the point. This will fix the upstream gauge. Again, spike the running rail to the turnout ties. We only need enough to keep the rails in place in smooth curves.

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Display Table Report

by Grant Knowles, MMR

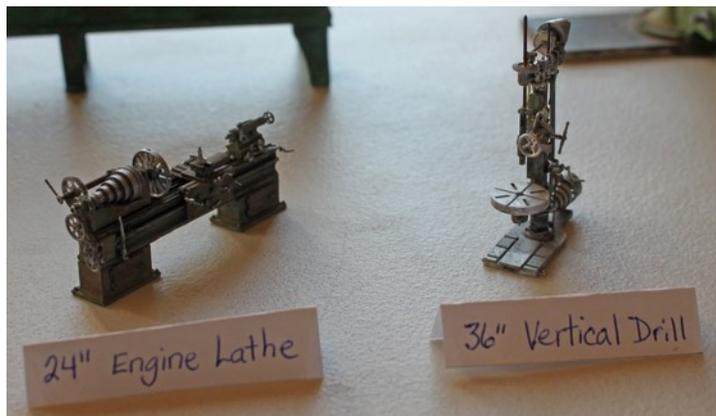
Though the Display Table had a lower participation level this month, the models that came out were worthy of close scrutiny. This month's theme was "Transition Era" which refers to the years when the railroads were shifting from steam powered motive power to the more economical internal combustion diesel engines, nominally the 1950's.



Picture 1: (Top) O scale paper structures assembled from Clever Models Kits by Bruce Leckie

Picture 2: (Center) Alex Binkley showed this scratch Build Stone Fence from natural building materials.

Picture 3: (Bottom) Mike Hamer assembled these F-scale machine shop tools from Western Scale Models kits



the CNR in 1956. The four steamers were all equipped with DCC / sound receivers which includes: U-2-g Northern, S-2-a Mikado, N-4-a Consolidation and a H-6-g Ten Wheeler. Doug's diesel roster includes: GR-15a (GP-7), MFA-15a, MFA-15b (FA), CFA-15a, CFA-15b (F-7) and C Liners: CPA-16a, CPA-16b and CFA-16-4.

Over the years, the SLD has undertaken a number of building projects, one of which was building a paper structure - a switch man's tower as I recall. Today, Bruce Leckie brought out a collection of O scale paper structures he had kit bashed from Clever Models (www.clevermodels.net) kits. Clever Models offers various building kits where you can download a series of files for each kit, print them yourself and then cut/fold these into a three dimensional structure. They also offer printed kits and a number of "texture" sheets representing everything from shingles to corrugated iron, bricks and boards, they all look very realistic. Certainly worth considering next time you are looking scratch building a structure. Bruce's models illustrated how realistic the finished model looks. Most of the "files" come in all the popular scales.

Alex Binkley built a section of a stone fence out of – that is right - small stones to see how it would look in S scale. The end product certainly looks very realistic and most definitely took less effort than the prototype to build! Of course I would like to know where Alex found tiny stones in the middle of the winter.

Mike Hamer and Doug Matheson paired up to present a clinic at the meeting about machine shops and the equipment you find in there. To compliment the presentation, Mike had an extensive collection of Machine Shop equipment that he had assembled for Doug both in F scale and HO. These kits were from Western Scale Models (now Wild West models) and Sierra West. The detail on the HO scale models were phenomenal and Mike did a fantastic job of assembling these and giving them the right level of weathering indicative of a busy shop.

Doug Cushman brought out more of his HO scale motive power collection - this time four steamers and six diesels thus illustrating the "transition" theme for



Picture 4: Stan Conley built this boxcar from a LaBelle wood kit

process. Stan managed to track down a new set of Minneapolis, Saint Paul and Sault Ste. Marie decals but after receiving it discovered the logo image was not exactly the same. Not one to lose sleep over something, Stan went ahead and lettered the second side of the car. Of course, since you cannot see both sides of the car at the same time, you would never notice the difference.

The problem that Stan encountered with lettering a wood car with wet film decals is not unusual. Here are some pointers you can follow to minimize the chance of it happening;

- First spray the sides of the car with a gloss clear finish. This will seal the wood pores.
- Apply your wet film decals as per the manufacturer's instructions.
- Take a small piece of paper towel and touch the edge of it near the decal to wick up the excess water. Note the water is only required to loosen the decal from the backing paper and to facilitate sliding the decal into position, after that it is no longer required.
- Now set the model aside while the decal dries.
- Once the decal has dried, apply your decal setting solution and let the decal dry once again. Repeat this process until the decal snuggles down. Sometimes you may need to use a sharp knife to pop air pockets and to score over ribbing.
- Once you are happy with the decal, seal the car with a light spray of a clear matt finish.

The key point here is: Do not leave any more moisture on the surface any longer than necessary.

The Display Table theme for next month is "Your Work In Progress", that is, any unfinished projects. Thus we are not looking for finished models but projects you currently have underway.

That sums up the March Display Table. Thank you to everyone who brought out their pride and joy for us to examine. Additional photos are available on the SLD March meet web page: http://sld-nmra.ca/meets/mar_18/mar_18.htm.

Continued from page 7: "Building a Turnout using Flextrack"

Slide one rail back in the Flextrack ties; bring it a bit upstream of the location of the frog. Use a spacer and mark the cut angle on the rail with a marker. Pull the rail out and file the rail to that angle. (It is the frog angle). Slip that rail back in the ties; bring it so the filed point is in gauge with both running rails. Fix the rail in place. The other rail will be filed to the same angle but mirror image. One way to achieve this is to have both rails back to back at the base and file them together at the same time. File the side that will receive the second flat. Do not worry if it is not exactly at the same angle, the rails will be soldered together so a small gap is no problem. Slide the second rail until it comes to rest against the first. It should butt against the side of the first, not line up tip to tip. Check everything with gauges; fix the second frog rail in place. At this point, solder the two rails together, or wait to make a solid frog after the closure rails are in place.

The rest of the turnout construction is the same procedure as building with jig or just rails; make closure rails and guard rails. If you are making a solid frog, drill a hole for a feeder wire near the tip of the frog. Once the closure rails are in place, lay a small feeder wire between the rails of the frog and fill the frog with solder. Use a hacksaw blade to cut the flangeways. Add more spikes to fix the frog and more spikes where you will cut the insulation gaps. The result will be a frog built in place with smooth curves that will give you trouble free operations.



Next Division Meet

St. Lawrence Division – NMRA

When:

Saturday, May 26, 2018

Where:

Emmanuel United Church

691 Smyth Road

Ottawa, ON

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

What's on:

Morning:

Division Business:
Election

Clinics by:

Normand Levert:
Modelling sedimentary rocks

Pat Brennan:
Railways in Aylmer, QC

Display Table:

"Your Work in Progress"

Afternoon:

Layout Tours:

