

# History of the Salmon Arm (Model) Railroad Association

In December of 1985 a small group of 5 model railroaders gathered to discuss forming a Model Railway Club. The name chosen at that time was SARA (Salmon Arm Railroad Association). By early May 1986 it was realized that there was a problem with the name as people were confused about whether it was a retired railroad group or model railroaders so we added "(Model)" to the name. You might be interested in the brackets around Model but the wisdom of the day was that we could expand our organization to include all sorts of railroad interests – miniature, historic, photographic, railfan etc.

The Club decided to build an "N" scale 5' by 8' (1.5m by 2.4m) layout. This small "N" scale size was chosen as it would be easy to transport and store as there was no permanent or even semi permanent place to work on it - we called ourselves "nomads". We were fortunate in that John Wayslow, member and owner of Glenn Echo Campground had a small building we could use to build this "N" scale layout.

The Club received its Society status on December 19, 1988 and held the first AGM January 23, 1990. The original Charter members were; Alvin Adams, Mike Beltz, Gary Hazell, Jim Johnston, Graham Redman, John Viau, Al Wilson and Doug Wilson. We ordered the steel frame for our current sectional "HO" model railroad (10 modules) and auctioned off the "N" scale in 1989. We purchased our custom-built trailer for the layout with the help of a GO BC grant in 1990. In 1990 we also decided to add 2 more "drop" modules (Monashee Canyon and Monaswap Harbour) bringing the layout to 12 modules.

The Club started taking the new layout to shows in 1989 and in the years leading up to the Portland OR NMRA (National Model Railroad Association) Convention in 1994 the Club had won a number of awards for its efforts even though the layout was far from finished. In Portland the Club won 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> in the group modules category judged by our peers, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> in the public vote. This was even though a number of modules had amounts of plywood showing. Also at this same NMRA convention other members of our Club namely Bob Gardner and Doug Hole both Master Model Railroaders, won 8 more awards including Best in Show for individual modules. We were very pleased and proud to come home with a total of 14 awards.

The layout continued to improve, with more scenery, scenes and animation being added. In 1997 the sawmill module was started. This took over 3 years to build with everything "scratch built" except the cars and people. This brought the layout size to 32'8" by 9'4" (9.62m by 2.71m). In 2000 we replaced the stationary lift bridge on the "Monaswap Harbour" module with an actual working brass model which took member Graham Redman over 3000 hours to construct. Other members worked on the electronics, wiring and mechanical operation of the bridge. The bridge went through three rebuilds to correct problems with operation. In 2008-9 sound was added to the bridge and another major rebuild to refine the operation.

In 2004 we traveled to the Seattle WA for the NMRA National Convention. We entered our 13 modules in the "group modules" category. We were very pleased to receive "Best in Show" the top award. This now restricts us from entering any judged competition at any NMRA sanctioned model railroad meets. We can still enter the layout in the public or popular vote categories at train meets and possibly judged

competition again when significant change is made to the layout. More animation and scenery improvements are continually being added

After seven years of occupying vacant areas at Piccadilly Mall and other locations, in March of 2005 we moved into a permanent room specially made for the railroad at Piccadilly Mall. Later that year we started on 2 of 3 shelf modules that will connect to the sawmill module and will depict a logging operation giving us more operating capabilities. These modules were primarily constructed to allow new members an opportunity to work on totally new modules and experience all the aspects of layout design and building. All track and switches are hand laid and various methods of scenery construction are being used.