



# The Interchange

Our 47th Year  
Ottawa Valley Associated Railroaders — OVAR

November 2007

Issue 419

## Oh! Mr. Wheel Tapper

by Colin Churcher

I was looking at the Will Hay classic black and white movie OH! MR. PORTER the other day. One of his jobs on the railway in this 1937 film was Wheel Tapper. When I was at British Railways, Reading, I had a wheel tapper on staff. Wally was a qualified Carriage and Wagon Inspector who had a small hut just off the centre island platform. This was a useful location for me because I could “disappear” when I needed to and there was always a cup of tea available. We used to enjoy a chat in front of his stove when he would extol about the good old days.

Wally was a very experienced mechanical inspector and he could often be seen walking alongside the trains stopped in the station not only tapping the wheels with his small hammer on a long handle but ensuring that the brake gear was in good order.

It so happened that the powers that be had decided to remove one of the guard's Brake Vans from the trains on the London–Worcester run. All trains had to have at least one brake compartment for the guard, so this move was within the rules, but Wally saw it as a retrograde step and was quite vocal in telling anyone who would listen. Problems would only arise if the one remaining brake compartment vehicle became bad order and had to be removed from the train which would then have to be terminated. The risk seemed to be pretty low as I couldn't ever remember having to switch out a bad order passenger car in a train at all, yet alone a brake vehicle.

The new train formations on the Worcester line came into force on the Monday and Wally was bound and determined to prove a point. He went over every one of the



4-6-0 7816 is the pilot at Reading in 1963. It has a few pretty dirty parcels vans similar the one that was used on the Worcester to London train.

Worcester trains, in both directions, until that Friday, he found a hot bearing – and it was on the sole brake compartment vehicle. Wally said:

“It's got to come off”.

To which I replied:

“But Wally, it has only got another 35 miles to go to London”.

He replied:

“You either run it at 15 miles per hour and stop for me to examine it every five miles or it comes off. Your choice.”

It was just before the evening rush period and 15 m.p.h. on a 90 m.p.h. line would have caused chaos. At least it was the last vehicle on the train so we were able to take it off without too much problem. I found a dirty old baggage car which had a brake compartment in it and we used that instead, much to the annoyance of the Worcester guard with his white shirt and a rose in his buttonhole.

And so Wally proved his point. For the rest of my time at Reading I don't think he ever bad-ordered another passenger rated

car!

Apart from this incident, the cups of tea and the chats, Wally remains in my memory for one other incident. One day we had a freight train pile up just after having passed through the station which was crowded with commuters at the time. Wally found the burnt-off journal bearing on the approach side of the platform! The train had run through the station with one four-wheel wagon having only three bearings. We were really lucky that the derailment hadn't piled wagons all over the station.

*Editor's Note: The planned Bytown Railway Society program for December is a viewing of the movie OH! MR. PORTER.*

### On the inside:

October Display Report

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plus much more

# Locomotives featured in October



Mike Hamer displayed Bar Mills Waterfront Willy's bait and tackle shop.

*Editor's Note: Unfortunately your organizationally-challenged editor has managed to mislay the October display cards, and therefore has been forced to generate much of this report from photographs and memory (and that would be the challenged memory that led to the problem in the first place!). We'll try to add overlooked items/corrections with next month's report.*

Ian Cranstone photos

One of the most impressive displays in October wasn't related to the locomotive theme, but were the displays provided by **Tim Warris** of Fast Tracks, who had come to demonstrate his company's track-building jigs. In addition to the turnout that he built before our eyes, Tim also brought along a number of impressive models of complex trackwork. I suspect that many of us have reconsidered using handlaid track after this demonstration. And if you feel so inclined, their website can be found at:

[www.handlaidtrack.com](http://www.handlaidtrack.com)

**Mike Hamer** showed an addition to his layout, inspired by the N scale version he built for the CHEO raffle layout (featured

## TIMETABLE

Upcoming events of particular interest to OVAR members

**November 17-18: WHITBY – Pine Ridge Railroaders Model Train Show**, Father Leo J. Austin School, 1020 Dryden Blvd. Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun. 1-4 p.m.  
[www.trainweb.org/prc](http://www.trainweb.org/prc)

**November 24-25: MISSISSAUGA – Toronto Christmas Train Show**, International Centre, 6900 Airport Road. Sat. 12-5 p.m., Sun. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
[www.antiquetoys.ca](http://www.antiquetoys.ca)

**November 24: OTTAWA – St. Lawrence Division Meet, NMRA**. Emmanuel United Church, Smyth Rd. 9:30 a.m. Info:  
[www3.sympatico.ca/gd.knowles/sld/sld\\_meets.htm](http://www3.sympatico.ca/gd.knowles/sld/sld_meets.htm)

**December 4: OTTAWA – Bytown Railway Society**, Canada Science & Technology Museum, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd. 7:30 p.m.:  
[www.bytownrailwaysociety.ca](http://www.bytownrailwaysociety.ca)

**December 5: CORNWALL – Moccasin Model Railroad Club**, St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church Hall, 1509 Second St. W. 7:30 p.m. Info: Chris Patrick, e-mail: [cpatrick1@cogeco.ca](mailto:cpatrick1@cogeco.ca)

**December 6: MORRISBURG – Morrisburg Model Railroad Club**, McIntosh Country Inn. 7:30 p.m. Info: Steve Skerry [stvskserry@personainternet.com](mailto:stvskserry@personainternet.com)

**December 1: BEACONSFIELD/LES CEDRES (ST. LAZARE) – CPR Holiday Train**, Beaconsfield Commuter Station 7:30 p.m., CPR railroad crossing at Chemin St. Dominique, mile 26.33 Winchester Sub 8:45 p.m.

**December 2: SMITHS FALLS/PERTH – CPR Holiday Train**, Smiths Falls Train Station, 64 Victoria St. 11:00 a.m., railway crossing on Wilson St., Perth 12:30 p.m. Info:  
[www8.cpr.ca/cms/English/General+Public/Holiday+Train/default.htm](http://www8.cpr.ca/cms/English/General+Public/Holiday+Train/default.htm)

**January 5-6: OTTAWA – OVAR Modular Rally**, St. Anthony's Soccer Club Hall. Sat. 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Sun. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Info: Gary Baillargeon (613) 774-2380

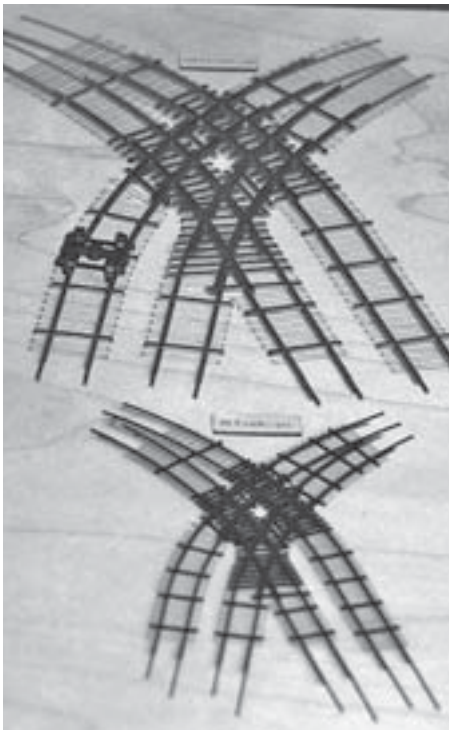
Check out OVAR's Web Site  
[www.ovar.ca](http://www.ovar.ca)

## INTERCHANGE YARD

Classified advertising in THE INTERCHANGE Yard is free to all OVAR members. Non-OVAR members: \$1.00 per line, minimum \$5.00. Cheques/money orders should be made payable to **OVAR**. Ads must include the advertiser's name and telephone number. Send to Ian Cranstone at address on last page.

**MUSICIANS WANTED FOR SPECIAL PROJECT.** If you can play any musical instrument and want to take part in a special project (railroad related), please contact Brian Earl at (613) 692-2371 or e-mail at: [brian.earl@sympatico.ca](mailto:brian.earl@sympatico.ca)

The Interchange



**Fast Tracks** showed off complex track-work constructed using their system.

in the October INTERCHANGE). Mike notes that he liked the Bar Mills Waterfront Willy's kit so much that he just had to have one for his own layout (this time in HO scale, however).

**Brian Earl** apparently brought in much of his roster, with several N-scale Great Western Railway steamers on display: Consolidation 127; Pacific 1028; Mikado 3803; and Mountain 6072.

**John LeBlanc** brought in CNR Consolidation 4894.

**Tom Hood** displayed another wheel arrangement, with CNoR heavy freight 2-10-4 no. 4705.

It is evident that surplus electric locomotives find their way to **Dave Knowles** and the Cacouna Portage. He showed a Bachmann Amtrak HHP8 (a modern 8,000 h.p. B-B unit); a Custom Brass GN W-1 (a 1940s 5,000 h.p. B-D-D-B unit); an unidentified brass PRR P52 (a 1920s 3,750 h.p. 2-C-2 unit); and a Suydam BA&P boxcab lettered for Canadian Northern (a 1910s 1,280 h.p. B-B). Quite the example of the evolution of electric power!

**Brian Ludlow** displayed a pair of brass O-scale GP9's, one now lettered in classic CPR maroon and gray, the other doubtless to receive similar treatment.

Also on display was one of Bob Craig's old engines, EOR 2-10-0 no. 50, and a CN SD40-2.

**November 2007**



**John LeBlanc** displayed a CNR Consolidation from his roster.



**EOR 2-10-0 no. 50** originally worked for Bob Craig's Eastern Ontario Railway.



**Brian Earl** showed several GWR engines, including 4-8-2 no. 6073.



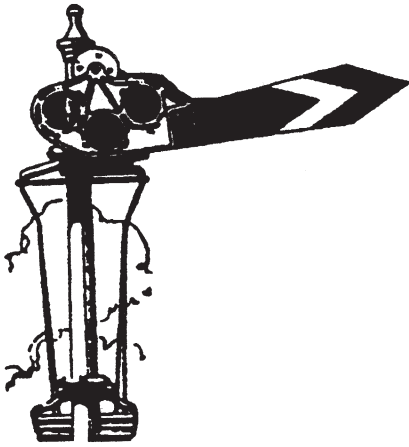
**CNoR 2-10-4 no. 4705** was displayed by Tom Hood.



**Former GN W-1** has been acquired by Dave Knowles' Cacouna Portage.



**Brass GP9** was reworked and painted by Brian Ludlow.



# Harry F. McLean

**Railway Construction and Contractor:  
A glimpse into the fascinating life of a  
construction magnate and Merrickville resident**

*presented by*

**Teresa Charland**

**Display**

Freight Equipment

**Tuesday, December 11**

St. Anthony Soccer Club Hall  
523 St. Anthony Street, Ottawa

*(just off Preston Street at the Queensway)*

**Doors open at 5:30 p.m.**

**Dinner served at 6:30 p.m.**

**Admission: \$20.00**

Includes dinner, facilities, program expense, taxes and gratuities.  
Free parking.

**Please note:**

If you cannot attend the meeting after saying you would, please call Fred Mills at (613) 723-1911. Thank you.



## OVAR Directory

2007-2008

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**Video Library:** Paul Anderson 613-445-3573

**Web Site:** [www.ovar.ca](http://www.ovar.ca)

### THE INTERCHANGE

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**Submission of Articles:**

THE INTERCHANGE welcomes your submissions that may be of interest to club members. Please send them to one of the departments listed above. Material submitted can be handwritten, typewritten, on floppy diskette, or sent via e-mail.

**Copy Deadline:**

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**Printing and Copying:**

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