



NEW BRUNSWICK UPDATE



Special August Edition 2004

CRHA (NB), Salem & Hillsborough Railroad, 2847 Main Street, Hillsborough, NB E4H 2X7

<http://www.shrr.ca/>

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SPECIAL NOTICE - A special meeting will be held on Thursday, **September 9, 2004** in the Hillsboro Station commencing at 1900 hours (7:00 p.m.). The meeting is an attempt to identify possible avenues towards achieving the rightful role and potential of the CRHA (NB Division) and the Salem & Hillsborough Railroad. We have invited our Member of Parliament, our Member of the Legislative Assembly, along with the Village Mayor and the Village Council. In addition we have invited the Greater Hillsborough Chamber of Commerce and the Albert County Tourism Association (ACTA) to send a delegation. E-mail was sent to as many of the CRHA (NB) members as possible and this Special Edition of the Division's "Update" is being sent to advise the remaining members without E-mail. This special meeting is open to anyone in the CRHA (NB) as well as any members of the public that may be interested in the development of our Hillsborough operations.

Update Report

by Steve Boyko

This special edition is being sent to inform everyone of the special meeting scheduled for September 9 (see above). Please make every effort to attend so you can provide your opinion on what the CRHA (NB Division) and the S&H should become in the future.

Since there has been no interest in a replacement editor, I will continue as the editor and publish the Update as best I can. I am of course still interested in turning this role over, should interest arise in the future.

Richard Viberg reports on the restoration work performed on the first class coach this year. Everyone involved deserves a great deal of praise for his or her hard work!

Art Clowes and Richard Viberg have also provided opinion pieces that should provide "food for thought" for the September 9 meeting.

Thanks to Art Clowes and Ron Townshend for their contributions. Please consider sending material for the next regular Update. Send it to **Steve Boyko, 33 Dora Drive, Fredericton, NB E3B 9L3**, or email to steve@shrr.ca

First Class Coach – Restoration Report

by Richard Viberg

Many repairs have been done to the first class coach this year. We have repaired several rotten windowsills at seat level on both sides. We have also replaced some side planking from the windowsills downwards, due to water leakage below the sills rotting the wooden sides in several places. Major caulking was carried out around all windowsills to stop these water leaks. We had to cut out rotten wet wood from the bottom wood support beam and let it dry out. The wooden side planking was milled by a friend of John Whitmore's, primed after received and installed by railroad staff on a couple of rainy days. After this was completed, a door was repaired along with two top window curves where the writing desk is located outside of the smokers' room.

A further inspection has noted a fair amount of dry rot and wetness at the upper windows, all caused by water leaks and condensation from the temperature changes during the winter. This year was the worst as we suffered considerable damage to the windows in the form of paint peeling of the silk-screened material. After all of this was completed the coach received a coat of semi-gloss CN green paint from the "Grand Trunk" board down to the trucks.

Special thanks to our museum and railroad staff, and volunteers John Whitmore and Malcolm Peacock for all their work and help.

A study to upgrade the first class coach is underway. At present I am awaiting costing from Industrial Rail Services to provide us with new rear seals and waste material in order to repair the trucks, and a further estimate to replace the brass if necessary.

Costs are being assembled to replace all of the planked wood on both sides of the coach in addition to new one-piece bottom curved silk-screened windows, as what we presently have is incorrect. The large windows in the alleyway and by the smoker section will have a design on them. A fan was at one end of the car, along with gold lettering for "men" etc. Luggage racks are missing along with window shades on rollers. The curves above the windows have a paint design on them, along with lights that are quite different than what we presently have. Interior walls were a mahogany colour.

No doubt the cost will be considerably higher than the \$5,000.00 Heritage Moncton donation, which may result in applying for a "heritage grant" or having a fund raising event. It also might mean that this project will be done over a period of several years, if approved by the CRHA (NB).

As this is a "museum" coach, my recommendation would be to take this out of regular train service and only use it on special occasions. For example, we could put the coach on the back of a freight train and run as a "mixed" special train.

The outside braced boxcar on the wye would be another piece of heritage equipment that fits a museum train quite nicely, and should be given consideration for a retrofit in the future.

If you have any suggestions or further input, kindly advise at your earliest possible moment. Thank you.

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE A LOOK AT THE LETTERS PATENT AND THE PAST

by Art Clowes

To provide all members of the general public with information regarding all aspects of railway transportation in the Province of New Brunswick and thereby to provide the education, enjoyment and entertainment of the general public.”

clause 1 of the Letters Patent of the CRHA (NB Division) and of the Salem and Hillsborough Railroad

The first question one needs to ask is how far have we moved toward the goal to being the “Provincial Showcase” for the education, enjoyment and entertainment of the public about New Brunswick’s railway transportation?

While I have been hanging around Hillsborough for almost six years now, I still look at myself as somewhat of an outsider, and do drag along some of my outside railway and railfan baggage! I was involved on behalf of a national railway with several heritage railway developments, especially in Ontario. On the hobby side, I have visited many of the tourist and heritage railways around North America.

As I started to look closer at things like the Letters Patent of both the CRHA (NB Division) and the Salem & Hillsborough Railroad, and its location with respect to tourist traffic, it became very obvious that we have a site with fantastic potential.

Where do we start to develop strategies to attain our potential? Perhaps it is worth taking a quick look at some of the highlights of previous studies on Hillsborough.

Let us look at the May 1983 report prepared by Lila Donovan as part of an S & H Railroad application for a funding grant under the L.E.A.P. This report identified the long-term objectives of the two groups as:

- The successful operation of the Salem and Hillsborough Railroad.
- The establishment of The Hillsborough Railroad Museum, a professional museum containing railway artefacts of New Brunswick and the Maritimes by the CRHA (NB Division).

The recommendation at that time was to operate these two activities under separate Boards of Directors. This probably made sense at that time due to the “Charitable” status of the CRHA versus the “Not for Profit” business status of the S & H Railroad.

As with most projects of the magnitude of the Hillsborough railway project, a number of reports had been prepared during the planning period. The above noted 1983 Donovan Report consolidates many of the main items identified in the other reports of this stage and was aimed at the S & H Railroad.

One interesting feature of this 1983 Donovan Report is that it contains a report on the failure of the Cape Breton Steam Railway, along with reports from five New England

tourist railway operations. Each of these reports is enlightening, since they each contain a list of “Recommendations to the Salem & Hillsborough Railroad.”

A glance through the recommendations from these individual railways reveals a number of common recommendations. One is to “maintain a clean and professional operation”; a second is to “strive for good public relations and media coverage”. In addition these reports stress the benefits of using as broad a base as possible to help finance the operations.

From this point, the S & H history reveals that for a number of reasons, the railroad portion of the partnership moved ahead, while the museum side had to wait until about 1992–93 before an attempt was made to develop it.

For various reasons, the gift shop's revenues lagged behind those of many tourist railways.

Except for a few short loop railways (normally not longer than one mile and within controlled sites), tourist–heritage railways are not noted for paying their own costs. This is where various associated activities come in and can financially help support the rail operation.

Net profits from many associated gift shops can cover up to 15 – 25% of a railway's operating costs. Well-developed associated museums probably have a slightly wider range of donation potential, depending on their activities. Museum donations can normally cover about 10 – 12% of railway operating costs, and depending on the number of interactive activities they can often double that amount.

Dinner trains, as operated by the S & H, can no doubt make a sizeable contribution to the bottom line of the railway. Without more financial details, it is hard to identify the measurable results from this operation. What are the costs to maintain the extra equipment? While not applicable this year, but what have been the extra costs to maintain extra trackage?

Turning back to the 1983 Donovan report, it contains a statement by a railway Bridge & Structures Engineer, who stated that “the two (2) rail carrying bridges are in fair to good condition and are adequate for the proposed type of rail operation. The fair condition is given because of the age of the timber.”

Similarly a senior track supervisor gave the rail structure and right of way a passing grade, while identifying some “rough” spots.

These reports stress that regular and routine track, structure and ROW maintenance is essential. Now these reports are 20 years older.

Since these start-up reports, there have been other reports prepared, some by in-house staff and others by outside professionals like the 1989 Flander – Good Study.

The reports associated with the S & H could be given low marks for their figures for traffic projections, and lack of detail on how the projected volumes of visitors would be handled. It is no use attracting thousands if your equipment can only handle hundreds.

From reviewing these Hillsborough reports, one notes that they contain plenty of suggested activities to make improvements around Hillsborough. To date, most of these recommendations have not been implemented. It appears that we need to do some “number crunching”. This involves taking a project, evaluating it by developing its detailed costs (including labour), along with the possible range of returns. This would permit the governing bodies to set a project priority for them. The bigger problem is to develop ways to find staffing and/or volunteers to head up and handle the project.

We know that various agencies also believe Hillsborough has the potential to become a major tourist attraction. We need to also realize both the amount of money that the government has contributed over the years, and the changes that governments have had to make in granting funds to groups like our Hillsborough operation, before we look to them for major funding.

What can we do to work towards becoming a worthy “Tourist Destination” in Atlantic Canada? In two words the answer is: **“Increase Income!”** Simple words but they have a major impact in any attempt to achieve them. For the railway, there are two routes: more trains, and/or more capacity. For both of these, the limiting factors are the extra people, be they volunteers or paid staff.

Without getting into details, there are a number of associated activities that can generate extra funds that could help with railway operations. With all associated activities, it needs to be realized that their income need to properly cover their own costs to ensure their long term survival before money is put into railway operations.

One major point that stands out in looking at the first 20 years of the S & H is the lack of a constitution and by-laws. Probably as a joint venture with the CRHA, the S & H needs to establish a long-term concept for what the S & H should look like in the future. A substantial part of this concept needs to be tailored to highlight and incorporate local features that make Hillsborough different from other heritage railways.

While one could spend considerable time reviewing the history and development of the railway around Hillsborough, we all need to look at what role we have contributed. We also need to think of the contribution that previous members of both groups have made, and of course the impact that that the guided ground transportation and their employees have made on the history of the Province.

In closing, I am going to leave you with a question. Is Hillsborough worth promoting to become another well-known tourist destination in the Province? If your answer is yes, do you have a friend or acquaintance that might be interested in helping Hillsborough move forward, and have you invited him or her to becomes part of our group?

**Don't forget the September 9
meeting at Hillsborough's new
station!**
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Food For Thought

by Richard Viberg

After not having a whole weekend of relaxation in some time, I recently took a short two day trip to Boothbay, Maine and visited the Boothbay Railway Village located off interstate 95 south on highway 27, a short distance from Augusta, the state capital.

This is a railway village, with a circular train ride around the perimeter of the property. An original Maine Central 1911 railway station is the main building, and another station circa 1870 has exhibits of the Belfast and Moosehead Railroad. This station features the station agent's office and accurately reflects the activities of that post.

There are also many exhibits of great interest about the narrow gauge railways of Maine, both in static displays in addition to early photographs and paintings. Some of the buildings include:

- The Boothbay Town Hall circa 1847
- Spruce Point chapel circa 1923
- Grover's Hardware full of interesting objects from yesteryear
- Dingley's store, a turn of the century country store
- Carriage displays
- A fire hall with old fire engines and fire fighting equipment
- Tompkins' filling station – gas was 17 cents a gallon then
- A post office
- A one room school house
- A village toy shop
- A homestead house

The site also featured a newer pre-engineered building for vintage vehicle displays featuring over 55 vehicles from 1885 to 1962, with most items on loan.

Railway buildings include Summit Station, a coal bin, a water tank, and a crossing tower, as well as a model railroad exhibit and a train shed, which displays rolling stock from the narrow gauge railways of Maine.

The site also included a very large gift shop, which really opened up my eyes as I saw many colour photo books on Canadian railways I have never seen before. It had a very large display of "Thomas the Tank Engine" models made in wood and steel, along with many other items.

After visiting for three hours at a cost of \$8.00 each, including the train ride, I was most impressed and has made me think that we are missing the boat.

Hillsborough has a lot to offer with stately old homes, the William Henry Steeves house, the Ducks Unlimited walk around a park like setting, and an interesting railroad history with narrow gauge or the Connie railroad which we could expand on in order to diversify.

We need more than just branch line train excursions or dinner train excursions that are costing us about \$1500 per train to operate. We don't even cover the operating costs of these, never mind the two bridges to be maintained at a great non-recoverable cost. We have a really interesting museum, and a railway village museum setting would certainly give more value for the money - at a far less cost than running trains!