

Share the Hobby – CAMS on the Road

Just after the beginning of the school year I received an e-mail through the CAMS website from Kate LaFrance, a teacher at Nackawic Middle School, asking if CAMS would be interested in doing a display on transportation and modelling for her students.

Although we have discussed it many times, we have never had the opportunity to do anything like this at the schools. The last display we put on was at the Fredericton Train Show in December of 2012. It was well received and did generate some interest in our hobby which bolstered the Make & Take at the annual CAMS show.

After a few e-mails back and forth the date was set for 26 September 2013 at 12:40 pm. The plan was to give the presentation to Ms. LaFrance's class and then other students would visit during the afternoon have a look at the display and ask some questions. This didn't sound too difficult but I still needed a partner so I asked Bill Knox if he was interested. Bill has been with CAMS for a long time and is an advocate of sharing the hobby. Once he confirmed he was available, he was more than willing to join me in this adventure.

Then the fun began. It has been a long time since I had given any kind of presentation and even though modelling is near and dear to my heart there is a lot about the history of modelling I did not know. I wanted this to be more than "this is a model and this is how you build it". For this, the internet proved to be a huge asset. I simply typed in "History of Scale Modelling" and voila - everything I needed to know. Now all I had to do was put it into something that would not bore a class of 12 -14 year olds to tears. After many hours of reading, typing, printing, retyping and reprinting I had a presentation ready; something I hoped would cover the basics, and steer the presentation in a positive direction while being both enlightening and entertaining.

The next question was what to bring. Bill stepped in with a number of unbuilt kits including the Revell Double Decked Bus, the Hawk Zeppelin, and the Revell WWII Corvette among others. Gordon Barrett came next with his Mobius Pro Star and Lone Star kits, the Apollo 13 and book as well as a number of Batman kits and figures to name a few. Scott Milligan sent out his built up of an AR-15 in 1/8 scale, a 1/35 figure vignette as well as three of the USS Enterprise kits from Star Trek.

I added a number of my builds including the Hawaiian Funny Car from the CAMS Flopper Challenge (I used this to go with the unbuilt kit to show the students what can be done with a bunch of parts) and the old AMT 1/25 General Steam Engine. A selection of various tools, magazines, finishing supplies, a modelling compressor, some airbrushes, and glues were brought along just to round things out.

We needed something to make the presentation memorable, so CAMS donated a raffle prize for Ms. LaFrance's class: an Airfix 1/48 British Forces Land Rover Patrol starter kit which featured the Land Rover, 7 figures, paint, brushes and glue - everything needed for the budding modeller to start out. Now we were ready.

The 26th dawned as a nice early fall day and at 10:30 I picked up Bill and his stash and we were off.

On the way out to Nackawic Bill and I went over what I was going to say and Bill added his comments and ideas which I incorporated. We arrived just before noon and were shown into the library where the presentation was to take place and we started setting up tables and chairs and bringing in stuff from the car. We met Kate and after the introductions took a couple minutes to explain what we would be doing. We then got our thoughts together and waited for the first class.



At 12:45 pm the first class came in and the students were wowed by the display of models and kits on the tables. They made themselves comfortable after Kate introduced Bill and me and we were off! Much to our surprise there were a number of the students who were already involved in the hobby. I went on to explain what models were and what they were used for and made of. The kids asked a number of very interesting questions about scales and types of models. During the presentation we gave examples of functional and static models referring to the models on the tables as well as giving examples of things that they may have seen that were models such as displays of hearts in Doctor's offices. All too quickly we were down to five minutes left in the class. I ended the presentation and gave the students a chance to look at the displays and ask some more questions.



When it was time for the class to leave we drew for the raffle prize and Lexy Bragdon was the winner of the Airfix kit. She was excited because she was interested in building a model.



During the course of the afternoon we had four more student groups come into the library. The original idea was for these classes to come in and have a look at the display and ask questions, but the teachers decided that they might enjoy the presentation. Since the presentation was originally designed to be 30 to 40 minutes long and we only had 20 minutes for each of the classes, this was a problem. What to do? Well in true modellers' form we scratch built a presentation and winged it. Between Bill and I, we forged ahead and presented the high points and points that made the kids think. We took the time to explain about the CAMS Spring Model Show and Contest, and how the awards were given out based on the level of modelling skill and that everyone received an award for their kit. They were also interested in the fact that the Junior and Intermediate builders had first pick of the door prizes.

We must have done something right because the interest level of the students was high and they continued to ask good questions about the models, the tools and the hobby in general.

When all was said and done we had given the presentation to over 100 students. Bill and I were a little hoarse from talking but well pleased with the interaction with the kids and the interest they showed in the hobby and the models.

This trip to Nackawic was one of the best experiences I have had as a modeller. I would like to thank Bill Knox for all his help, along with Gordon, Scott and Kyle for their donations to the display. Thanks also to Alison Sollows-Astle, Michael Liston, Nathan Staples and Anne Wilson for bringing their students to the presentation.

Special thanks go out to Kate LaFrance for asking us to come to Nackawic Middle School and letting us share the hobby with her class and the other students. Since our visit, she has started a lunch time student model club and Bill has offered to come out and help her.

The best part of this trip was the opportunity to share the hobby with a future generation of builders. We don't often get the chance to do that, and the response from the students was refreshing to say the least.

Remember, Share the Hobby, it is worth it!

Bob Kerasiotis