



#### KATHY MILLATT EARNS MMR #542

I started, like many modelers, with my dad's old Hornby Dublo train set. I had it laid out on a 4x8 sheet of plywood. My first inspiration was a model of a slate mine full of rusty locomotives and rolling stock. Unfortunately, homework and teenage life got in the way, but years later, I went to a permanent model railway exhibition called "World of Model Railways" complete with an underground and boats moving on the water. I was hooked again and started a modern-era UK model railway, which I built down the side of my lounge based on the railway that ran past my house.

In 2002, I went to a model railway show with an exhibition hall of American layouts. The layouts were really different, and the NMRA had a stand. I joined up and started going to my local group. It really was the friendships that I made in that group that has inspired and helped me grow as a modeler.

Since then, I have become more and more involved with the NMRA from running shows and conventions through to encouraging the AP in my local group. I was encouraged by the previous Atlantic Director to stand for election and was lucky enough to win. My day job is the Deputy Director of Finance for Aston University, so acting as a Director for the NMRA makes use of my skills and experience. It has been really rewarding to be able to give back to the NMRA.

I decided to model the New Haven because I loved the area and thought the brick buildings and scenery may be similar to the UK. A visit to the 2009 Hartford National Convention made me realize how many more trees I would need! I have a 12-foot square triple-deck New Haven layout with a port, a large town, steam servicing yard, and a mill valley branchline. I also have a set of On30 FREMO modules based on the Argent Lumber Co. I enjoy the scenery and structures best, but one thing I like about modeling is the variety of needed skills and knowledge.

I have always enjoyed challenging myself, so I started on the Achievement Program. I got my first Merit Award in 2004 and finally achieved my MMR in July 2014. The AP has challenged me to try new things and really helped improve my modeling.

I started, back in 2004, by printing all the paperwork out, reading what was needed, and planning my attack. I didn't quite follow the plan, but I started small by entering my first scratchbuilt model of my then house in a Region contest. Thankfully, despite a few errors, it earned a Merit Award. I have tried to enter something in every Region contest that I attended, usually a structure; sometimes a locomotive.

After a couple of years, I totted up my volunteer efforts for running a group, opening my layout up to Division meets, acting as a contest judge, and the Region's reporting

accountant. I had easily exceeded the points needed, so I earned my first Certificate in 2009. Over the next couple of years, I had a few articles published in *Continental Modeller* and *Model Railroader* — enough, with my website, to get my Author's Certificate. I was on a roll.

When I became the Atlantic Director in July 2013, my fellow Directors challenged me to finish the requirements for MMR by the following convention. It didn't seem too hard; I was only missing five Certificates: Electrical, Civil Engineering, Motive Power, Structures, and Official. The electrical was done, and I arranged for a couple of judges to evaluate my home layout since I was 10 minutes down the road from the 2013 Region Convention. The judges checked off all the necessary structures on my layout and the electrical elements giving me my third Certificate, electrical. That left four to go, but because I had done so much already, I needed to build only three pieces of hand laid track, a couple of scratchbuilt structures, and a scratchbuilt locomotive. It sounded easy to accomplish in a year.

Unfortunately, I had left the bits that I find hardest until last. I did a lot of modeling at 6AM in the weeks before the April meet where I was getting them all judged! I had to tweak my crossing slightly afterwards, but I did manage to get them all done in time for the July deadline. I received my Official Certificate at the July 2014 Board Meeting and, as a result, my MMR.

The lessons I learned were that it is easier to look at the Achievement Program at the beginning, work out which models can be used in more than one category (e.g., the structures can be used in prototype models), and to chip a little bit off every year. I'm now looking forward to working on the remaining Certificates.

#### AP Certificates - Kathy Millatt

**Association Official**  
**Association Volunteer**  
**Model Railroad Engineer – Civil**  
**Master Builder – Structures**  
**Master Builder – Motive Power**  
**Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical**  
**Model Railroad Author**