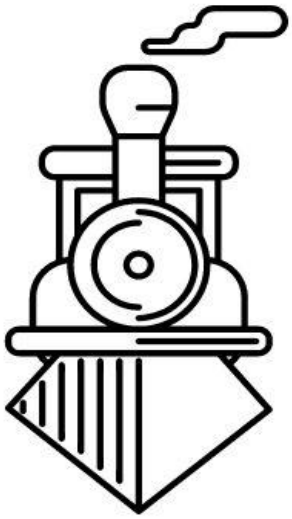
THE GARDEN WHISTLE

NEW ZEALAND LARGE SCALE NEWSLETTER

MAY 2025



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May 2025

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Cover photo — Ian Galbraith's FA1 emerging from the tunnel on the Mt Catt and Jessie Falls Railway. Photo supplied by - Bill Stanley.

The ***Garden Whistle*** is published monthly by the Christchurch Garden Railway Group and features news from various Large scale Groups in New Zealand.
Each club is a separate identity and the contact details may be found in club contacts.

Contributions of articles and/or photos are always welcome. Photos should be sent as separate jpg attachments.

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor, Executive, or members of the Christchurch Garden Railway Group

Editor: Iain Collingwood, Email: gw.editor@outlook.com

Auckland Garden Railway Society Meeting

Report - Chris O'Brien, Photos - As Credited

Wellington Garden Railway Group meeting March 2025

Saturday April 5th was my turn to host the monthly AGRS meeting, on the Rainforest Garden Railroad in Auckland's Waitakere Ranges. The weather was not promising in the days leading up to the weekend, but the sun finally came out on Saturday morning. A couple of random rain showers in the morning were concerning, but the weather cleared just in time, and we had a pleasant afternoon of train running for the small group who attended.

The Rainforest Garden Railroad was originally inspired by visits to the famous Train Garden in the Chicago Botanic Gardens. After a number of conversations with the team who run that display, we decided to attempt something similar (but on a much smaller scale of course) in our own garden. In keeping with the spirit of the Train Garden which inspired it, the aim of the Rainforest Garden Railroad is to enhance the garden, not to be an outdoor scale model railway layout.

The Rainforest Garden Railroad runs around our septic tank. This means that mains electricity is conveniently located nearby. On running days the transformer is plugged into a mains socket above the septic tank pump, adjacent to the track.

The area within the track loop is the top of the septic tank itself. This means we are limited in terms of the weight and depth of any objects or plants which might be placed here. We eventually settled on the grass garden which can be seen in the first photograph.

In the early days track power proved to be challenging, due to the endless coating of the rails with tree gum and other detritus. Various track cleaning methods were attempted. Eventually a highly effective formula was found; genuine scotch brite moistened with methylated spirits, followed by a firm wiping of the rail with the corner of a linen cloth. This has proved very effective, and track power has continued to be very reliable over the years.

Another lesson learned the hard way was the railroad's gradients. These have been progressively eased over the years, but still sections require some careful train planning.

The tunnel is a recent addition. The tunnel portals, which many will recognize as Michael Hilliar casts, blend nicely with the bird bath and various ornaments around the garden.

With a lot of garden to attend to on our property, the Rainforest Garden Railroad has been a case of "a little bit new" or "a little bit improved" each year. What began as a loop of track around our daughters' trampoline has become a special feature of our garden.

As the nights are getting longer and the days shorter the Auckland group activity for May is a group dinner. The dinner will be 6pm Sunday 25 May at the Black Salt Bar and restaurant New Lynn (see https://blacksaltbar.co.nz/) I hope to see many of you at the dinner, we can have some good food with a drink and can have a yarn about our railway and other activities. Please RSVP to me
at grahamclannz@xtra.co.nz or robert.graham@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
or send a text to 021 529 015 by Wednesday 14 May. Thanks Robert Graham

The Rainforest Garden Railroad provides part of the boundary between the garden and the native bush – Photo Chris O'Brien

Chris Coles' train crossing the main bridge as the afternoon shadows set in – Photo Chris Coles

Simon Sharp and Chris O'Brien look relieved as Simon's diesel loco easily brings a full train up the grade – Photo Robert Graham

Simon Sharp's diesel loco makes light work of climbing the back straight – Photo Chris O'Brien

Chris Coles' train passes the upper station – Photo Robert Graham

Simon Sharp's diesel loco hauls a train towards the tunnel at the summit of the line – Photo Chris O'Brien

Toby wonders if he should take the branch line instead – Photo Robert Graham

Chris O'Brien works the hidden controller as his train crosses the main bridge – Photo Robert Graham

Passing through the station at the lowest point on the line – Photo Chris O'Brien

Wellington Garden Railway Group Meeting

Report and Photos - John Robinson

WGRG's April Running Day at the Kenlea Lakeside Railway

A good thing about a running day on the last Saturday of the month is that one cannot procrastinate as one usually does in getting one's report of a running day off to the garden Whistle's Editor. A bad thing is that there isn't time to write and proof read the length of report that the running day Clive Eastwood hosted at his Kenlea Lakeside Railway deserves. However be reassured it was a very good and well attended running day on a surprisingly warm autumn afternoon.

Clive's has managed to fit in a dual track 'L' shaped railway into a small, yet very pleasant, suburban garden complete with a decent pond, lots of buildings, and quite a few bonsai trees with a back drop of mature trees and shrubs. Most of the buildings were built by Brian Cashmore and came to Clive when Brian had to downsize and relocate. Recycling at it's best! Not featuring in the photos are two aviaries at the north end of the railway, the birds seemingly quite unperturbed with the busy railway activity, perhaps they just aren't train fans, shame.

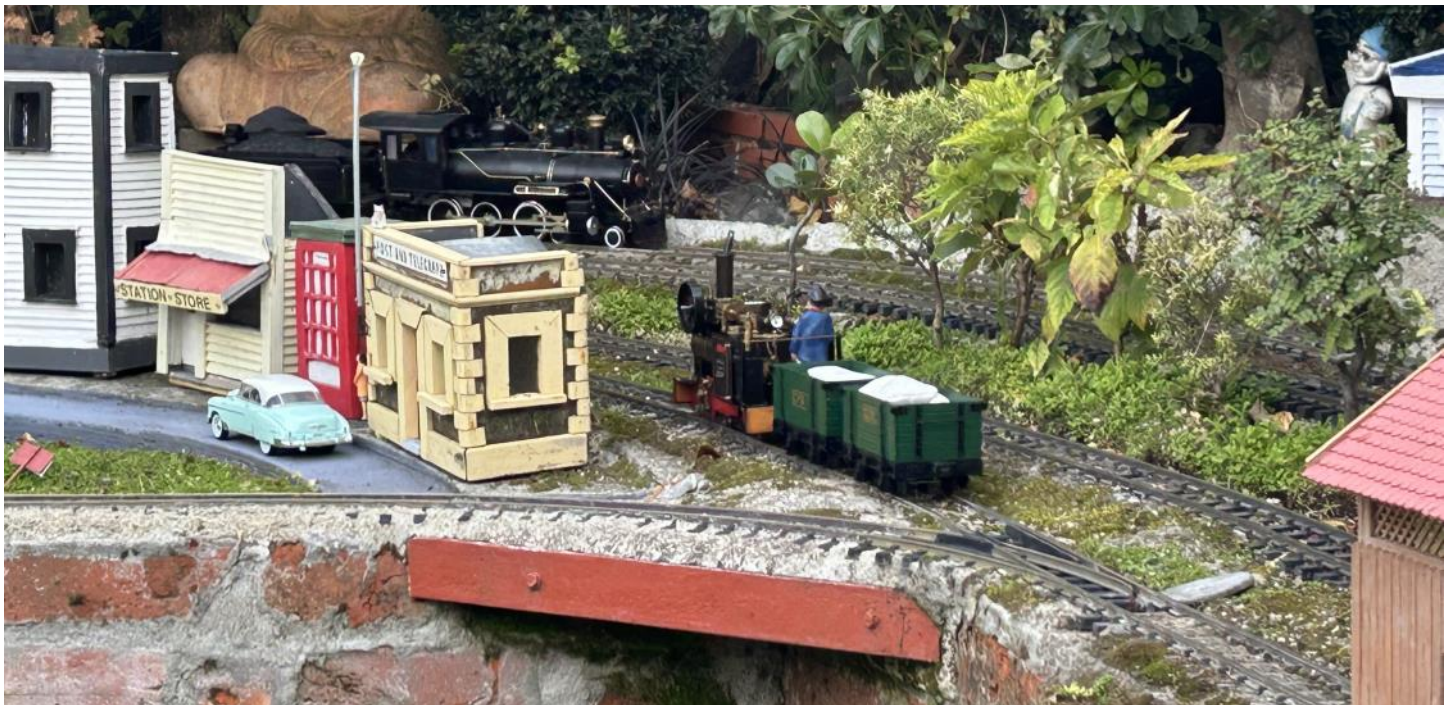
The Kenlea Lakeside Railway's beautifully engraved name plate.

As usual an eclectic mix of guest trains ran, it wasn't until near the end as traffic reduced that Clive got to run one of his own trains. It's an ironic sign of a good running day that the host is run off his feet looking after, feeding and watering guests and does have time to run a train! From what I saw the railway ran well with few, if any, of those usual sort of running day incidents. Being in a small space curves are necessarily small, but with the way Clive has designed the railway, and integrated it with the planting, it isn't readily apparent. And guests having enjoyed running days here before knew to bring stock that matched the railway.

Track and battery powered trains ran most of the afternoon with a cameo live steam appearance towards the end. I did jokingly suggest someone should send out for pizza so we could extend the fun into the evening, something to consider next time maybe!

Gavin's 7/8th's scale Davenport looping around the pond at the south-eastern end of the railway.

David's Baldwin about to pass through the village in the centre of the railway with Gavin's Davenport behind.



And Vincent out of the snow tunnel, passing behind the village. Brent's train in the background.

Gavin's 7/8ths Davenport again, this time on the section of the railway just to the right and north of the central village. The Davenport was able to circulate happily much of the afternoon making the most of the track power available, no worries about batteries going flat!

John R's train emerging from a tunnel after passing around the pond.

Following Vincent through the snow tunnel.

David's Baldwin negotiating the pond which is well stocked with gold fish.

Chris's Regner Vincent steaming along. It was steaming, just the steam was not that visible to the camera in the warm sunshine.

Tales from the West Highland Railway in New Zealand

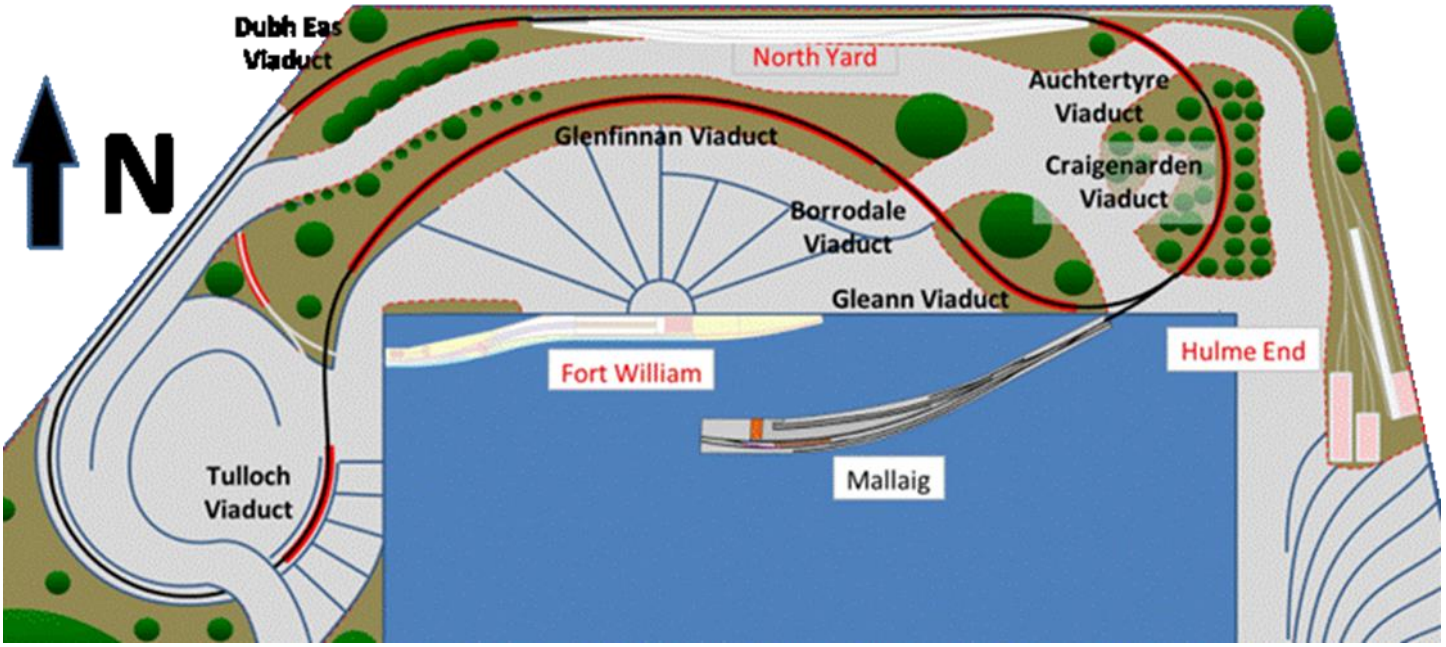
Mallaig Junction

Author: John Boyson

The junction set up for fine scale operation with the connection to Mallaig in place.

1. Introduction

In creating my layout, I had reached the point where I had two separate railways: the outdoor loop and the indoor representation of Mallaig Station. The masterplan envisaged these would ultimately be connected up. However, there existed a gap rather like that of the Great Central Railway at Loughborough which is campaigning to connect up its northern and south sections through the town and over the Midland Main Line.



Master plan with Mallaig Junction on the right.

To bridge the 2.8 metre gap, I had originally created two somewhat lengthy boards of which only one was brought to completion. The need for the two boards was because of the differing standards and scales I work to:

1:32 fine scale for the Mallaig and standard gauge British Railway West Highland operations.

1:19 coarse scale narrow gauge models of various systems as takes my fancy.

The completed board allowed the main loop outside to function for the coarse scale stock. However, Mallaig remained cut off. In practice, I found that this board was cumbersome to install and remove. It was also becoming increasingly heavier as I aged. Funny how this happens!

Thus, a rethink was needed.

At this point fate stepped in. I was in conversation with David Halfpenny (G1MRA) who has encouraged my endeavours with the dual standard system I am developing. Up to this point, I had conceived the idea of interchangeable boards as complete units to deal with points with differing standards. David came up with a refinement whereby, instead of treating a point as a complete unit, he suggested that only the crossing needed to be replaced. Uereka! Thank you, David.

2. Design

Having had this induced epiphany, I set out about redesigning the connection. This evolved into the following:

- Three hinged approach boards from each of the approach lines:

1. East approach from Craigenarden Viaduct
2. West approach from Gleann Viaduct
3. Indoor approach from Mallaig

The first two would be hinged to drop down when not in use and have attached legs to provide intermediate support for the connecting boards.

The Mallaig board would be a hinged raised board that would drop down for use to rest on the Gleann approach board.

- A central board that would rest on and span the gap between the approach boards noted above.

This board would have two interchangeable decks for either:

1. The 1:32 fine scale crossing to allow access to Mallaig, or
2. A section of plain track to connect up the main line with Mallaig isolated.

In order to determine the lengths of each board, the following track geometry was developed:

- The main line which describes a three-metre radius curve throughout the crossing as part of the east return loop of the main line.
- The Mallaig branch that leaves the main line though a transition curve gradually increasing its radii to infinity (a straight line).

Thus, the connecting point is a curved point making it much longer than a point with one straight track.

With the point toe and crossing locations calculated, the board joint locations were established keeping well clear of these critical areas. This included making due allowance for the moving parts of the blades approaching the toe and the various check rails at the crossing.

The two end boards for the main line which are designed to lower down when not in use, as noted above, had to remain clear of the ground when lowered whilst maintaining sufficient room along the path below for a wheelbarrow and wheelchair. The supporting legs also had to tuck up between the board frames and their support structures, when lowered, see below for clarity. These considerations also impacted on the design of these boards and their supports.

Views of the folded away edge boards from outside and inside. The hinged supporting legs tuck up between the main frames and adjoining support structures when stowed as depicted here.

The final consideration was the presence of the workshop door that the Mallaig connection passed through.

Firstly, the lifting Mallaig connection had to be clear of the door when not in use to allow the door to close.

In addition, the remaining boards (for the coarse scale operation) also needed to be clear of the closed door in both lowered and raised positions.

Thus, the door would only need to remain open when the railway was operating with Mallaig in use.

3. Board Construction

Aluminium angle and treadplate, salvaged from the original boards, was reused to form the new boards. As before, the angle sections were pop rivetted together to form rigid girders to support the treadplate decks. One other issue that had made its presence felt was some amount of ground movement. This had caused a degree of unevenness within the track which the Leek and Manifold locomotive with its huge overhangs and small wheel base vigorously accentuated at each joint. Lesson learned. In the revised design, the track decks were bolted to the frames with spacers in between to allow for future adjustment as necessary. Stainless steel hinges were rivetted to the frames at the appropriate connecting points.

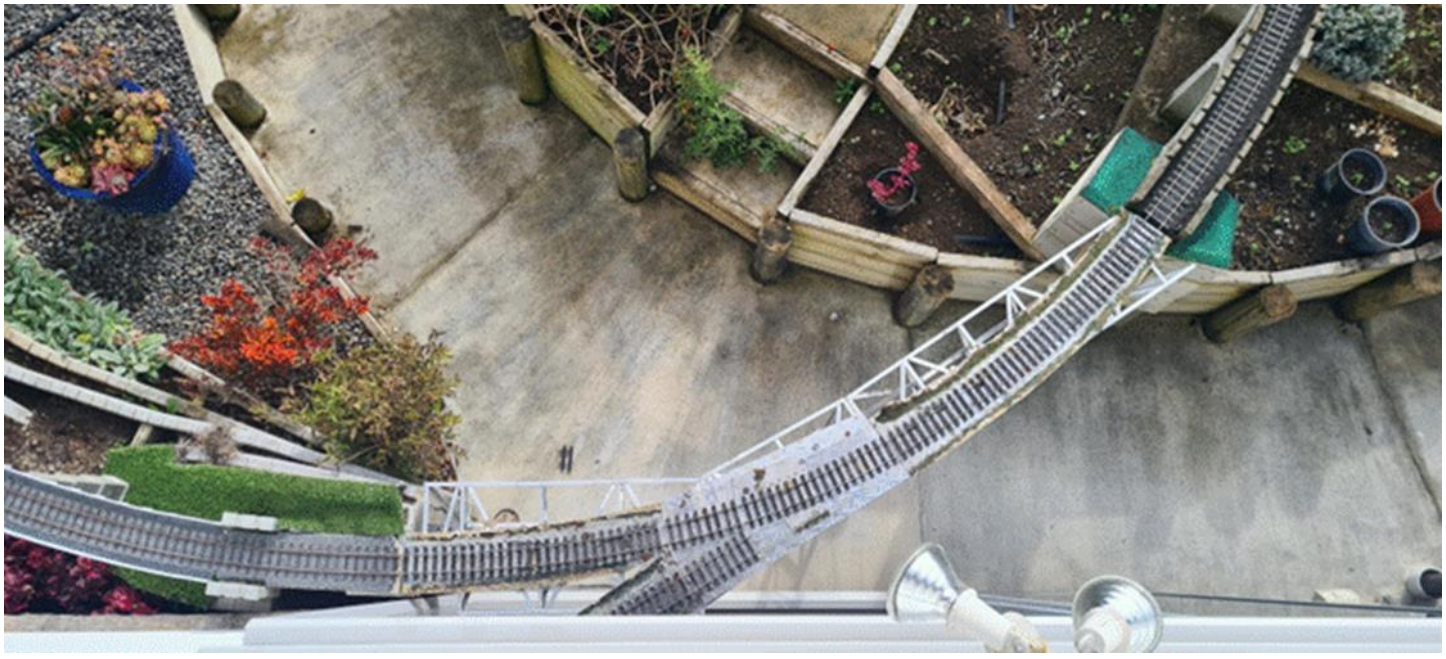
Two views of the frames under construction.

Decking being fitted

The central span was treated differently with the interchangeable track decks that were simply allowed to slide down onto locating bolts without any attempt to hold them down. Ultimately, track alignment was assured by rail joiners connecting each of the rails at each end of every board. These are slid back onto their parent rails before moving the boards.

4. Trackwork

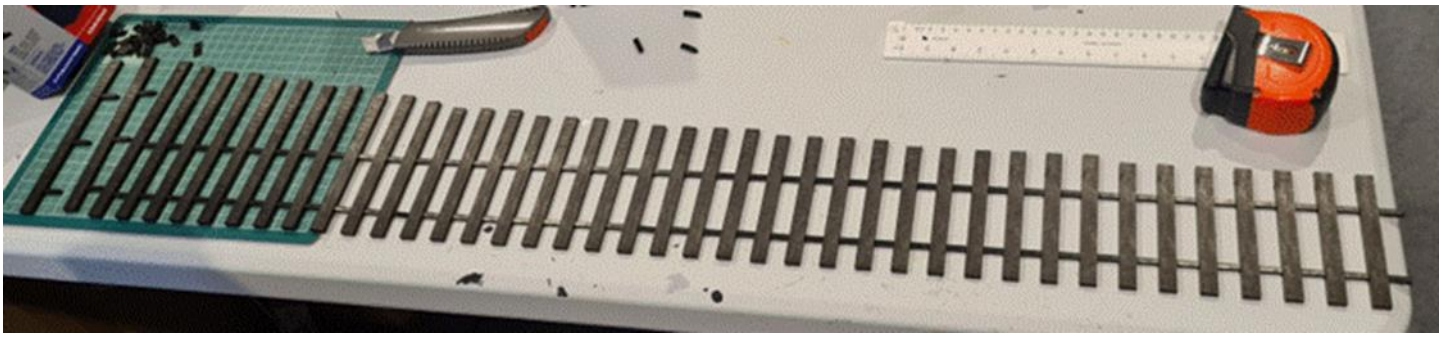
With the structures built, attention turned to the track. Firstly, the rail alignments were accurately plotted on the assembled decks whilst these were in position. Then the plain sections of track were constructed on each of the three approaches. These were all levelled up allowing for the gradient change coming off the rising Gleann Viaduct. Nuts, washers, etc. were temporarily used to adjust these. Once I was happy with the horizontal and vertical alignments, the approach tracks were glued in place with exterior sealant.



Track alignment being cross checked

Full length rails (two metres) had been used in the initial levelling in to ensure that the horizontal and vertical alignments through the future point were true. These were now reset along each side of the point stock rail alignments between the three approaches to level in the point sleepers.

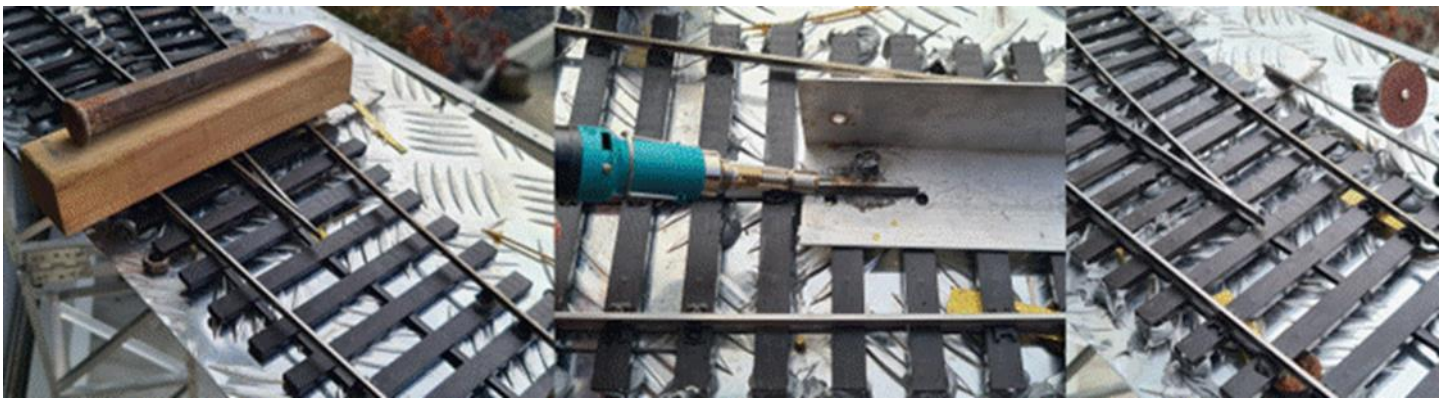
I use Cliff Barker's track as standard and his point sleepers are designed to be cut to length in 5mm increments as the point widens from its toe to the far end of the check rails beyond the crossing. With these cut to size, they were loose fitted within the point area ensuring that a sleeper was placed under the crossing vee and also under the pinch point where the crossing check rails bend back out to form the running rails out to the blades.



Point sleepers cut to length

Next, the chairs carrying the Mallaig approach stock rail were fitted, except where the adjoining crossing check rail and blade rail closed in, to ensure this geometrically complex alignment was positioned firmly. Vertical alignment was also established at the same time. The chairs are plastic welded to the sleepers using pipe welding solvent.

With this stock rail fixed as a reference, the next job was to fabricate the vee crossing and fit this. These stainless -steel rail sections, having been filed to shape, were fitted and clamped together before soldering. N.B. a special flux is required for this. However, with this, a strong joint can be assured.



From left to right, the crossing vee rails filed and slotted in place. Centre, being soldered together with some spare aluminium angle acting as a heat shield to prevent damage to the sleepers below, and the completed vee on the right after filing and grinding.

N.B. The rail chairs for the left stock rail and both vee rails have been welded down to the sleepers. However, whilst chairs have been fitted to the stock rail on the right they have yet to be welded down since the gauge to the right side of the vee still has to be established following the soldering work. Chairs around the check rail areas surrounding the crossing have likewise not been fitted anywhere at this time.

The next job was to glue in chairs for the second stock rail again using the opposing stock rail as a level reference. Obviously with both the vee and this stock rail, the track gauges for both tracks approaching the crossing point were verified as each chair was welded in place. N.B. the areas with check rails did not have chairs fitted at this point.

Following this, the blades were manufactured. This involved filing down the front of the blades to remove the protruding part of the rail head back to the web but leaving bottom flange in place. Next, the blade was inverted and the remaining thickness on the reverse side was filed back to obtain a taper leading to a knife edge at the point. Each blade was routinely cross checked against its parent stock rail as it was filed down to ensure a good fit.

Given the curved nature of the points and the fact that the widening around the toes was particularly gradual due to the gentle transitioning curve of the Mallaig rails, the length of moving blade is significant. Furthermore, the sweep of the blades has to allow for coarse scale wheels passing through. I concluded that it would be wise to have two tie bars to ensure sufficient clearance was maintained throughout the toe area to a point where there was adequate space for all four rails to be fixed down with chairs. N.B. even the stock rails are only restrained on the outer face up to a point where a full chair can be fitted between it and the adjoining blade rail.

A blade being formed and tested on the right.

The two tie bars were formed from 3mm brass rod for strength and these were once again soldered in place.

The pair of blades being soldered to a pair of tie bars

Once the blade assembly had been fabricated, the two rails were fitted with chairs at their stub ends leaving the floating ends to move freely. These were welded in position again checking gauge as each chair was fixed down. Extension rods to the two tie bars to connect with the operating linkage were then soldered in place. Finally, a brass plate was bolted down over the toe tie to restrain any vertical movement of the blades.

The blades installed with the holding chairs at the stub end welded down. On the right, the supporting slide chairs to support the stock rails and blades have been fitted as have the extension rods and holding down plate. This latter item stops the blades from rising up above the stock rails whilst providing a degree of friction to the slide movement of the blades. A fine scale bogie is being used to cross check clearances.

A comparison of fine and coarse scale wheels. N.B. These are not fully fine scale since I haven't narrowed the treads and the flanges are still a tad deep. Both these compromises are a nod to the practicalities of outdoor track. The wider tread gives more leeway where crossing gaps are involved and the deeper flange to the inevitable track undulations that will occur. However, the flanges are thinner and the back-to-back measurement is 42mm not 40.5mm as would be standard.

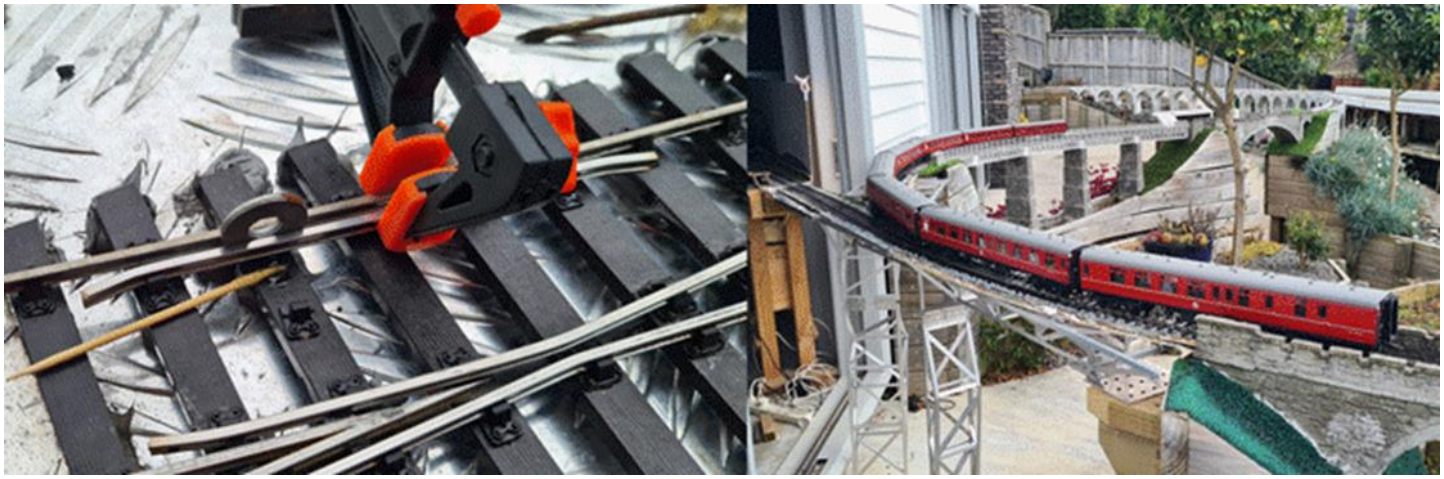
Trimming the butt ends of the blades ready to fit the rails connecting up to the crossing as seen on the right formed and ready for installation.

With the blades fitted, attention turned to the completion of the crossing. Firstly, the crossing rails were formed by bending two rails to shape. As each bend was formed, the rail was checked for fit and adjusted as necessary. Since the rails also form the crossing check rails opposite the vee, a second bend was required to finish off each check rail. Once I was happy with the fit, the excess at each end was cut off leaving each rail ready to fit as with the rails previously installed.

N.B., Cliff Barker's rail, being Code 180 bullhead rail, is easy to bend without twist and/or kinks forming, given its uniform and narrow cross-sectional profile, unlike some of the heavier duty flat bottom rail used in the larger scales.

To complete the toes, half chairs were fitted to each rail between the slide chairs and point where full chairs had already been fitted.

The last job was to form and fit the check rails opposite the crossing. In fitting all of these, care was needed to ensure that the clearances between the check rails and the flangeways matched the fine scale requirements I work to. Fitting the check rail chairs to these areas meant chopping Cliff's chairs into two and discarding the central section which is designed for standard G1 clearances. New narrower inserts were wedged in place between the rails and half chairs to maintain these smaller gaps.



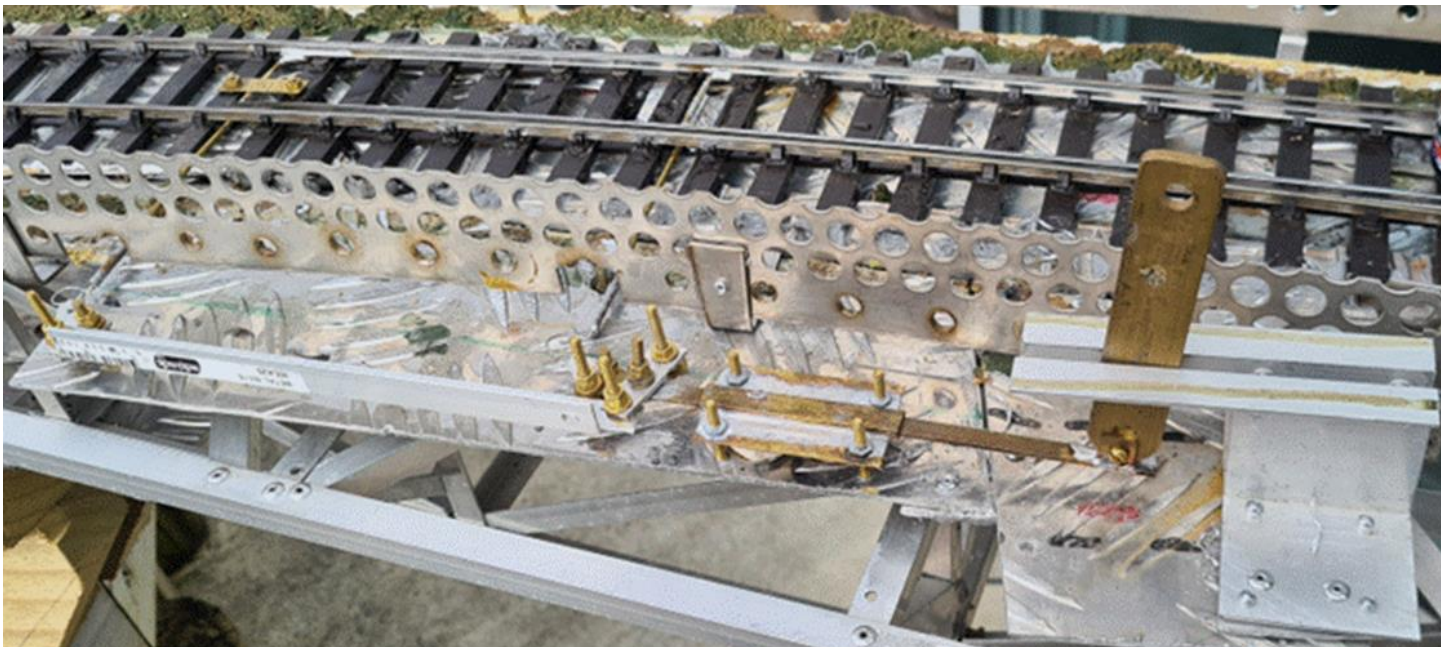
Installing check rails opposite crossing and a test run of the complete point with the new mark 1 carriages

As this work progressed, test runs were routinely conducted with fine and (where relevant) coarse scale wheel sets as a proof of fit. Adjustments were made, where necessary, as work proceeded.

5. Point Operating Mechanism

5.1 Mechanism

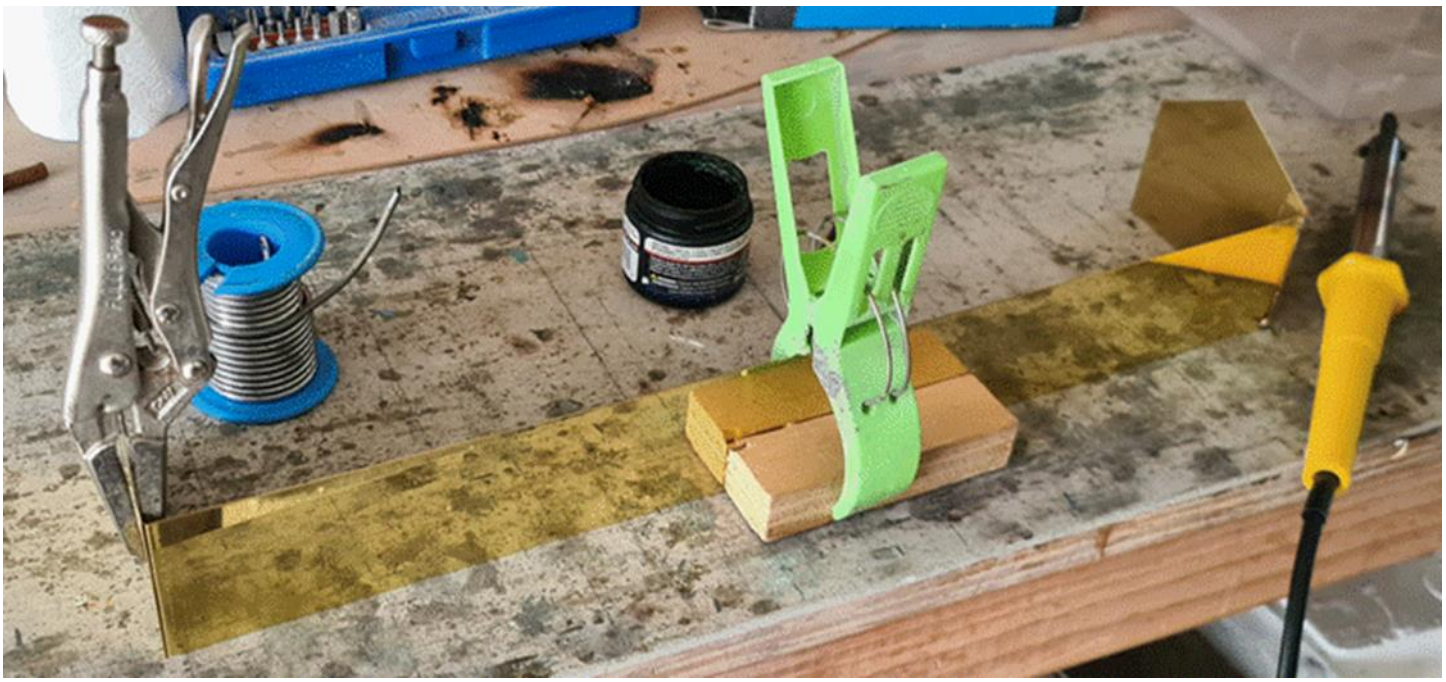
To operate the two tie bars, a mechanical linkage was fabricated with a compensating bar to ensure that both ties moved fully across when operated. This was connected to a pivoted bar which formed the point lever. The photo below shows the principle of the operation.



Point operating mechanism: The lever on the right operates a bar leading to a centrally connected cross beam that is able to pivot about the connection point. This in turn draws/propels two more bars that connect through angles to the point ties. Thus, each tie is pulled/pushed until such time as one of them hits the stock rail the lever is pulling/pushing the blades to. Once the first tie has made contact, the cross beam will automatically transfer any remaining thrust to the second tie which will then complete its movement. Omega loops have also been incorporated between the ties and the angles to ensure that there is spring pressure also being applied to each of the blades as well. N.B. following the fabrication of this unit, where I used a mix of brass and aluminium components, I have been cautioned that this is not a good idea where these are subject to wet conditions. Accordingly, I shall be replacing the brass items with aluminium/stainless steel equivalents to prevent problems in the longer term. Thanks to Robert Graham for the timely advice on this point.

5.2 Lineside Hut

The linkage was built robustly to handle its outdoor life. Thus, it was not at all to scale being built strictly for functionality. To disguise it, I fabricated a brass hut that would cover the mechanism with just the lever poking out through a slot in the main ridge of the roof.



Side and ends being soldered together.

Side decorated with tarred sleepers and a rough double door centre left. These were formed from brass strips sweated onto the main carcass. The excess solder whilst having smoothed down with a rotary sanding tool provides a texture that hopefully replicates the rough and ready finish of such structures. This has also made the whole thing far more rigid.

Bitumastic felt roof represented by three sheets of brass, each folded at the crown to sit on top of each other. The lower full width sheet has already been soldered to the wall sections and now the remain two sheets are being sweated on top. No place for a soldering iron here. With the sheets clamped down, a hot air gun is being wafted over the whole assembly to give sufficient heat across the entire area to get the sections to fuse together. Once I was happy that they were firmly attached, I left the whole thing for an hour to gently cool down again.

The completed hut having been given a coat of black etch primer paint followed by two coats of outdoor UV resistant black paint to represent the tarred finish these types of lineside building typically exhibited. Note, the slot for the lever in the crown of the roof on the left and the tabs at the base to locate the building accurately. N.B. the shine is the wet paint waiting to dry. It is a matt finish now!

6. Walls

Given the potentially exposed environment and the presence of the point, I was concerned about the consequences of derailments with the boards passing over the concrete footpath about 800mm below. Accordingly, with the track installed, decorative stone walling along each of the boards was constructed using some left over perforated stainless-steel sheeting rivetted to the boards. Mortar walls were cast around these and, once set, carved to represent drystone walling to give a more natural feel.

Perforated stainless-steel sections rivetted to decks ready for wall casting. These were cut out from left over sections of this material that was used for the concrete viaducts a few years ago. N.B. the section beside the point operating mechanism was later cut away to allow the lineside hut to fit in.

Live steam test to check clearances (making future allowance with thickness of mortar) with the largest stock to use the line.

Finished wall sections for the outdoor loop format: i.e. the two main loop outer boards and the central board for just the loop. Note the gap now present for the hut.

7. Ballast and Rail Painting

For the next jobs, the various sections were disconnected and taken into the workshop. As is my way, the rail sides were painted with a black etch primer and then a top coat of UV resistant roof paint mixed to a suitable rusty brown shade. This included the rail chairs. This brings the track to life and, whilst slow and potentially tedious, adds a lot to the final look of the railway. Following this, the area between the above walls was ballasted firstly using the left-over mortar detritus resulting from the wall carving as an underlay. This was followed with a top coat of Woodland scenic coarse grey ballast. Each layer was glued in place with diluted outdoor PVA applied with a syringe. The boards were then left for the glue to properly harden before being reassembled.

Track painting underway on the central panel for the point crossing.

First layer of ballast laid formed from the waste grindings left from forming the walls. Note, the hut is in place with a polythene membrane between it and the ballast.

Top coat of Woodlands Scenics coarse grey ballast being added.

8. Final Assembly and Commissioning

Once the glue had hardened sufficiently, a trial assembly of the boards making up the main loop was undertaken.

A test run with the double fairlie on this set up

Having completed the above works back in August last year, I found myself having to travel, firstly urgently and unexpectedly (literally on the same day that we were advised of the issue!) to Australia; and then, nine days after our return, over to Europe for a planned vacation that also got extended due to another set of family matters. Thus, before we left for the first trip, I quickly returned the individually completed boards to the work bench until after our final return and the time where order had been sufficiently returned to both the house and the garden due to our long absence. This amounted to nearly six months from when we first left!

Eventually, their turn came in the long list of outstanding jobs to finish and it was with some trepidation that I reassembled them in the New Year after so long away. To be fair, I was fully expecting some wall trimming to fit the Mallaig approach board since this was constructed in the workshop without much regard to the final fit that was now at hand. Fortunately, some time ago I had found some drill mounted grinding bits in Mitre 10. These had been purchased on the premise that they would be useful at some stage (as you do!). Thus, they came into their own for this job and after much grinding away of excess mortar, a good fit between boards and the workshop door was achieved.

On the left, the first attempt to fit the Mallaig approach board. On the right, the installed board after much wall grinding.

The Mallaig approach board, raised on the left; and in position, on the right, showing the layout from the station approach to the connection with the outside loop.

Testing of both formats followed this work and again proved satisfactory.

An embryonic class 27 emerging from Mallaig on a test run of the fine scale variant of the connection. It too was running for the first time. Thus, this was both a test of the junction and the chassis. The rest of the tale on this locomotive will have to wait since it is very much a project that is "in progress"!

The final job was to construct a shelf unit to go under Mallaig Station approach to store the central connecting boards when not required for operation.

9. Conclusion

Finally, I have an easy-to-use system to allow Mallaig Station to connect with the garden railway in my form of fine scale operation and, likewise, a coarse scale purely outdoor alternative with Mallaig disconnected. The individual boards are far more manageable than their predecessors, and a time and motion study showed I could have the connection up and ready to run in just four minutes for either format.

I want to finish by again acknowledging and thanking David Halfpenny for the original idea and also Robert Graham for his thoughtful advice. I hope that I have done this guidance justice in the resulting junction.

Wairarapa Garden Railway Group Meeting

Report - Warren Stringer, Photos - Lloyd Dickens

Moa Pass Running Day April 2025

This month's running day for the Wairarapa Garden Railway group was on the Moa Pass Railway.

As usual at this time of year the trees are shedding their leaves, and the weeds are growing with a vengeance, so there was a bit of clean-up work required to find the track again before we could run trains.

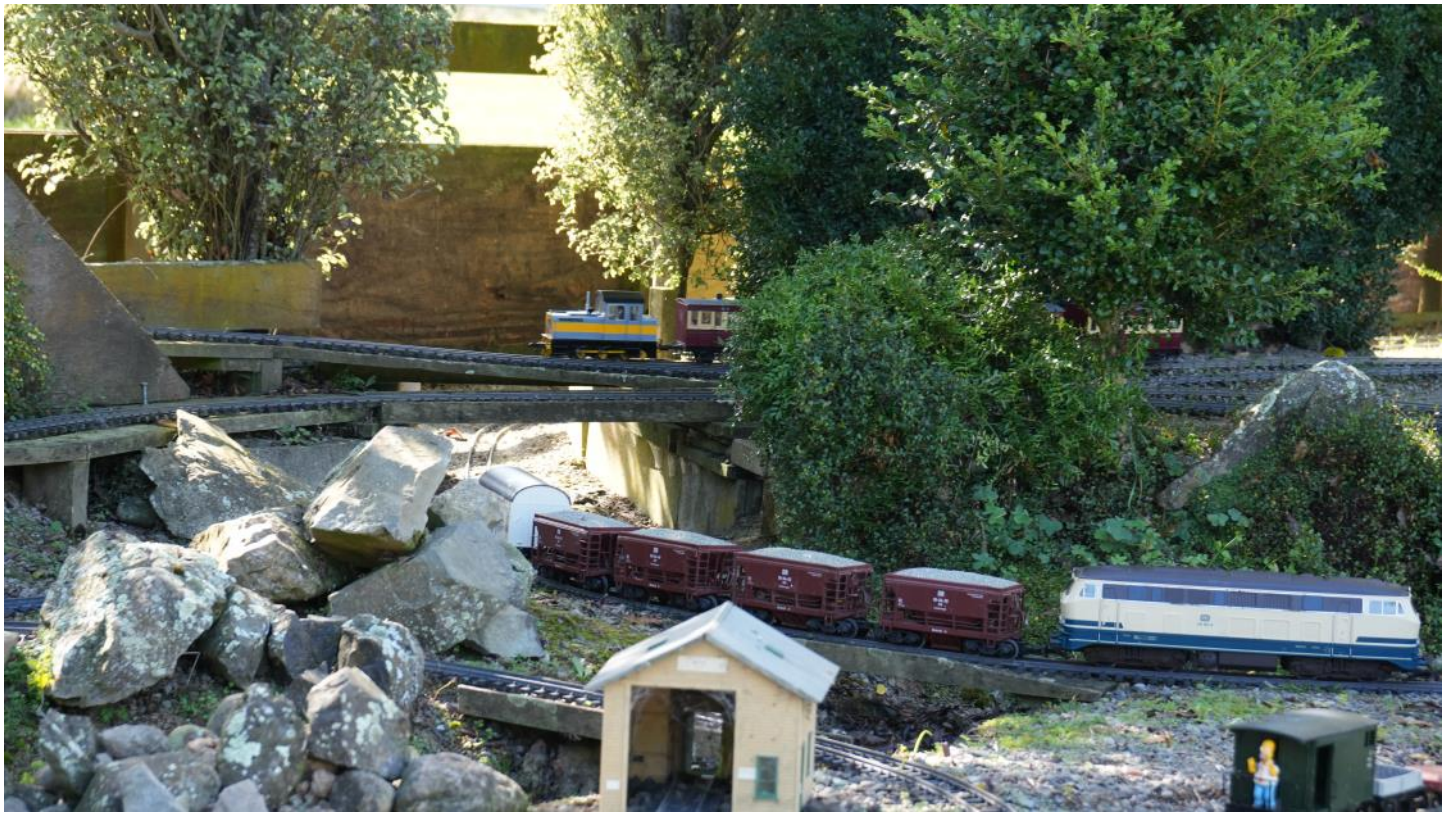
More interesting was the discovery that one of the tunnel portals had been squashed down by the big heavy pile of rocks that I had piled on top of it. This had been going on slowly for a while, but the squashyness had now reduced the portal height enough to stop trains getting through. So now instead of a tunnel we have got a new "cutting" on the layout where the tunnel used to be. Problem solved.

Luckily our weather on the running day was fine and warm – just another balmy Autumn day in the Wairarapa.

We had a good turnout, with plenty of room for everyone to run their trains. While a bunch of us ran our battery-powered locos around the layout, a break-away mob worked on rigging up a DCC power supply on the track; that kept them distracted until it was time for a cuppa.

It was nice to see all the trains running well. And we now have plans to get our "pesky" DCC gear running for a future running day after a break over winter. In the meantime we are making plans for a display layout in a local train show in early May - we will no doubt cover that event in our next report for the Whistle

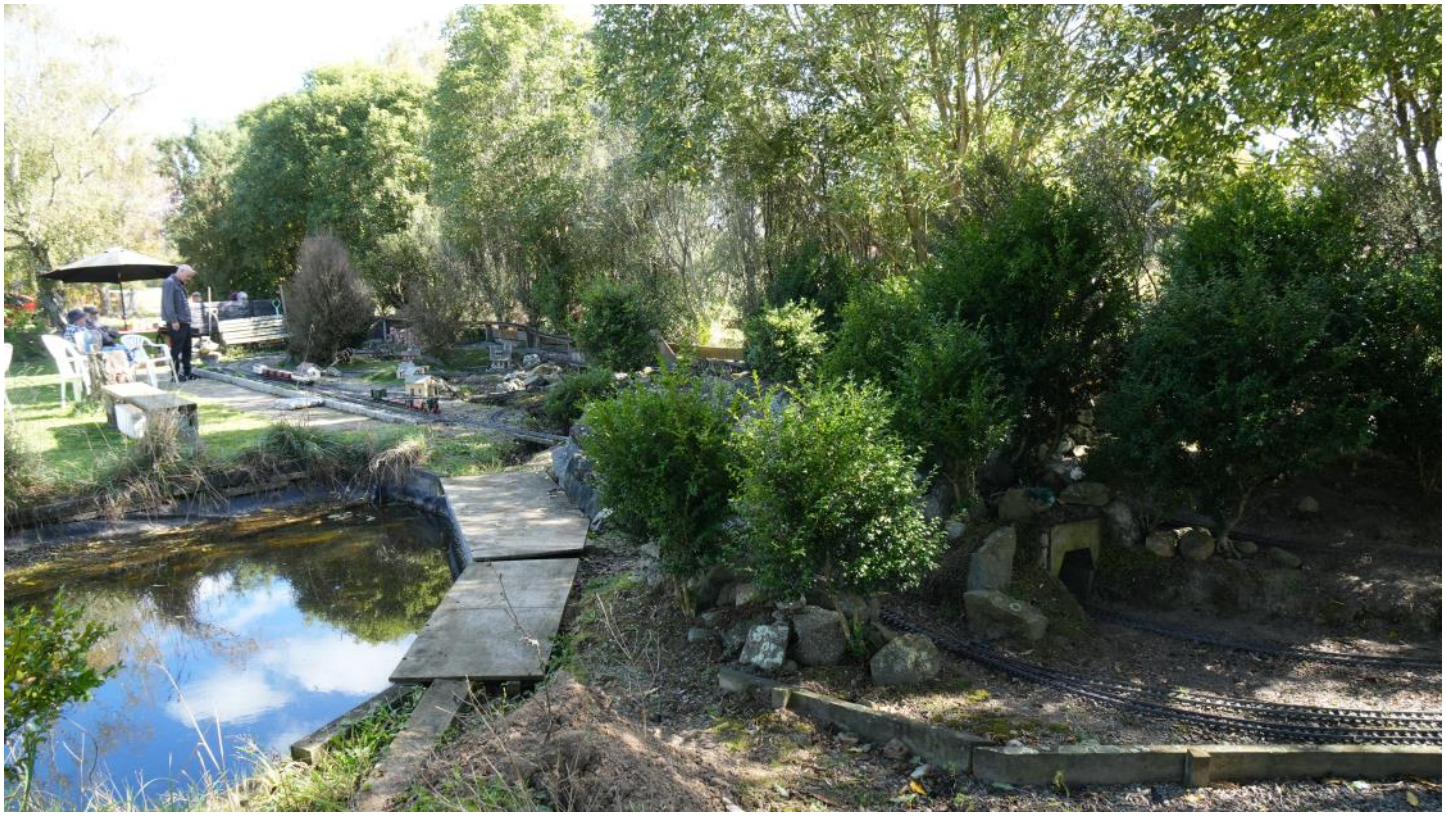
Harlech Castle and Isle of Man Coaches



Moa Pass centre.

Warren Stringers train on his Moa Pass Railway.

Lloyds Harlech Castle and Isle of Man Coaches appearing from the tunnel.



Moa Pass Railway over view.

Harlech Castle and Isle of Man Coaches on the Moa Pass Station.

15TH NZ GARDEN RAILWAY CONVENTION
CHRISTCHURCH GARDEN RAILWAY GROUP
WAITANGI WEEKEND FEBUARY 6TH, 7TH & 8TH 2026

Christchurch Garden Railway Group Meeting

Report - Dave Day, Photos as Credited

The April running day for the Christchurch Garden Railway Group was held on Sunday the 27th at Karl and Allisons L shaped layout, in brilliant sunshine, after being postponed from the week before due to a lot of moisture falling from the sky and making it too wet.

We had an excellent turnout of members, partners, children and also great to see so many different trains running around with the very odd uncoupling and derailment, but that all adds to the fun of the day. It was interesting to look around the group and see some in a wee group looking at various parts that Ian Galbraith had 3d printed for members, Douglas with a full kit of tools working on the Spruce Goose for Kabita. Others driving their train, removing their train from the layout or putting their train on.

With Karl and Allisons layout being the oldest in Christchurch is a credit to them both to still get it to perform so well on the day. It is real shame the earthquake damaged the pond on the West end and can't hold water now, maybe just as well going by the people climbing into it to retrieve rolling stock when it uncoupled.

The photos say lot about the day and also good to see the ladies getting together for a chat under the tree. As the day went on & the shadows grew longer afternoon tea was presented to all who attended and very well catered for, I must add. We were told not to go home until all the food was devoured. We gave it a good shot but alas didn't quite make it.

All in all a very relaxing social day was had by all many thanks to Karl and Allison for hosting a running day on your awesome layout.

Engine shed on the Mt Catt and Jessie Falls Railway - Photo Bill Stanley.

Karl in his train room with his OO gauge layout - Photo Tony Rothschild.

Canal boat on the OO layout - Photo Tony Rothschild.

Lock for the canal on the OO layout - Photo Tony Rothschild.

Station on the OO layout - Photo Tony Rothschild.

Hobo camp on the railway - Photo Bill Stanley.

Ian Galbraith's FA1 with some wagons under construction - Photo Tony Rothschild.

Karl's passenger train and Andrew's FA1 at the Jessie Falls station - Photo Tony Rothschild.

Douglas's Alco S4 passing by on the mainline - Photo Bill Stanley.

Members seeking shade under the tree to enjoy trains passing by - Photo Tony Rothschild.

Douglas's freight train snaking past the lake - Photo Bill Stanley.

Stainz loco heading through the canyons - Photo Tony Rothschild.

Karl's Mogul hauling a passenger train - Photo Bill Stanley.

Group members enjoying the fine weather - Photo Tony Rothschild.

Karl's train passing the Mt Catt Station - Photo Bill Stanley.

From the Workbench

Kabita Whale, Collins Creek Branch Railroad

Left -

Guess what this is? no not a Dalek.

Below -

This is the through shed of the Pro Patria mill , made of foam board, bit of a mission with foam board, have to use foam compatible glue & "dry" glue or the paper on the foam warps.

Kabita Whale

Collins Creek Branch Railroad.

CLASSIFIEDS

For Sale

If you are interested in any of this equipment, please contact:

Daniel Clews - daniel.clews@xtra.co.nz (Items located in Christchurch)

Items	Named	New	Used	Note	Prices Each
Bachmann					
Tank Car	Mobilgas		1	Damaged	$40.00
Gondola	Unnamed	2			$70.00 each
Reefer Car	John Howard	1			$70.00
Reefer Car	Union Pacific	1			$70.00
E-Z Command					
(DCC Controller HO/N scale)		1			$150.00
Lehmann Gross Bahn (G Scale Track)					
Level Crossing (10007)		2			$30.00
Crossing (13200)		1			$40.00
Aristo Craft Trains					
Rogers 2-4-2 Locomotive					
& Tender	B&O	1			$225.00
Other					
Static plastic locomotive kit 1/25th scale					
The General		1		Unassembled	$30.00

Wanted

Large radius 4ft (8ft Dia) turnouts code 332

LGB R3, Piko R5 or Aristo X-wide

Lefts and Rights wanted

Contact Editor

gw.editor@outlook.com

Readers Pictures

Just a couple of images of a Bing for Basset Lowke 4-4-2 Atlantic over 100 years old and still runs great.

Michael Avery,

Speers Point,

NSW Australia

15th NZ Garden Railway Convention, Christchurch

6th – 8th February 2026
Update #2

I thought it would be a great idea to provide everyone with another update on Convention progress. We have our Venue booked, this being the Prebbleton Hall, 617 Springs Road, Prebbleton. We have the Hall booked for Friday and Saturday, so hopefully this may help those from out of town wishing to book accommodation for the Convention. We are also working through a draft programme and menus for the Evening meals. Convention Tee Shirt design is the graphic shown above and sizing guide is located at below these are available to order with your registration. A full range of unisex sizes are available at $25.00 each, to give us time for ordering and printing please order and pay for your shirts in full by 1st December 2025.

- Currently we have 14 Layouts to view, 4 of which are new layouts and 5 layouts which have had changes since the last convention in 2021.
- We will have sales tables and trade stands available at the venue Friday / Saturday. (If you wish to have a trade stand, please contact myself on nzgrc2026@gmail.com).
- We are currently organising some inhouse clinics and have had some expressions already but if you have a new clinic you wish to present, please contact myself on nzgrc2026@gmail.com.
- Currently our programme starts at 8.30am on Friday 6th (We may do pre-registration with a Layout Visit from Thursday 5th 5.00pm)
- For those from out of town also allow for 4pm finish on the Sunday (For those booking flights aim for 5.30pm or later)

With the 2026 Convention we have made the decision to have 4 registration prices including a junior membership which and are on the registration form and are the following:

Junior Registration Fee is $125.00 per registrant 12 years of age or under with accompanying full registrant and covers all activities including the Friday evening buffet meal and Saturday evening buffet meal.

Full Registration Fee is $180.00 per registrant if paid by 1st December 2025, and covers all activities including the Friday evening buffet meal and Saturday evening buffet meal.

Late Registration Fee is $200.00 if paid after 1st December 2025, and covers all activities including the Saturday evening Friday evening buffet meal and Saturday evening buffet meal.

If you're interested in attending the Convention, please return your completed registration forms by email to: nzgrc2026@gmail.com

Iain Collingwood
Convention Convenor

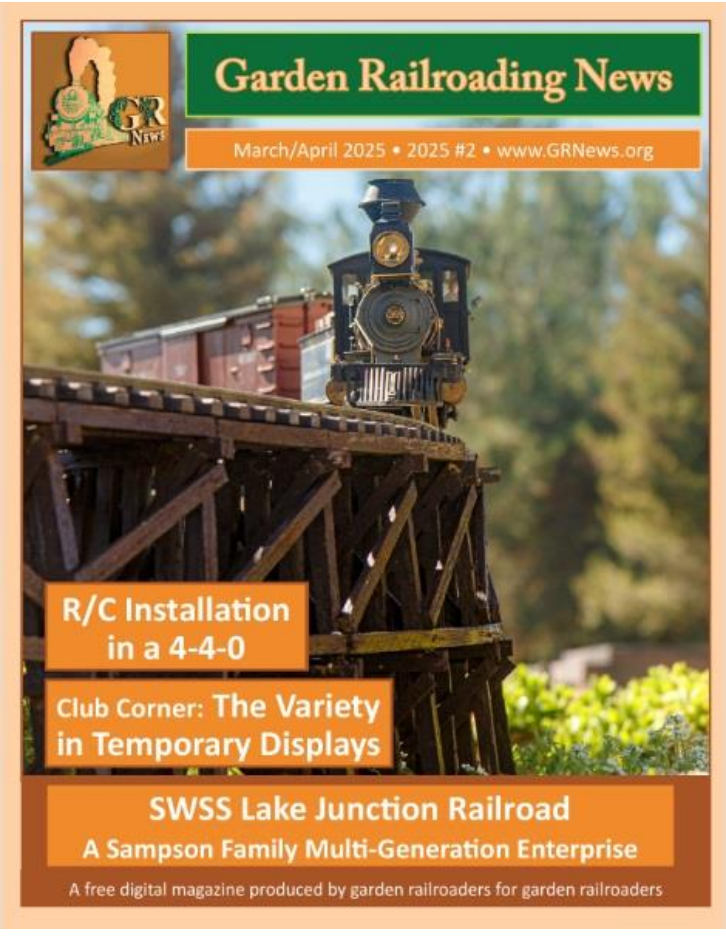
COMING EVENTS

May 3-4 2025	WaiRail, Carterton
May 3-4 2025	Dunedin Model Train Show, Mosgiel, Dunedin
May 3-4 2025	Hobby & Craft Expo, Levin
May 3-4 2025	Northeast Large Scale Train Show, Massachusetts, USA
May 10 2025	GCMRC Giant Boot Sale, Ferrymead, Christchurch
May 9-10 2025	Great Lakes Large Scale Train Expo, Ohio, USA
May 18 2025	Whanganui Toy Fair, Whanganui
June 4-7 2025	Midwest Garden Railroad Gathering, Oklahoma, USA
June 18-21 2025	40th Garden Railway Convention, Sacramento CA, USA
July 13-18 2025	National Big Train Operators Club Convention, Georgia, USA
July 5-6 2025	Alpine Model Railway Expo, Timaru
October 4-5 2025	The Big Train Show, Christchurch
October 8-12 2025	National Steamup Symposium, California, USA
October 2025	Great Little Train Show, Invercargill
November 2025	RailEx, Taita, Lower Hutt
February 5-7 2026	15th NZ Garden Railway Convention, Christchurch
May 31-5 2027	2027 National Garden Railway Convention, Nashville, USA

Do you know of an event?
Contact the Editor to include in the next Garden Whistle newsletter
gw.editor@outlook.com

The March / April Garden Railroading News is available to read online, this can be found at www.GRNews.org or

Click here to view the current issue.



ADVERTISERS

Club Meeting	Club Contact
May 25th (Sunday) 6pm Group dinner at the Black Salt Bar and restaurant New Lynn (see https://blacksaltbar.co.nz/) **Please RSVP to Robert Graham at grahamclannz@xtra.co.nz or robert.graham@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz or send a text to 021 529 015 by Wednesday 14 May**	**Auckland:** Auckland Garden Railway Society Inc Club Contact: Email: grahamclannz@xtra.co.nz Robert Graham, Ph: 09 836 0900
Running Days/Meetings cancelled until further notice	**Waikato:** GROW: Garden Railway Operators of Waikato. Club Contact: Email: sandnlipsey@gmail.com Stefan Lipsey, PO Box 612, Waikato Mail Centre, Hamilton, 3240, Ph: 07 859 3650
May TBA	**Wairarapa:** Wairarapa Garden Railway Group. Club Contact: Email: Lloyd.dickens@wise.net.nz C/- Lloyd Dickens, 55 Titoki Street, Masterton. Ph: 06 370 3790.
May TBA	**Wellington:** Wellington Garden Railway Group. Club Contact: Email: bilthompson@xtra.co.nz Coordinator: Brent Thompson, 6 Bodmin Terrace, Camborne, Ph: 022 619 4006
May 18th (Sunday) 12pm AGM Rod Bender Hall, Waterloo Rd Working bee on U-drive then AGM starting at 1.30pm Please bring a plate for shared afternoon tea.	**Christchurch:** Christchurch Garden Railway Group: Club Contact: Email: 2days61@gmail.com Secretary: David Day, 61 Carnarvon Street, Linwood, Christchurch. Ph: 03 981 4424 President: Bill Stanley, Ph: 027 282 4244

CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM

15th NZ Garden Railway Convention,
Christchurch
6th – 8th February 2026

Personal Details

Name: _____ Name on ID Tag: _____

Partners Name: _____ Name on ID Tag: _____

Railway Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Country: _____

Contact Phone / Mobile: _____

Email Address: _____

Junior Registration Fee is **$125.00** per registrant 12 years of age or under with accompanying full registrant and covers all activities including the Friday evening buffet meal and Saturday evening buffet meal.

Full Registration Fee is **$180.00** per registrant if paid by 1st December 2025, and covers all activities including the Friday evening buffet meal and Saturday evening buffet meal.

Late Registration Fee is **$200.00** if paid after 1st December 2025, and covers all activities including the Saturday evening Friday evening buffet meal and Saturday evening buffet meal.

For **Partners / Friends** attending only the Friday evening Meal the cost is $45.00 per person.

For **Partners / Friends** attending only the Saturday evening Buffet Meal the cost is $45.00 per person.

Drinks for Friday evening meal is BYO and Saturday evening meal is at your own cost.

A **Convention Tee Shirt** is available to order with your registration. A full range of unisex sizes are available. To give us time for ordering and printing please order and pay for your shirts in full by 1st December 2025.

Costs

Junior Registration	$125.00	No Attending	_____	$_____
Full Registration	$180.00	No Attending	_____	$_____
Late Registration	$200.00	No Attending	_____	$_____
Friday Buffet Meal only	$45.00	No Attending	_____	$_____
Saturday Buffet Meal only	$45.00	No Attending	_____	$_____
Tee - Shirt(s)	$25.00 ea.	No Required	_____	$_____
#1 Unisex		Size	_____	
#2 Unisex		Size	_____	
			TOTAL	**$**_____

Notes (e.g. Dietary / Mobility requirements): _____

Please return your completed registration forms by email to: nzgrc2026@gmail.com

Please make Direct Credit payments to "CGRG Convention" account

BNZ **02-0820-0432546-02** with your **Full Name** in the reference field.