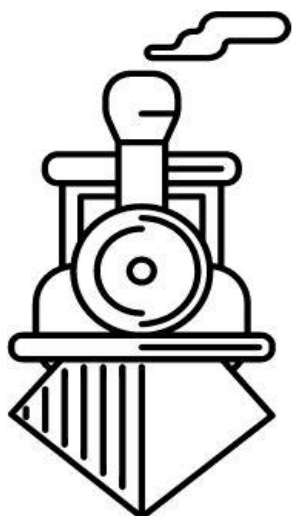


THE GARDEN WHISTLE

NEW ZEALAND LARGE SCALE NEWSLETTER



FEBUARY 2026



THE GARDEN WHISTLE

NEW ZEALAND LARGE SCALE NEWSLETTER

February 2026

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[Cover photo](#) — Geoff's Christchurch Boon 152 tram draws into Te Horo station to collect passengers. As a sign of the times the tram has on board batteries making old fashion overhead unnecessary! The tram 1:24 scale tram was scratch built by Geoff and is finished to his usual very high standard.

Photo supplied by - John Robinson.

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

Wellington Garden Railway Group Meeting

Report John Robinson, Photos - As Credited

January Running at the Te Horo Branch

Looking back at what I wrote about the previous Wellington Garden Railway Group's running afternoon at my railway, the Te Horo Branch, I boldly said "it's becoming a bit of a tradition for the Te Horo Branch to host the Wellington Garden Railway Group for a running day in January in the warm Kapiti Coast sun." Well the tradition of the January run has been maintained but the warm Kapiti Coast sun for much of summer has been away on vacation elsewhere as it was this day. It was though a pleasant enough day, possibly more conducive to enjoying the trains without having to worry about sunblock and hydration!

All in all, it was a pretty normal running day, very pleasing watching a wide range of locos and rolling stock running from Max's Christmas train to Geoff's Gauge 1 meths fire Schools loco. In between was the usual mix of battery power and butane fired live steam equipment. I briefly ran my old faithful Dubs A as guests arrived then pleasingly just stood back, chatted and watched, I hope, everyone enjoying themselves, I did.

A number of visitors kindly commented that the planting around the railway is maturing well. It's taking a while but my vision, if you could call it that, is starting develop nicely. No longer can you readily see trains running around the entire railway, a bit of walking is now required to follow your train as it passes through or behind the rising vegetation.

Bridges are now all in place, all be it with a bit more integration of the landscaping required around the truss bridge abutments and proper bridge sleepering on the built beam girder bridge crossing the pond. All in good time! The truss bridge uses two spans uplifted from my previous railway in plus one new span built to match. The built beam girder bridges use parts 3D printed for me by my good Aussie mate Stephen Cross. (Yes, I should really write something for the Garden Whistle about the bridges, maybe when I actually finish them.)

Ample catering was provided by my daughters Hannah and Michelle supplemented by some guest contributions, thanks to you all. And thank you to all who came on the day, despite the initial poor forecast, seeing so many enjoying the railway made all the effort worthwhile.

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Derek's Accucraft Lyn steaming across the dry wash bridge.



Chris's train passing over the dry wash bridge, while the Bridge Gangers in the foreground are engaged in conversation and oblivious of the fine scratch build brass body of the loco behind them that uses Accucraft chassis/running gear. The wagons are all kit bashed and decaled by Chris.

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Derek's Accucraft Lyn on the pond built beam girder bridge. Getting the right angle for the best reflections in the pond is still a work in progress.



Geoff's Gauge 1 meths fired Schools negotiating the southern end of the railway as he tested out the suitability of the Te Horo Branch for the finer Gauge 1 standard of this Aster loco. With a slight adjustment to the front steps successful running ensued.

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Dave's shunter hauls a small local service over the truss bridge. Batteries are under the load in the first wagon.



Max's Christmas train, well Christmas loco, added some joyous colour and ran very well.



Dave's shunter and train pausing in the loop at Te Horo.



Geoff's Aster Schools steaming over the truss bridge.

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Grant's DX provided the days heavy freight working.



Chris's Roundhouse Russell passing under the recently installed truss bridge, detailing of the bridge abutments still needs to be done.

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Nearing the end of the day Chris's Russell is seen with a bit of American influence beneath. (I think the train and loco were Dave's?)



Chris's Russell providing a final reflection on the day.

Wairarapa Garden Railway Group Meeting

Report and Photos - Lloyd Dickens

Murray Clarke's Elm Grove Railway running day

Murray had his running day in good conditions something that is not guaranteed these days. The turn out from our Wairarapa team was not large due to holidays. Fortunately Ian Webb and Tony Christie arrived from Wellington so it was great to see them.

Elm Grove is on a farm and located behind the homestead. The complete railway is all raised off the ground. Murray has DCC which will normally run with my brass locomotives and wagons. This time however it did not like running with my railcars. I will have check why every so often they seem to short the track out.

Since last years running day Murray has added a "Y" turning arrangement with a Digitrax Y voltage switch unit. This unit detects a short circuit on the track and switches the DCC polarity.

Murray is using a DCC module to switch the points on the "Y".

A great day was had by all.



Elm Groves Y that has been installed.



Murray Clarke Elm Grove, Afternoon tea time.



Tony Christie controlling his train.

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Warren Stringer guiding his train.



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

Auckland Garden Railway Society Meeting

Report - Robert Graham , Photos - As Credited

Auckland Garden Railway Society January 2026 meeting

In Auckland we have had at best a rather mediocre summer with a few fine days interspersed with days of high winds, heavy rain or both. We don't normally have a January meeting but because the convention is in February we decided this year to have a meeting in January. Michael Hilliar volunteered to host and Sunday 11 January turned out to be one of the hottest and sunniest days so far this summer.

We had been contacted by AJ from up north as he is helping dispose of a deceased estate collection of model trains including some LGB and other G Scale trains so we invited him to attend our January meeting. He turned up with a helper and a full car load of engines, wagons, track, parts and other assorted bits and pieces that he put out for us to look at. We all had fun looking at what he had and most of us bought something off him. At the end of the day one of our guys made him an offer for what was unsold so AJ went home with an empty car and a full wallet which was a great result for all involved.

We had a reasonable turn out of members to run trains or watch the trains running but we would always like to see more people attending our group meetings. We spent much of the time sheltering from the sun and enjoying a natter or watching the trains.

There were no major issues running the trains but with an afternoon temperate of around 29 degrees any 3D printed items needed to be kept out of the sun. The photos show most of the trains that were run.

On behalf of the Auckland Society I would like to thank Michael, Liz and Rachael for hosting the meeting and providing afternoon tea. You can't beat a sausage roll even on a hot day.

As many of the Auckland society will be heading down to the Christchurch for the convention we don't have a meeting planned for February. Our next meeting will be at Ray Williams house in March.

I am always looking for people to host meetings or suggestions for railway related activities or places to visit so any suggestions please send me an email

robert.graham@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz or grahamclannz@xtra.co.nz

Robert Graham

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Grant's Sante Fe crossing the trestle - Photo Robert Graham.



Pulpwood train passing by - Photo Robert Graham.

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Left - Mikes K28 locomotive hauling freight - Photo Louise Graham.

Right- Grant Alexander packing up some of his rolling stock - Photo Louise Graham.



Close up of Mike's K28 - Photo Louise Graham.

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*Left - Grant Alexander doing some boating in Mike's water feature - Photo Michael Hilliar.
Right - Full yard at Rockwood Station - Photo Robert Graham.*



Mike's Loco's in the storage yard - Photo Michael Hilliar.



Mike's K28 on stock duties - Photo Louise Graham.



RDC passing through the Rockwood gorge - Photo Michael Hilliar.

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AJ's sales table was popular - Photo Louise Graham.



Trains awaiting departure - Photo Robert Graham.



Crossing the girder bridge - Photo Robert Graham.



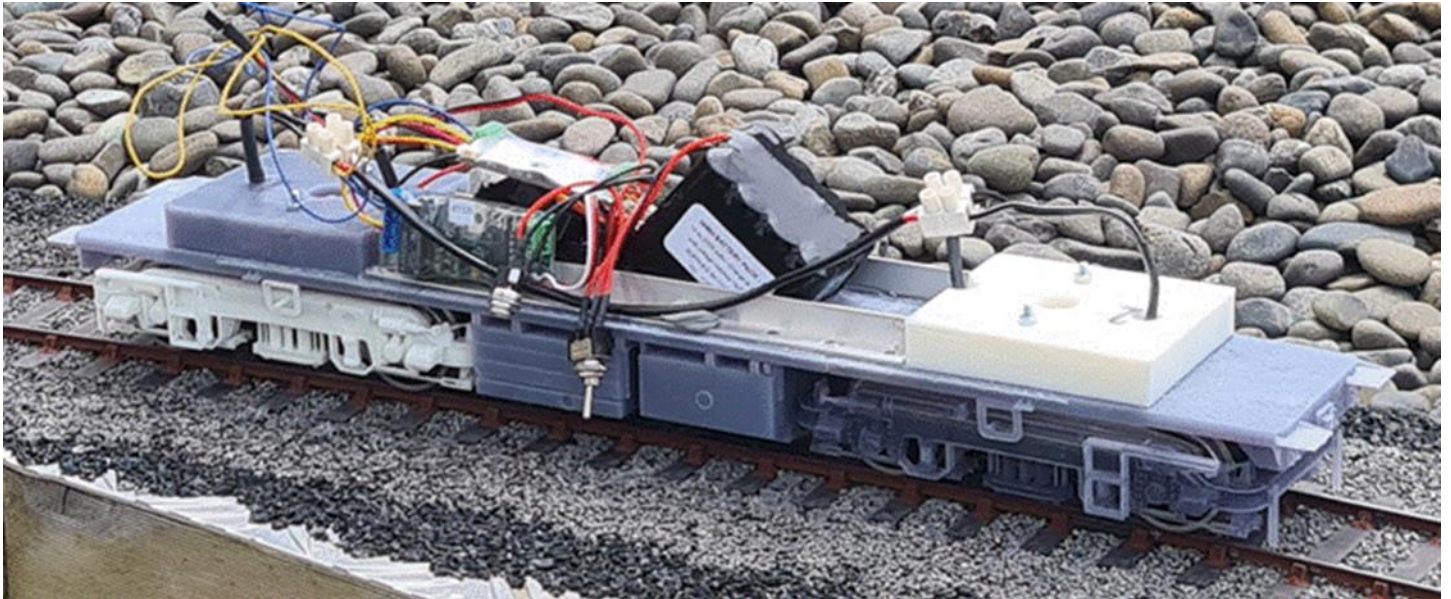
Grant's Sante Fe passenger train - Photo Robert Graham.

Tales from the West Highland Railway in New Zealand

British Railways Class 27

3: Chassis and Electrics

Author: John Boyson



The beginnings of an operating chassis with the electrics loosely installed for the first time. They are being tested, as supplied, before setting up the permanent mountings and adding the extra fittings and details described below.

1. Scope

Having achieved a rolling chassis in the last instalment, the focus now was to make it operational and be able to do its job of pulling/propelling other stock. There were also details to be added as well. These included:

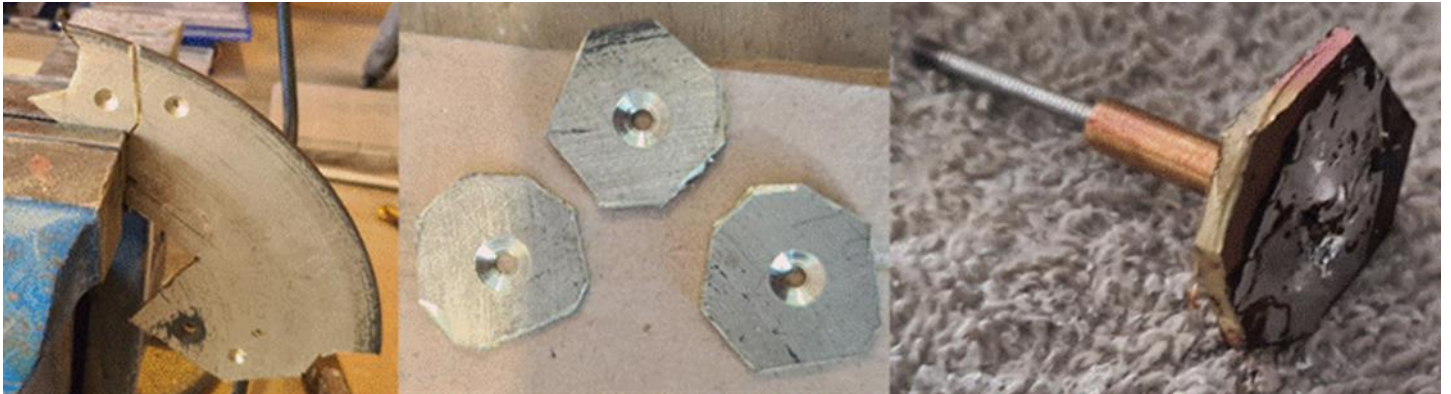
- sprung buffers,
- coupling hooks,
- hoses and cables on the front buffer beam,
- bogie retention brackets and
- an operating fan.

2. The Buffer Beam Details, Bogie Retention Brackets and Fan

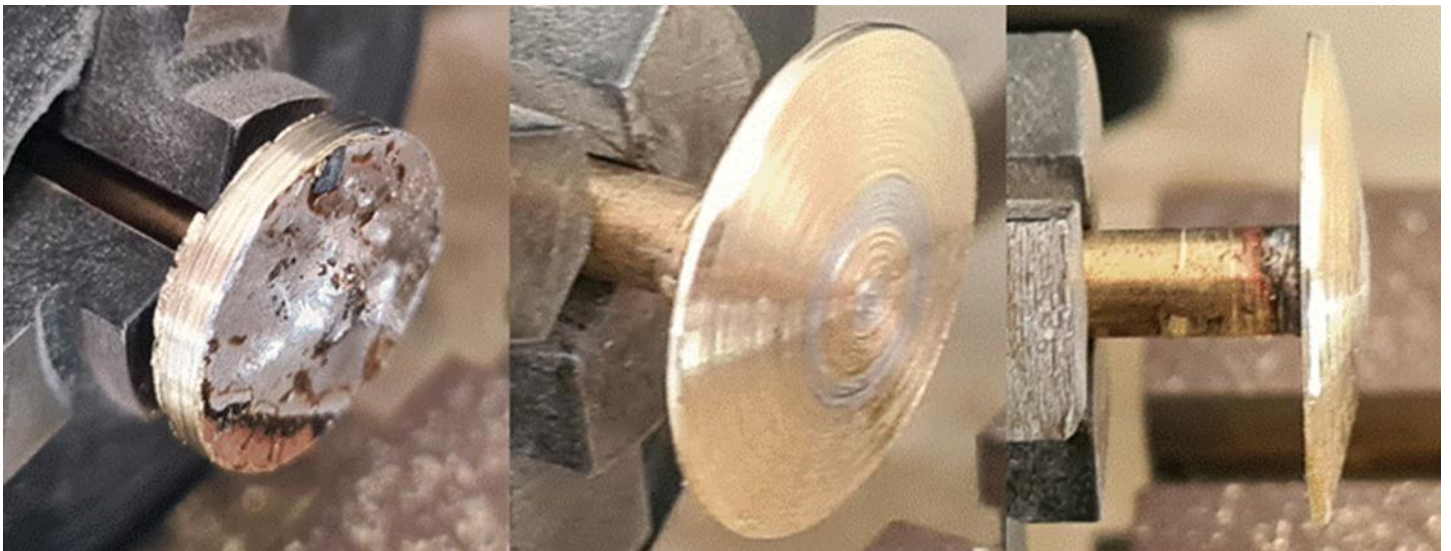
The main features at each end, amid the myriad of cables and hoses, are the buffers and coupling hooks. Given the loads each would have to take, I determined that these would be made from metal. However, the connecting plates and holes housing these, were incorporated into the prints to give positive and accurate locations for each as described in the previous instalment.

2.1 Buffers

The main features at each end, amid the myriad of cables and hoses, are the buffers and coupling hooks. Given the loads each would have to take, I determined that these would be made from metal. However, the connecting plates and holes housing these, were incorporated into the prints to give positive and accurate locations for each as described in the previous instalment.



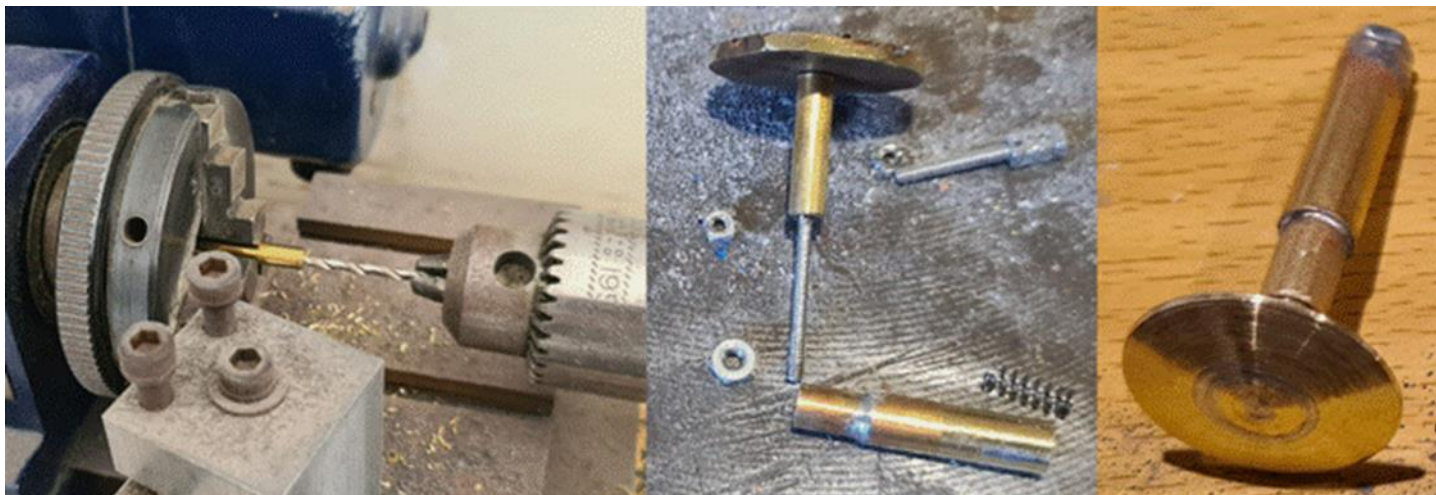
Forming the buffer as described above



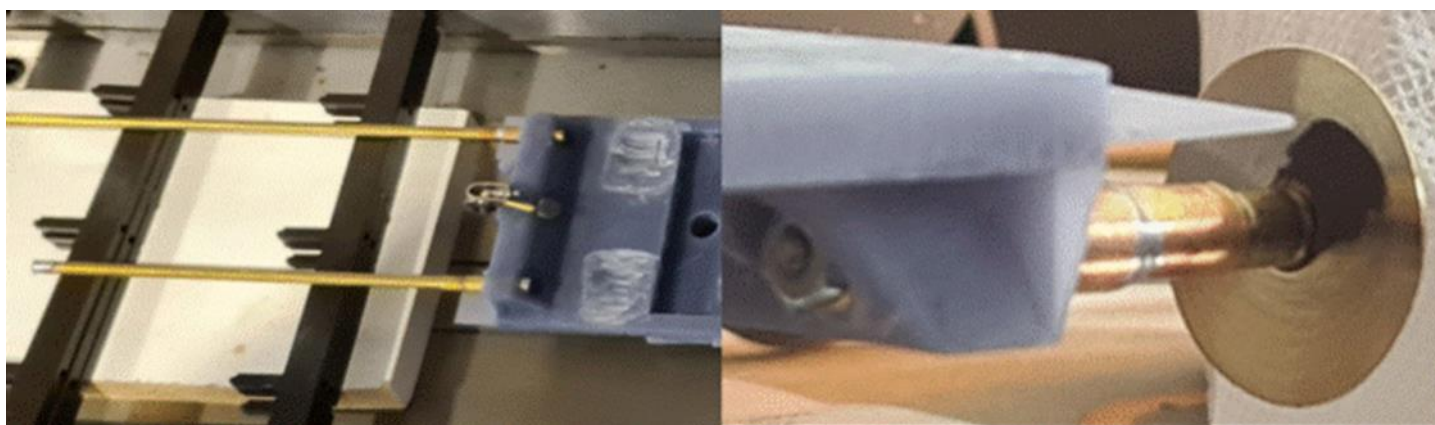
Turning the buffer head.

The fixed mounting shank was formed from various diameters of brass tube and a short solid end piece with a hole drilled through. This allowed the protruding piece of studding extending from the buffer shank to pass through. The exposed length of thread was removed except for about 2mm at the end for a retaining nut to hold things together. Assembly of the unit then included a small spring that fitted over the exposed studding and fitted between the main buffer shank and the end piece within the fixed shank section. Complex? yes, they are! Hopefully, the photos and below will make things a little clearer!

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Left: drilling a hole in what will become the end insert of the fixed shank. Centre: the various components of the buffer. N.B. In this photo the buffer head has yet to be turned down. Right: the assembled buffer unit
Once fabricated, the fixed shanks were glued in place with a long length of rod inserted to ensure they stayed true to line and level. As always, super strength araldite was used for this. N.B. using a long length of rod allows for much finer adjustments to the alignment of the shanks whilst the glue is setting.

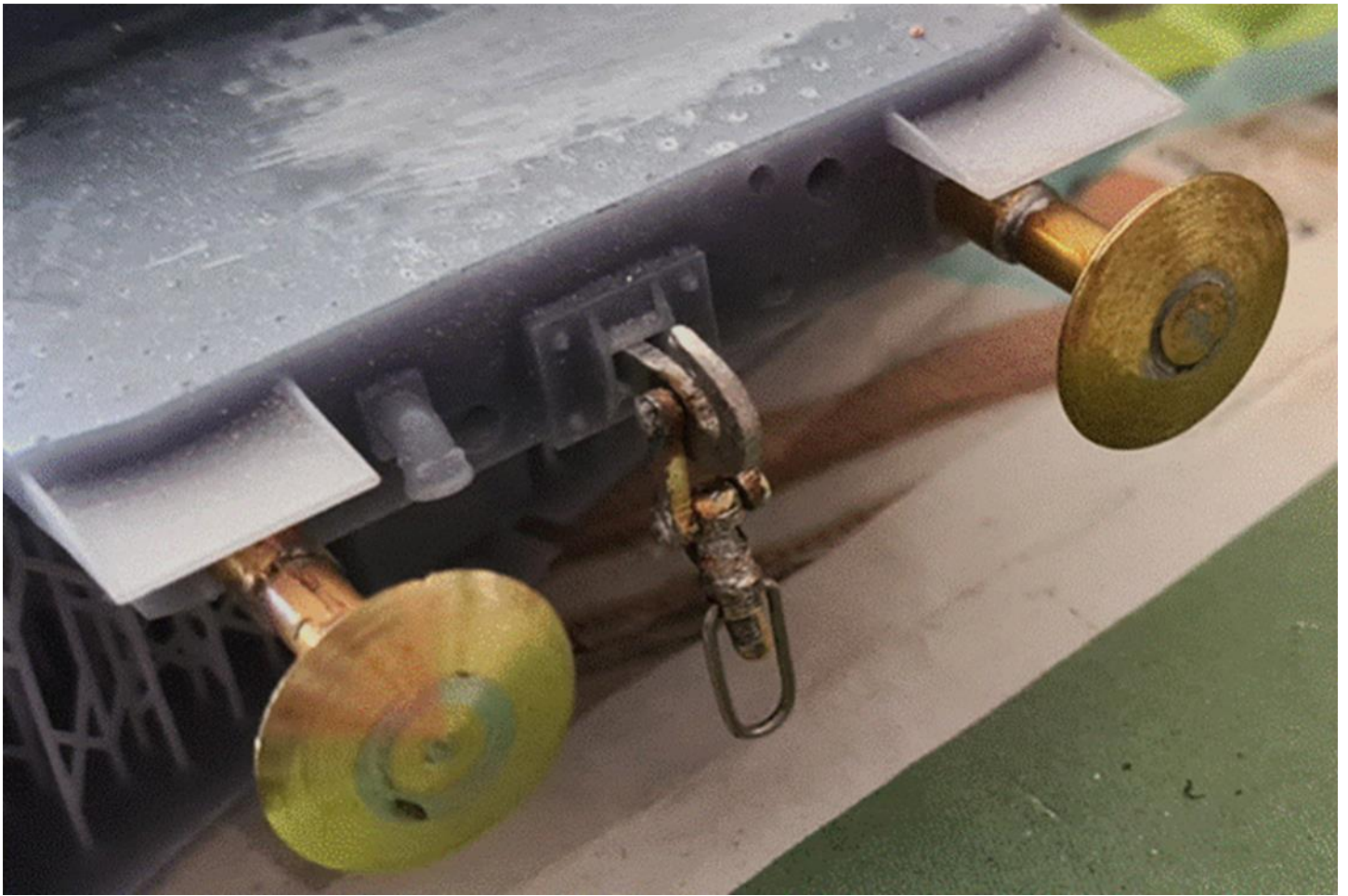


On the left, two of the fixed buffer shanks being glued in place with guide rods inserted to align them. As noted in the text, using long rods allows fine lateral adjustments to be made as well as more easily ensuring that the shanks stay horizontal. On the right, a glued shank with buffer spring and retaining nut fitted.

2.2 Couplings

Equally challenging to make were the couplings. These consisted of a fixed hook, two links to a screw link complete with tommy bar and finally a hoop. Various bits of metal section were carved up to form each of these and the whole lot was carefully soldered together ensuring that the loose connections did not get gummed up with solder in the process. This was mostly successful. However, some of the loose joints had to be eased free, following soldering, despite my initial care. This freeing up process had to be repeated once the units were painted as well. However, that comes later in the tale.

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Buffers and coupling fitted

2.3 Cables and Hoses

The remaining cables and pipes were generally formed with printed end parts and wires in between for a bit of strength. Most of these would have been far too flimsy if simply printed in resin in what are particularly vulnerable areas of the model. Each was located in its own hole pre-formed in the buffer beams.



Various hose and cable fittings designed on the left, batch printed in the centre, and a section of brass tube being heated and curved to form one of the hoses on the right.

THE GARDEN WHISTLE



Two sets of prepared fittings for both buffer beams.



The array of hoses and cables fitted to one of the buffer beams. N.B. the buffers were removed to allow more access for fitting.

2.4 Bogie Retention Brackets

These are awkward little blighters that hang down from the underframe and interlock with pins sticking out from the bogie sides. Whilst they don't come into contact with the pins (or shouldn't) they have to be capable of being removed to allow the release of the bogies. Thus, sleeves had been included in the underframe prints which allow the brackets to be slotted in as a simple friction fit. A tang was included in each bracket print. These were gently filed down to a slight taper on all four sides to allow them to ease into the slot and gradually tighten up as they went in. I did contemplate fabricating these from metal. Metal 3-D printing is now available commercially. However, it is relatively expensive. Also, if something were to happen, I would prefer the bracket to break and not something else. In addition, it is easy to run off more prints of these at little cost. Indeed, whilst I needed four, I printed eight off to give me some spares for such an eventuality.

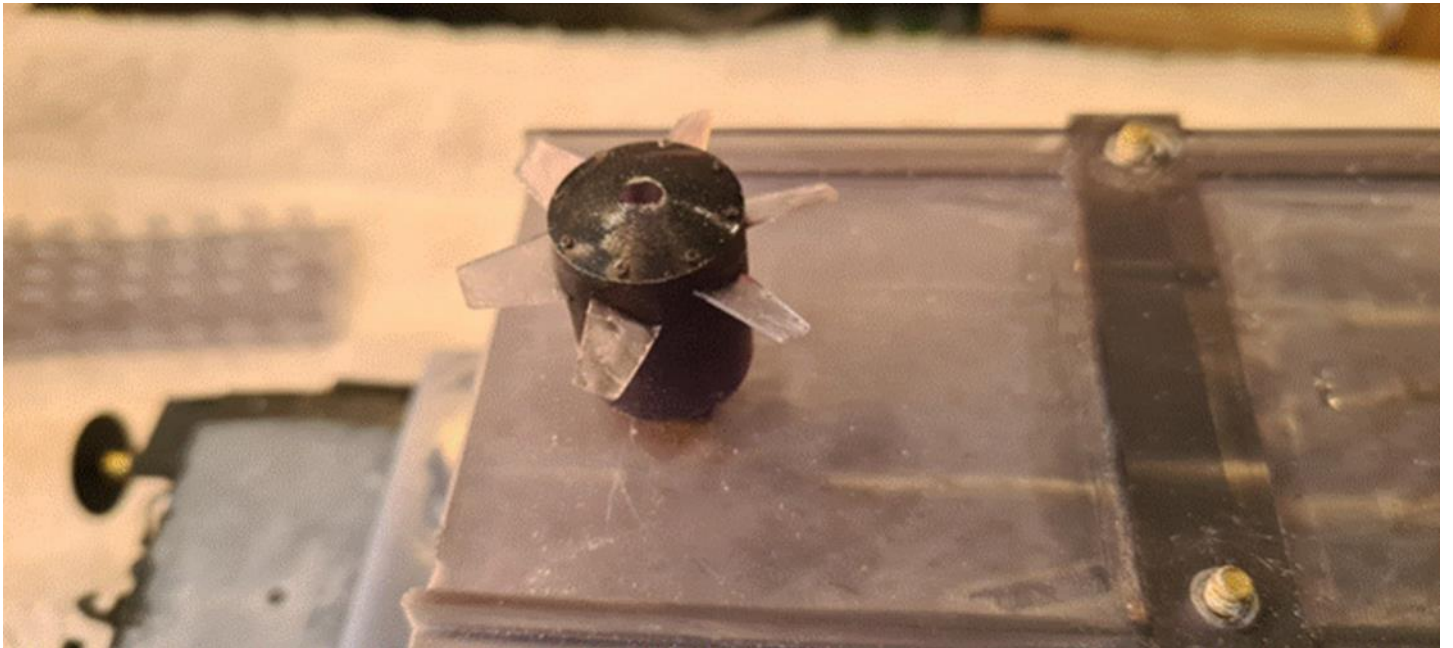
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A fitted bracket. It has a printed tang at 90 degrees to the bracket that slides into a slot printed under the underframe. The bracket surrounds a rod sticking out from the bogie frame. The trick with this assembly is to ensure that the bracket does not limit the bogie movement too much.

2.5 Fan

The fan was printed as a complete unit with a D hole for mounting directly on the vertically mounted motor. It took a few goes to get the D hole right. However, it is now a simple friction fit on the motor spindle since it is simply spinning on top of the motor without any other loads being applied.



The printed fan unit mounted on the support deck described below.

3 Snagging

Given the complexities of fitting everything together, it was inevitable there would be issues and so it proved.

These included the upper part of the brake rigging interfering with the buffer shanks when compressed. I resolved this by lowering the offending part of the rigging on the bogie frame artwork. However, this meant these had to be reprinted. Luckily, as mentioned in the first article, I was still in the process of refining the bogie design so the reprint was simply another step in the evolution of this.

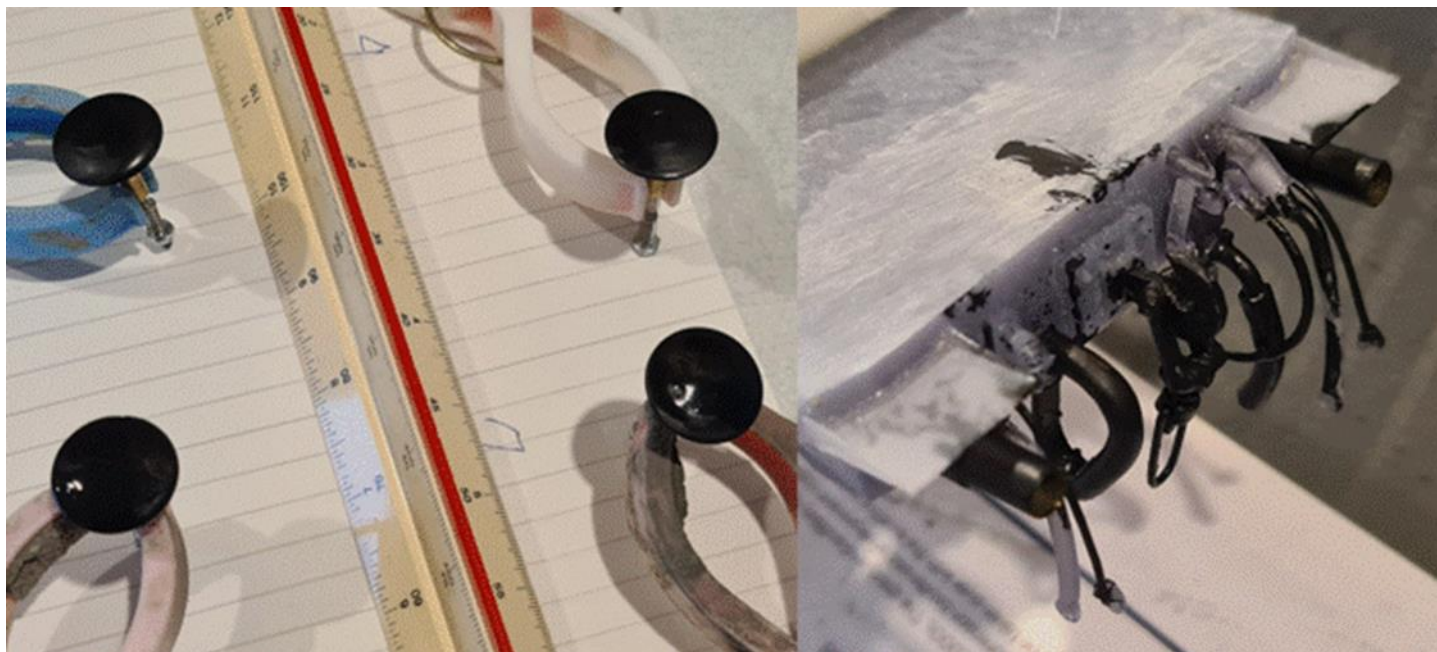
As mentioned in the previous article, the wheel flanges also hit the underside of the underframe when the secondary springs were compressed and the bogie was angled vertically. The solution was to grind out arches in the affected areas of the underframe making allowance for swinging movements that the bogie might also perform. Long term, I shall modify the design to incorporate these for future models.

Slots and openings for wiring runs were drilled out as necessary. Now I have a master for these, I shall incorporate these in the artwork as well for future models.

As also noted in the previous article, the plastic pins initially incorporated in the housings for the bogie suspension systems sheared off during the first runs of the locomotive. Logical really when considering the loads being imparted. I replaced these with metal pins of the same diameter. Holes were drilled out where the pins originally sat and their metal replacements were glued in. Again, I shall modify the artwork to create these holes for future models.

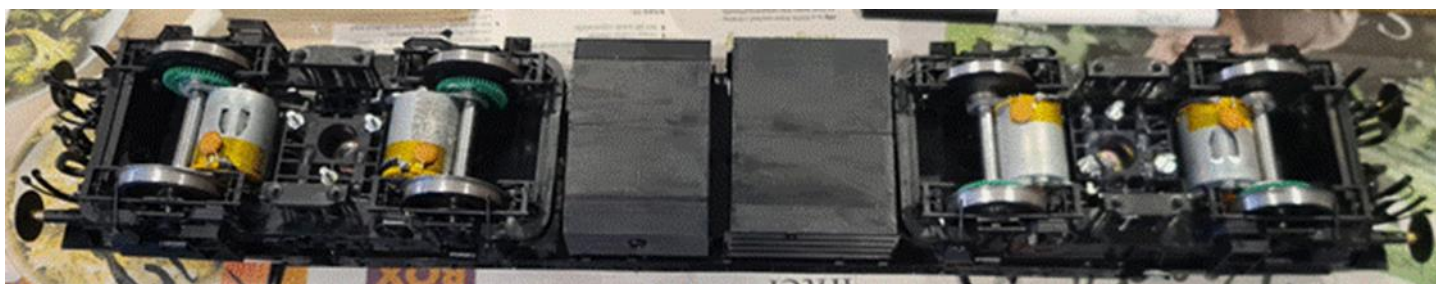
4 Painting

This was relatively straightforward. Firstly, the buffers were removed from the fixed shanks. Then all the metal parts were given a coat of black etch primer. Next, all visible areas were given a black coat. This included the area housing the fan and the cab floor since these would be visible after the body was attached. The fan itself was given a coating of grey.



The metal parts primed with a black etch primer.

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The painted underframe and bogies.

5 Electrics

5.1 Components

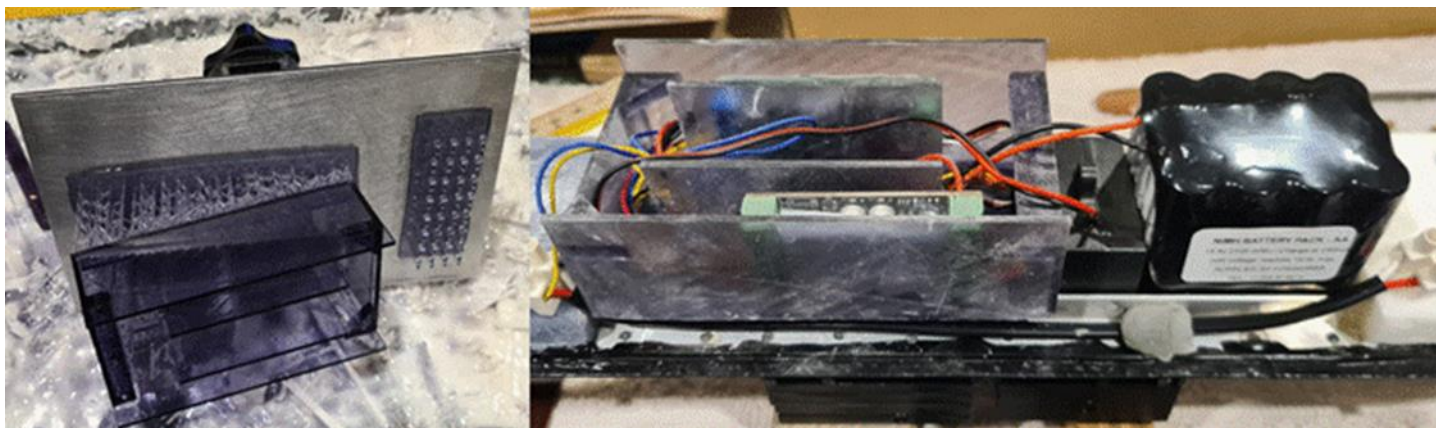
This really is my 'Achilles Heel' as I have mentioned previously. Thus, I had ordered a suitable plug and play system from Fosworks in conjunction with the power units they had supplied for the bogies. As mentioned in the introductory article, Steve Foster was really helpful in ensuring I got the equipment I needed for the locomotive. The system supplied included:

- transmitter,
- receiver,
- control system,
- batteries,
- Sound system,
- Battery charging socket,
- On/off switch,
- facilities for directional lighting, and
- Clear, easy to follow instructions on how to connect up the various components. Indeed, they arrived already connected and with the transmitter already "bound" to the receiver.

In addition, I had to separately organise a motor unit for the planned fan, as well as the LEDs and resistors for the rear lights displayed on the locomotive.

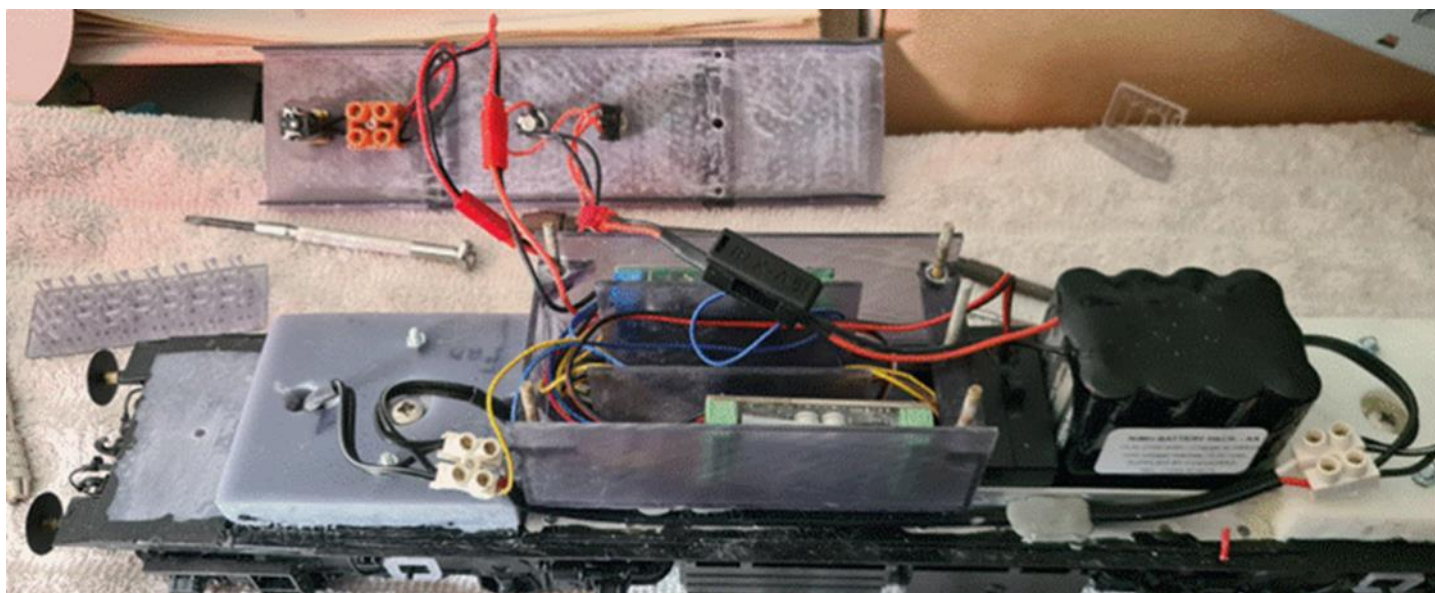
5.2 Holding Box

To keep everything in place, I designed a holding box which could be glued in place midships on the chassis. This together with the space in the tanks, mentioned in the previous article, and the channel formed by the aluminium angles provided a neat receptacle to hold all the above components securely.



The control storage box straight off the printer (left) and glued in place with the electronics stowed inside (right). The two items to the right are the speaker and battery pack.

The box was covered with a bolted-on lid. This held the switch, charging socket and fan motor. The photos below make the arrangement clear.



The box lid with wiring mounted. An explanation of this is under the photo below.



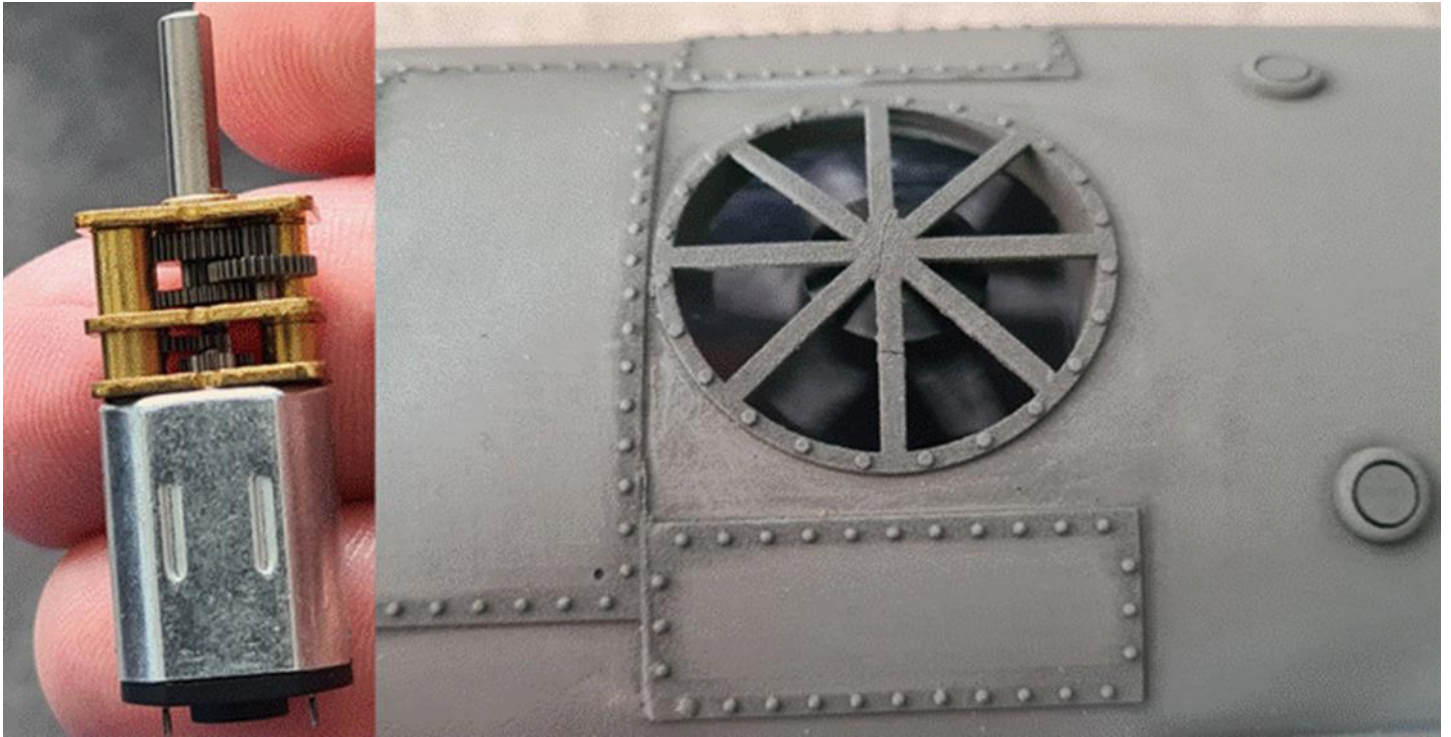
The lid fitted which locks everything into place. Note the extensions each end which, on the left, hold the fan motor and, on the right, retain the speaker and battery pack. The fittings visible on top of the lid are (from left to right):

- Fan (with motor mounted underneath).
- Charging socket.
- On/Off switch.

5.3 Fan Motor

The areas I had left to deal with were the wiring up of the fan which Fosworks instruction made no allowance for. After a bit of navel gazing, I figured it should be wired in parallel with the control system but between the on/off switch and the control system. Thus, the fan would start immediately following the switch being turned on and also it would always operate in the same direction. It would thus be unaffected by the controls and, in turn, would not affect these as well.

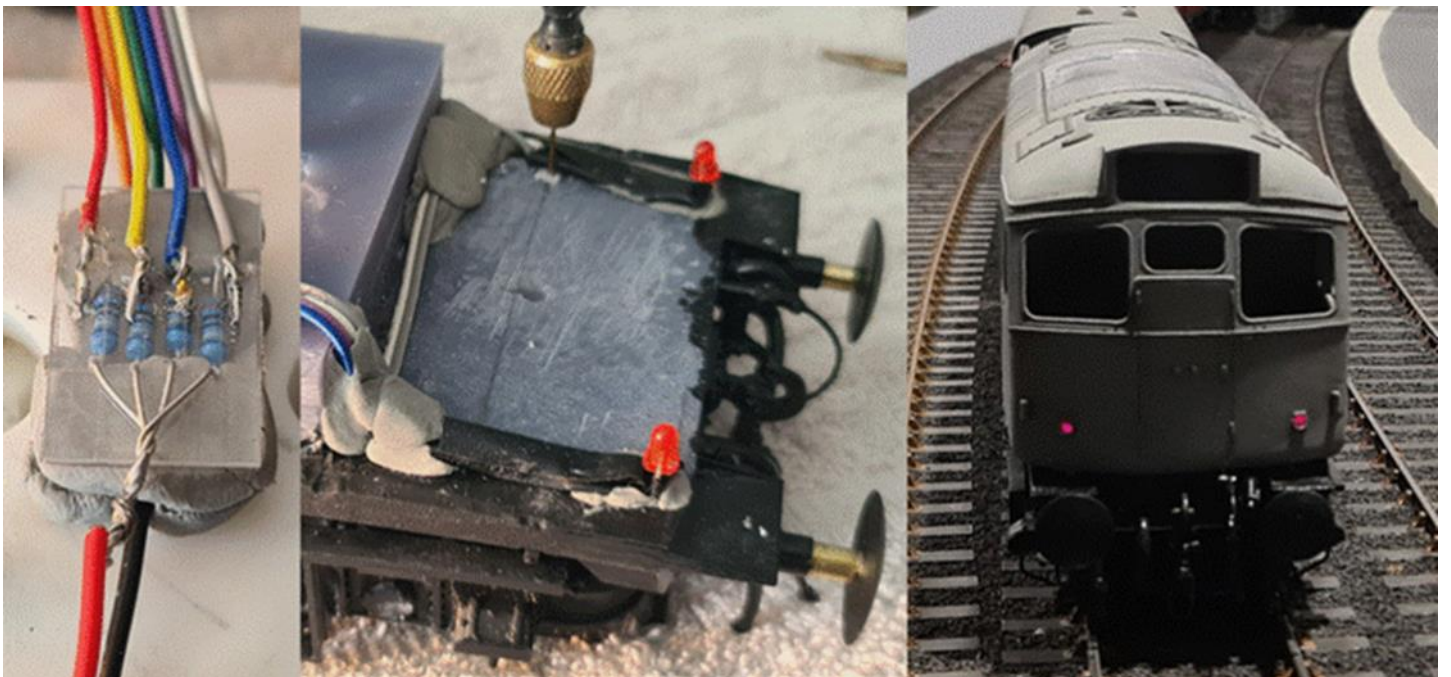
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The fan motor and reducing gear box found on AliExpress for a few dollars and, on the right, mounted and working in its housing below the top opening. N.B. it is a little off centre in the photo. I corrected this as I mated the body to the chassis. I will be covering this in a future instalment of the series.

5.4 Tail Lights

The last job however did go slightly awry. This was the fitting of the red tail lights. I initially wired them together using the common and 'rear' terminals (the positive terminals were named 'front' and 'rear' on the instruction sheet; so, logically in my mind, I selected 'rear' for both ends!) only to find that only one set of LEDs functioned and then only when the loco was correctly travelling with this end tailing.



On the left, the original resistor bank for the four LEDs. As outlined, I had mistakenly wired them all together to the positive lead connected to the "rear" labelled connection on the control board. Having worked out how I had gone wrong, I separated out two pairs of the resistors and made a separate connection for them to the "front" labelled connection on the board. Fortunately, the negative port was common so no rewiring was necessary for this.

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Centre, two LEDs at one end of the locomotive. I have marked the position of the cab seats and am piloting a hole for each of them to ensure that the wires miss them.

Right, the front of the locomotive with the red lights illuminated indicating that the locomotive is set to travel away from the photographer. All this work for something that is barely visible during the day and only visible in dull conditions when the locomotive is light engine. However, importantly, I know they are there!

A period of head scratching saw me separate the pairs into two individual sets and then wire each to the respective terminals and hey presto it all worked! Clearly the "front" and "rear" in the instructions refer to each end of the locomotive (does a two-cab diesel have a front and rear?) and not the individual function of the lights!

5.5 Installing and Testing

Before installing the electronics, I first checked the system, as Fosworks had supplied it, to verify it was working before I started fiddling any further. I then rechecked its operation each time I added a component or fixed a part in place. In doing so I ensured it continued to work before moving on a step.

Apart from the resolved tail light issue, everything worked first time each time using this methodology giving much needed confidence in an area that is mainly black magic to me! However, I like the end result which is the important thing.

Having made everything work, the final job was to tidy up all the wiring running from the box out to the motors and the LEDs. Job done! And I still think it's the work of wizardry and witchcraft!

6 Conclusion and the Next Stage

Completion of the chassis meant I could test the unit. Thus, it was given a run outside to check everything worked properly.

In regards to the electrical system, I found it straight forward to connect up and operate. The issue with the LEDs and also the lack of information on wiring in a fan have been sent to Fosworks, not as criticisms, but as areas where more information would be helpful to non-electrically minded folk such as myself. Now the sound system is working, I am blown away by how realistic it sounds. I have also received a lot of positive feedback from elsewhere echoing these thoughts. Having the four motors as well gives the locomotive ample power for the 1:50 grades on the railway. This does mean that the locomotive has to be driven and, like the other engines on the railway, it cannot be left to trundle around on its own.

The completion of this stage led to the next being the body shell. The design and test printing of the cab will be covered in the next article.



The class 27 with its bodyshell fitted in Mallaig with the tail lights glowing nicely.

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE LGB LOCOS

20882 Uintah #51 Mallet 2-6-6-2 steam Loco, w/sounds, bells & whistles and many more, lights, smoke as used box magnets and manual \$2800.

25192 C & S #7 Bear Trap Mogul Steam Loco, w/sounds, bells & whistles and many more, lights, smoke as new box magnets and manual \$2600.

26192 C & S #10 Mogul Steam Loco, w/sound, bells & whistles and many more, lights, smoke as new box magnets and manual \$2400.

2017D -RG Rio Grande #6 Steam Loco 0-4-0 and tender w/2 motors, lights, and smoke \$450.

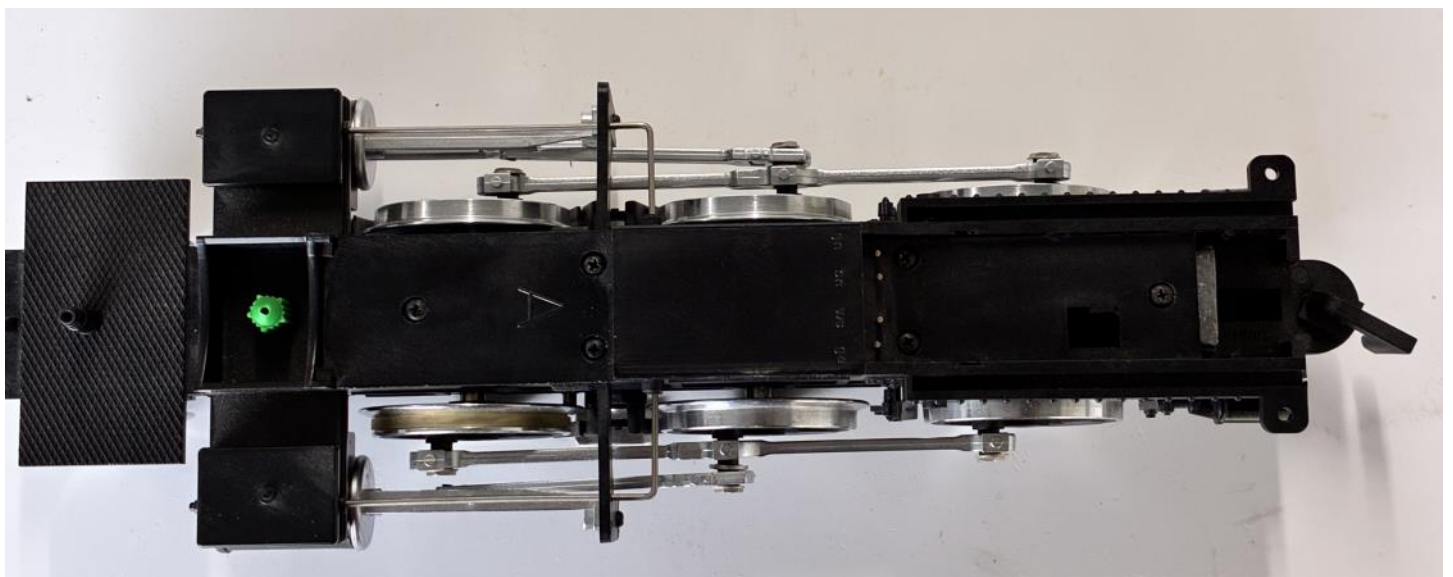
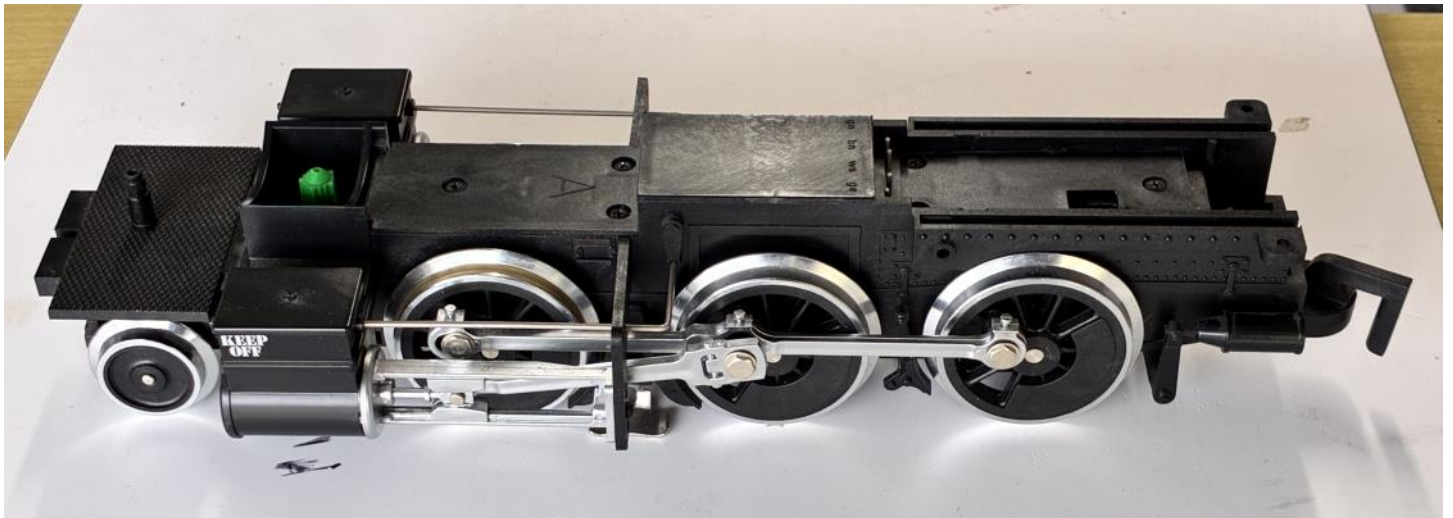
LGB xxxx Mogul Chassis with motor as new \$260.

(Note: smoke units have not been tested. Items maybe picked up)

Don Ellis (Christchurch)

rhbdonut@gmail.com

+64 027432927



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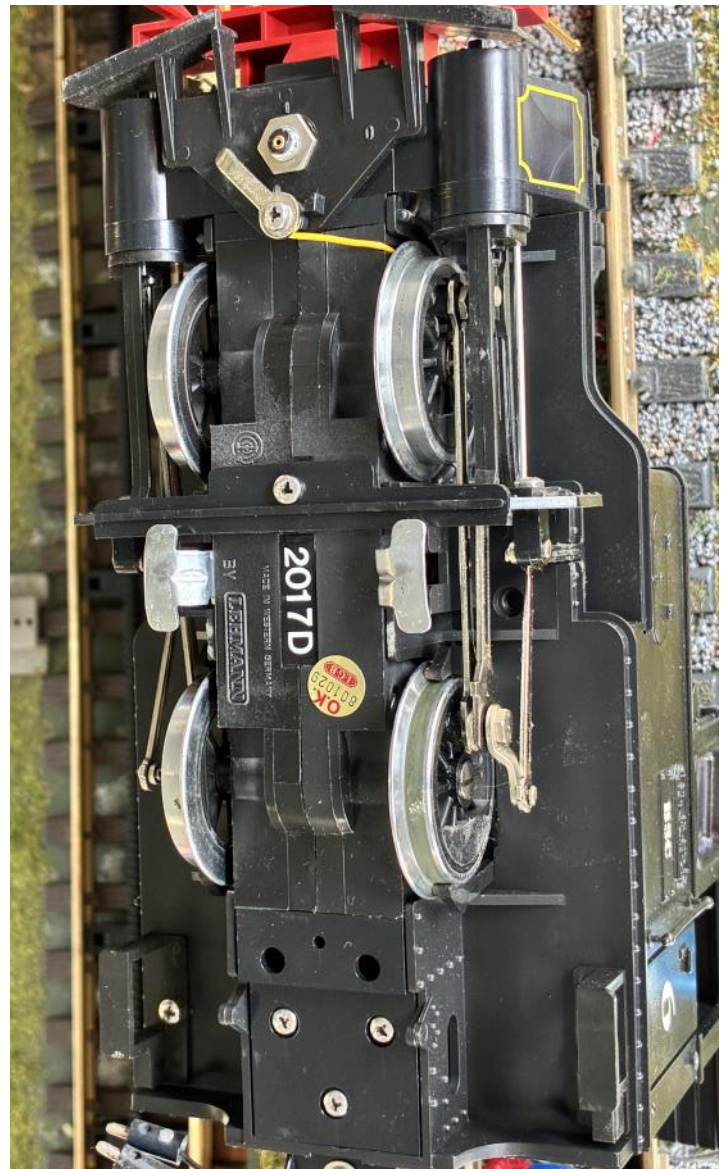
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CLASSIFIEDS

Free

Attached are photos of hand-built turnouts from a dismantled garden railway. They are **FREE** for anyone interested. They are from a railway in the North Island and will be available for pickup at the Convention in February.

The turnouts are only suitable for battery or steam locomotives, and some work may be required. They range from 1.35m to 1.5m length; as they are hand made the bend radius varies but they can be considered as large radius.

Contact

Warren Stringer

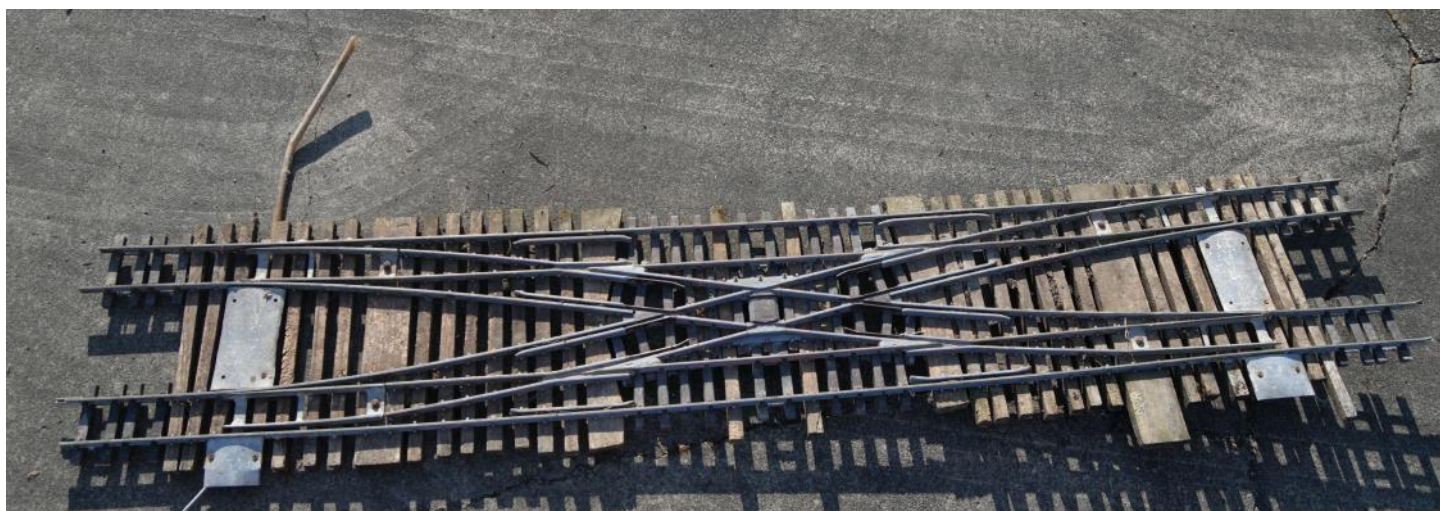
warren.stringer@xtra.co.nz



CLASSIFIEDS



CLASSIFIEDS



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

COMING EVENTS

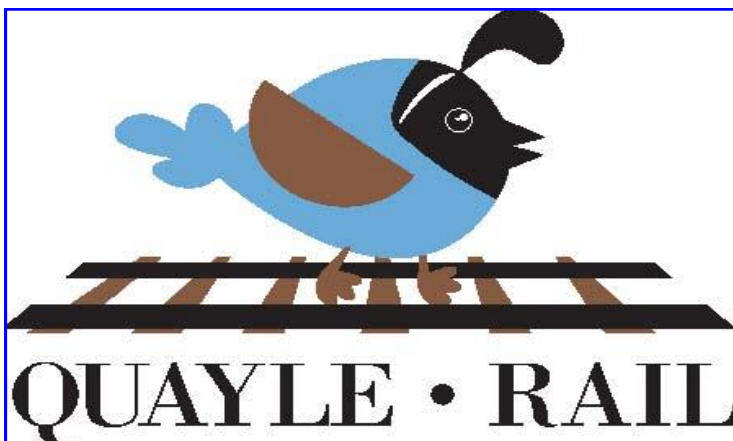
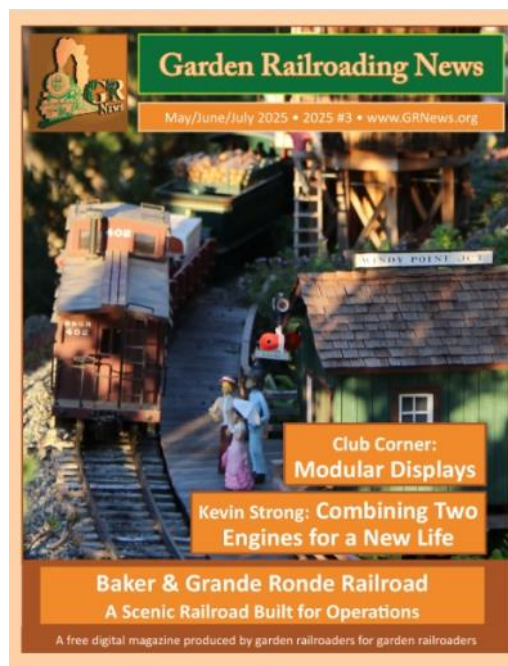
February 5-7 2026
March 21-22 2026
March 28-29 2026
May 2-3 2026
May 15-16 2026
June 13-14 2026
July 4-5 2026
September 5-6 2026
October 2026
October 2026
November 2026
May 31-5 2027

15th NZ Garden Railway Convention, Christchurch
Model Train and Lego Show, Wanaka
Bulls 2026 Model Railway Show, Bulls
Dunedin Model Train Show, Dunedin
2026 Great Lakes Large Scale Train Expo, Ohio
Hastings Train Show, Hastings
Ashburton Model Train Show, Tinwald
Nelson Model Railway Show, Stoke
Big Model Train Show, Christchurch
Great Little Train Show, Invercargill
Rail Ex, Lower Hutt
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 May / June / July Garden Railroading
News is available to read online, this can
be found at www.GRNews.org or

[Click here to view the current issue.](#)



Quayle Rail track now available in three metre lengths
It is available from Auckland, Masterton and Rangiora
Mike Hilliar, Auckland
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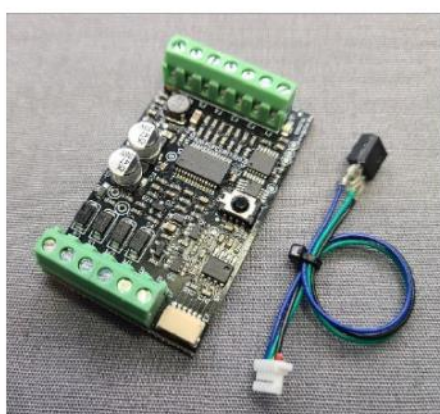
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Contact Chris cdrowley@xtra.co.nz

Club Meeting	Club Contact
<p>March TBC</p> <p>No February Meeting</p>	<p>Auckland:</p> <p>Auckland Garden Railway Society Inc Club Contact: Email: grahamclannz@xtra.co.nz Robert Graham, Ph: 09 836 0900</p>
<p>Running Days/Meetings cancelled until further notice</p>	<p>Waikato:</p> <p>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</p>
<p>February 22nd (Sunday) 1pm</p> <p>Warren Stringer Moa Pass Railway 187 Park Road, Carterton</p> <p>DCC/ Battery live steam Only</p>	<p>Wairarapa:</p> <p>Wairarapa Garden Railway Group. Club Contact: Email: brendonclarke76@yahoo.co.nz Coordinator: Brendon Clarke</p>
<p>February TBC</p>	<p>Wellington:</p> <p>Wellington Garden Railway Group. Club Contact: Email: bilthompson@xtra.co.nz Coordinator: Brent Thompson, 6 Bodmin Terrace, Camborne, Ph: 022 619 4006</p>
<p>February 6th, 7th & 8th (Friday, Saturday & Sunday)</p> <p>15th NZ GARDEN RAILWAY CONVENTION (WAITANGI WEEKEND)</p> <p>(From 5pm Thursday)</p>	<p>Christchurch:</p> <p>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</p>