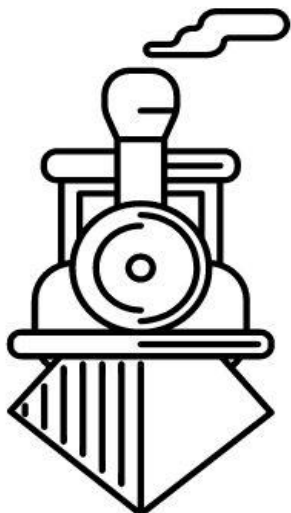


THE GARDEN WHISTLE

NEW ZEALAND LARGE SCALE NEWSLETTER



MARCH 2026



THE GARDEN WHISTLE

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March 2026

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[Cover photo](#) — Group photo from the 15th New Zealand Garden Railway Convention in Christchurch at Bill and Maggies Pirfic Station.

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

15th New Zealand Garden Railway Convention 2026

Report Bill Stanley, Photos - As Credited

On behalf of the organizing committee, for the 15th New Zealand Garden Railway Convention, I would simply like to say a “huge thank you”. As most of you will realize an event like this does not happen overnight and this event was no exception. In fact, planning for this event started over two years ago and I am pleased to say has exceeded our goals.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following in no particular order: -

- The weather man, after the poor summer we have had, we need to be grateful, that when it really mattered, the sun was shining.
- The Committee of The Christchurch Garden Railway Group Present and Past, and the sub committee formed for the convention, who all worked well as a team.
- Our helpers, who really made sure we did not go hungry and the food was of a particularly high standard, and an endless supply.
- Presenters and layout operators, who provided entertainment that captured the attention of all attendees.
- Your convenor and Garden Whistle editor, who continues to deliver constantly to the highest standard, every month.
- You as participants, guests, attendees, without you there would be no convention.
- Your sponsor “[Tootoot](#)” offering support throughout the convention and only a phone call away.
- Our guest speakers Malinda & Steve Jungst from Tennessee with their inspirational “Making Trains Fun” program with the support of Charlie Ro from USA Trains.

I am sure you will see many photos from this very memorable occasion appear in “The Garden Whistle” which will give you some appreciation of the enjoyment that was experienced by all who attended.

Sorry if I have left anyone out, thank you and, see you all next time.

Bill Stanley
President, Christchurch Railway Group, and
Co convenor, 15th NZ Garden Railway Convention

Please note:

The Convention Report will be done in 2 parts, first 6 layouts and the Making Trains Fun Clinic in this months newsletter and the next 7 layouts and Clinic information will be covered in the next issue.

THE GARDEN WHISTLE

15th New Zealand Garden Railway Convention, Prebbleton Hall.



Above - Bill Stanley (CGRG President) Formal Opening - Photo Editor.



Left - Oliver explaining where the rest of his train is that he left behind on the floor layout at the hall - Photo Editor.

Layout 1 - RhB Swiss Railway, Don Ellis.



Don at the controls - Photo Bill Stanley.



Track gang hard at work - Photo Bill Stanley.

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Crew are prepping locomotive in the rail yard - Photo Bill Stanley.



Loco depot - Photo Bill Stanley.



Shunting team are setting up the next train - Photo Bill Stanley.

Layout 2 - Hercules St Station, Aaron Emerson.



Train with a pipe load snaking its way through - Photo Lloyd Dickens.



Marty Checking out the multiple layouts - Photo Lloyd Dickens.

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Another 1 of Aaron's 5 layout loops - Photo Lloyd Dickens.



A happy Andrew checking out the trains - Photo Lloyd Dickens.

Layout 3 - Mount Catt and Jessie Falls, Karl and Allison Arnesen.



A-B-A set hauling freight around the lake - Photo Lloyd Dickens.



Attendee's enjoying lunch and catching up - Photo Lloyd Dickens.

THE GARDEN WHISTLE



Steve from USA getting close up photograph - Photo Bill Stanley.



Group has gathered to watch the big catch reeled in - Photo Bill Stanley.

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Heading through the mountains - Photo Bill Stanley.



Train rolling through Jessie Falls - Photo Bill Stanley.

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Layout 4 - The Clifton Mountain Railway, Mel and Claire Sanders.



Mel Sanders BR 99 steam loco - Photo Andrew Bishop.



Tackling the steep grade - Photo Lloyd Dickens.



Heading down the decent - Photo Lloyd Dickens.



Passengers waiting for the next train - Photo Lloyd Dickens.

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Mel's passenger train - Photo Lloyd Dickens



Heading up the spiral - Photo Lloyd Dickens.

Layout 5 - The Great Northern Railway, Ross and Gwyn Fraser.



Ross's Layout is controlled via DCC EX with controls housed in the little structures around the layout - Photo Lloyd Dickens.



Ross's train puzzle - Photo Andrew Bishop.

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Attendee's enjoying the railway - Photo Andrew Bishop.



This photo shows how Ross has built his layout on concrete blocks - Photo Andrew Bishop.

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Ross's Rhaetian Railway Allegra - Photo Lloyd Dickens.



Ross talking to Grant as he controls his trains - Photo Lloyd Dickens.

Layout 6 - Flaxton Creek Railroad, Neil Wiggins.



Exiting one of the tunnels - Photo Lloyd Dickens.



New coal tipple under construction - Photo Bill Stanley.



Plenty of space to move around - Photo Lloyd Dickens.



Paul and Jim in discussion as Warren enjoys his lunch watching the train head past - Photo Lloyd Dickens.

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Overview of Neils Layout - Photo Bill Stanley.



Ten Wheeler and Forney locomotives pass by each other - Photo Bill Stanley.



John with a big smile watching his Double Fairlie pass by as young Benjamin looks on with intent - Photo Lloyd Dickens.

THE GARDEN WHISTLE



After lunch the live steamers grabbed everyone's attention - Photo Bill Stanley.



John's Double Fairlie Locomotive in Steam - Photo Bill Stanley.



Paul and Jim admiring the climax passing by as Steve is taking a photo - Photo Bill Stanley.

Report from the 15th New Zealand Garden Railway Convention

“MAKING TRAINS FUN” the future of Garden Railway

Is our hobby of Garden Railway the domain of the mature, the retired, or seniors? Some of us ask, what is the future of our hobby, where do we get new recruits, what can we do to retain our existing members and how do we attract the younger generation?

Others find ways to open doors and make things happen.

A few years ago, a couple from Tennessee decided to tackle 2 challenges: -

1. Attracting younger people to garden railroading
2. Providing children accompanying their parents and or grandparents to conventions an activity specifically for them

So, this unique and innovative program “ Making Trains Fun” was established by Malinda and Steve Jungst from Tennessee.

Malinda and Steve were our guest speakers at the 15th. NZ Garden Railway Convention, commanding attention from the audience and engaging in an entertaining question and answer session. We learnt how this program has grown in USA and the future generation has taken to this initiative with creativity, enthusiasm and excitement. Many hours of planning, construction and production have been put into the establishment and development to get the program where it is today.

During their presentation we were VERY SURPRISED at their generosity as they presented us with ten flatcars and a large supply of items used in the Making Trains Fun program. These items are to be used to encourage our younger members to further develop their interest in Garden Railway. Then the following day after lunch Malinda and Steve agreed to present three flatcars to Jessie, Benjamin and Oliver the three junior members present at our convention.

It didn't stop there, Malinda and Steve then agreed to run an impromptu Making Trains Fun mini clinic. This created great interest for the junior members who spent some considerable time decorating their flatcars. The interest was not confined to the juniors as some of the adults were most intrigued with many of the items used to enhance the flatcars.

In the USA Malinda and Steve have also spent many hours cutting and preparing timber for buildings that their junior members construct during clinics held at their conventions.

The program has been very well supported by Charlie Ro of USA Trains who has donated all the flatcars used and been a very active advocate of this initiative. It takes people with vision for the future, creative minds to develop what juniors need / want, and above all patience to implement this over time.

Thank you Malinda and Steve Jungst and Charlie Ro (USA Trains), for having the foresight to develop such a program. Also for your very generous contribution to our convention and the future of our junior members in New Zealand.

The following pictures were taken during the “Making Trains Fun” clinic held at the 15th. New Zealand Garden Railway Convention, using flatcars supplied by USA Trains.

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Finished wagons after Making Trains Fun Clinic - Photo Bill Stanley.

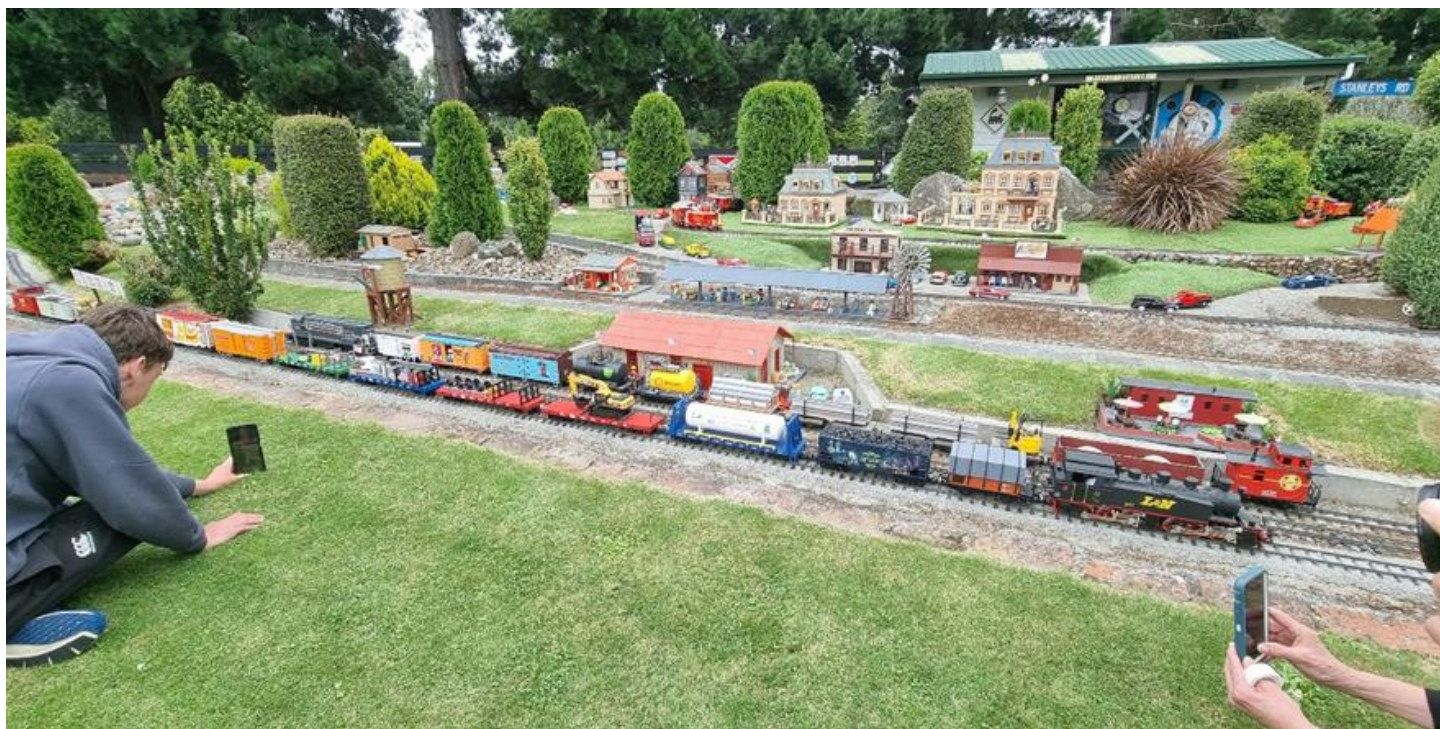


Clinic attendees, Parents, Convention Convenors along with Making Trains Fun founders Steve and Malinda - Photo Bill Stanley.

THE GARDEN WHISTLE



Steve and Malinda hosting the Making Trains Fun Clinic - Photo Bill Stanley.



Bills train hauling the wagons produced at the Making Trains Fun clinic for clinic attendees and convention attendees to enjoy - Photo Bill Stanley.

Letters to the Editor

Our trip to New Zealand to visit your beautiful country and attend the 15th New Zealand Garden Railway Convention is now behind us and we safely made the long journey back to America. Each of us left with so many fantastic memories, photos, and new-found friendships. What a wonderful time we had during the convention! The garden railways we visited during the tours were inspiring and motivating. We will "borrow" some of the ideas we saw and use them on our own layouts. Although we have known each other for just a few days, your kindness in welcoming us made us feel like we were family and members of the Christchurch Garden Railway Group. To each of you, thank you for your warm hospitality.

Bill and Maggie Stanley and Iain and Bonnie Collingwood spent numerous hours planning the convention and doing all the "behind the scenes" due diligence needed to make the convention so successful. Everything was so well organized with a nice flow. If there were glitches, they were unnoticeable. There was plenty of time allocated to viewing each layout and talking with the owner. We never felt rushed to move on to the next layout on the tour. There was ample time to travel from one layout to the next. To each of the layout hosts, we thank you for allowing us to visit your layout and view your hard work you put forth to build and meticulously maintain your railways. The craftsmanship we saw in the custom buildings, electronics, animations, the 1:7.5 scale locomotives, and the unique designs in the railways were truly a work of art. The food served at the two buffet dinners and all the food served during the morning and afternoon teas was delicious and we greatly enjoyed them. It was nice to see each food item labeled and whether it was gluten free. Thank you to all the ladies and chefs that worked so hard to prepare and serve the delectable eats.

We also want to personally say "thank you" to Douglas Wall for driving us Americans, that drive on the wrong side of the road, to the layout tours. Doug was an excellent tour guide and told us about the areas which were destroyed by the earthquakes in 2010 and 2011 as we drove by and other points of interest. We still cannot comprehend to devastation caused by the earthquakes.

In closing, thank you all for making us feel so welcome, and perhaps again, sometime in the future, we will meet again. All the best to each of you. Keep those trains running!

**Steve and Malinda Jungst,
Bobby and Ruth Ann Veach
Nashville Area Garden Railroaders**

To CGRG Committee

Could you please pass on my appreciation and gratitude to the team, including the ladies doing the catering for the morning, afternoon teas and lunches. I think this group of helpers was outstanding, with smiling faces and nothing was ever a problem if you needed anything, which added so much joy, fun and personal touch to a very memorable convention.

The food was excellent and the catered dinner at the hall was the best evening meal, not taking anything away from the two first rate lunches we had.

I chatted with a few of the north islander for their views and the response was, they were very happy with the quality of the layouts, even though they had seen some before, they enjoyed the hall based style of gathering activities. Hoping to see our new portable modular layout in the future at the hall

If there was another ChCh convention they would like to see it had more new railways, before making the next trip south, but they were very happy.

The only minus view points were, Bill still can't spell Pirfic properly, and Andrews Toot Toot attention noises need more work to get to Bills standard.

Yours in training and very proud of our team, club, committee and partners (ex-sel-int-ss).

Don Ellis - CGRG Life Member

Letters to the Editor

Well the weekend is now over , the trains are packed away till the next playtime and life gets back to normal, a little sign of depression as its over, is the croaky voice and bags under ones eyes as pointed out by a work colleague. But the wee high from the stimulating conversations, the friendships made, renewed and re acquaintance's had are still buzzing around inside ones head. I spent far too much , but have no regrets. It was pointed out to me that when I drove my steam engine at Kabita's on Sunday I had a smile a mile wide and the ,memory of that time makes me happy. I had an awesome weekend as did many many others.

My wife and I were complimented on the presentation of our property and railway which I found most humbling and Nicola appreciated her hard work and dedication to presenting our place was acknowledged by our guests. As Bill made comment this has been a two plus years in the planning and putting together by the club and its members,

A huge vote of thanks to all who attended, you all help make it the special occasion that it has become and I am already looking forward to the next one, wherever that is maybe. I especially enjoyed meeting our new friends from the US of A and wish them safe travels and look forward to reading of their future endeavours to promote the hobby.

I am even planning do to the next stage of my own railway and where I would like it to be when you all come back to Christchurch the next time Bill and Iain put there hands up to run one again, fingers crossed.

Happy railroading

Andrew J Wilson

Bill, Margaret, Iain and Bonnie, to come from a meeting at Iain's home some 2 years ago when you said that you 4 will plan and organise the 15th Railway Convention and people said that it can't be done with only 4 people. Oh how wrong people can be.

Right from the get go everything fell into place. (that sounds too easy, just saying it as it was) From the welcome speech to the closing speech it was just an awesome weekend with a very sociable group of people all joining in and having a very sociable time, looking, chatting and passing on information, buying and selling.

You can tell by the body language looking around at the people that they were having a great time. A lot of people approached me to say the food was spot on, and they were fed very well for the weekend. I didn't hear one complaint all weekend, over 4 days that is a great achievement, please give yourself a big pat on your backs.

This is the first time I have been to a convention so I have nothing to compare it with, but in my book that was a thoroughly enjoyable awesome weekend. A lot of people I talked to said that they will be back for the next convention in 2 years time. So now you have set a precedent for all conventions in the future.

Once again, a thoroughly awesome job taken in your stride, with all the planning it went like clockwork and 70 odd people went away after enjoying our hospitality.

Dave & Pauline Day

Wairarapa Garden Railway Group Meeting

Photos and Captions - Lloyd Dickens



Lucus Clarkes train running through settlement.



Warrens train passes new water tower.

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Warren's train running through the settlement.



Lloyd Dickens Harlect Castle towing Gwyn Valley Coaches.

THE GARDEN WHISTLE



Chris Drowleys George ready to receive water.



From left Murray Clarke, Warren Stringer and Ian Webb.

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Murray Clarke's train going through settlement.



Lucus Clarke and his Grand Father Murray.



Warren's own train.



Murray Clarkes train at the Station.

Wellington Garden Railway Group Meeting

Report and Photos - John Robinson.

WGRG February Running Day

I'm pleased to report that the Wellington Garden Railway Group have had another successfully running day defying this summer's fickle weather. Grant and Aggie Allen had been in almost constant contact with the Met Service forecasting as the long range kept changing through the week and then several times through the day before. I was watching it too wondering just what the day would bring. Thankfully the day was spot on for train running, not baking hot like the preceding day or blowing profusely like the following day.

So enough of the weather, on to the train running on Grant's Foxton Branch railway. The L shaped railway is nestled in a mature immaculately tended suburban garden, with lots of cameo scenes and the occasional fairy hiding in the trees. The track plan is basically a loop around the perimeter of the L with bypass tracks in each L so two separate loops could be run if so desired. A few trains did navigate the bypasses at times but for safe running day operation running rights were issued only for the main loop. It's a credit to Grant (and probably aided by brother David) that the track is laid to a high standard that most of the days running was without incident.

Grant is a retired Kiwi Rail driver but still does an occasional turn as a heritage train driver, yours and my dream job! At Grant's request a number of us brought live steamers to run to show off the joy of live steam in small scale to his visiting full sized steam loco driver friends. So apologies if the content of many of the accompanying photos are a bit steamie for your liking but, well, I was kind of enjoying that heady fragrance of warm steam oil drifting through the trees.

But fear not some track power and battery powered stock did run, the usual eclectic mix. Actually the times of battery powered operation gave ample time for much discussion about the recent Convention, filling in those of us who sadly couldn't attend with a taste of what we missed.

The garden the railway runs through is bordered by a low garden edging wall so to aid the old knees of many of us Grant placed a number of kneeling pads on the lawn, a good idea. Though note to self, be careful standing up as at times you are under an apple tree and the apples don't respect heads.

The running day was well attended, numbers in the mid 20s I think. It's not surprising as it's such a great railway in a pleasant location and that's without mention the feast Aggie put on for lunch. Judging by the chaps having seconds, no names mentioned but I know who you are, I'm not sure if they only came for the food. (I came for both.)

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Grant's maintenance crew out checking the railway at the start of the day.



Morning service drawing into Foxton.

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David H's battery powered train of 3D printed wagons. Earlier in the day the wagons had general freight loads which David then changed to provide a drinks train!



John R's battery powered LGB field railway loco hauling skips past the famed Tui Brewery tower. Batteries and receiver are daisy chained through the Binnie Skip's.

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Chris D's Regner Vincent was the first steamie for the day to depart Foxton.



John S's Lady Anne passing the barn at Himatangi.

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Chris's Regner Vincent respectfully passing by the local cemetery.



Ngahere, John R's slightly altered Accucraft Plantation, hauling the train a Binnie skips through Carters Cutting.



It's busy at Himatangi Station. Denise and Aggie's cheerful coloured trains at the platform as Geoff H's Lady Anne steams past with his train of scratch build coaches.



Geoff H's Lady Anne passing through Himatangi village.

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No prizes for guessing my favourite train of the day was Geoff H's Lady Anne past with its train of scratch built coaches, here drawing into Foxton Station.



Chris D's Frank S arriving with afternoon service at Foxton Station.



Geoff H's scratch build Festiniog Funky Diesel also at Foxton Station was one of the last trains I photographed before I left, I think a few more trains ran well into the evening.

Readers Pictures



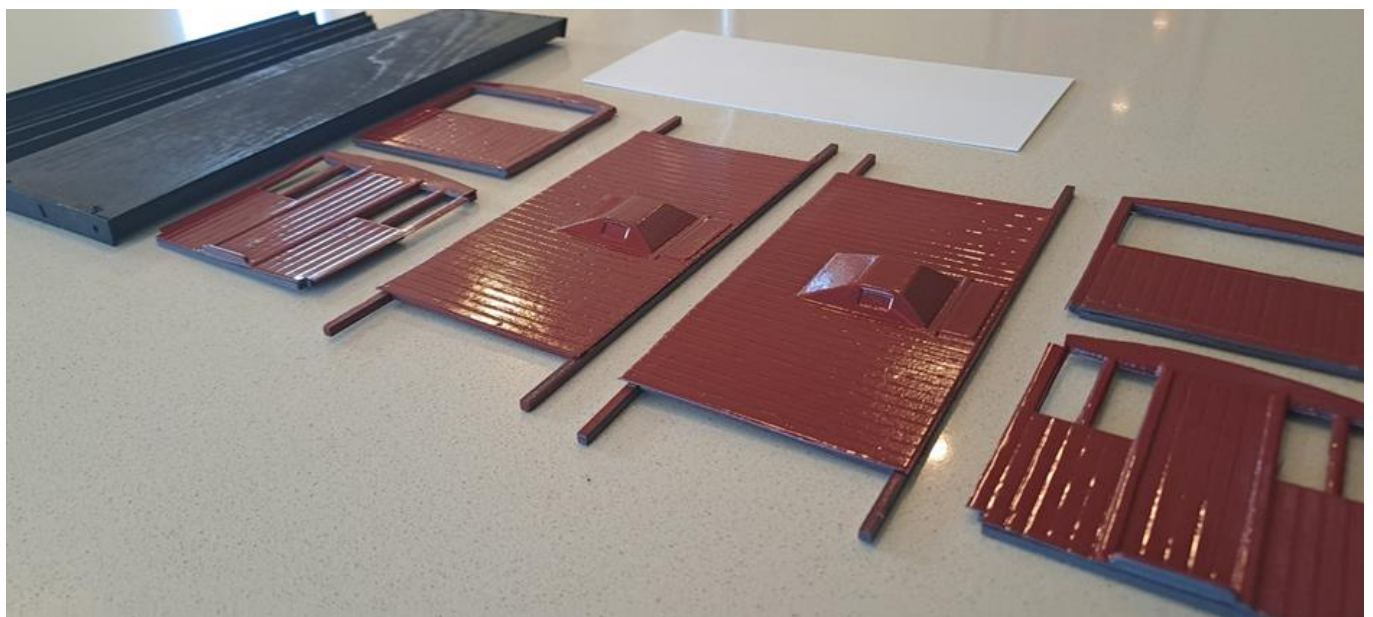
Minor damage from apple fall on the Foxton Branch so WT 22 has been busy clearing the apple fall ! - Photo Grant & Aggie (Paul M commented - With climate change maybe all garden railways need to invest in clean up equipment like this. A rush on crane sales. Add a cider factory as an on-line customer. Leading to cider tasting meetings).

Tenmille BR 20T Brake Kit

Article and Photos - Andrew Bishop

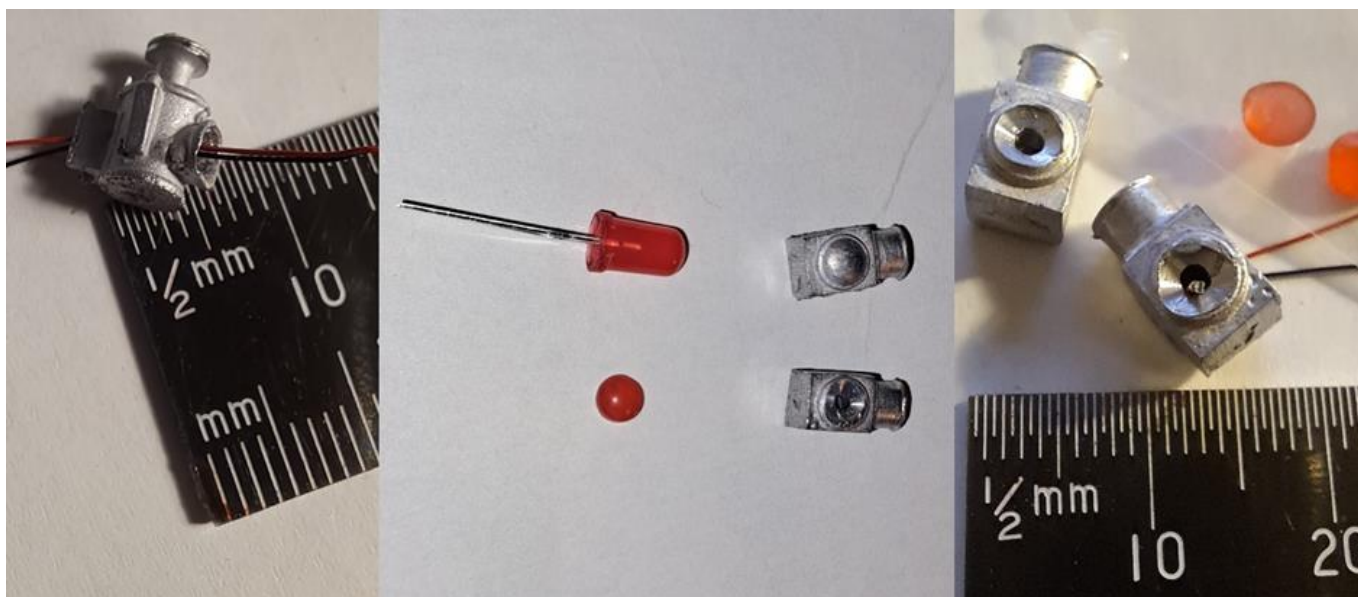


As I build my collection for gauge 1, I felt that I needed an independent brake van for my goods train. Above is one in preservation for reference. I liked the idea of doing one of the Tenmille laser cut models, so I chose one from them, the one chosen is an older model that has plywood for framing and chassis, with vacuum moulding for the detail.

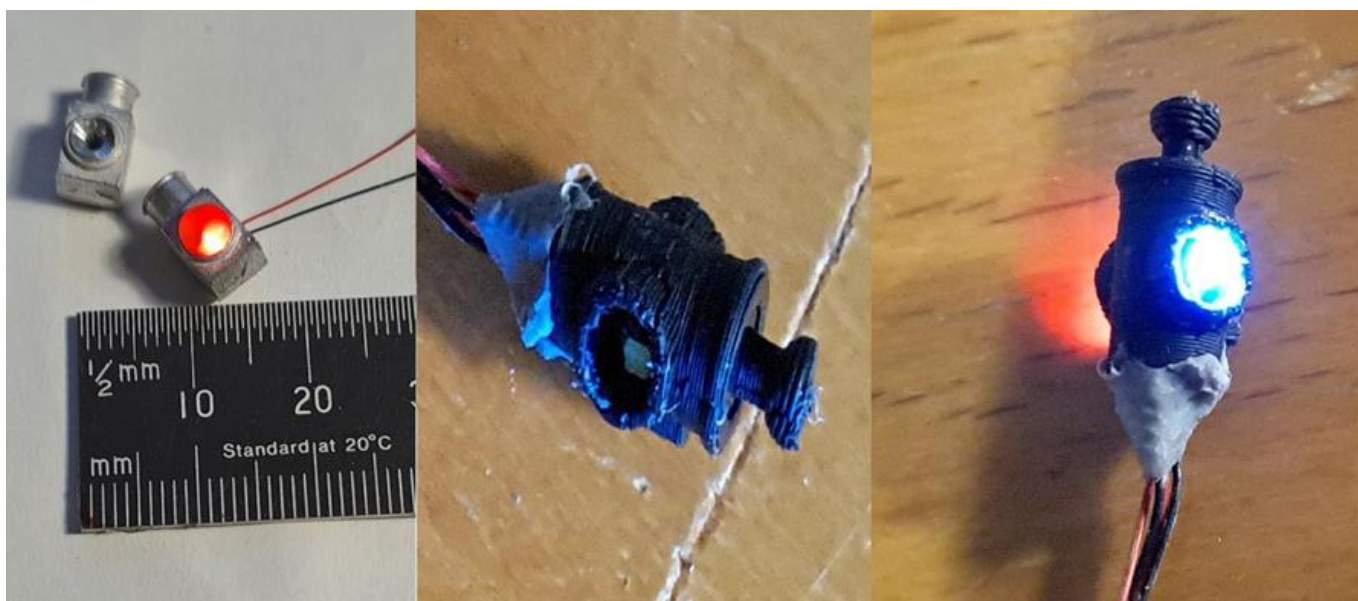


These are the main parts, semi assembled and painted. The roof was a simple sheet of plastic which I found difficult to evenly bend for the curved roof. I decided to create a 3D printed roof instead. The chassis base twisted slightly when the support beams were glued on, this would be because the ply was very thin and the glue made it a bit damp.

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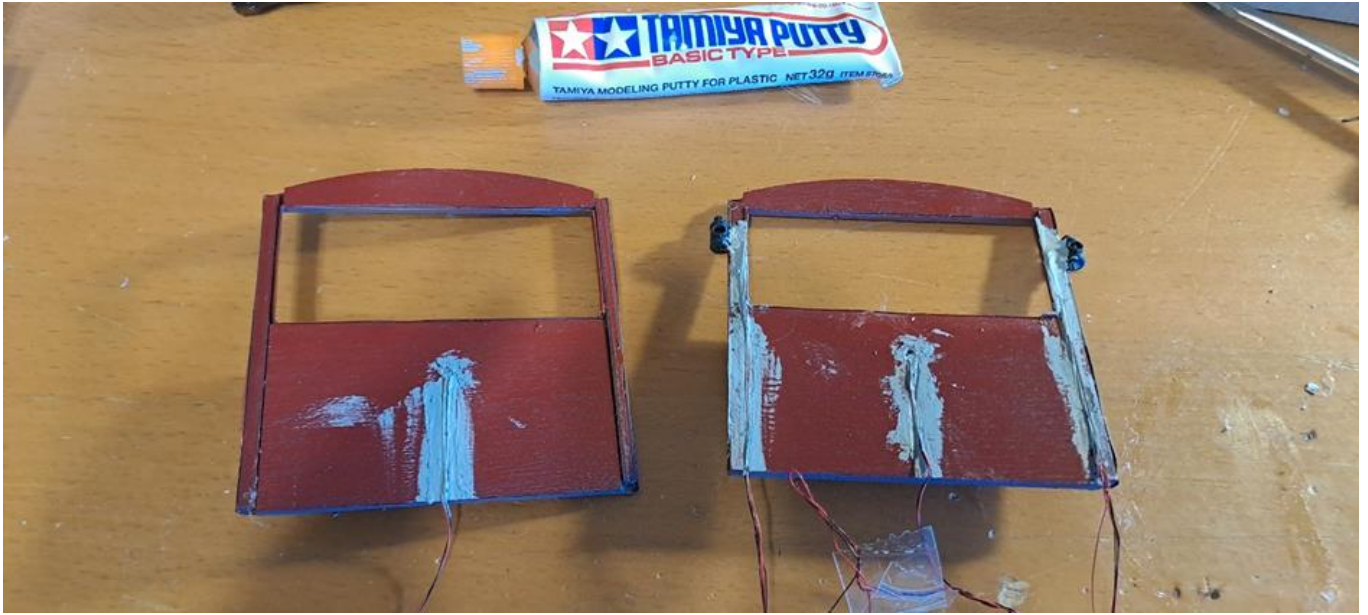


I decided to put working lamps on. I had some very fine red LEDs and white LEDs. I also sawed the tip off some red and white LEDs to make a small lens for each lamp. I drilled out the moulded head lamps, again from Tenmille. You can see how small the LEDs are in these photos. The actual LED was about 1mm in size.



On the left is the lamp with the lens on and some power, this tested nice and bright. I wanted to have the side lamps as well and these can be 2 sided – red on one side & white on the other, these I 3D printed and, on the right, here you can see both LEDs with power. There was 2 of these 3D printed side lamps, one for each side, the right with red backward and white forward and the left a reverse of this.

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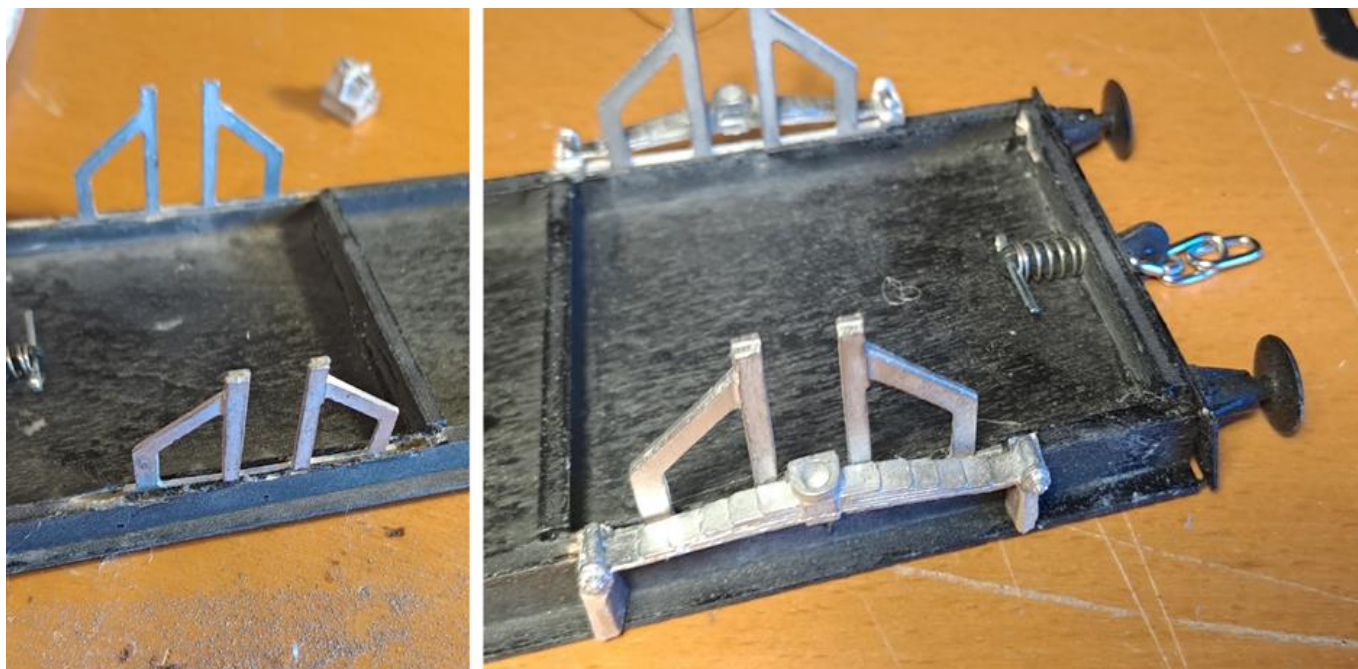


Here we are fitting the lamps and covering over with putty, in the end I actually completely covered these areas with a thin sheet of card.

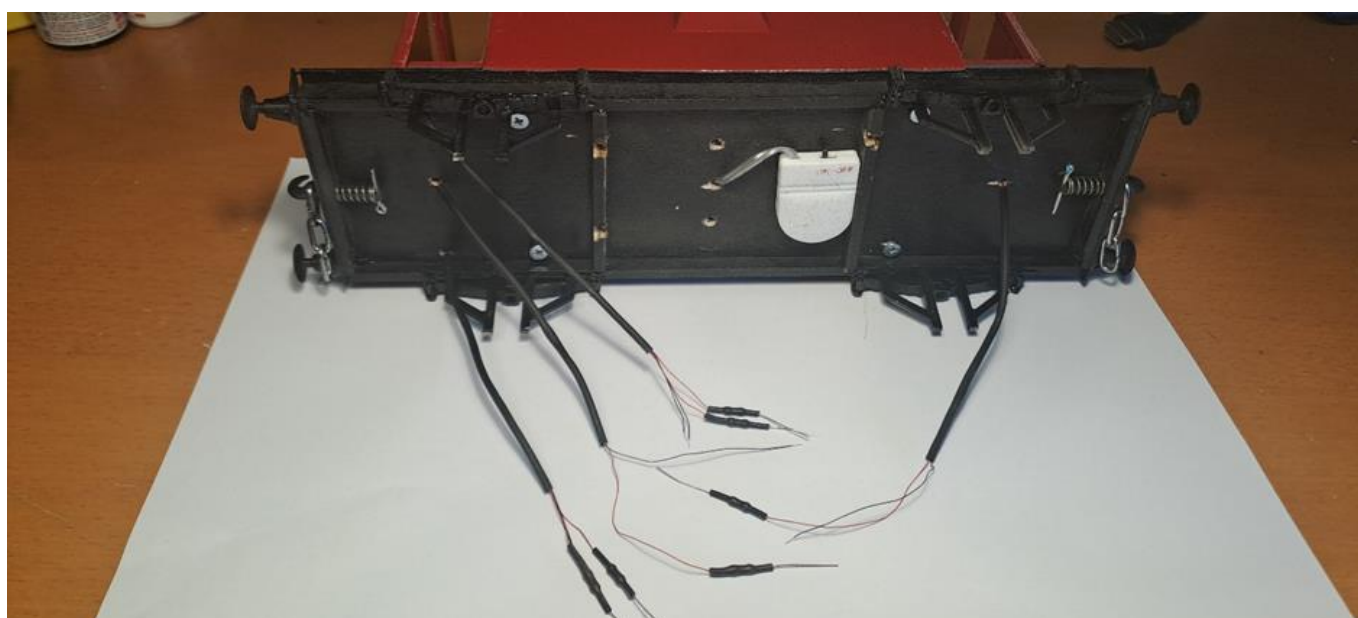


Next, I glued the 4 sides together, I add square dowel to re-enforce the corners. I used some plastic from a take-away container for the window glass, I gave it a sanding with fine sandpaper, so it was opaque.

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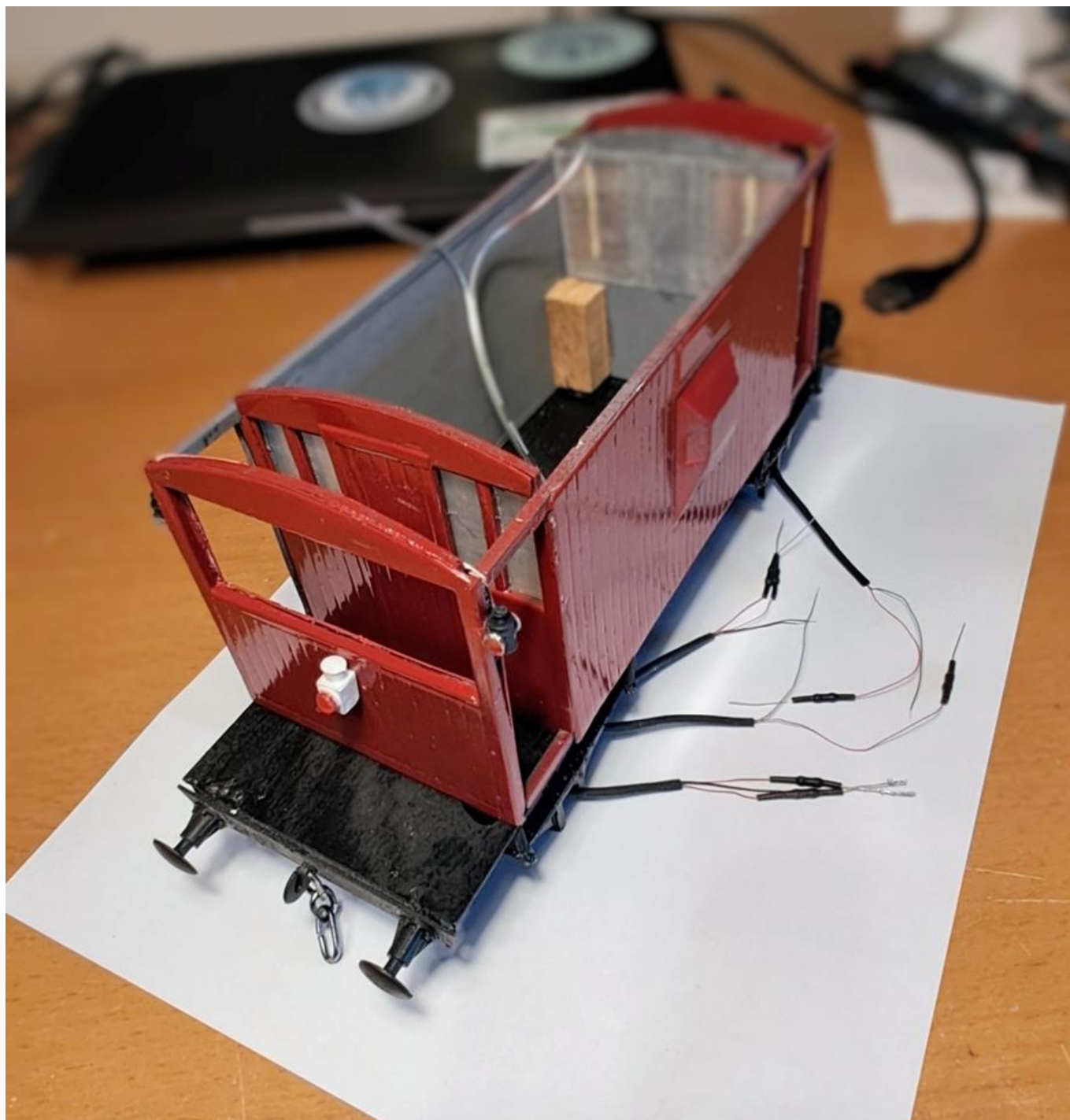


I used Tenmille springs and wheel mounts plus their 3D printed buffers and hooks. I decided to slot the wheel mounts into the actual plywood framing. The plywood was 3mm, the mount 1mm, so a precise centre cut was needed. A risky move, but it worked.

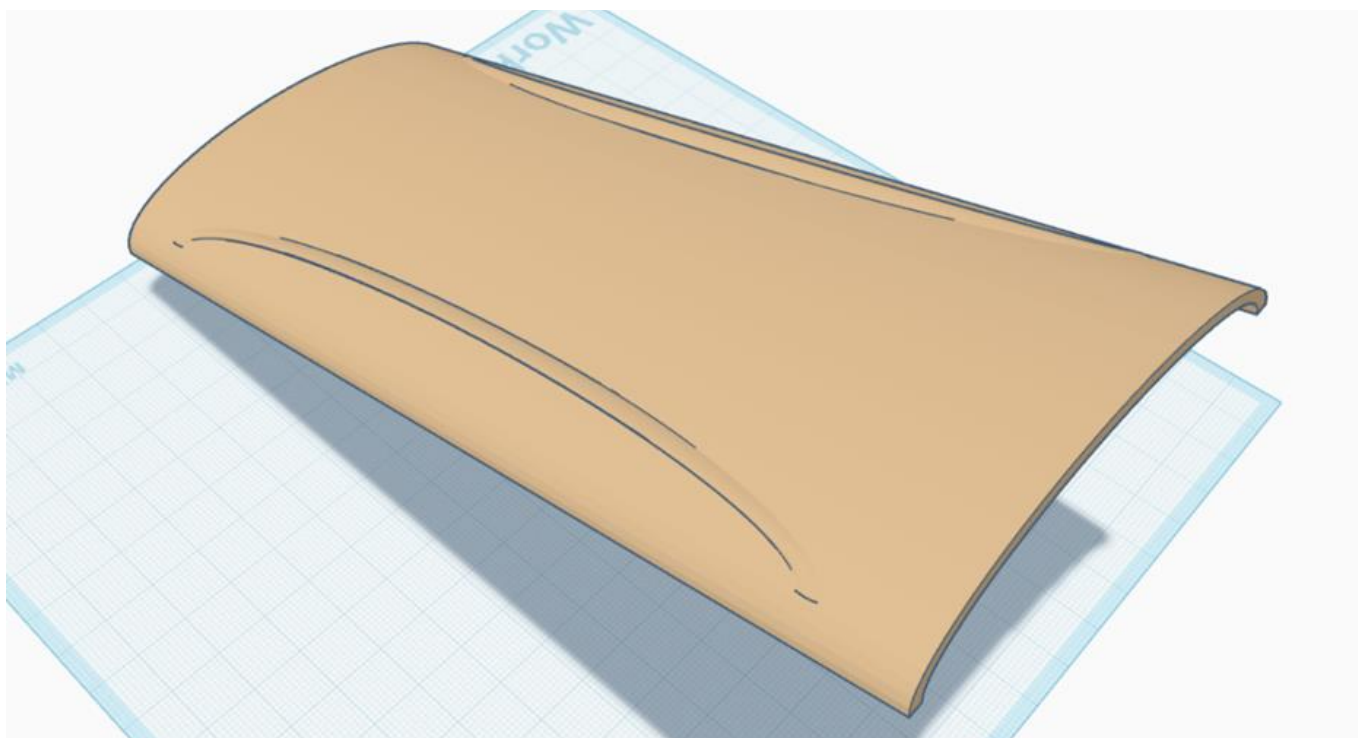


The LEDs are to be powered by a 3V coin cell, which I put on the underside of the chassis. Here you can see all the wires, including resistors, with holes and routing spaces, ready for the micro-LEDs to be fed up into the inside of the main wagon space.

THE GARDEN WHISTLE



A different view of the LEDs with the battery wires already inside. You can see the head lamp and the side lamps on each side, each with a small plastic lens.



This is the 3D roof design, on the under side I added a side bar on each side so that the roof fitted snugly into the main body. This was applied without glue, it holds well and allows access to the inside if needed. I then used the vents and chimney, as supplied with the kit.



Here is the finished article. You can see more of the detail here; I added LNER decals which I think look good. The van ended up being a good weight so I did not need to add any additional weight. In the end I also 3D printed the side step bars as then I could make these more sturdy and fit more securely. There is a lot to be aware of with this model with delicate parts that can be accidently knocked off.

Readers Pictures



We have just returned from a South Island trip in our caravan. On the West Coast, we visited Shanty Town, and had a train ride. Two views of the engine at the terminus station.

On our way back up the East Coast, just south of Hinds, we saw a railway gang with one truck. A little further, and there were three trucks and a lot more workmen. Just as well that track isn't used very often.

Dean Farrow, Rangiora



COMING EVENTS

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

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

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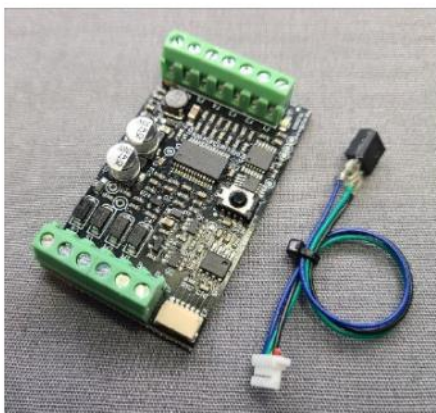
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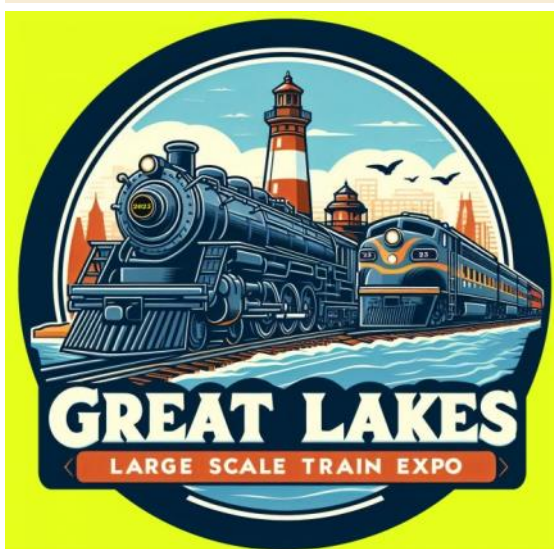
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Contact Chris cdrowley@xtra.co.nz

Club Meeting	Club Contact
<p>March 22nd (Sunday) 2pm</p> <p>Ray Williams 5 Broadview Place, Howick</p> <p>No track power so bring battery or live steam trains.</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>March 15th (Sunday) 1pm</p> <p>Brendon Clarke 6 Alton Grove, Masterton</p> <p>DCC, Battery and live steam</p>	<p>Wairarapa:</p> <p>Wairarapa Garden Railway Group. Club Contact: Email: brendonclarke76@yahoo.co.nz Coordinator: Brendon Clarke</p>
<p>March 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>March 22nd (Sunday) 1pm</p> <p>Iain Collingwood Iron Creek Railroad 11b Jozecom Place, Rolleston</p> <p>Track Power available</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>