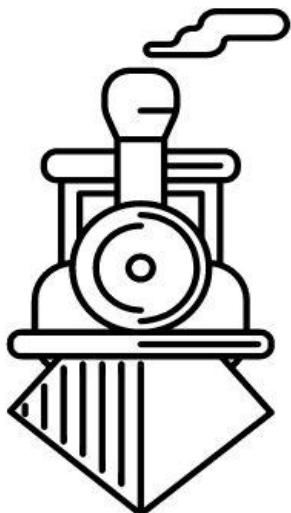


THE GARDEN WHISTLE

NEW ZEALAND LARGE SCALE NEWSLETTER



MAY 2026



THE GARDEN WHISTLE

NEW ZEALAND LARGE SCALE NEWSLETTER

May 2026

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[Cover photo](#) — John Seawards live steamer having a run around the loop. His was the first steamer to use the loop, it ran really nicely.

Photo supplied by - Henrik Dorbeck.

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 - Tony Christie, Photos as credited.

Wellington Garden Railway Group April Running Day

The April Meeting was held on Saturday the 11th at David Humble's Ngaio Valley Tramway, a fictional take on a preservation version of the current Johnsonville line. David joined the Wellington group in late 2025 and has been notable at recent meetings for running his scratch-built wagons made from parts generated on his Prusa Core One 3D printer, including the wheel sets and LGB compatible hook and loop couplers. David began construction of his point-to-point railway about 2 years ago and it is an ongoing project. The railway is located in the backyard of his home in Ngaio, which has a long narrow expanse of lawn that rises to the back and is flanked on the sides and back by steeper slopes covered in mature shrubs and trees. The railway currently runs along the left side as seen from the house looking to the back and consists of a single line of track connecting a station and yard area at each end. There is no loop and therefore running a train there-and-back requires some switching of the loco to the other end of the train if it is to return with the loco at the front.

David is in the process of extending the line further to a third station and yard area near the back of the section. The elevated railway utilises LGB track with R1 radius points and curves to best manage the geography and topography. Track in the station and yard areas is laid on wooden benchwork, whereas the single connecting track is laid on a mix of natural surfaces cut into or built out from the hillside, flat areas above wood and concrete block retaining walls, elevated horizontal wooden support rails on posts, viaducts and a fold down bridge, the latter three awaiting arrival of new LGB track before completion to the third station and yard area. Another current project is a very complex manual interlocking frame to be installed in the second station area for operation of points and signals. It will have wire linkages from the frame to the points and signals.

With an 11 am start, we took a break at about 12:45 pm for lunch of sausages and sliced onions cooked on the BBQ and accompanied by bread rolls and coleslaw, followed by Danish pastries for dessert. The trains operated on the day were all battery and RC, although there is provision for track power. Many thanks to David for hosting a very enjoyable session that was run on a spectacularly fine autumn Wellington day with clear skies and no wind! The next day's rain, related to the southward progression of Tropical Cyclone Vaianu, provided contrast. We are looking forward to the 2027 running session at the Ngaio Valley Tramway to hopefully see the track plan completed.



David Humble's diesel shunter and rake of 3D printed hoppers. The track was temporarily staged for the photo and to confirm that the loco could manage the grade. - Photo Tony Christie.

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The Ngaio Valley Tramway runs along the left side of the backyard. David Humble and Dave Allen stand by the current end of the line, but the trackbed continues all the way to the wood platform at the end of the grassed area and is waiting on the arrival of new track for completion - Photo Tony Christie.



Chris Drowley's train about to depart the station and yard area closest to the house. The diesel is an LGB Stainz with a diesel nose. The wagons are from LGB, with custom made loads – Photo Tony Christie.



Dave Allen's Aristocraft Colorado & Southern railbus making its way to the current terminus - Photo Tony Christie.



Chris Drowley's train entering the current terminus. Thanks to Chris for providing some extra track for the day to provide more operational interest here - Photo Tony Christie.

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Chris' train about to move off from the current terminus after shunting the loco to the other end of the train, observed by Dave Allen (back) - Photo Tony Christie.



Dave Allen's railbus at the current end of the line. But the trackbed continues to the top of the garden awaiting installation of LGB track - Photo Tony Christie.



Dave Allen examining the manual interlocking frame that will eventually be installed here and linked to points and signals by wire linkages - Photo Tony Christie.



David Humble constructs his own rolling stock mostly from self-designed 3D printed parts. His scratch-built rail cleaner is in the foreground - Photo Tony Christie.

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Third wise man found (follow up of "The third wise man is missing...." Lloyd Dickens photo on page 57 of the April newsletter). John Seward, Tony Christie and Ian Webb - Photo Dave Allen.



Tofi and Tor load testing the viaducts that lead to the third station area under construction – Photo David Humble.

Wairarapa Garden Railway Group Meeting

Article - Henrik Dorbeck, Photos - As Credited.

The new and updated layout is very much still work in progress. I have removed all the old "big" layout from the back yard and built a much simpler track plan, the line starts down the side of the house as previously done. The new town area has been lifted and just a single line runs into the mine, it runs out along the back fence line as before and then heads through the wood wall and out along the fence up to the gazebo and that now has a return loop around it and back on to the mainline again and back into the station yard. Off the main station is a short industrial branch line to the farmers co-op and a small station, it is serviced with a 3 road yard which will ensure an interesting mix of shunting and mainline running. The long run out the back will ensure people keeping on their toes, ultimately there will be a return loop down the side of the house to ensure continuous running.

It had been our intention to have the club meeting and AGM on Saturday which turned out wet and miserable so we rolled it over to Sunday, Sunday arrived beautiful, clear and hot. I got into setting things up, Dan arrived to help me set up and after a "wee medicinal port" we set to. As I had started early there was not a lot to do, I suggested to Dan what the chances would be of finishing off the track laying of the return loop and the wiring in of the loop electronics. I got rolling (see bending) with Dan following with the hammer and nails pinning things down, the system worked well and as the first people arrived I was finishing off the wiring.

We had the meeting under a beautiful sunny Wairarapa day. John S, Ian W and Tony C arrived as part of the Wellington contingent. We had 8 locals there some of whom ran trains. The point, out and back to point through some people but I think with a loop down the other end will simplify things a bit more for the "loopers" in the group.

We had a couple of other visitors with friends turn up and enjoy the day and train running, one has a bakery in Lower Hutt and has trains in display cases in his shop. He has some G Scale already so I think I will need to work a bit more to lure him over to "the dark side". His excuse was he has no loco or track, my reply was "Well boy do I have a deal for you!" Time will tell.

We had our AGM and discussed some proposed changes to the clubs table layout, Brendon who is our new club co-ordinator has some good and interesting ideas to add a little juss to the running days. It is good to see a fresh view being added to the club. Best of luck Brendon, I have your back.

The meeting closed and we went off to afternoon tea. Interestingly we closed the meeting, packed up the tables and buildings and left - within 3 hours we had a new front swing through and we had rain, thunder and lightening! Talk about good timing.

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The Main station with John's train at the rear, Brendon and Lucas' battery train on the mid road and Lloyd's railcar at the front - Photo Henrik Dorbeck.



From Left Warren Stringer, Ian Webb, Dan Hughes and Wayne Haste - Photo Lloyd Dickens.



Henrik's train's at the terminus - Photo Henrik Dorbeck.



John Sowards Lady Anne Live Steam Locomotive being prepared - Photo Lloyd Dickens.

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Henrik's OBB class 2092 diesel with small freight train - Photo Henrik Dorbeck.



Henrik's OBB class 2095 diesel has just arrived at the terminus station with a passenger consist - Photo Henrik Dorbeck.



A view down the rear of the house with the coffin in the rear of the doorway. It is connected to the layout with R1 points that are all a little limiting but functional - Photo Henrik Dorbeck.



Central Industrial area - Photo Lloyd Dickens.

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The industrial branch from a distance with farmers co-op front in centre, also showing the changes from the former layout - Photo Henrik Dorbeck.



The location of the new village with halt, lower track heads to terminus station at the rear of the house - Photo Henrik Dorbeck.



Another view of the village from the other side. The maintenance and work train in the background has recently travelled up to Bruce Gibson's layout in Whangamata to do a little work there - Photo Henrik Dorbeck.



Western end return loop around the gazebo with Lloyds Railcar - Photo Lloyd Dickens.

Christchurch Garden Railway Group Meeting

Report - Bill Stanley, Photos As Credited

CGRG March Running Day

Following a week of beautiful weather and a forecast for a wet running day, the day was fine, dry and very pleasant for running trains.

Another good turnout of members and thanks to Aaron & Tracey for a lovely afternoon tea. Even though the supercars were on the big screen, the focus was on Garden Railway. We had several members running their trains along with Arron running some of his own. Some interesting discussions around axle length, wheel spacing and 3D printing, and many more related topics.

Unfortunately Dave and Pauline were noticeable by their absence! I can't remember the last time Pauline and Dave missed a running day as their organisation, support, and presence at running days has been incredible. We all wish Dave a speedy recovery and hope to see him fighting fit for our next meeting, the AGM.

Stay on track and have a pirfic day Bill.



Andrew's Lyn hauling an express passenger service - Photo Bill Stanley.



Crossing the bridge - Photo Bill Stanley.



Aaron's High Speed Train - Photo Bill Stanley.



Aaron's mixed freight train - Photo Bill Stanley.

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Full yard at Hercules St Station - Photo Andrew Wilson.



Andrew's Passenger train - Photo Andrew Wilson.

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Heading by the sawmill - Photo Bill Stanley.



Doug's diesel on freight duties - Photo Bill Stanley.

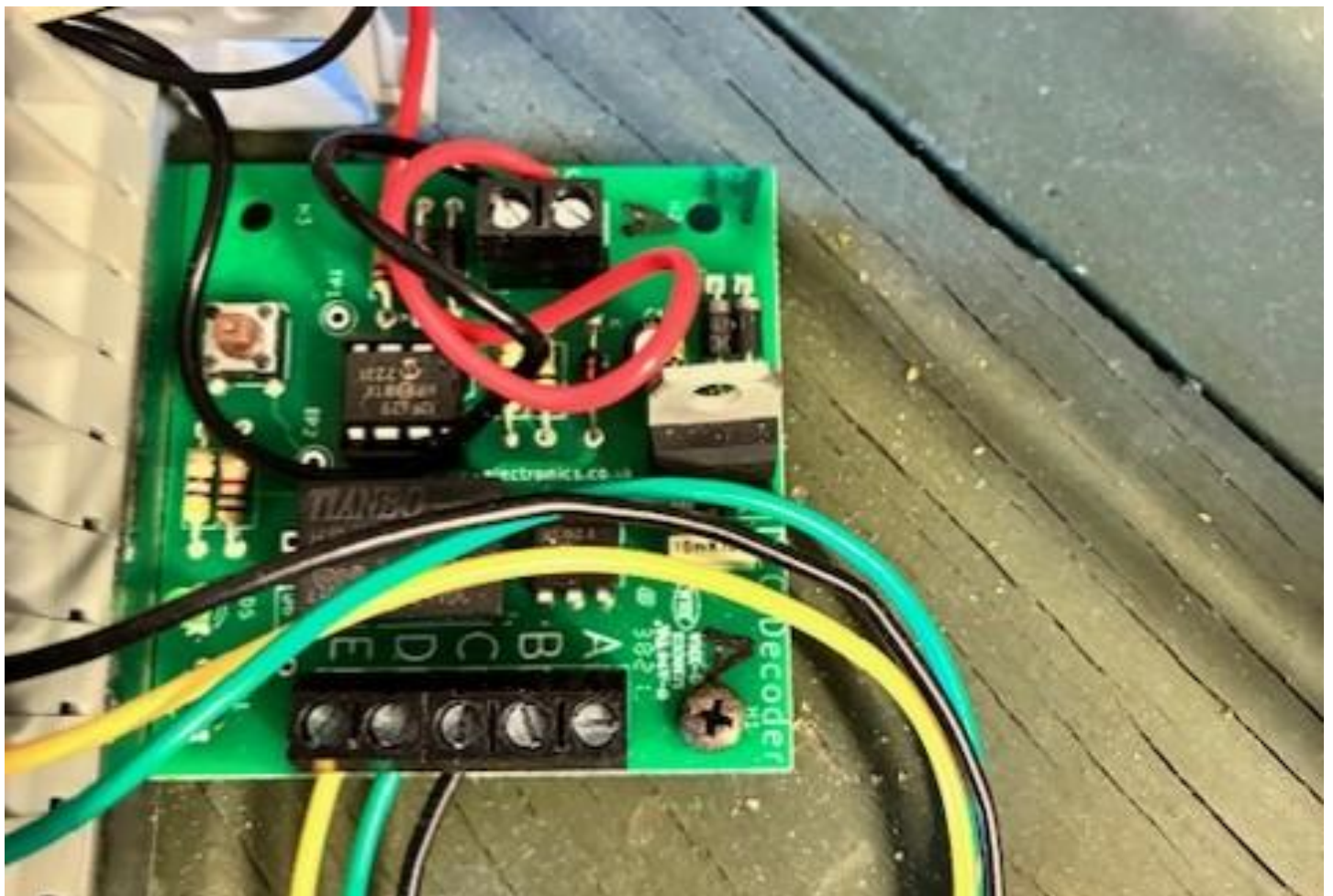


Karl's passenger train - Photo Bill Stanley.

Convention Clinic - DCC

Article - Don Ellis

The Christchurch Convention held a short DCC Clinic this was to give people an insight on what options are now readily available and what can be done to add an animation and automation to your railway. Decoders allow connections to many sounds, lighting effects or movements. There are various types of Decoders one type is a Stationary decoder in a fixed position, for example a point Motor, others are mobile and sound decoders or function only decoders. (a function is an operation from a decoder like turn on a light change a point via a function which relate to a push button switch either on a remote control or maybe a fixed switch panel. DCC can be used indoors and outdoors.

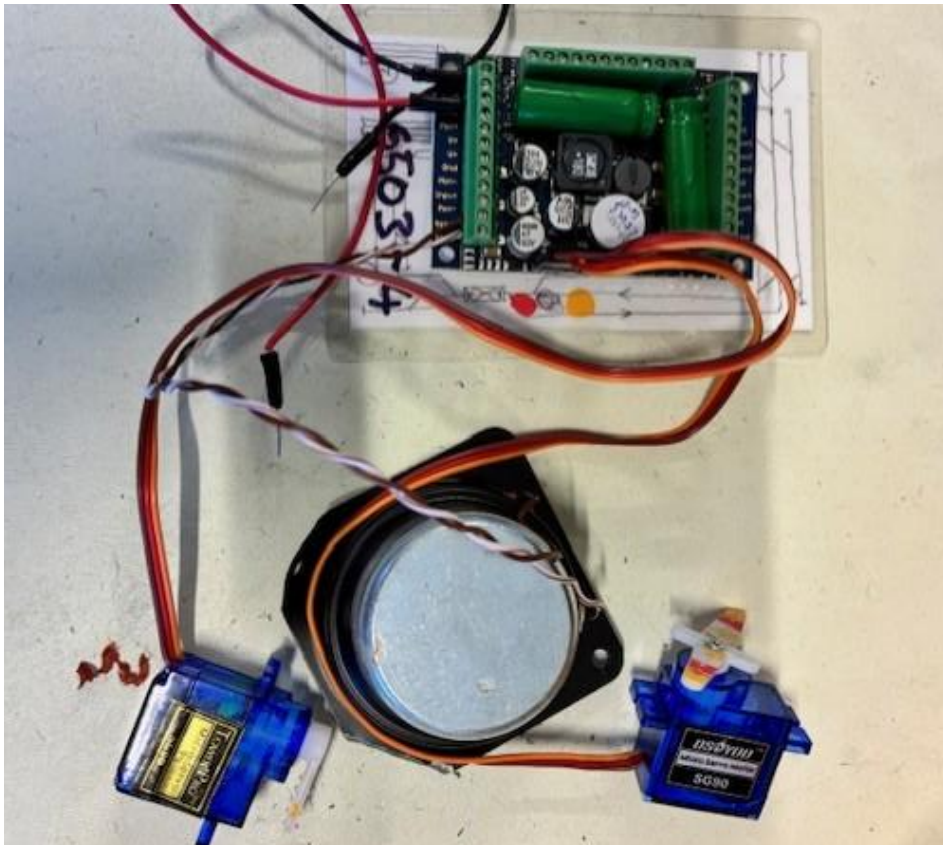


Example of a stationary decoder.

Stationary decoders can be mounted anywhere around the track or even in moving vehicles as long as they have connectivity to the DCC track power, These encompass signals, point motors, animation such as a door opening or shutting and uncoupling operating, movement of a person i.e. a driver turning around in the cab to face the opposite direction, cranes buckets moving the possibilities are endless.

The Mobile Decoders are most commonly for use in locomotives, as they include Motor circuitry to power the electric motor or motors in a locomotive. Allowing you to drive your loco.

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Mobile decoder, this one has sound functionality and it also has output terminals to control servo motors and other auxiliary devices.

These sometimes can have sound chips and many other electronic circuitries for things like lights front and rear, cab lights. These can light LEDs or incandescent bulbs. Some the circuits include servo interfaces (for small rotating motors), These can open doors open vents move to uncouple or couple up, raise and lower pantographs the options can be quite endless.

Mobile decoders come with sound or without sound, The ones including sound can be set up to work in parallel with

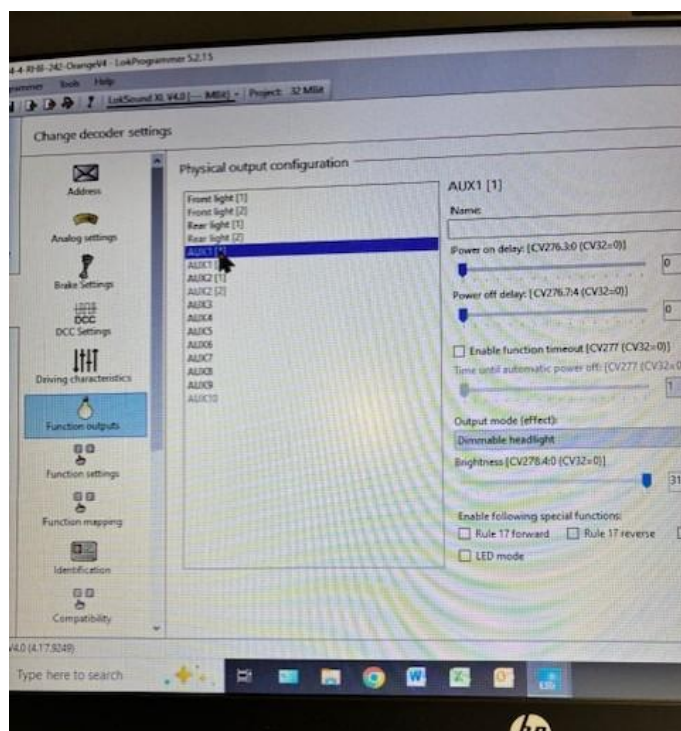
the motion so that the sound is linked to the movement, i.e. an uncoupler movement can have the sound of the chains and link and knuckles closing or opening, as with the door the sound of the door closing.



Stationery signal decoders can operate various different coloured lights as the prototype does to link with the train passing a signal and turning to red or even changing colours to show speed restrictions, these can have timers set for the operation to be over a short or long period.

Example of a stationery signal decoder.

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Left - A programmer to interface from PC to decoder to change decoder settings.

Right - Screenshot from programming software which shows selectable options.

Setting up of decoders can be very simple if you have the interface box that links to your computer and allows you to just tick the things that you want or adjust the software and then send the set up from the computer to the decoder and it's all done automatically.

Its done by changing a CV (Configuration Variable) from one value to another i.e. you might want to change the loudness of the speaker volume therefore you could change CV 63 to equal 100 for a loud sound or CV 63 could be set to 20 for a quieter sound, so it's all numbers really but with the software you don't have to know the numbers you could be possibly just moving a sliding bar from low sound to high sound.

If you have any questions, I'm happy to answer if I can, By sending me an email at

rhbdonut@gmail.com

Also DCC EX was discussed at the clinic, this is an Arduino based system which has been around for awhile but in the past has been more reserved for those with skills to write code for programming their own Arduino hardware. Available now is a website which has the ability to select your hardware and create the code to download into your hardware, also you can have the ability to control from an Android or IOS device.

anyone wishing to learn more about DCC EX these websites are of interest:

Dcc-ex.com

Little Wicket Railway - DCC Ex

jtelelectronics.co.nz

Convention Clinic - Rock Casting

Article - Neil Wiggins

This project started when I had a new layout planned on waist high benchwork. I liked the idea of rocky mountain scenery but real rocks were obviously too heavy in any sort of number. I'd tried various crinkled tinfoil and hand carving methods a few years ago but wasn't really happy with the outcome.

Eventually I came across a website which showed making rubber moulds of real rocks, then casting thin concrete panels which gave an exact copy of the rock but weighing a fraction. The videos in the link below give a good explanation of this gentleman's methods.

<https://www.youtube.com/c/fauxrock/videos>

There was a bit of experimentation to adapt to local products – the main one was swapping to latex rather than silicone rubber for the moulds due to cost. There are some drawbacks to this that I'll get to later.



Making the moulds is relatively straightforward, although a bit time consuming. Find some interesting rocks – ones with fractured faces appealed to me, clean them thoroughly and move them to a workshop - preferably with blinds or curtains (I'll get to those latex drawbacks later).



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They needed to be set up level, as the latex is quite runny.

I sealed the rocks, but this may not be necessary depending on what type they are. Latex takes a while to build up, I figure it took around 10 layers to get to 1mm thick. Each layer has to dry between coats so this is not a fast process. A warm day dried in 20 minutes, cold ones took several hours.

I tried thickening the latex to get faster build up, especially on undercuts but the drying time extended as it got thicker so there was no real benefit. I ended up using small amounts of SMOOTHON-40 where this was needed, sandwiched between latex layers. This is important as the 'backing' mould needs a smooth contour so it doesn't get mechanically stuck when you try to separate it from the rubber.

These moulds could be peeled off and used as is, but to capture the true rock shape I put a hard shell over the latex so the contours were kept.

I used fibreglass for this at first, but moved to using concrete later on, again to reduce cost.



I did about 30 layers of latex, ending up with 3 -4 mm thick moulds.



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Standard kitchen clingwrap was used between the fibreglass and rubber to stop them sticking together. The finished moulds looked like this, the latex captured plenty of surface detail.



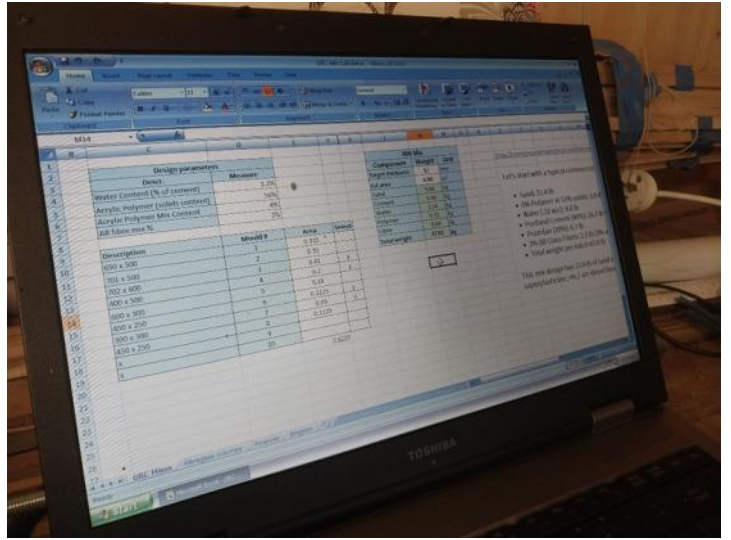
The actual casting is a two-part process, although they are done straight after one another. The first layer is the face coat, essentially a soupy cement and water mix that goes on first to capture all the tiny surface detail in the mould. This is followed up by a structural layer, about 12mm or ½ inch thick.

This where I closely followed the approach suggested in the link I posted at the top – using glass reinforced concrete (GRC) for the structure. It's got several advantages – only needing a thin layer for strength (10 – 12 mm), being able to demould after only 24 hours, and not needing the long wet cure that normal concrete needs. It does cost a bit more, but I think this is worth it for the speed and weight saving.



There is plenty of information on the web about GRC if anyone wants to learn more but here is a quick run down. The two main changes are adding a polymer to the cement mix to get the wet cure properties, and using glass fibre for reinforcing. The fibre is alkali resistant so it can withstand the high concrete pH, normal glass fibre will fail over time. I substituted a local polymer after speaking to their technical staff. Not quite the level of the commercial grade, but again – cost!

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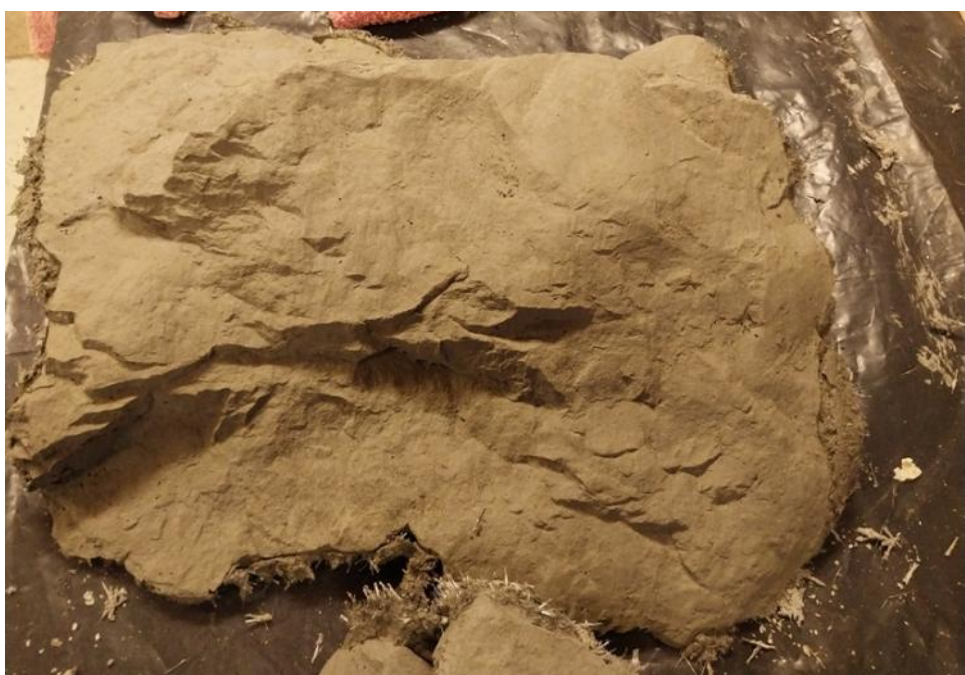
This mix was worked into the face coat a handful at a time until the moulds were covered. I used a piece of wood with a nail sticking out 12 mm to gauge the mortar thickness as it was very easy to overfill valleys and underfill ridges.



The casts still need to wet cure for 24 hours, so they are covered in wet towels and kept damp for a day.



Here is a final result, fresh out of the mould. This can now be left to fully cure without being kept wet.



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And a comparison of an actual rock, and the casting. I was very pleased with how it came out.



The next stage is to assemble the castings together to make tunnels, rock walls and gorges on the benchwork.

Tales from the West Highland Railway in New Zealand

Christchurch Garden Railway Convention 2026

Author: John Boyson



The Collins Creek Branch created by Kabita Whale

1. Introduction

Priscilla and I thought long and hard about attending this event with a number of family issues surrounding us. However, in the end the desire to go and with no immediate family matters to attend to, we made the decision to both go and also fit in two weeks touring around the South Island following the Convention. On both counts we were pleased we went since both activities exceeded expectations.

In reporting on my impression of the Convention, I shall concentrate on each garden visited in the order they were presented without any preferential treatment. This holds true of our resulting feelings since all, without exception, were wonderful examples of the garden railway pastime. Furthermore, they all in their own way, had the wow factor as well as a unique charm that is so important when displaying garden railways at these events.

2. The RhB Swiss Railway, Don Ellis

This complex indoor railway located in Don's garage is a masterpiece of G scale modelling that is operated with a complex DCC set of controls which controls locomotives, points and signals in a railwaylike way. In addition, strategically placed cameras and monitors allow sight of otherwise inaccessible areas as well.

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An electric 'Crocodile' and steam locomotive at the main station. Note, the signals and points are all operated remotely.



A centre cab locomotive moving off the MPD turntable to assume its next duty.

THE GARDEN WHISTLE**3. Hercules St, Aaron Emerson**

This ground level outdoor railway is based on an American system with a number of separate loops allowing the use of multiple trains at once.



A coal train rounding one of the return loops.



A mixed freight.

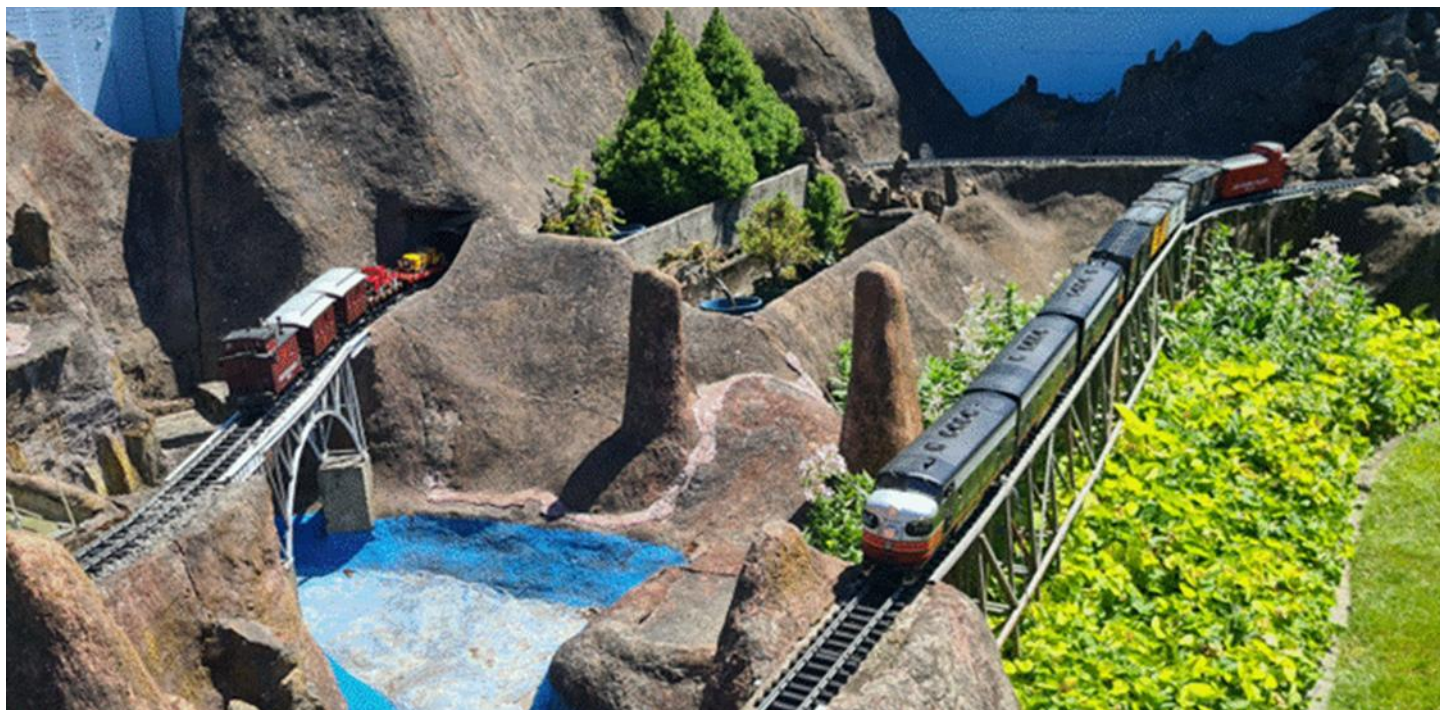
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4. Mount Catt and Jessie Falls, Karl and Allison Arnesen

This railway shows some beautiful artistry. It has a slightly raised profile for ease of access with careful blending into the garden as a whole. Judicious planting together with some interesting rock work coupled with some spectacular bridges (not that I am biased of course!) made for a wonderful presentation. There is also a significant number of buildings (sadly not pictured) that formed a town scene at one end of the railway.



A view of the end of the railway. One of the many highly detailed buildings is visible. There were many more.



The mountain section showing sensitive blending of the rock, plants and water, all with the railway carefully integrated.

5. The Clifton Mountain Railway, Mel and Claire Sanders

This multi-level railway is situated, as the name suggests, on a steeply sloping garden that would have made its design and construction challenging to say the least. That it has succeeded in this difficult environment, shows a significant degree of ingenuity. In addition, it has been blended well into the garden to create a harmonious scene, once again marrying the railway and garden into one.



One of the bridges at the upper end of the railway. The careful placement of rocks around the railway is masterful.



A general view of the lower levels of the railway.

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6. The Fraser Line, Ross Fraser

This Swiss based railway is mounted on blocks, all carefully levelled in place. None are bonded together. This makes adjustments, alterations and eventual removal easy to undertake. Planting around the railway is ongoing and this will go a long way to soften the lines of this complex and impressive railway. There are four elevated prongs leading from a central junction area that allows easy access all around.



An electric unit running along the blockwork baseboard. Some judicious planting of shrubs behind the blocks is starting to soften the impact of these.



This photo gives a clue as to the complexity of this railway. This is part of the central junction area from which the four prongs lead off. Note, further planting has been done that, in time, will further harmonise the railway with the garden.

THE GARDEN WHISTLE**7. Flaxton Creek Railway, Neil Wiggins**

This extensive, but embryonic, American based railway has been designed with gentle flowing curves. It is built at a convenient height above ground on an elevated base board. Ballasting and scenic rockwork is beginning to appear on the line to landscape it.



Trains passing. Note, ballasting has started to appear which is already starting improve the railway's visual appearance.



Live steam was also given a chance after the electric trains had finished. This is Andrew Bishop's Roundhouse 'Harrogate'.

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8. Ashley Street Station, Dean and Lois Farrow

This was a smaller railway compared with most viewed. However, what set it apart was the fine scale nature of it and the scratch built 1:24 NZR stock running on it. The photos below outline the construction process for the stock, whilst the results speak for themselves in the last photo.



The vacuum forming system created by Dean with a pattern and resulting moulding on the right.



A twin car standard rail motor set constructed using the techniques outlined above. A real fine scale masterpiece.

THE GARDEN WHISTLE**9. Tadbroke Hallow Railroad, Noel & Denise Collingwood**

This railway is an excellent example of what can be achieved in a relatively small space. It takes the form of a dumbbell and is a slightly raised layout mounted on boards. However, what sets it apart is the use of artificial grass to disguise the edges of the boards and the buildings and flowers (both artificial and real) set around the railway to create a blend of the three scenes into one that is visually perfect. It is a real treat to view and proves that layouts do not have to be large to impress!



An overview of the town end of the railway showing the wonderful buildings Noel has incorporated into the railway and garden. It has a real charm even without any trains visible.



This idyllic scene really shows how, with careful attention to planting, a harmonious setting for even the simplest configuration can be achieved.

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10. Burts Creek Railroad, Cyril and Alison Fifield

Cyril models in a variety of scales including some large narrow gauge miniature engines. He also has a number of British steam models in a variety of model engineering gauges. These are beautifully made as the photos show.

In G scale he has a small indoor railway, whilst in HO he has an extensive and wonderfully detailed European railway that was being put through its paces.



Some of Cyril's model engineering handiwork.



Views of Cyril's G scale and HO European model railways. The HO layout is a particularly fine piece of work.

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11. Wilson Valley Railroad, Andrew Wilson

This extensive and complex railway has been largely built on a designated part of the garden. It has been adapted to fit in with extensive rock work and subtle and sympathetic planting as can be seen below.



The main staging yard for this extensive railway with the G1MRA 75th Anniversary Brake Van on display. This has now passed into the care of Andrew Bishop having travelled to both Tasmania and Adelaide since leaving my custody



An overview of the main part but not all of this extensive railway. The blending of all the various elements forming the railway including the structures, rockwork and planting has produced a most pleasing result.

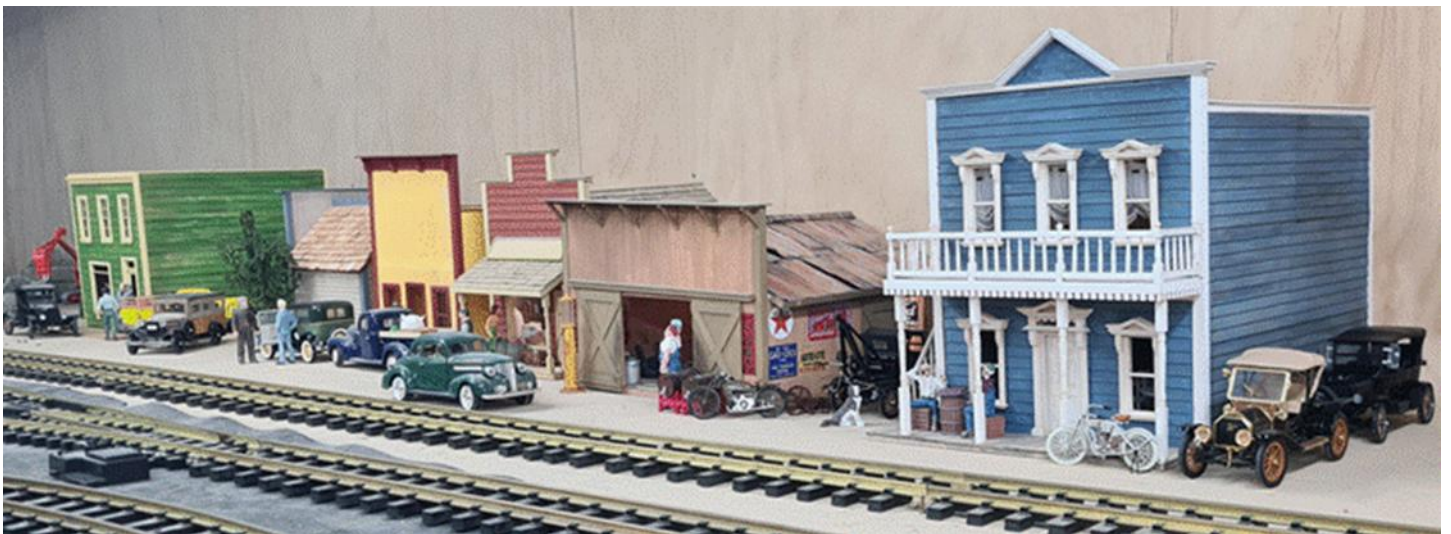
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12. Iron Creek Railroad, Iain Collingwood

Iain's railway is a representation of an American logging line in steam days. Whilst it has been built on a raised baseboard for ease of access, there has been a lot of scenic work done to landscape the setting. This includes some fine hand-built buildings and other structures. This work is ongoing. In addition, there is a lot of what appears to be highly detailed hand-crafted stock as well. The artificial grass and ballasting likewise, neatly blends the track into the scene as well.



A Mallet saddle tank locomotive rounds the return curve at one end of the railway. A Heisler geared locomotive with coupled bogie trucks, stands in the yard behind.



Some of the fine scratch-built buildings that illustrate another strand to Iain's skills. This is on top of his work activities and editing the Garden Whistle as well (not to mention helping to run this Convention): how does he find the time??!!

THE GARDEN WHISTLE**13. Collins Creek Branch, Kabita Whale**

This huge multi-level railway based on American practice is an eye level system that has been set up superbly with smooth flowing curves and considerable care given to track laying. At present, there is extensive work being undertaken on landscaping with a lot of beautifully crafted rock work with a number of realistic bridges to compliment the scene. This work is continuing.



A small example of the fine work being achieved by Kabita on what is a massive project. Behind and above the bridges evidence of the techniques used to achieve the rock finish can be glimpsed in an area that is still being worked on. The bridges are also masterpieces in their own right. This shows what can be achieved in outdoor modelling.



The same train further along the line.

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14. Pirfic Station, Bill and Margaret Stanley

This spectacular railway concluded the event and was a fitting layout and garden for this. The ground level railway is extensive and had no less than thirteen independently controlled trains running at the same time, seemingly in perfect harmony.



A really lovely blend of trains and garden is apparent with this intensively operated yet relaxing railway. (Photo courtesy of Priscilla Boyson)



Three of the nine trains gently ambulating around this layout looking really natural in its garden setting. (Photo courtesy of Priscilla Boyson)

15. Conclusion

I hope this small appreciation of this very special event gives some idea of the scale of what the Christchurch Group has collectively achieved. These occasions do not just happen. A lot of hard work both by the layout owners and the Convention organisers clearly took place to achieve something spectacular. Priscilla and my thanks go out to all those involved. You have done us all proud. I hope that this article in some small way helps articulate our gratitude to you all.

Auckland Garden Railway Group Meeting

Report - Robert Graham, Photos - As Credited

Auckland Garden Railway Group April Meeting 2026

For our April meeting we headed down to Whangamata on the east coast of the Coromandel peninsula. A visit to Andy Murray's railway had been organised for Sunday 26 April and we were lucky to have a beautiful autumn day.

We were also lucky to receive an invite to visit a second garden railway in Whangamata and that was Bruce Gibson's railway. Bruce invited us to visit as he had just completed his railway with the help of his friend Henrik Dorbeck (Henrik gets around doesn't he!). Bruce's railway is built on the ground and has three loops that can be run connected up or as independent loops. Also one of the loops has a spur that climbs a hill to a terminus at a mine site where trains can be loaded. This railway runs with battery powered trains and Bruce has some large US steam locos including an impressive looking Mallet. Bruce opened his railway for us in the morning so people could visit before heading to Andy's railway for the rest of the day.

Being out west it took us around two and a half hours to drive down to Whangamata but those out east would have had a shorter journey time. I think that unfortunately the increased fuel costs deterred some members from driving down, which was a shame. The people who went were Chris O'Brien, Simon Sharp, Bruce Cropper, Mike and Liz Hilliar, Ray and Shelly Williams and Robert and Louise Graham.

After visiting Bruce we drove to Andy's railway. His railway is located on a tree shaded knoll at the rear of the section and it is an elevated railway with a double track loop that circulates around Andy's workshop that is located in the middle of the loop. The workshop roof extends over one side of the track to give a covered yard for preparing trains or doing some shunting. This railway uses battery or live steam powered loco's. A unique feature of this railway is that it passes beneath a wood fired pizza oven. Andy had a White Pass passenger train circulating on one track and I ran my Fowler loco and a couple of bolster wagons on the other track. I then swapped that train for my Baguley diesel and freight train.

Everyone had a very pleasant afternoon chatting while watching the trains circulate. On behalf of everyone who attended I would like to thank Bruce and Andy for hosting our visit. Hope fully we can visit you again another time.

The May meeting will be at Chas Hoskens railway on Sunday 24 May. See you there.



Bruce's Mallet locomotive passes by - Photo Robert Graham.

THE GARDEN WHISTLE



RS3 hauling light over the bridge - Photo Simon Sharp.



Coal train being loaded at the mine - Photo Simon Sharp.

THE GARDEN WHISTLE



Bruce's C&S train crossing the arch bridge - Photo Robert Graham.



Sawmill on Bruce's railway - Photo Robert Graham.

THE GARDEN WHISTLE



Andy's train exiting the pizza oven tunnel - Photo Simon Sharp.



Andy's K27 locomotive - Photo Simon Sharp.



Members enjoying the running day - Photo Robert Graham.



Robert's Baguley diesel on freight duties - Photo Robert Graham.

THE GARDEN WHISTLE



Robert's Baguley diesel exiting the tunnel - Photo Robert Graham.



Robert's Fowler passing through the staging yard - Photo Robert Graham.



Turntable on the line - Photo Robert Graham.



Robert's Fowler with a pipe load - Photo Robert Graham.

Bruce's Railway Update

Article - Henrik Dorbeck

At the beginning of April I headed off to Whangamatā to visit Bruce Gibson. He was having a few problems with his layout and needed some assistance. It was a good drive up and I arrived in time for dinner and a few medicinal wines and whiskeys.

Bruce's layout is the first one he has built in G Scale and consists of 3 loops as yet not connected, that was part of my job. It has a mix of low level and track 600mm off the ground. His track is standard 332 track with a mix of points including Peco (from Loco), Aristocraft and some LGB. He has a mix of buildings from Loco in Ōtaki and proprietary models from Piko and Pola. He has a beautifully made viaduct, made out of steel.

His rolling stock is a mix of LGB, Bachman and Aristocraft that he has converted to radio control with Chris Drowley's assistance. The pride of the fleet currently is 2 Unitah mallets, 2 Sumpter mallets and a Aristocraft 2-8-8-2 mallet. All are converted to run on battery power.

I set to and had them done in good time. We had them running but needed to fine tune the track a bit to make things right. We removed a couple of R1 points that were causing problems and replaced them with LGB R3's. I took my trusty Works and Way set of wagons up with me and the rail bender to get things sorted. Also added was a lovely bridge he got from Irma (Peter Milburns) layout when we dismantled it.

All in all we had a fun week and ran some trains where we could. On the last day we got all the loops fully running and trains on all of them simultaneously. A good reward for a fun week.



Some of the track work that was tweaked to help operations.



More track work that has been completed.



Time for some test running with the RS3.

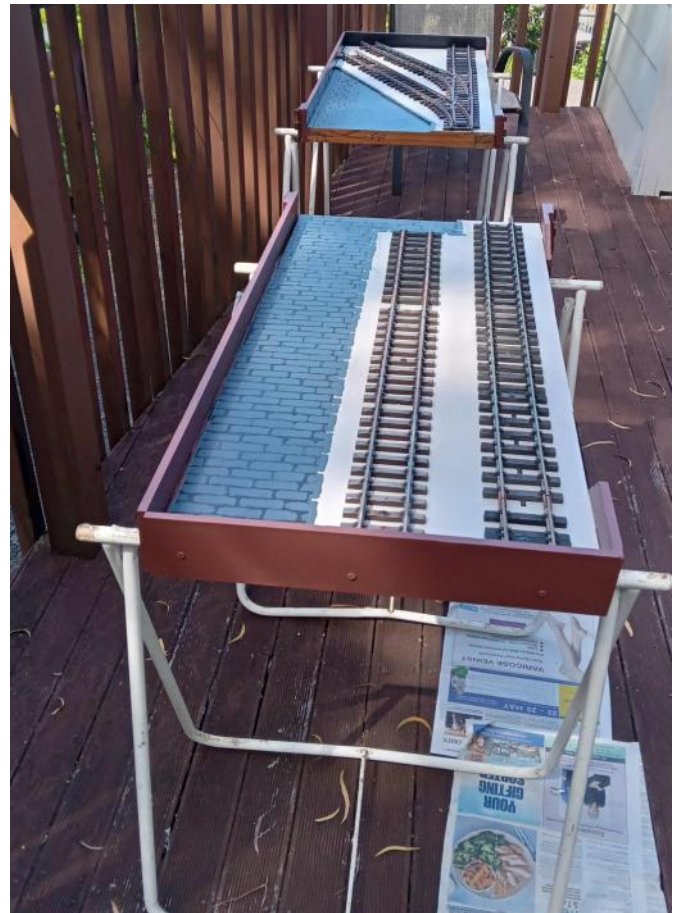
Keep it Simple Stupid

Simon Sharp, Auckland

Brannigan Brothers Yard - Or How to build a G-scale layout on a shelf



Left - Half a door with stencil.



Right - Completed Boards still separate.

The genesis of this piece of the Ore Valley has been floating around for several years.

First off, The Auckland display layout has been in storage ever since Covid. This is because there have not been suitable exhibitions to set it up, and secondly, on the multiple occasions a suitable hall at a reasonable rate has been available the membership has passed on the opportunity.

Second, most of Auckland membership do not have a layout, nor are they engaged in active modelling, so this is an invitation to all armchair modellers to make a start with a simple test track.

Third. it can easily be taken to exhibitions and school / church fetes where an exhibit would promote the hobby of model railways

THE GARDEN WHISTLE

Right -

*Close up of Joint ,
showing use of split
hinge.*

Below -

*First set up to check
running.*



We now come to the how. Long time club member Michael Brannigan died recently and all his model railway equipment was left to North Shore Model Railway Club. They very generously offered on to AGRS his G-Scale pieces. Amongst the track were several short lengths and 2 LGB points. These became the basis for the layout. From the inorganic collection I had acquired a 2m x 50cm solid interior door. These are basically flat and square and can be up to 1m in width and do not need any work to make them usable.

Because I wanted to fit the layout in my car I had to cut the door in half, and screw on end pieces for transportation. As a bonus this also allows any visitors to see how modules are fixed together. I started by attaching a surround, converting the door into a large tray. This was to ensure that the engine and rolling stock would not run off the edge if any operator was distracted. Neither of these steps would be necessary if the layout was destined to sit permanently on a shelf against an interior wall.

After thoroughly cleaning the running rails and soldering power through the rail joiners at the central joint I had a simple, but reliable running track. The baseboards are just paint, Redwood on the sides, black with grey to represent stone setts stenciled on the base and the track itself sits on cork tiles painted ballast. At one end is a pair of crossing gates to imply access to the rest of the Ore Valley, and wooden buildings represent the Brannigan Brothers Offices. Operationally 5 feldbahn wagons and a small 0-4-0 endlessly switch the sidings while I decide to make it a builder's, coal or wood merchant's yard.

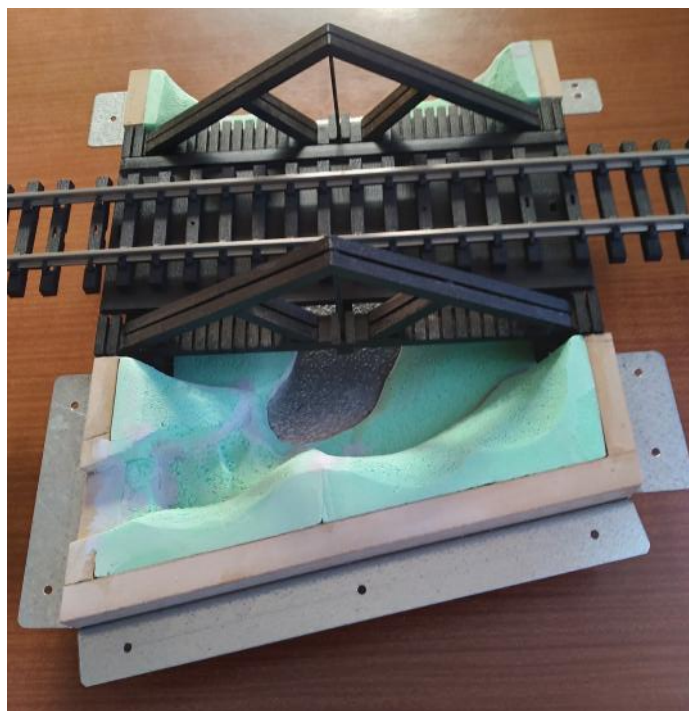
THE GARDEN WHISTLE



*Above & below some close ups
Centre View of whole layout with
backscene*



Readers Pictures



Left -

*My rail bridge over the styrene river,
painting and detailing yet to be done
Photo - Lew Henry.*

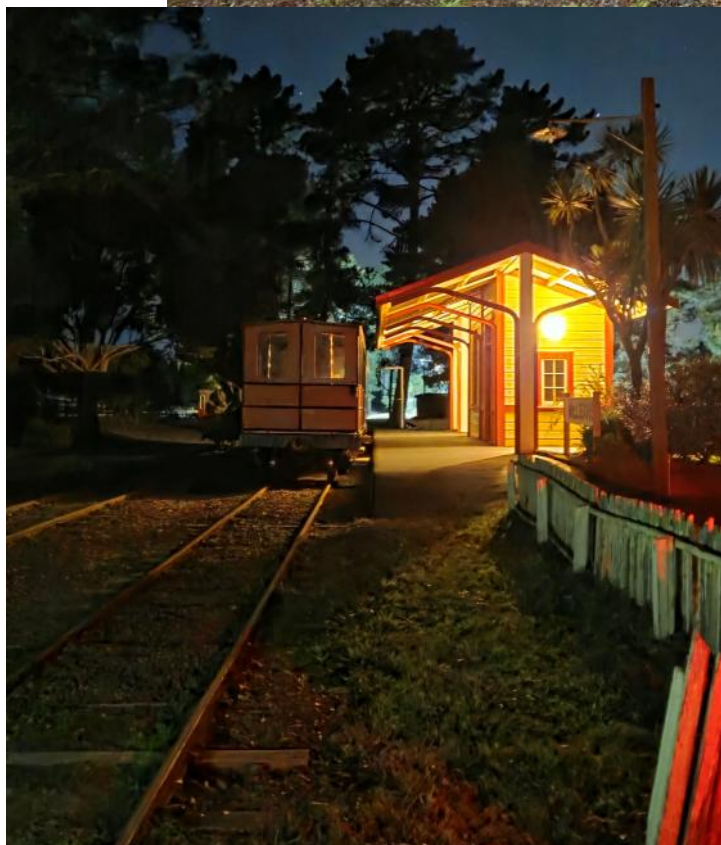
Below -

*Images of a gathering of 5 very old Gauge 1
Clockwork, Bing, Bassett and unknown,
average age 95 years.*

*Photos - Michael Avery
Lake Macquarie Australia.*



Readers Pictures



Photos from Steam Scene's recent steam extravaganza weekend event.

Top photo is the fowler steam locomotive along with their diesel shunter.

To the left is a night shot showing their new Mcleans Station building lit up.

Andrew Wilson

COMING EVENTS

May 2-3 2026	Dunedin Model Train Show, Dunedin
May 15-16 2026	2026 Great Lakes Large Scale Train Expo, Ohio
June 13-14 2026	Hastings Train Show, Hastings
June 20 2026	Model Train Display Rolleston School, Rolleston
July 4-5 2026	Ashburton Model Train Show, Tinwald
September 5-6 2026	Nelson Model Railway Show, Stoke
October 3-4 2026	Big Model Train Show, Christchurch
October 2026	Great Little Train Show, Invercargill
November 2026	Rail Ex, Lower Hutt
January 23-24 2027	Tauranga Model Train Show, Tauranga
March 2027	Cromwell Train Show, Cromwell
May 31-5 2027	2027 National Garden Railway Convention, Nashville, USA



Pirfic Station is on
Youtube find it here:

[www.youtube.com/
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Do you know of an event?
Contact the Editor to include in the
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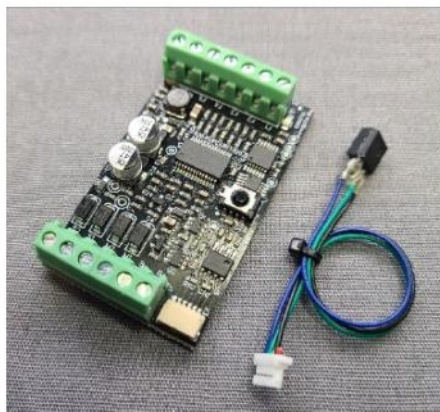
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Club Meeting	Club Contact
May 24th (Sunday) 2pm Chas Hosken's 6 Pricor Street Papakura (entrance is off Margaret St)	Auckland: Auckland Garden Railway Group. Club Contact: Email: grahamclannz@xtra.co.nz Robert Graham, Ph: 09 836 0900
Running Days/Meetings 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 17th (Saturday) 1pm Peter Murray 212 high street Masterton Battery/DCC	Wairarapa: Wairarapa Garden Railway Group. Club Contact: Email: brendonclarke76@yahoo.co.nz Coordinator: Brendon Clarke
If you are interested in attending the running session, please email coordinator for further details	Wellington: Wellington Garden Railway Group. Club Contact: Email: bilthompson@xtra.co.nz Coordinator: Brent Thompson, Ph: 022 619 4006
May 24th (Sunday) 12 - 5pm CGRG AGM (AGM Starts at 1pm) Rod Benders Hall 132 Waterloo Road, Hornby	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