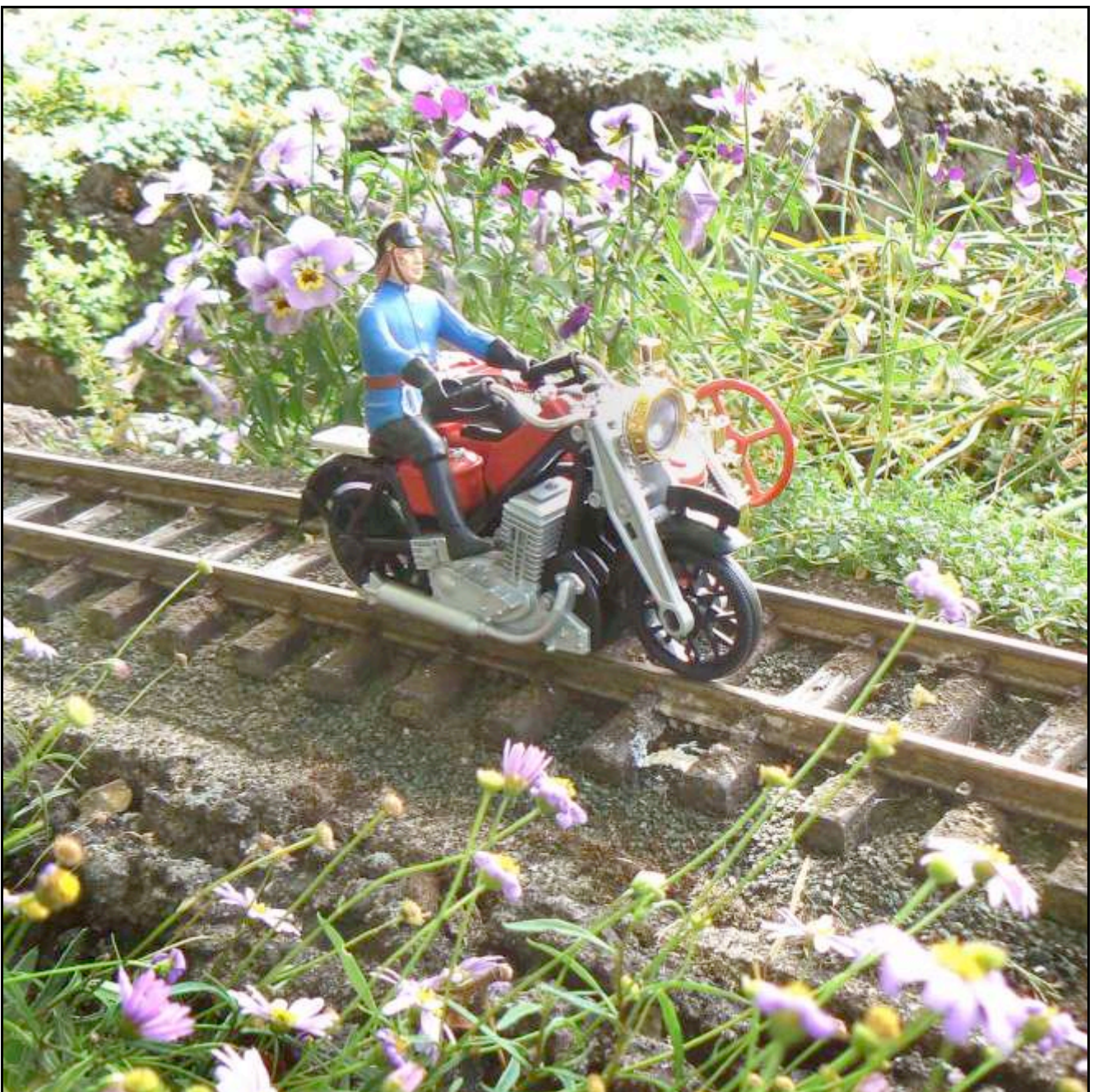




# The Garden Whistle

- G scale news from around New Zealand -

## January 2012



Fire Brigade to the rescue! Alf William's fire fighter jigger on a safety patrol following a steam train on the Alfrosa Railway in Auckland. Photo: Michael Hilliar.

## The Alfrosa Railway



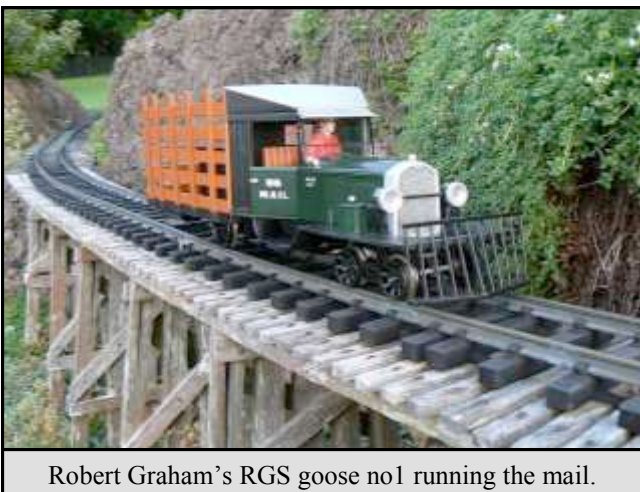
Robert Graham's train at Spotswood, named after the station north of Christchurch where Alf went camping as a child.

*Text by Alf Williams (Auckland)*

*Photos by Michael Hilliar (Auckland).*

About 3 weeks ago I started to clean up the "Alfrosa Railway" of the winter debris of leaves, weeds plus the trimming of the overgrown plants. It was amazing just how much growth there was. With one thing and another I never got back to it. So the day before the meeting I had to start all over again clearing and

cleaning the tracks. This was one of the days we had to look after grandchildren Chelsea (4) and Harrison (2) and of course they wanted to help carry the buildings out. They had a ball putting the railway staff and passengers out and then when the cars and trucks came out, driving them up the roads and across the paddocks – walking all over the place. I didn't have the heart to growl at them when they broke a few fences, as it was just lovely to see their enjoyment.



Robert Graham's RGS goose no1 running the mail.

Saturday morning came and a friend came over to help put up the sun-shades and get the tables and chairs out.

First to arrive was Derek with his live steamer. This was great to see and the first live steamer to run here for a number of years.

With people coming and going, both tracks were busy with up to 3 trains running on one track at a time. At afternoon tea time there must have been 30 to 40 people here which was a good turnout. There were several young children present, some of whom were able to run trains.

Late afternoon Chelsea and Harrison arrived to watch the trains running and stayed for the B.B.Q. There were 18 – 20 who stayed on for the shared B.B.Q.

The children who stayed also had a lot of fun driving the Jeep and kept us entertained with their enjoyment of playing together while the adults all sat around the table talking.

Mike's train was the last one to run, and after everything (except the last controller) was put away, Mike, Liz, Rosemeri and I sat down and had a cuppa while watching Mike's train running and so we closed down about 9 o'clock.

Rosemeri and I would like to thank those ladies who helped lay out the table for the meal



Derek Cooper talking to Adrian Cole

and those who also helped put away the buildings. It was certainly appreciated. All together a great day!



Don Oliver's 2-8-0 crosses the trestle.

## Loco Miniature Railway and Gardens Revisited

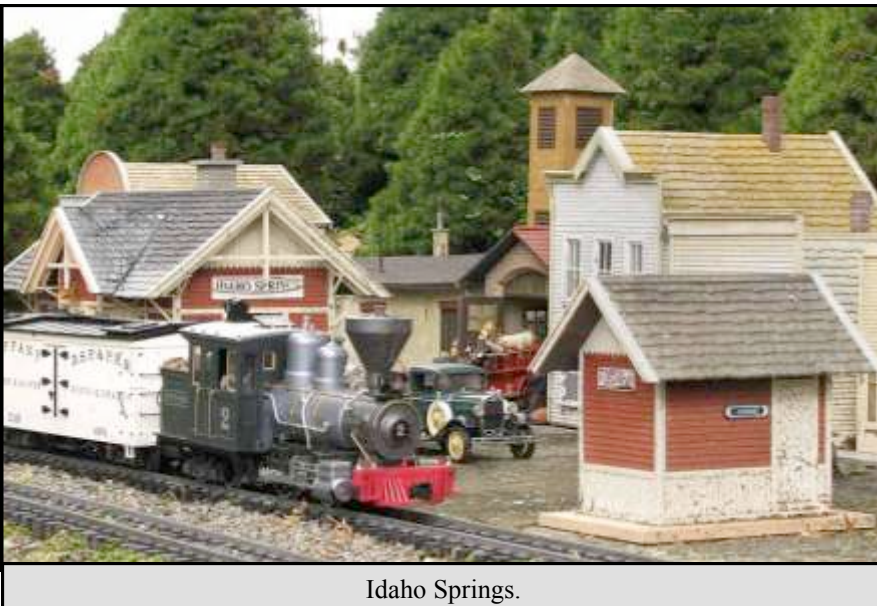


Dave Allen's Rio Grande Train. Photo by Gavin Sowry

### *Text & photos by John Robinson (Wellington)*

Back in April the Wellington Garden Railway Group visited the commercially run Loco Miniature Railway and Gardens north of Otaki, and it seems we made as much an impression on David Brooker as "Loco" made on us that he invited us back for our December Christmas running afternoon.

It made for a rather special day as it's not everyday you get to have a running day and not have to worry about getting things ready or packing away afterwards. Well a small advance party had helped David with some maintenance back in October before Loco opened for the summer. The railway is looking much tidier than our April visit after winter maintenance on the buildings, the gardens as always are well presented.



Idaho Springs.

My report back in the May Garden Whistle gave details of the railway so I'll try not to repeat to many details. But as a quick refresher there is some 200-300m of run in two interconnected circuits. Track is predominately code 250 aluminium rail. Loco's trains are all USA steam outline battery powered, so visiting trains need to be similarly powered, or live steam.

The relative merits of the code 250 aluminium rail was

discussed and while size wise it looks better than the more common code 332 rail, the way the more common brass tarnishes looks better than constant, umm, aluminium colour of aluminium. Perhaps you could paint the rail sides rust colour like the smaller scales paint their nickel-silver rails?

The smaller code aluminium rail is also much more, shall we say mobile, being subject to a fair degree of thermal expansion and is also very easy to flex or kink during human activity. The later point one would consider a distinct disadvantage on a public railway but David seems to manage this very well. He did say though that the sections of track that he does have in Code 332 brass rail are easier to man-



Chris Drowley's Frank S steams past a line side shed.

age. As a purely personal conclusion I think I like to try code 250 brass rail, though one would still need to be aware that it is not elephant proof like LGB code 332 rail.

Back to the running day, as we arrived Loco's trains were run into sidings and the WGRG was given complete running rights over the next 3½ hours. David was keen for us to run longer but



John Robinson's "Little Johnny" almost lost in the magnificent scenery



Ian Galbraith's C16 at rear and Tina Sowry's Beer train at front. Photo by Gavin Sowry

the desire to beat the traffic put paid to that unfortunately. We ran a good mix of live steam and battery power, with a few minor misadventures as we learned the road. Though our own David A's grandson seemed to be in more control of his Granddad's train than some of us.

Like most running days we found where a few gremlins lived, and while we did a few tweaks for David, there is no doubt we'll just have to go back and help with some more maintenance followed of course by further testing.



Trains belonging to "Loco", the logging train, (with battery hut) and the circus train

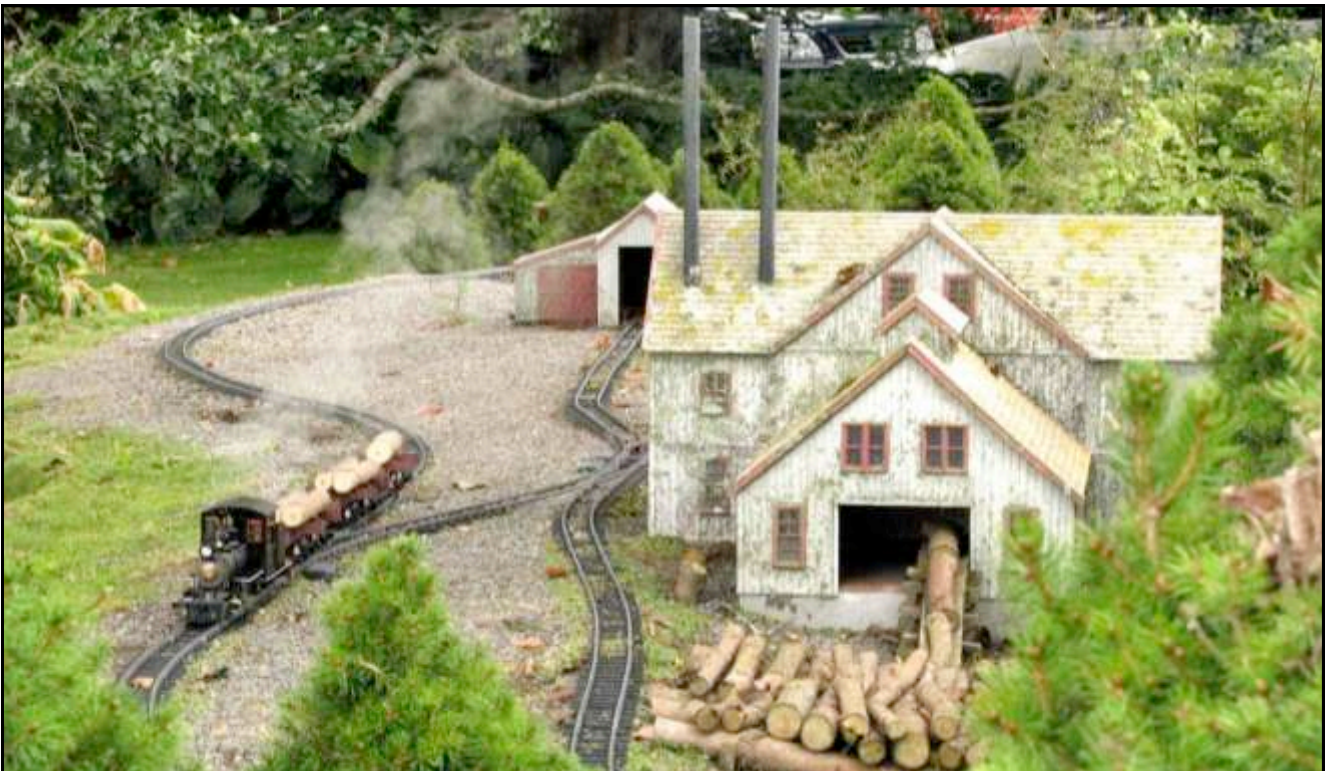
Again on a personal note, I'm still learning the dark art of live steamers, so to get some extended running in a foreign environment was very rewarding if not somewhat nervous when there were several members of the public closely watching your every move intently. They thought I knew what I was doing – isn't ignorance bliss!

It was a real shame that Ian Galbraith's great Aristocraft C16 developed an unexplained fault as it really suited the railway. It looked great as it approached from a far, sweeping around the broad curves, disappearing from view to reappear, what seemed to be many minutes later. It's a real treat to run on such a long run, and I hope we can encourage some even bigger/longer trains on our next visit. Loco would be the ideal place to run some serious double-headed trains or maybe one of those big US steam locomotives.



Lloyd Dickens Caledonian rolls into town

So that was our December running day. It was great too to have some of the Wairarapa lads join us. The weather was warm, the pizzas were positively yummy, the kids had fun in the playground, and the bigger kids had fun with the trains. Thanks to David for hosting us at Loco, it was a great way to warm up to Christmas with your mates and trains.



Arriving at the mill with more logs.

## NZ Garden Railway Convention

28 & 29 January - Christchurch



It's now only a couple of weeks to the Garden Railway Convention.

Its not too late to register if you still intend to come, but you will have to be quick; **Registrations close on 10th January.**

The pre-Christmas earthquakes haven't affected our plans and the recommended accommodation in Riccarton is still operating as normal.

Please meet at Computer Data and Cables, 118 Wordsworth Street, Sydenham just prior to 9am. At 9am we will be grouping into car loads and starting the first layout tour.



There are some great clinics and demos lined up for the weekend; How to vacuum form your own shapes from plastic, Creating your own people, Making easy stonework, How to build your own loco chassis. Plus more.

We are going to visit some great layouts, and also have our own special charter train at the Plains Railway. The Saturday night meal is at the Tinwald Tavern and is not included in the registration price.



If you are from outside Christchurch and planning to do your own exploration while down here, please drive safely. Unexpected bumps will be found in lots of roads and some areas of the central city are still closed.

If you want more info please email: [glen.bren@paradise.net.nz](mailto:glen.bren@paradise.net.nz)

## Somerset & Willard Railway

*Text & photos by Glen Anthony  
(Christchurch)*

Christmas BBQ's have been a bit hit and miss (weather wise) over the years. We've had some good ones, and some real shockers. I think it was last year that we huddled under a tarpaulin while it bucketed down with rain. This year a doubtful start continued to get better and better throughout the day.

We had three new members arrive. Both had made contact after seeing our display at the Big Model Train Show in October, which reinforces how important doing this display is.

Rob and Pam den Boestert came along with trains and you can see Rob's excellent scratch built caboose else where in this issue.

Neil Wiggins' new mallet got its first test run, after he finished the bogie swivel mounts on the bottom of the boiler. The loco motor blocks were temporarily wired directly to a 7.2v battery pack to provide power for the test run. This



Neil Wiggins' Climax with a long train of empty logging bogies

proved to be just the right speed for a bush loco and it completed several circuits of the track without any problems. You can see more photos on the following pages. Neil advised that the mountain loop on his railway would be completed in time for the Garden Railway Convention in January, and I'm really looking forward to seeing it.

Thanks to Michelle and Kevin Leigh for providing their railway for the meeting.



Father Christmas made a visit and is seen here at the back of Glen Anthony's train

## Rob's Caboose



The wheels were turned out of steel. The bogie frames moulded using resin and fibreglass matt. The hand rails are brass, and the body work is plywood.

It has full inside details, the windows slide open and the doors open too - he hand made the hinges for those.

The brake wheel turns, and drives the underside brake rod- ding which activates a switch to turn on

Rob den Boestert (Christchurch) wanted a caboose. So he set out and built one. But this scratch built included everything - even the wheels!

and off the interior light.

The road name on the side - Uvongo & Victoria Bay RR, is made up. They are both places names from his home land of South Africa.



## Neil's Mallet Project

Neil Wiggins (Christchurch) is building a bush logging Mallet.

It is a copy of the TTT #7 / GVR #4 ALCO 2-4-4-2 Mallet built in 1907. It spent most of its life working for the Taupo Totara Timber Co in the North Island where it numbered TTT #7. More recently it has been restored at the Glenbrook Vintage railway near Auckland and is now numbered GVR #4 (see photo).



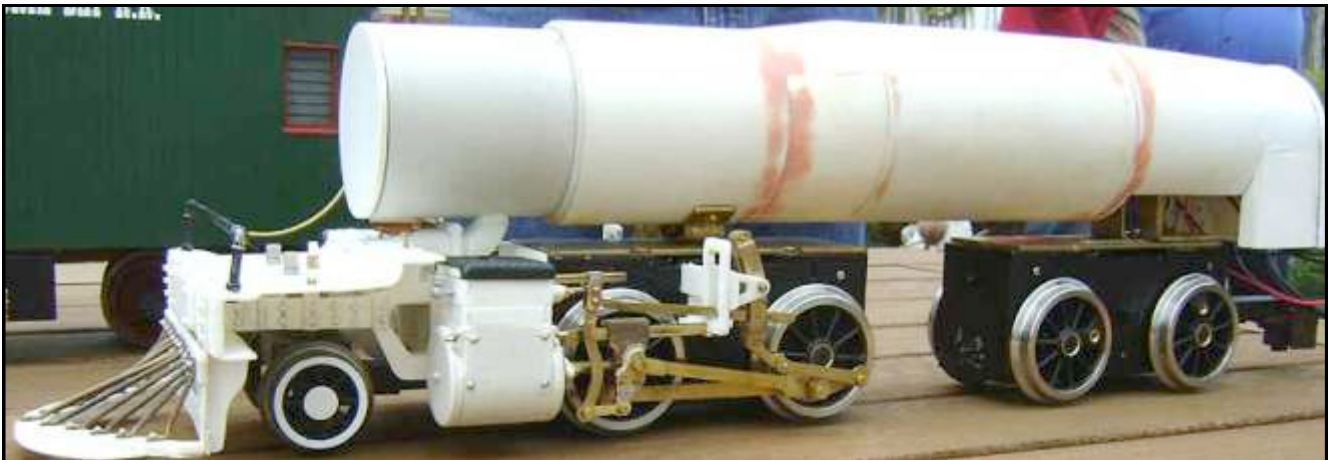
The prototype, Glenbrook Vintage Railway #4

Neil found that the motor block for a Bachmann Shay had the right wheel spacing, so he ordered two replacement motor blocks to work with.

He then hand built all the outside valve gear from brass strip. The front motor unit has been completed and the back one is still to be done.

The rest of the chassis has been scratch built from plastic. Each bar in the cowcatcher has been attached with a separate bolt. What a work of art!

The first test run was made in December wired directly into a 7.2v battery in the tailing battery wagon.



The first test run, plugged into a battery wagon delivering 7.2v direct to the two motor blocks.

## Update from the Wairarapa



*Text and Photos  
by Lee Collett  
(Carterton)*

In October we visited Murray Clarke's railway in Carterton.

Murray has an extensive railway around the back yard at ground level



A branch line weaves through it climbing up to the waist height storage yard inside the garage.



In November we visited Jeremy Were.

He has a large USA style mountain railway with winding mountain passes, tunnels and bridges.



And finally for our Christmas meet in December we were at Charles Colinson's

Here is Lloyd Dickens Christmas train with Santa head board and father Christmas following on the flat deck wagon at the back.



**Please Note:** There will be no Garden Whistle published in February due to the close timing of the Garden Railway Convention at the end of January. I don't have time to do both!  
The next issue of the Garden Whistle will be March, due out on 1st March as normal.

## **Club Events and Contacts**

### **Auckland:**

Club Contact: Auckland G Scale Society.

C/- Michael Hilliar, 22 Halver Road, Manurewa, Auckland 2102. Ph 09 266-4745 email: mhilliar@orcon.net.nz

### **Waikato:**

Club Contact: GROW: Garden Railway Operators of Waikato!

Grant Alexander, PO Box 1172, Cambridge. Ph 07 823-0059. gscale@clear.net.nz

### **Wairarapa:**

**Sunday 22 January** - Lloyd Dickens

**Sunday 19 February** - Ian & Ann Galbraith.

Club Contact: Wairarapa Garden Railway Group. C/- Murray Clarke, 4 Taylor Street, Carterton. Ph 06 379 7659.

### **Wellington:**

**Sunday 8 January** - from 1:30pm venue to be advised.

**28 & 29 January** - Garden Railway Convention, Christchurch.

Phone John for more details. 0274 427 160

Club Contact: Wellington Garden Railway Group Incorporated. [www.culcreuchfold.org.nz/wrg.htm](http://www.culcreuchfold.org.nz/wrg.htm)

C/- John Robinson, PO Box 56039, Tawa, Wellington 5249 Ph 0274 427 160 [wgtngardenrail@gmail.com](mailto:wgtngardenrail@gmail.com)

### **Christchurch:**

**28 & 29 January** - Garden Railway Convention

**Sunday 19 February** - Glen & Brenda Anthony. 59 Colombo St. Ph 942 1817 if wet.

**Sunday 18 March** - Ross Fraser.

**Sunday 22 April** - Neil Wiggins.

All running afternoon's 1-4pm. If weather looks doubtful, please phone host to check if meeting is still on.

Club Contact: Christchurch Garden Railway Society P.O. Box 7145, Christchurch 8240

Chairperson: Michelle Leigh. Email: [shellandkevin@paradise.net.nz](mailto:shellandkevin@paradise.net.nz)

The *Garden Whistle* is published monthly by the Christchurch Garden Railway Society and features news from various G scale clubs in New Zealand.

Each club is a separate identity and the contact details can be found above.

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

**Editor:** Glen Anthony. 59 Colombo Street, Christchurch 8022. Email: [glen.bren@paradise.net.nz](mailto:glen.bren@paradise.net.nz)