

A RAILWAY FOR JOYCE

In late November 2010, Roger and Michael from Mini Train Systems (with help from Joyce, Phil and daughter Christine) built a ride on garden railway in Taree. In two days. Here is the story.



Joyce Bradney going "solo" for the first time

THE SITE

Joyce and Phil are long term train fans with model trains from Z-gauge in TV sets to G scale in the garden, but Joyce had set her heart on a 5" gauge *ride on* garden railway for her and her grandchildren.

The Bradney's have a beautiful garden in Taree but there was a section that had lost it's way and needed something to wake it up and give it focus for regrowth. So that's where we started.

THE PLAN

The plan involved starting with a siding on the verandah of the house and running through the garden, around the outside and down through an old pergola. There was then an old fish pond to cross and the back to the points.



The idea was to blend the track in with the garden with minimum impact on the best areas and give the opportunity to clean up and refocus the parts that had got away.

We worked out that we would wind up with around 30 metres of track plus the siding, but there were a few clearance points we couldn't

finalise so we took extra track with us to allow for some variations plus some parts and a welder in case we had to make a fiddle piece. As it turned out, the plan we wound up with was close to the one we preferred - a little better really - and could be built with all MTS #2 curves (3.77m radius).



That (the #2 radius) meant that not only would the Planet loco being supplied in the package be able to run on the track, but should Joyce want to run a larger MTS-Maxitrak loco later on, it too would be able to get around the curves.

It also meant that because the MTS points are made to #2 radius, should Joyce want to extend the railway further out into the garden, then

she could peel off a branchline almost anywhere around the track, replacing a curve or a straight with a point.

THE BUILD

DAY ONE

Started at about 8am - day half over!

We laid the preferred track plan out on the ground and found good news: No need for the tighter #1 radius (2.5m) curves we thought we'd need. All we needed was to insert a couple of straights in the curves at each end to make sure we had the right clearance around the palm trees and we were in business.



We then used bricks, pavers and blocks and a "Cowley" level to check the heights all around the track and found that if we got a bit serious with the earthworks then we could make the track itself almost flat. There would be embankments and cuttings, which are fun, and relatively little of the garden would need to be transplanted.



replaced the rotting wooden bridge - it rains a real lot in Taree!

By 7pm we'd had enough so we packed it in. Probably $\frac{3}{4}$ of the excavation had been done and the retained embankments more than half complete.

We used line marking paint to mark the clearances around the track and then started digging! We had to pull up some pavers and used some left over koppers logs for retaining work. A reinforced concrete stair tread



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DAY TWO

This time we got into it at 7am. No sense in delay!

While Michael went off for the first load of gravel Roger

continued with the earthworks. We then worked through the whole track section by section until we had it all done:

- Even off earthworks
- Plastic sheet to stop the weeds
- About 50mm of gravel
- Track laid on top and loose bolted.



Once the track was finally joined up, joint by joint it was brought up to level and then the ballast evened out. By about 7pm the track was running!



DAY THREE

Well, OK, it took more than two (long) days. We had to spend an hour early the following morning with fresh minds and bodies to thoroughly test run and check the super elevation. If you want to see the results check out this short You-Tube link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_ctEBDBCK

If you're wondering what it cost, the answer is just under \$8000 excluding the labour. That includes the track, the train, the gravel, the star pickets, the lot. Everything that had to be bought and that wasn't already lying around.



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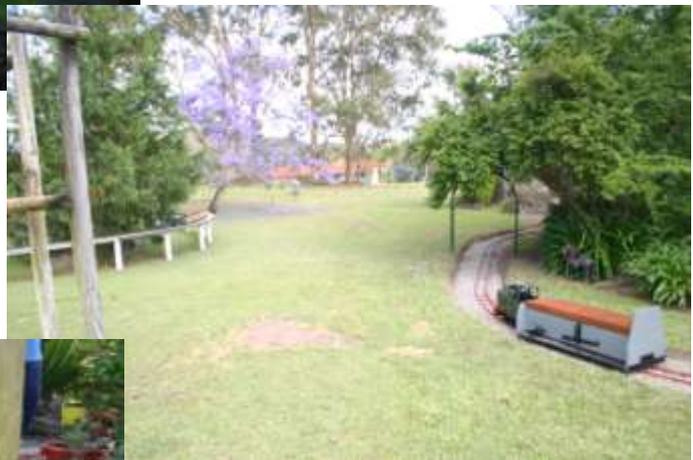
We were delighted with the results and more importantly so were Joyce and Phil. Throughout the whole process they were looking poking around and making comments like “if I move that” or “if I put this there it’s going to look really good”. The grandchildren are in for a treat - it’s going to be a little wonderland and we look forward to going back in a year or so to see what they’ve done.



If you would like our help designing and building a ride-on railway in your garden - or would just like some advice and recommendations on designing and building your own, just contact Roger Jones - info@minitrains.com.au



Above: Phil contemplating his next move.



Above: The view from the ride-on to the G scale garden railway.



Left: The bridge over the fish pond looking towards the siding.