

SOLDERING – A short “Lock Down How to” in three episodes.

by Andy Hopper

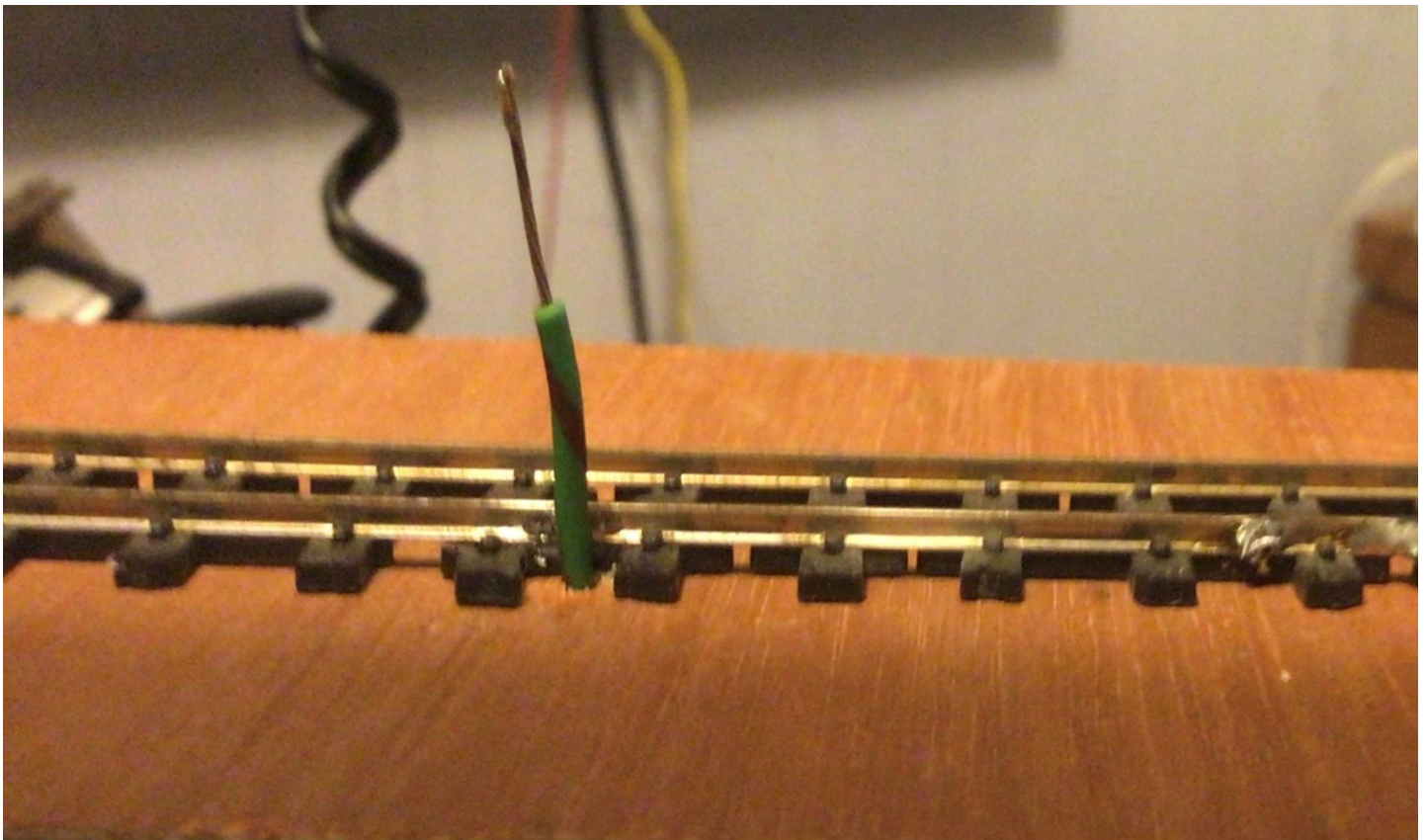
Part 3

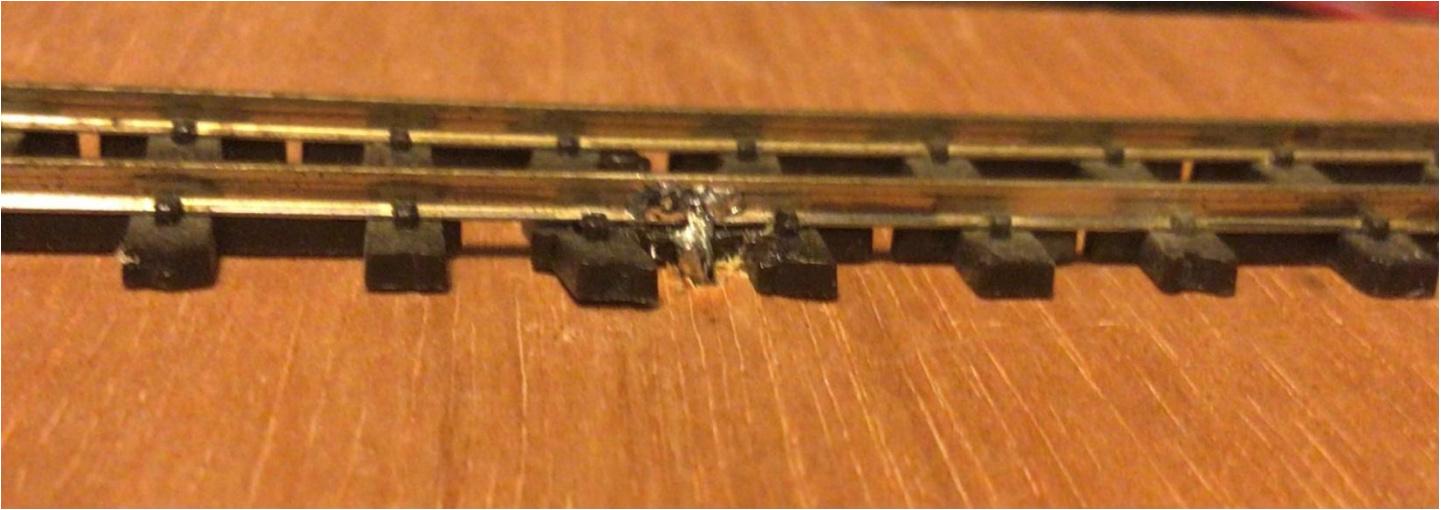
PREPARING THE WIRE

Next strip a centimetre or a bit more (half an inch if you haven't gone metric) of the end of the wire, and twist the strands of wire together, push it up through the hole in the baseboard until it is sticking up clear of the rail. A touch of flux again and touch iron and solder to the wire as before and the solder should run into the strands to make a neat solid end.

MAKING THE JOINT

Bend the top of the tinned section of wire towards the tinned rail, pull it down so the end rests on the bottom flange of the rail, apply soldering iron, wait for the solder to run, remove iron, let it cool and then give a tug from below the baseboard. It SHOULD stay attached. If it doesn't try again after adding a little more flux and with a small blob of solder on the iron.





Again the magnification makes it look quite rough, but it's a good join. Notice how the wire is only on the bottom flange of the rail so that if it's on the inner face it won't foul the wheels.

Practice until it works every time. Once you have got this far you can go to stage 2 where you put the twisted and fluxed wire straight up against the clean rail, pick up a blob of solder on the iron and apply until the solder runs.

If you want your wires to be really invisible tin the wire as above, bend about 3mm (1/8inch) at a right angle and thread it under the rail between the sleepers, be a little more generous with the flux, apply solder and iron and if all is properly clean you will have an invisible track feed. If you're good at planning you could do this before laying the track.

I don't recommend soldering the feeds to fish plates as dirt can get into the join and cause a poor connection. For the same reason it is recommended that each section of rail between fishplates on longer rail runs has its own dropper soldered to the feed wire for that section under the baseboard (or solder a wire to the rail one side of the fishplate and drop this through the baseboard then up again the other side of the fishplate and solder to the rail that side to form a jumper).