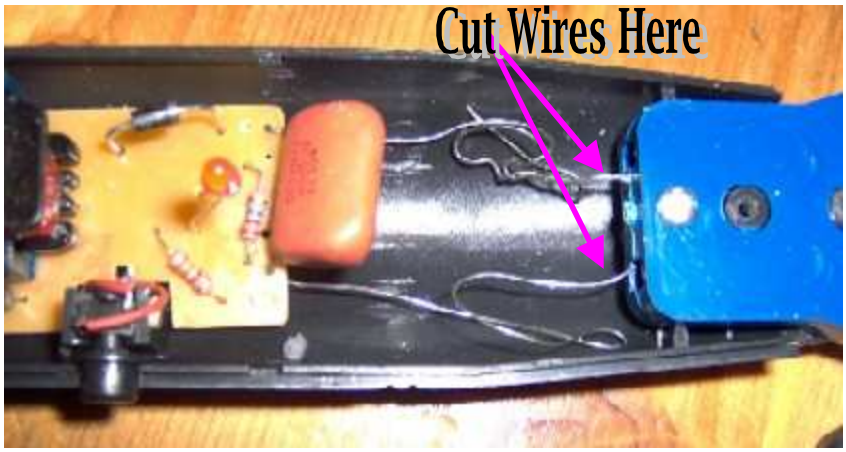
Making A Cheap Static Grass Applicator

The Noch static grass applicator is an expensive bit of kit, costing around £120.00 from Gaugemaster. I couldn't justify that much, even with my home layout and the club layouts in mind, so I set out to make a cheap one myself. It's easy enough for anyone who can achieve basic soldering and costs under a tenner. Here's how: -

You'll need an electric fly swat, like the one shown in the first photo below, which can be bought at garden centres (and occasionally at "cheap shops") for about £7 - £8.

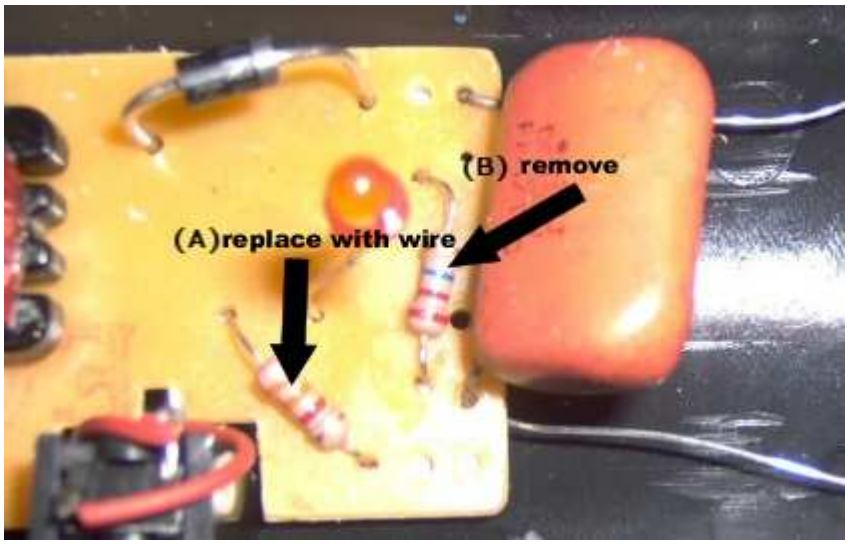
You'll also need a metal tea strainer about 2" to 3" in diameter (under £1 unless you shop at M & S), a mini crocodile clip and some equipment wire (under a pound).

Start by taking the handle cover of the fly swat apart to expose the inside of the swat, which should look like this: -



Cut the two wires as indicated, remove the retaining screw and take off the "head" of the swat.

Next you'll need to make an adjustment to the PCB located in the handle, which should be as shown below. As indicated, one resistor needs to be replaced with wire (I used a similar thickness as the resistor legs) and the other removed.



Re-assemble the device by fixing the handle of the tea strainer in place of the "fly swat head". I did this by cutting off the end to size and then using the plastic end of the swat to clamp it in place. Next solder one of the two cut wires to the bowl of the strainer and the other to a lead that ends in a crocodile clip (I made this lead about 18" long") and is left hanging outside the assembled handle.
For the most effective result, make sure that the wire attached to the strainer is actually making contact with the mesh and not just the metal rim.

There you have your static grass applicator for less than a tenner!!

To use the applicator secure a conducting screw into the area to be treated, spread some PVA on the surface, attach the croc clip to the screw and sprinkle on the static grass through the strainer. (Don't forget to have the button pressed "on" whilst sprinkling !!!)
Best results are achieved by holding the sieve about 2" above the surface, pressing the button for 10 - 15 seconds to "charge up" the static grass and then gently shaking the unit so that the grass filters out.
When you stop sprinkling and let the button go (so the unit is off) and earth the unit by touching the screw / croc clip, otherwise you'll get a static shock. Similarly, don't touch the metal strainer whilst using or the sparks will fly - up your fingers!!

I find the best and easiest way for me, is to hold the device in my right hand and tap the back of my hand with the left, making just enough shake to release a small amount of grass from the bowl.