



BASIC MODEL RAILROADING

Part 10: Other SCALES and GAUGES

Preface

In summary, the most frequent scales and gauges the new modeller will encounter are HO, N and O, in that order.

Here is information about some other scales and gauges.

All of them are somewhat specialized, all only have modest manufacturing support and/or depend heavily on the vintage market, and the willingness and ability to scratchbuild (build one's own equipment, track and scenery from commercially or commonly available parts or materials).

The majority of modellers start in one of the popular scales and adopt a secondary interest at some stage of their progression in the hobby.

Narrow Gauge (A gauge narrower than standard gauge at 1435 mm or 4 ft 8 in) Narrow gauge representation is gathering momentum for modellers who become intrigued by its "whimsy", and are also attracted by the more modest space demands proportionate to the scales involved, especially if one plans to exhibit as a "solo" modeller at a model railway show.

Many modellers add a narrow gauge operation to their standard gauge layout.

Aside from the practical considerations of space, the "whimsy" quality of narrow gauge lets modellers draw on ingenuity, improvisation and imagination, not to mention sense of humour.

As a group, narrow gauge enthusiasts probably do more scratchbuilding than standard gauge modellers, partly because the ready-made market is not as large, and partly because scratchbuilding is part of the fun of this branch of the hobby, combined with a pronounced urge for creative expression.

The most popular narrow gauge interests in North America are **On30"**, **HOn3'**, and **HOn30"** (or **HOe**).

O and HO signify the scale, "n" stands for narrow gauge, and the numbers stand for the track width represented.

In O scale, the 30" gauge is represented by HO Gauge width track with O scale ties, offered by Peco™.

Similarly the 3 ft gauge in HO scale is represented by 10.5 mm wide track obtainable from Shinohara™.

The HO 30" gauge is represented by 9 mm track with HO scale ties obtainable from Peco™, Tillig™ or Roco™.

Another narrow gauge scale with an emerging following is **Gn15"**.

It is G Scale (see **BMR – O, G and 1 scales**) with a usual scale range from 1:22 to 1:24, running on 16.5 mm gauge track, which is either handbuilt, Peco™, or other closest available commercial equivalent.

Other emerging narrow gauge scales are **Nn3'**, running on 6.5 mm track, and **HOm**, with Peco™ or Tillig™ 12 mm track to represent the metre gauge.

All eclectic, but fun, hobby options.

S (for Seven-eights) Gauge

This gauge (22.2 mm or 7/8") appeared in 1946, pioneered by the American Flyer brand.

Originally tinsplate track similar in appearance to traditional Lionel three-rail track (also with bakelite bases for turnouts and crossings), but with the all-important difference that has since become the norm – two-rail electrification.

As for O Gauge, those with the vintage version are said to be in "S Gauge", whereas modellers working with prototypical track and equipment are said to be in "S Scale" (1:64).

S Gauge appeared with the aim of reducing the amount of space required for a comparable Gauge O layout, but was soon overtaken by the rapidly emerging HO Scale.

Those in vintage S Gauge have to rely almost exclusively on the second-hand market, and those in modern S Scale have limited (but improving) manufacturer support, and thus also have to rely on kits and scratchbuilding.

TT (for Table Top) Gauge

The original trains marketed as "table top" were the pre-WWII Bing OO Gauge trains (see **BMR – HO scale**), but again post-WWII, this gauge (12 mm) was designed in North America, and ironically gained sustained popularity in Europe, where this scale (1:120) was promoted by Triang-Rovex in the UK and Rokal in Germany.

Obsolescent in North America, it is now being supported by Peco™ and Tillig™ with 12 mm track with much improved realism, and coincidentally also an option for HO scale one-metre gauge modelling, as noted above.

Standard (not to be confused with standard as opposed to narrow gauge) or **Wide Gauge**

This vintage 2 1/8" gauge was the deluxe electric train of the 1920s.

Treasured by collectors and vintage enthusiasts.

Made by Lionel, Ives, American Flyer and Dorfan.

Some very limited modern manufacturing support.

Z (for the ultimate smallest, therefore last letter of the alphabet) **Gauge**

The miniaturization of the hobby reached state-of-the-art with Märklin's introduction of Z Scale (1:220) in 1972.

Only one principal manufacturer of equipment.

Conversation piece or curiosity?

Aside from the narrow selection of equipment, with a 6.5 mm gauge, it is generally acknowledged as being too small for most modellers to derive many of the versatile creative and operational satisfactions that the model railway hobby has to offer.