

Fine Scale Modelling 2

PRACTICAL BEGINNINGS



Kevin Knight



For those who came in late...

Fine Scale standards or **Fine Standards** are model railway standards that aim to be as close to the prototype dimensions as physics and skill allow.

Fine Scale is a state of mind in your modelling – not what you model but how you model. You can find fine scale in all prototypes – and gauges.

Generally speaking, fine scale becomes most evident in track and wheel standards, rather than anything else – but... if the track and wheels are improved, other things start looking a bit “off” and so a whole approach is needed.

Better looking track

Generally speaking, when it comes to track, the areas which stand out the most are:

- Sleeper spacing
 - Height of rail
 - Cross section of rail
 - Crossings, check rails and flange ways on turnouts
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Sleeper spacing

NSW – generally 600-700mm from centre to centre. This translates to 3.75-4.375 using 1:160 scale. 4mm will most likely do it unless you've the means to make accurate jigs – and know exactly what it is you need.

UK – a bit more complicated as it varied from railway to railway and how long the track sections were. Generally 26 sleepers to a 60' length with the centre to centre being smaller at the ends of the section. The end sleepers were a foot in from the end of the rail, the second sleeper at 2' and the rest at 2'6" (or thereabouts). This puts the spacing at a bit over 5mm in 1:148 and bang on 5mm at 2mm fine scale standards.

Peco Code 55 track has sleeper spaces at 4.6mm – so narrow for Britain but a too wide for NSW. Atlas Code 55 (which is apparently the best looking track for US prototypes) is 3.175 which I would suggest is also too narrow for NSW and no chance for the UK.

Rail height

A variety of options exist

Code 80

Code 55

Code 40

Code 30

In the real world, 6" high rail is normal – with a bit of variation up to 6.5" and down to 5.5" depending on lb/ft or kg/m. So code 40 is "right" and the rest "wrong".

The good rule of thumb I've seen employed is Code 55 on "heavy" lines, Code 40 on "light" lines and Code 30 on narrow gauge.

Approaches to better plain track

Obviously build your own – it is actually quite easy for plain track. For 2mm Fine Scale, there are plastic sleeper sections which you can thread Code 40 Bullhead rail into for the most accurate looking track UK wise.

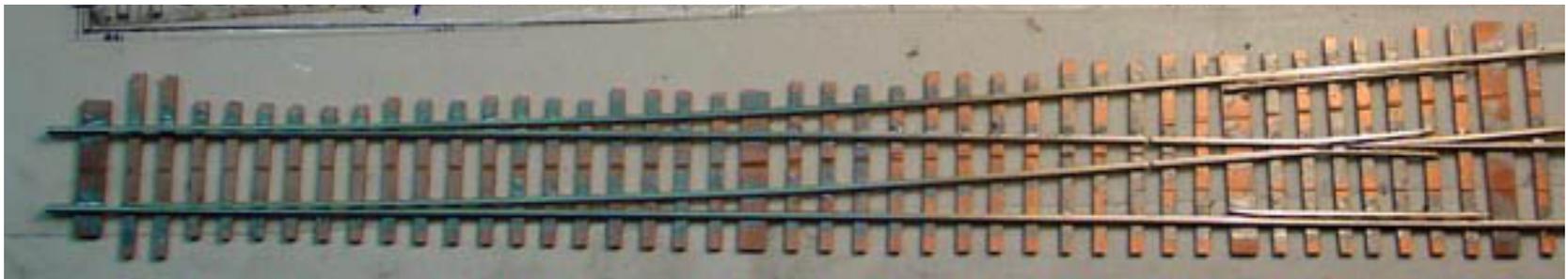
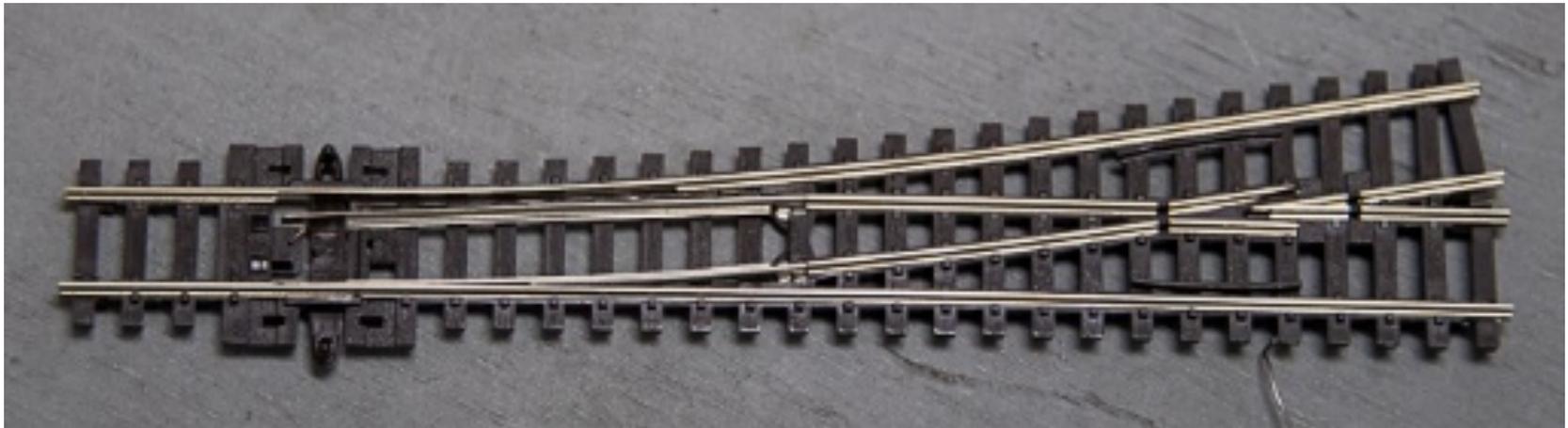
N Gauge modellers can go the Finetrax route which is the same system but for 9mm not 9.42mm track.

Flat bottom rail is also catered for as are concrete sleepers. If this doesn't appeal, or doesn't fit what you need, you can go for the soldered track construction.

If you are looking for a “halfway house” then cutting the bits between the sleepers on the flex track and spacing it out more will work. A simple jig will help with the spacing.

Turnouts (Points)

It is in turnouts that the real advantage of Fine Scale is seen – in track work at least.



Building turnouts

Kits available from 2mm Association and Finetrax – being British outline they work well for those modellers. For everyone else....

Like most things, it is a skill which can be learnt by those keen enough.

Beyond the track

Things that look “off” if the track is better:

Wheels

- Treads
- Flanges

Chassis in general

Details on buildings

- Gutters and downpipes

Locomotive fittings

Fine scale is a journey – all it takes is a willingness to have a go, and see what you can achieve.

You'll probably surprise yourself.

