



## Gauge '3' From a Distance

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I must have been crazy. Why would any railway modeller adopt a scale in which all the suppliers, all the open days and most of the society members were ten thousand miles away? Well that's what I did.

I live in Clayton Bay, South Australia, an hours drive south of Adelaide. My house is on the banks of the River Murray in a sleepy little village where the pelicans outnumber the people by far. In my front garden is a garden railway, a G scale layout which has about a hundred metres of track with three live steamers and four battery powered diesels. After seven years of development, it had reached a plateau. It was complete in the sense that it had an established, quarry to harbour, reason for its existence and all the facilities one would expect to see on a light railway.

So, it was time for the next step but expanding the G Scale railway made no sense. I had plenty of space but wanted to introduce a standard gauge line. At this stage, I should explain that I was born and bred in Wiltshire and did my train spotting on God's Wonderful Railway. Therefore there wasn't a seconds hesitation in deciding which standard gauge railway to model. But which scale?

Gauge One is much more common in Australia but I didn't want a 1:32 railway next to a 1:22 line. Also I had put a lot of effort into making moulds for resin, 1:22 scale buildings and I wanted to re-use these moulds on the new line. So Gauge Three was chosen.

My garden slopes a little so the main station and working area was located at the bottom end where it could be built waist high to avoid bending. This is the area shown in the photo. Later on, a Brunel wooden viaduct is planned to take the line up the garden, round a tree and back.

The next step was to acquire some track. There is none in Australia so an order was placed with Cliff Barker for his stainless steel rail, plastic sleepers and point kits. This is where distance be-

comes frustrating. Track is much too heavy for airmail so a two month wait followed while it went by sea.

In the meantime, I had purchased an electric pannier kit and a couple of wagons from GRS. The pannier was converted to battery power using an RCS radio control system and a MyLocoSound soundcard. I therefore have pushbutton control of direction, speed, whistle and firedoor opening with automatic chuff and illuminated lamps at each end.

However, at heart I am a live steam enthusiast having built a steam railmotor and a K1 Garratt for my G Scale railway. But I don't have machine tools, or the skills to use them, for scratch building so have to rely on commercial components. In G Scale this was no problem with manufacturers like Roundhouse Engineering offering suitable kits. In Gauge 3 it was more difficult. Yes, GRS have some live steam models and kits but I really wanted proper working cylinders.

So we come to my current project which is to build a radio controlled, live steam GWR railmotor. The three major components are the GRS auto-trailer kit, a vertical boiler from GRS and a chassis and valve gear kit from Roundhouse. Design is now under way to make them work together with minimum modifications.

So that's what is happening in this remote outpost of the Gauge 3 Society. Not much point in having an open day with all the other members being ten thousand miles away. But it's still really good fun and I would be happy to entertain any members on holiday from the UK.