

GAUGE SPREADING TESTS: A SUMMARY OF WORK CARRIED OUT DURING THE LAST TWO YEARS ON RUNNING LINE TRACK OF VARIOUS AGES, TYPES AND CONDITION; TOGETHER WITH TESTS ON DELIBERATELY WEAKENED TRACK

During the last two years a series of gauge spreading tests has been carried out on running line track of various types, ages and condition. The aim was to assist with assessing safety of old/deteriorated track particularly with defective sleepers, to highlight when action is required and to aid decisions on relaying. It is appreciated that resistance to gauge spread is only one of a number of features involved.

The objectives were:

- Whether track gauge at a specified lateral load could be used as a measure of track condition.
- Whether a limit could be set to the permitted gauge under a specified lateral load.
- Whether the principle of an axle moving along the track and applying lateral load would show up local weaknesses, particularly deteriorated sleepers.
- Whether the manner in which the resistance to spread of gauge changed with time could be monitored, so that predictions could be made two or three years in advance.