

PRODUCT REVIEW

Ready-to-run O gauge Pannier

BRM looks at the new high-spec 64xx/74xx 0-6-0PT from Lionheart Trains.



Lionheart Trains may be a relatively new name in the hobby but owner Richard Webster certainly is not, having been involved with model railway design and production for more than 40 years. Starting at Ratio, his late father's model business, Richard then went on to produce several O gauge GWR plastic wagon kits under the 'Websters' label in the 1980s, then ran Kader's model train factory in China for five years.

Richard has also been vice-president of engineering at Lionel, America's oldest model train company, and is now developing a range of innovative ready-to-run true-to-scale products for the O gauge market, beginning with the 64xx Class 0-6-0PT.

Prototype

The GWR 6400 Class 0-6-0PT was introduced in 1932 to the design of C B Collett. A total of 40

built, all auto-fitted to work with the GWR's fleet of auto coaches. Their 4' 7½" driving wheels were well suited for work in hilly areas, and early allocations went to the valleys of South Wales. They also worked on branch lines in Devon and Cornwall until displaced by DMUs in the early '60s. Gloucester-based No. 6412 became a local celebrity when it operated the last Chalford auto-train service in the Golden Valley between Gloucester and Chalford in 1962.

In 1936, the non-auto-fitted 74xx class was introduced. This was similar to the 64xx but with higher boiler pressure (180psi). One detail difference between the two classes was the angle between the bunker top edge and cab sheet, the 64xx having a radiused profile while the later engines had a right angled join. A total of 30 were built in 1936-1937, BR building two further batches of ten locos in 1948/50.

Model

Lionheart Trains are designed from original works drawings and manufactured using modern processes and materials. The first release is a highly accurate model of the GWR 64xx/74xx 0-6-0 pannier tank. The body and chassis/running plate are diecast metal as are wheel centres,

gearbox, motor support and ashpan. Tyres and axles are steel. The cab assembly is moulded in plastic with all detail faithfully incorporated, including a highly detailed backhead. Plastic is also used for the brake gear, thus avoiding any potential short circuits. The chimney, dome, safety valve bonnet and buffer heads are all separately-turned items.

The motor is fitted with a skew-wound balanced armature driving the rear wheels by a toothed belt. The separately mounted gearbox is totally enclosed, thrust bearings allowing the motor to provide power more efficiently. The chassis incorporates equalising beams which also provide electrical pick-up from the live bearings.

The 64xx and 74xx are available in two versions, the standard model being 12v DC (analogue) DCC ready, while a small number are factory-fitted for DCC operation with sound, including 21-pin Zimo decoder, hi-bass speaker and LEDs for firebox glow and the directional lighting, which uses plug-in lamps (these features are only available on the DCC version). The printed circuit boards are housed in the lower boiler/tank moulding.

We were fortunate to see one of the 12v DC examples in action on



The high level of cab detail can be seen in this close up of the RTR 64xx 0-6-0PT.

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Gifford Street at the *Swindon Railway Festival* in September where it happily ran round the layout hauling a train of 48 vans without any sign of struggling. Performance was very smooth and sure-footed. The DCC version was demonstrated for us on a rolling road in the *BRM* office, the sounds being very realistic - as they should be, having been recorded from full size preserved class member No. 6435.

A choice of liveries is available - green with 'Great Western' in full or with the 'shirtbutton' device, lined

green early or late BR, and black BR (early or late).

Rolling stock

Ready-to-run rolling stock is also under development at Lionheart Trains, with a GWR Diagram N panelled autotrailer at an advanced stage. This is one of the 59' 6" vehicles, only taking up 26" in 7mm scale, so providing an ideal small train for the 'senior scale' modeller starved of space!

Also in the works are BR 16 Ton mineral wagons to Dia.1/108 and 109, both unfitted and fitted.

These long-lived wagons will be fully finished with sprung buffers and three-point suspension.

Product Details

Scale/Gauge: 7mm/O

Produced by: Lionheart Trains, PO Box 7189, Sturminster Newton, Dorset DT10 9BB Tel: 01963 364363 www.lionhearttrains.com

Price: 12vDc (DCC ready) £498.00; DCC sound £621.00

