

Minerva shows off sound equipped '57XX'

● Price: £390.00 ● Cat No: GV2015 ● Couplings: Working screw links
● Site: www.minervamodelrailways.co.uk ● Era: 3 ● DCC: 8-pin socket

MINERVA MODEL Railways has taken delivery of the last version of its series of Great Western Railway '57XX' and '8750' 0-6-0PTs for 'O' gauge – the riveted cab tank '57XX' design. The first of this specialist 'O' gauge manufacturer's 'Panniers' debuted in September 2017 (HM125), but this time we have been supplied a version with factory fitted sound too.

The riveted tank '57XX' follows the same high standards of moulding and production as the original '8750' 0-6-0PT which we received from Minerva. The level of detail is excellent with a large number of separately fitted components on the injection moulded plastic body. This includes handrails, chimney, dome, lamp irons, pipe work, sprung buffers, sprung screw link couplings, brake rigging and more. An accessory pack also includes optional vacuum brake pipes plus you also get a discount code for Narrow Planet locomotive numbers for the Minerva 'Panniers' and ModelU crew figures to suit the '57XX'.

The stand out external feature of this model is the riveting on the pannier tanks. This is superbly done with fine rivet heads on both tanks to give this version a

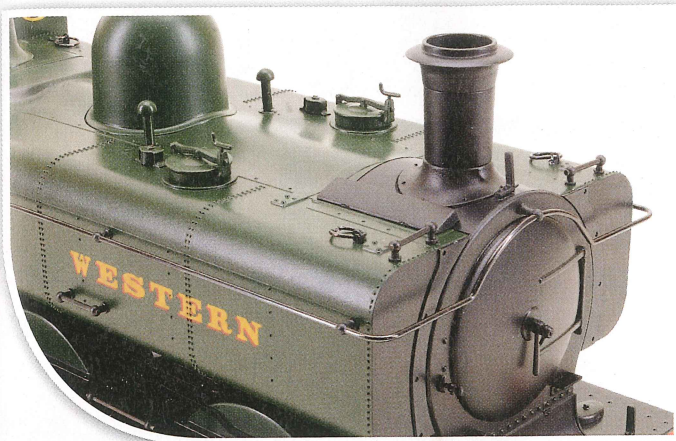
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unique appearance. It is available in plain green, Great Western lettered (as featured here) and BR black with early or late crests. There is also an option for early crest locomotives with top feed arrangement for those looking to customise their purchase further.

The highlight of this particular sample though is its Digital Command Control (DCC) sound decoder. It is equipped with a Zimo MX645R 8-pin decoder and a Zimo 3D printed speaker. The sound file has been engineered by Paul Chetter and includes Zimo's braking feature – a fantastic addition to the driveability of these decoders – 28 functions, heavy and light exhaust beats, programmable whistles and equally important quality coasting sounds. Much



of this can be customised too with a basic understanding of adjusting Configuration Variables (CVs) on DCC decoders.

The main exhaust sounds are excellent and modulate between a heavy and cruising exhaust sound automatically. You can also interrupt this manually by using F5 which mimics the reverser moving to a short valve travel to soften the exhaust beat. If you are allowing the locomotive to work with its automatic sounds, an increase in power takes the sound file back up to an accelerating sound as if the driver has opened the regulator wider to build up speed.

The braking feature is a brilliant part of the Zimo decoder software which was developed to more realistically mimic real life driving situations. Using F2,

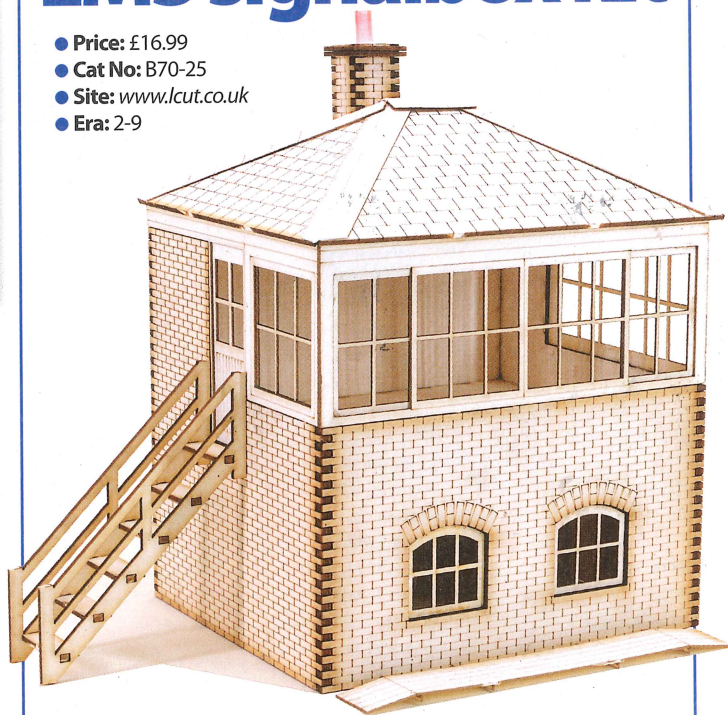
a momentary function button, the speed can be wound right down on the DCC handset throttle and F2 can be used to trim the speed gradually to bring the locomotive to a stop. Controlled emergency stops can be carried out by holding your finger on the F2 button on a handset.

A large collection of additional ancillary sounds including high and low whistles, coal shovelling, coupling, ejector, buffering up, safety valves, water filling and guard's whistles can also be used from its extensive armoury.

With its sub £400 price tag this sound equipped version of the latest Minerva 'Pannier' is a great addition to its line up which will be equally at home on shunting layouts as it is on the main line. Excellent and available now. (MW)

LCUT Creative 'O' gauge LMS signalbox kit

- Price: £16.99
- Cat No: B70-25
- Site: www.lcut.co.uk
- Era: 2-9



LCUT CREATIVE has added this small LMS pattern signalbox to its range of 7mm:1ft, 'O' gauge, laser cut kits. The building takes inspiration from Shap signalbox on the West Coast Main Line and is available in right- and left-hand staircase formats.

The kit comprises a combination of laser cut parts using laser board ranging from 0.45mm to 2.6mm thickness. It is well designed and comes with clear instructions which make assembly a straightforward process. Our review sample took less than an hour and a half to construct, excluding drying time for the roof components.

All of the components are neatly cut in the kit and also fit the apertures where required without any modification or adjustment – just cut

them from the sprues with a sharp knife and glue the parts together. We used Deluxe Materials Glue N Glaze adhesive applied through the same manufacturer's fine tip applicator. The advantage here is that the glue dries clear and is controlled in its application through the fine tip.

The only elements not included in the standard kit are glazing for the windows and an interior. The latter is available as a separate kit from LCUT for £18.99 while glazing can be added using readily available plastic sheet or by reusing clear plastic packaging.

Once assembled the kit builds into an attractive structure which is strong and finely detailed. A perfect addition to a developing 'O' gauge layout and modestly priced too. (MW)

