



# Lionheart Trains launch DCC sound fitted panniers

**R**eady-to-run manufacturing for 'O' gauge is on the rise and one of the latest names to appear is Lionheart Trains. This new name may be familiar to those who have seen Lionheart's stand at exhibitions, but to many it will be completely new.

Lionheart Trains is run by Richard Webster and it currently produces a range of ready-to-run 'O' gauge GWR pannier tanks covering the '64XX' and '74XX' series locomotives. To keep the cost down, but the standard of detail up, Lionheart has used die-casting technology for the majority of the bodywork coupled with lost wax castings and turned brass fitting for the details and plastic for the cab.

The latest development with these high fidelity models is the introduction of a realistic and comprehensive sound chip. This has taken these models beyond the average 'O' gauge ready-to-run model and sets them streets ahead of the competition.

## The models

From the outset it is clear that a lot of time and care has been invested in the production of these models. The current '64XX' and '74XX' 0-6-0PTs have a number of interchangeable detail parts which allows GWR and BR period locomotives to be accurately represented without compromise. Each is manufactured in China and this currently extends to a range of six locomotives: 6410 in Great Western livery, 6421 in BR lined green with early crests, 6437 in BR lined green with late crests, 7400 in GWR 'shirtbutton' livery, 7404 in BR black with late crests and 7427 in BR black with early crests. This all adds up to a good selection and one which is likely to be expanded in the future.

Suffice to say the body detail is excellent in all respects. The die-cast nature of the body

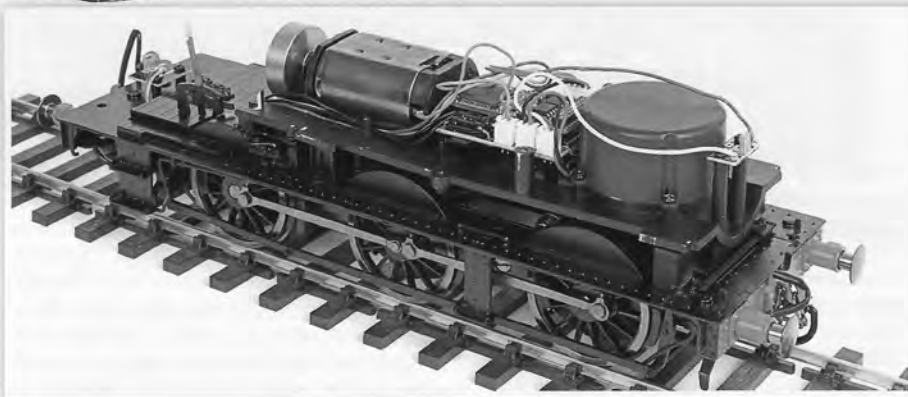


isn't noticeable from the outside, but it has really paid off. The quality here is excellent and the models look exactly as they should.

Underneath is a compact but powerful chassis. This is again assembled in China and features a powerful motor which is neatly hidden in the firebox and drives the rear axle through a belt drive to a gearbox on the axle. This all helps to keep the mechanism smooth and quiet. The chassis is also designed to negotiate 3ft radius curves in 'O' gauge and the models, where supplied DCC fitted, now also feature working directional lamps front and rear on the '74XX' model and on the front only for the auto-fitted '64XX' series.

## Digital sound

The most impressive part of Lionheart's panniers is the new digital sound chip which



has been developed for them. This has been specially recorded for the model and, if you will pardon the pun, features all the bells and whistles!

The actual sound of the locomotive is timed with the revolution of the wheels and plays an authentic two-cylinder beat for the GWR pannier. On starting the sound of the boiler working is played and, as an automatic function, when the locomotive moves off for the first time the cylinder draincocks sound for five seconds. This function is repeated if the locomotive has been stood still for more than 30 seconds. The acceleration sound is another triumph. Here the sound chip is designed to accelerate the noise with the locomotive until it reaches a cruising speed at which point the sound changes to an unloaded exhaust beat. By dropping one speed step the vacuum pump sounds and only below speed step 30/128 do the brakes come on. All of this is written into the main sound function.

Beyond this are 12 further sound functions written into the chip. These are:

- 1 Fade for going into a tunnel or fiddle yard
- 2 Coal shovelling with a flickering orange light in the firebox
- 3 Injector
- 4 Ejector
- 5 Short whistle
- 6 Long whistle
- 7 Playable whistle
- 8 Vacuum brake
- 9 Vacuum brake release
- 10 Buffers touching
- 11 Safety valves
- 12 Draincocks

All 12 of these functions can be called upon at any point when the main sound function is operating and this allows Lionheart's pannier to be operated like a true 12in:1ft locomotive, save the fact that you won't be able to fit into the cab!

## The details

■ <b>Manufacturer:</b>	<a href="http://www.lionhearttrains.co.uk">www.lionhearttrains.co.uk</a>
■ <b>Cat No:</b>	See website
■ <b>Description:</b>	GWR '64XX' and '74XX' 0-6-0PTs
■ <b>Price:</b>	£498.00 each DCC ready, £621.00 DCC fitted with sound
■ <b>Scale:</b>	'O'
■ <b>Era:</b>	3-5
■ <b>DCC:</b>	DCC ready
■ <b>Couplings:</b>	Three-link couplings

## Overall

What Lionheart Trains has produced is a first class product which betters anything we've seen before as a ready-to-run 'O' gauge model. The quality of the sound chip in terms of both functions and sound quality is exceptional and there is nothing to fault these models on.

Being 'O' gauge the price isn't what you would be used to if you had worked in 'OO' gauge previously, but for £498 you can buy a DCC ready version while the DCC fitted model with sound comes in at £621. In our view this is stunning value for money in a scale which is currently undergoing a renaissance as more manufacturers enter the scene to make it even more appealing. (MW)

