

Ixion Models launch Mk 2 'N' GAUGE



Ixion Models has released the first of its 'Mk 2' versions of the Collett 'Manor' 4-6-0 in 'N' gauge following problems with the original model, launched in September 2008, being over scale. The new model is here to set the record straight and I can say straight off that the model is correctly proportioned and scaled for 'N' gauge.

The GWR introduced the 'Manor' 4-6-0s in 1938 and 30 were built over 12 years with the last emerging from Swindon Works in 1950. The fleet was designed for secondary main lines and most will associate the fleet with the Cambrian lines radiating from Shrewsbury and around the Cambrian Coast. However, they were also commonplace on the Great Western Main Line and were also used

extensively in Devon and Cornwall.

The 'Manors' were numbered 7800-7829 throughout their careers and carried a range of GWR and BR liveries based on both green and black base colours. The last of the class was withdrawn in December 1965 at the end of Western Region steam and nine have been preserved at heritage railways covering both GWR and BR built locomotives.

The model

Despite only being a class of 30 the 'Manors' have been popular with enthusiasts and it seems logical that the class should be recreated in the model form. While 'OO' modellers have had a model of the 'Manor' from Mainline and more recently Bachmann, 'N' gauge modellers have never had the option.

The revised Ixion model offers a high level of detail comparable with the latest releases

from the 'big two' in 'N' gauge – Bachmann and Dapol. Like all recent new steam outline models the 'Manor' has the motor in the tender and, in the same fashion as Dapol, this drives the locomotive wheels through a cardan shaft which crosses the cab.

We did notice a couple of build quality issues on opening the boxes of the two samples featured here. The BR black version had no drive at first because the cardan shaft which connects the motor in the tender with the locomotive mechanism wasn't engaged on one end and the GWR liveried version had one of its tender wheels pressed in beyond its bearing meaning that it sat lopsided. Despite this both problems only took a matter of moments to resolve, but some would suggest they shouldn't have existed in the first place.

Moving on to the positives and from the outset it is obvious that Ixion has done a great job in creating the artwork for the body tooling, which looks neatly proportioned with the skinny boiler profile looking just right. Detailing is superb with GWR pattern lamp irons, separately fitted handrails, and neatly relieved rivets. Also impressive is the printing of the locomotive number and shedplate on the BR example – both are fully legible with the latter needing a magnifying glass to make out the 83A (Newton Abbot) shedplate.

The chimney profile looks right too and has the distinctive copper cap which makes all GWR locomotives stand out compared with other railway companies.



'MANOR'



THE DETAILS

Manufacturer: www.ixionmodels.com

Description: GWR 'Manor' 7808
Cookham Manor, GWR green

Description: GWR 'Manor' 7823 Hook
Norton Manor, BR black

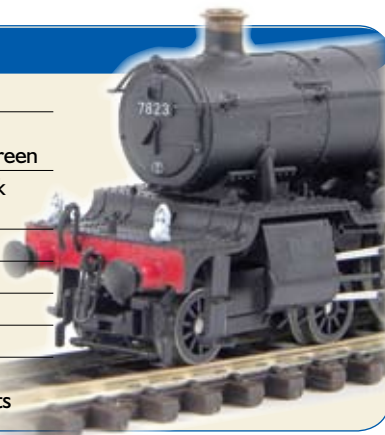
Scale: 'N'

Price: £104.99

Era: 3/4 respectively

DCC: No fittings provided

Couplings: Standard 'N' gauge
couplings in NEM pockets



The safety valve bonnet and top feed are also neatly done together with boiler cladding panel and rivet detail.

Along the side of the boiler the differences between the fireman's (left) and driver's sides have been taken into account with the driver's side have a reversing lever and the fireman's side having a much more Spartan appearance. Brake rigging is also factory fitted to the models which adds further relief to the area between the see-through spoked wheels.

The tender is just as finely made as the locomotive and impressively Ixion has been able to fit the motor and DCC connection within the confines of the rather small 3,500 gallon tender of the 'Manors'. Also worth noting is the close coupling between the locomotive and tender which still allows the model to negotiate second radius curves with ease.

Livery application is to a high standard with a semi matt finish. On the BR version the crests, number and nameplates are all neatly printed. The GWR version received for review, which has the shirt button logo, also has high quality

printing, but the shade of green doesn't look right – it seems too light but this is always a very subjective area.

At the opposite end of the scale is the quality of the additional detail components supplied with the model. Without doubt the 'Manor' comes with the best set of detailing components I've ever seen with a ready-to-run 'N' gauge model which includes a set of fireirons, a crew, lamps, bufferbeam detail, steps and even a set of guard irons to fit to the front bogie! The front footsteps do limit movement of the front bogie and we found that they derailed the front bogie on second radius curves. If you have tight curves the front steps will need to be left off. Naturally you will need a steady hand and a keen eye to fit the separate details, but to me this is a lesson in what a detail pack should contain, no matter what the scale of the model.

Performance

On the track the 'Manor' performs just as well as it looks. With the little niggles resolved both models performed faultlessly and ran smoothly throughout the speed range following running in for half an hour in each direction.

There is no DCC decoder socket, but Ixion's 'Manor' does have NEM coupling pockets front and rear, which makes this model accessible, and replacement couplings are provided to the same design as the alternatives supplied with Dapol 'N' gauge models.

In terms of haulage capacity both of our samples proved capable of hauling a 10 coach train with ease and clearly had power in reserve to haul more if required. However, I'm sure that 10 coaches will fulfil the needs of the majority of 'N' gauge layouts.

Overall

Ixion Models' 'Manor' had a difficult birth, but this time it seems the company has got it right in terms of the model's proportions, detail and performance. The build quality issues are something to be aware of, although as I stated these were both resolved very easily by simply looking round the model and finding the source of the problem.

With all the details fitted Ixion Model's 'Manor' is transformed into a different league and offers more than the established manufacturers making this a highly attractive model. Ixion is to be commended for turning out a high quality model of a popular and useful mixed traffic locomotive design and also for championing the GWR in its 175th anniversary. (MW)