

# Peckett perfection?

Minerva Models has released its debut product - an 'O' gauge ready-to-run model of the Peckett 'E' class 0-4-0ST. **MIKE WILD** investigates whether it can meet today's expectations of perfection.

**T**HE POPULARITY of 'O' gauge modelling has seen the rise of a new name in ready-to-run - Minerva Models. This new company debuted its first locomotive during December with the arrival of its 7mm:1ft scale Peckett 'E' class 0-4-0ST.

As a company Minerva set out to be different from the start and this includes supplying its model direct to its customers or through a limited chain of suppliers. Each model is checked and tested before despatch and I can't be the only one with high expectations.

The 'E' class was introduced by Peckett in 1903 with all built at its Atlas Locomotive Works in Bristol. Most were operated by industrial private railways but a handful passed into GWR and BR ownership having started their careers with the Swansea Harbour Trust. 'E' 0-4-0STs survived in service into the 1960s and a number have been preserved.

## THE MODEL

The Minerva Peckett is delivered in a sturdy box with foam lining and is instantly recognisable as a product of the Bristol based

locomotive builder. Our sample was finished in plain satin black while two further models are available in plain green and light green with lining on the saddle tank.

All are intended for further detailing by the purchaser and each is supplied with a set of etched brass worksplates together with a sheet containing lamp irons and, for the GWR and BR locomotives, suitable cabside and smokebox numberplates. Such is the forethought and flexibility of this model that Minerva also supplies each locomotive with a choice of three domes and an optional toolbox. This allows the customer to elect exactly which details are included on their model version.

**An 8-pin DCC decoder is fitted to the Peckett together with space for a 20mm speaker in the chassis.**

The fit of the domes is so good that you could even swap them at a later date as there was no need to glue them in place on our sample.

Removing the model from its packaging its weight is immediately apparent. It feels strong and robust while retaining an air of finesse. The plain black livery is basic on our sample but once it has been kitted out with number and worksplates it comes to life.

The overall profile looks spot on for the real 'E' class locomotives while neat features include turned brass buffers and shanks, working three-link couplings, a

turned brass chimney, options for the dome design and a turned brass whistle on top of the cab roof. The cab has interior detail - although not to the level of some models - including a finely produced regulator and firebox door together with a handbrake on the fireman's side. All four spectacle plates are flush glazed.

The relatively plain frames of the prototype are reproduced well with the addition of brakes and sandpipes giving much needed detail in this area. Also included is a moulding of the firebox base through the cutout in the rear of the frames.

The wheels and motion are produced to a high standard with a subtle darkened finish. Even more impressive is the detailing of the oiling points on the motion where close inspection reveals that even the corks for these have been reproduced.

## PERFORMANCE

Taking this model off shed reveals how well the mechanism runs. Our sample was smooth and quiet throughout the speed range during tests on a rolling road and showed no signs of 'crabbing' during operation. Speed control is excellent with our sample operating

at a crawl without any hesitation. The model has been built with Digital Command Control (DCC) in mind. It has an 8-pin decoder socket above the leading driving wheel ahead of the motor, which is mounted at the rear of the boiler. Space has been left below the socket to place a decoder after it has been connected and, better still, a housing has been cast into the chassis baseplate to support installation of a 20mm round speaker. Sound fitters will need to be careful to ensure that all connections to the speaker are suitably insulated though as this cavity is finished in bare metal.

## OVERALL

Peckett's industrial locomotives might not have been the most glamorous or exciting machines, but this first ready-to-run product from Minerva Models is an excellent choice. It is sure to prove a catalyst for more modellers moving up to the larger scale and particularly with the rise of interest in shunting layouts. The 'E' class is executed superbly with consideration to the variants which we as modellers want to be able to replicate and with its quality production it ticks all the right boxes. Excellent and available now. (MW)

## THE DETAILS

<b>Manufacturer:</b>	www.minervamodelrailways.co.uk
<b>Cat No:</b>	MOS-PPBL
<b>Description:</b>	Peckett 'E' 0-4-0ST, plain black
<b>Scale:</b>	'O'
<b>Price:</b>	£255.00
<b>Era:</b>	2-9
<b>DCC:</b>	DCC ready, 8-pin socket
<b>Couplings:</b>	Working three-links

The punchy look of these little tank engines has been depicted brilliantly by Minerva.

