

Bachmann 009 Baldwin 10-12-D locomotive

I've been curious about Bachmann's 009 Baldwin 10-12-D 4-6-0 tank locomotive model since I saw some samples in their showcases at Warley last year (2017). From what I could see there I thought it looked a very creditable first effort in 009, and some reviews I'd spotted in the magazines confirmed that, so when I saw one on the Cheltenham Model Centre stand at Railex, I bought one. After all it is narrow gauge and it is a US prototype, even of it isn't HO scale and the D&RGW never had any. None of them ever ran in the US, either!



These locomotives, Baldwin class 10-12-D, are two-foot gauge, or rather, 60cm gauge, like the Festiniog Railway. They were ordered by the British War Office for use behind the lines in France in the Great War to be used ferrying troops and supplies to the trenches. Baldwin had already designed and were building these locomotives for the French forces, who had to source overseas as many of their locomotive builders were by then in occupied territory. Baldwin built 495 10-12-D locos for the British war effort, though a few were lost at sea in transit to Europe. Quite a few ended up in the Middle East, too, and largely

stayed there after the war. Those that remained in Europe at the end of the war were rapidly sold off. Most remained in France, a large batch went to India, and a few made it back to the UK. They were used on the Welsh Highland, Ashover Light Railway at Clay Cross and on the Glyn Valley tramway, and at Snailbeach. The latter two railways re-gauged their examples, and in the case of the Snailbeach, did that merely by moving the tyres on the driving wheels outwards on their centres. There are 4 currently in the UK, all reimported from India, and one, heavily modified, in Australia.



The Bachmann model I bought is based on 778, which lives at the Leighton Buzzard railway. Their web site says of 778: "Baldwin Class 10-12-D. One of 495 locomotives built by Baldwin in 1917, for the UK War Department Light Railways. They operated on the thousands of miles of narrow-gauge tracks that supplied the front line trenches in the First World War. It then worked in India until the 1980s, finishing at the Upper India Sugar Mills in Uttar Pradesh. Entered service in August 2007 and is regularly used on passenger trains. The completion of the restoration made 778 the first locomotive of this type to operate in Britain since the 1940s." How accurate the model is of 778, and exactly at what stage in the life of this loco it is represented, I don't know. I suspect that the model is based on the current appearance of 778, though there is no air pump or dynamo present, which I suspect adorn the locomotive now.

First impressions on unpacking the model were good. The packaging and supplied info is up to Bachmann's usual standard and even though the box was damaged - yes, I got extra discount for this - the model was unharmed. Initial tests on DC showed that it runs extremely well, though suffering from the usual Bachmann issues of dirty wheels and only half the pickups actually contacting the wheels. It's designed with DCC in mind, having a speaker pre-installed in the bunker, and a Next18 decoder socket in the front of the boiler. Just a pity that there are no Next18 type sound decoders currently available that will actually fit inside the loco! Design wise the loco is a 2-2-6-0, with the front "bogie" wheelset in a pony truck and the rear one rigidly mounted in the frame with a miniature version of Bachmann's spring axle plunger underneath it and some side play. In operation this deception is undetectable. The six drivers are all powered via a coreless motor and nylon gear-train to the centre axle, with the coupling rods driving the outer axles. A complete set of Walschaerts valve gear is present, and even sports a moving radius rod, driven by the combination lever. It also has working lights, which on the prototype would have been oil-lit when built, but which I suspect are now electrically driven, hence my comment earlier about a dynamo. It's claimed on the box to be weathered, but that just means that it was painted grey rather than black. A set of etched plates was included, even though the number and worksplate detail was tampo-printed on the model. One issue for rabbit-warren 009 layout owners is that the standard 009 couplers are body mounted and not truck mounted, and have no



side play. This makes the buffer beams look much better, but may limit operation on really sharp corners. I did discover, too, that Athearn N-Scale buckeye couplers are a straight replacement should you want an operating knuckle coupler instead.

I can't leave things like this alone. I have to play with it, and the first thing was DCC. I didn't have a Next18 decoder, but I did have a spare Zimo MX648 sound decoder. I figured that it would just fit, if I removed the circuit board that held the decoder socket. This is reached by removing two screws under the side tanks and lifting off the tanks/smokebox/boiler assembly after picking pipes loose with tweezers. If you need to, two more screws remove the bunker and two more the cab. Removing the PCB and adding the decoder, splicing it to the existing wires took a very few minutes (well, Ok, about 45 of them). This included hardwiring in the headlight and adding resistors for the lights to protect them and make them suitably dim, then carefully squeezing it all back into the available space and reinstalling the tank. Track tests showed that it still ran well and made approximately appropriate noises, courtesy of the existing sound set in the decoder. I then borrowed a friend's Zimo MXULF, downloaded the free Zimo S-160 sound set, and squirted that into the decoder. That gave it a better chuff and a much better whistle - though still unlooped - even though the S-160 is an Alco rather than a Baldwin. At least it is a single-chime whistle. Other tweaks set the chuff rate, light operation, and removed the airpump and dynamo sounds. After that I weathered it properly, and added a crew - this time with HO figures, and some coal. What do you think?

Mick Moignard