



A Peckett Kit from GRS

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On February 21st I picked up the new Peckett kit from GRS at the G3 AGM at Leighton Buzzard. Having put down the money and taken the kit home, the next thing to do was to read and re-read the instructions. I can hear sounds of shock and dismay and I know real men do not need instructions and that is why A&E has such a busy trade over Bank Holiday Weekends.

The first thing I did was decide what modifications were required to make the engine into what I wanted. My intention was to convert the Peckett into a Hawthorn Leslie No.37 'Invincible' as it is in preservation. The engine is of local interest to me, as it spent most of its working life in and around Farnborough, working the tramway through the streets. In 1971 it was sold for scrap and rescued by a Mr. Jeffries who loaned it to the Isle of Wight Steam Railway where it still is to this day. In preservation it has had several liveries. I personally remember seeing her in Southern Malachite Green and bearing the No. 37 in the Island sequence of numbering.

Anyone who has seen the last newsletter will be familiar with the photo supplied courtesy of GRS and know what the basic kit can produce. I personally think of it as a generic kit, in that it is a close representation of a 'Peckett' and not an exact kit, as each person may want a specific engine and this kit allows for those alterations. This is backed up by the fact the saddle tank and smokebox are from the new J94 saddle tank kit and that the dome, chimney, filler tank cap and various other items within the kit have been sourced from other kits within the GRS range.

It's a very enterprising way of creating a kit, with the only new resin moulding being that of the cab.

The LGB chassis wheel set was tested before anything progressed and proved to be very satisfactory in its running. As I intend this model to be radio controlled, I could see no need for the pick up plungers on the wheels, so they were removed and the plastic keeper plate carefully replaced. The wheels were then painted using the Railmatch paints. The wheels were brush painted with the malachite green and the centre and rim of the wheel painted black. Once the paint was fully dried, varnish was applied and lining put on the centre and the rim of each wheel. They were then varnished again and left to one side ready for installation at a later date.

The dummy chassis (which fits around the LGB modified chassis) has two spacers, one at each end, with two bolt holes for the buffer beam and two for the footplate attachments. There is a single pre-drilled (and tapped) hole each end for a 6 BA bolt to be screwed in to hold the dummy sides onto the spacers. The spacers could have been better designed, by being double depth and having four 6 BA bolts into each spacer (two each end as opposed to one). This would have allowed for a stronger and more rigid assembly. The notch that has been cut out for the coupling hook does not really help in holding it in place, as the locking split pin can slip below, thus allowing the hook to pull further through than would be acceptable. This is simply because there is not enough meat within the 'spacers' metal for the hook to pull against. So I modified it by mounting a piece of brass bolted on to the buffer beam. It has an aperture big enough to allow the end of the hook to pass through and gives it more stability. The hook is now solid in its mounting.

Once this was sorted, I moved onto the buffer beams themselves. I have to say that I like the idea of having a brass overlay on the buffer beam and this has allowed for greater detail and covers up the countersunk 8 BA Bolt heads in the buffer beam. My other engines do not have this and I would certainly be interested if they could be made available for them. The buffers were fitted using a 10mm spanner and a set square. Again, this is a very neat little assembly. However, the buffer heads supplied were too small for the specific engine that I have modeled, so some larger ones were made courtesy of Dick Allan on his lathe (Thank You Mr. Allan!).

The footplate was offered up to the chassis and fitted neatly into place. I carefully marked the back of the buffer beams on the underside of the footplate in readiness for the valances to be soldered on. At this stage, I also soldered on the lamp irons on the front of the loco footplate and the steps onto the valances. Once the necessary soldering and cleaning up had taken place it received a coat of primer grey (Halfords finest). I brush painted the inside frames and buffer beams red and the rest into black. Once dry it received a coat of matt varnish.

The one part of the kit that I was really disappointed with (and for me let the kit down badly) was the slide bar and crosshead assembly. It is, perhaps a little crude and not very well thought out. The cylinder end is made from a lost wax casting with four holes pre-drilled in it. Had they not been pre-drilled, then I would have been able to use them! The two larger holes are for the fixing screws and the two smaller ones are where the ends of the slide bars fit in. The problem is that the cross head is then too big to fit and it would have meant filing away around 2-3mm. It might not sound like a lot but I would have had to take off equal amounts off both the slide bars and the cross head.

Had the cylinder ends not been pre-drilled, they would have been fine but I did not want to have to open up the holes so as to allow the slide bars to be further apart. This would not have done much for the strength and integrity of the slide bars and could potentially make it a weak spot on the engine. I needed each hole to be moved 'half-a-hole' width out from the centre and it's not easy moving holes once they are there. So the answer was to make a brand new brass cylinder end and again my thanks to Dick Allen for all his help. The finished cylinder ends were extremely neat and the same outer diameter as the resin cylinder block provided in the kit and superior parts to the ones supplied in the kit. Both piston rods were soldered into the cross heads and I then measured the point out from the centre using the cross head as a marking point. The position now marked was drilled and tapped to allow for a 10 BA bolt. I then ran a 10 BA die up the short stub of the slide rod so the slide rod could be screwed in and then soldered for good measure. The assembly for each piston was checked to make sure that all was square and parallel and then fitted to the engine's cylinders and the main coupling rod to the driving wheels.

The resin body top needed a lot of modifications to turn it into the engine that I wanted. Fortunately a friend of mine has the particular model Peckett engine that I am converting in '00' Scale. So I was able to measure up the smaller model and increase the size up to G3. The resin saddle tank has been shortened in length by 25mm and blanked off at the firebox end with a piece of 40 thou plastic card and lots of filler to hide the join lines and a multitude of other sins. The cab has had the most surgery with the back wall of the cab cut back and extra grab handles fitted, plus a semi-circular recess for the hand brake fitted on the driver's side. As I am modelling the engine in its current state, it has only one coal bunker on the fireman's side in front of the cab. This will also

house the recharge socket for the on board batteries. The driver's side bunker was removed by the Isle of Wight Steam Railway to accommodate the Westinghouse pump. The coal bunker and the fire box are made from 40 thou plastic card. The plastic for the firebox was softened up in the microwave and a cup of hot water in order to form the round top shape of the firebox.

The kit comes with a piece of down pipe (from some guttering) for the boiler and to be honest it is not really the ticket. The diameter of the piece of pipe is almost the outer circumference of the saddle tank so it is way too big for the boiler. I did try to cut a section out and rejoin it by reforming it in the microwave. What I ended up with is a piece of modern art - Turner Prize here I come! It may be easier to supply a piece of brass that can be rolled, as the only part of the boiler that is really visible is the underside below the saddle tank and in most cases likely to be painted black so you are not going to see too much of it. The chimney was also shortened and the dome re-profiled prior to fitting. Once all the body work and filling was complete it received a coat of primer grey. At this point I then usually find another half dozen areas of filling that I missed, such is life! The model was then painted and lined. For the lining I have used the HMRS transfers 'general purpose yellow' lining and these go on so easily. I have to say the one job I really enjoy in any kit is applying the transfers. Any good modeller will tell you a paint job can make or break any model but the lining can enhance a good model and a good paint finish even further.

My overall impression of the new GRS Peckett Kit is good and if I had to give marks out of ten then it would be a very respectful seven. It would have been higher had it not been for the issues I had with the slide bar/crosshead assemblies plus the modifications to the draw hook and the spacers. In conclusion I would recommend the kit as a way for any new Member to get a reasonably cheap engine in Gauge '3' but do be aware of some of its pitfalls and the ways of overcoming them.