

The Dave Alexander Class 14 "Teddy Bear" kit

by Mark Pearson

I built a Class 14 some years ago when kit building was still feared by myself. I chose it because, not only did I like the prototype, but the simple chassis construction was a principle consideration.

The parts were all of excellent quality, the whitemetal body parts having very little "flash". The brass chassis frames were square and all the burrs removed. Following the instructions step by step led to the body being assembled with very little effort. Perhaps the worst part was to make the eighteen body lifting rings, represented by twisting fine fuse wire around a 1.5mm drill bit. A fiddly job but worth the effort once complete as these area a noticeable feature on the prototype.

The chassis was built with equal minimum effort, even the jackshaft drive which was the part I had been dreading (*having tangled with jackshaft drives in both 4 & 7mm in the past, this is very good news as this is one area where the running of an early diesel can be severely affected - Phil*). One minor fault will be when the model is viewed at eye level the bottom of the motor and the motor cut out in the frames are visible. Now, gaining more experience, this would be just a matter of gluing or soldering a plate over the offending area.

Since completion of this kit and on speaking to fellow modellers/critics !, it appears that the Dave Alexander version is too high - approximately 2mm and that the Constructeon (spelt correctly !) Models kit is too narrow ! A clear example of paying your money and taking your choice. Personally, I enjoy working with white metal kits and although my "Teddy Bear" is around six years old, still looks right and performs well too.

A D11 motor through a 55:1 gear set supplies the power. This is the recommended choice in the instructions. Again, experience has taught me that the views expressed in kit instructions are not always the easiest or best solution. I am now a fan of the Branchlines multiboxes and would not consider straight motor/axle drive as an option. (*Sometimes the instructions of older kits need re-working to include more modern motor/gearbox options so bear this in mind if you are looking at a kit that has been on the market for some time - Phil*)

Overall I would recommend Dave Alexander's range of kits to anyone. Beginners would find the quality of the parts and the easy to follow diagrams and instructions to be of great benefit.

On the price scale, perhaps they are not the cheapest range of kits but, as I'm sure we have all experienced, quality never comes cheap and cheap, nasty, poor quality kits just continue to deter would be kit builders.

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