Dyna Drive: Experiences with a 47

by Brian Roper

In response to the article in Journal V8-1 and as suggested by the editor I thought fellow members might be interested in my view and experience on this piece of model engineering.

I first saw Dyna Drive at the Epson & Ewell Model Railway exhibition in 1997. I was very impressed with the demonstration, but that was before I knew the price of a kit! The price was also very impressive. Needless to say, I did not order a kit, but a phrase that John Lythgoe used stuck in my mind for a long time afterwards - "this is the Rolls Royce edition, if you want a Mini, stay with the standard pancake motor".

A number of years went by and every time I saw the advert in Railway Modeller, I remembered that phrase. Then I took the plunge, arranged a second mortgage with the bank, and ordered a class 47 kit. This was in November 1999, and fortunately all items were in stock, and the kit arrived a few days later.

I had also requested the adhesives that are recommended (£ 10) and a full instruction booklet. These booklets are sold separately, so that they can be used again if you buy another kit. They are very comprehensive, and well worth the £3.25 they cost. There is no point in guessing for that relative small cost.

It took me some time to read the instructions as they effectively take you through the procedure bit by bit (or is it rivet by rivet?). At first all is rather confusing, but after a while, and a few bevies, things eventually make sense. The procedures are made very clear and specific, even to such detail that the screw heads holding the motor mounts should be
in line, so that when you show the insides to interested parties, they can see the attention to detail that the manufacturer is very obviously proud of. There is even the hint of when to make the next cup of coffee to allow the adhesive to set!

I feel I must comment on the after sales service John provided for me. I had a particular difficulty in fitting the flywheel in the body, as I found that I needed to remove more of the body than the instructions implied. I e-mailed John, and within a day received a comprehensive reply, explaining that the flywheel mountings had changed slightly (and improved) from when the instructions had been written, and that the flywheel now stood about 1 mm higher than before. The tolerances in the Dyna Drive are so fine that 1mm makes a big difference.

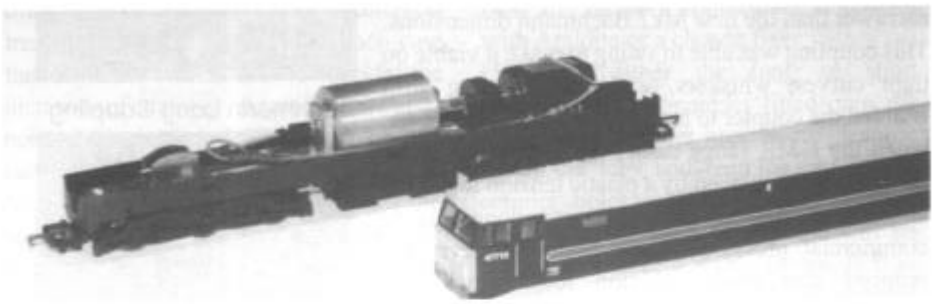
(Since completing .the kit, I used a different Lima body in the chassis and I had no difficulty. I suspect that as the second body was newer, the Lima tolerances have changed - perhaps they use a thinner plastic now!

Once the kit is built, the exciting part begins. A further booklet is provided called "How to drive a Dyna Drive". You may wonder why you need a booklet to teach yourself how to drive a model locomotive, even if you have flywheels in other locos. However, the flywheel in the Dyna Drive is massive, and the amount of energy retained when the power is cut off is tremendous. You really do have to think ahead. In sidings, buffer stops can easily be demolished, wagons and coaches derailed. On my layout, which is 10ft square, when running at full speed, it takes 1/4 of the way round to stop -just like a
container ship at sea. You certainly have to drive it. Consequently, smoothness in running is out of this world. Points are crossed without hesitation, any poor electrical gaps passed over without a jerk.

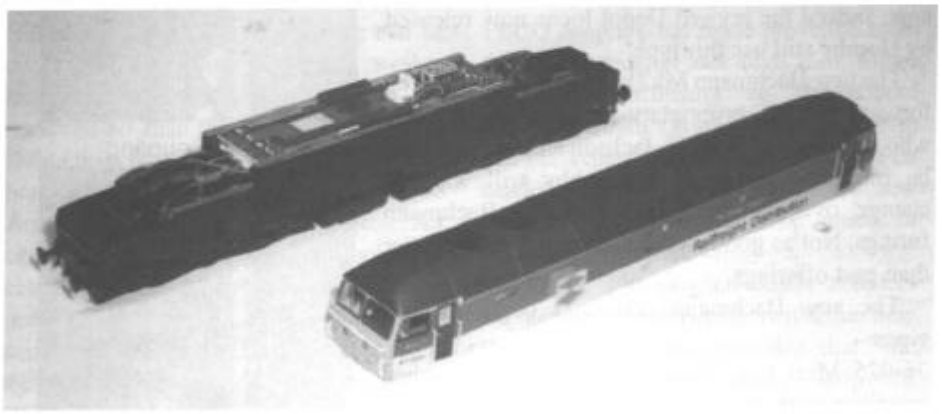
It doesn't take long to get used to the new driving method, and control at all speeds can be obtained after a bit of practice.

There is an emergency stop procedure, but it still takes some distance to come to a complete halt. You simply put the controller on full reverse, and then turn the power off once the clutch has started to effect the reverse direction. This does put a fair bit of pressure on the clutch and drive shaft, so the fewer times you have to do this the better!

Overall, the Dyna Drive is a very good piece of model engineering. It certainly enhances the Lima model, and although I haven't yet seen the Heljan 47 in operation, I'm sure the Dyna Drive is far superior. The extra amount that it costs is worthwhile; it's a pity I cannot afford more of them. I have on order a Lima Class 66 kit, but due to supply difficulties, this has not yet arrived.



Lima Fragonset Class 47 with Dyna-Drive Unit



Heljan Railfreight Distribution Class 47

At the end of the day, you certainly get good value for money, and in my opinion, well worth the investment.
My only problem really is to decide which body to use!