

DCC CONCEPTS BUFFER STOPS

DCC Concepts' illuminated bufferstop is put under scrutiny by **Howard Smith**

Photography by Brett Caines

DCC Concepts bufferstops with lamps (ref: H-DML-MBS) have been on sale for a few years, and so by default, don't fall under the 'new item' category. Even so, when tasked with reviewing them, it was hard to imagine what to say when first putting pen to paper (or finger to keyboard in this case). After all, just how much can you say about a set of buffers?

As it happened though, these 'stops' proved to be a worthy subject of scrutiny, so much so, that I felt obliged to provide one with an adequate scene, just to show how good they can look when installed and painted.

For a number of years Peco have dominated the OO and HO market with their buffer stop offering and have probably sold tens of thousands of them over the years. Those wishing to make the lamp situated above the beam

An example of what can be made with a few items and a DCCconcepts buffer stop. If Phil Parker built a pizza layout, then this must surely be a pizza slice layout.

DCC Concepts has once again succeeded in producing an easy-to-use and useful working feature that is essential for almost any layout.

WHY OIL-LIT LAMPS?

Oil-lit lamps were commonly used on buffer stops situated in sidings or stations where night time marshalling was likely to take place. They acted just as much as a form of warning as they did a marker for drivers. They were gradually phased out in the late-1980s in favour of battery or mains powered lights, which were more reliable and require less maintenance.

illuminate resorted to either drilling out a hole and fitting an LED, or replacing it with a circuit board and pre-mounted LED suitable for more modern applications. Either way, no reliable off-the-shelf lit alternative existed; that was before the arrival of the offering from DCC Concepts.

Upon request, Gaugemaster kindly supplied a pack for review (two stops per pack) and it was time to see just what you get for your money.

At £23.95 for a pack of two bufferstops with built-in LEDs (each with its own separate PCB with integrated resistor) they can't be described as 'dirt cheap'. That said, neither can their quality. As with many things, what you pay for is what you get and it must be said that the rail detail has in no way been compromised.

All bolts and spacing blocks between the rails have been represented - even the lamp has a copper wire grab handle and separate clear lens added over the LED. The product is based on a GWR style rail-built buffer stop, of which there are many varieties - a subject worthy of an article in itself - but which still remains a relatively generic design that can be used in other

When lit, the buffer stop is an interesting feature that can add more interest to an otherwise overlooked area of a layout.



Before installing the bufferstop and gluing it into place, you will need to remove the chairs so that the rails sit flush with the sleepers.

areas of the country if required. This differs from the Peco offering, as both uprights join the track on the outside of the rail rather than one either side.

Unwisely wires are a modeller's worst enemy - track, lights, motors, servos - they all need them. Luckily most of these are hidden under the layout at all times, but a buffer stop light is one exception. DCC Concepts has foreseen this problem by discreetly running two very thin single strand wires from the lamp on the bufferstop all the way down to rail height, glued in place every five millimetres or so. Layout owners will rejoice at this - a small hole in the baseboard is all that is required to return those wires underneath, where they belong. Power to the LED can be 6-12V DC or 9-15V AC, hence, those with a DCC operated layout can connect the LED via the PCB resistor unit straight to the track. **BRM**

THE VERDICT

To summarise, DCC Concepts has once again succeeded in producing a commonly found and useful item that most layout owners will require at least one of, if they have a siding. Nothing of note can be criticised about the product as it does what is expected of it - the LED isn't overly bright, just like an oil-lit lamp. It would be great to see a modern style bufferstop lamp joining the range in the future.