

Saxony's Glory

Class VI k narrow-gauge steam locos



In 1917, the Inspector of Transport Troops for the German Military Field Railroads in Berlin ordered fifteen brand new locomotives from Henschel & Sohn in Kassel for two narrow-gauge railways near Warsaw. These locos, originally numbered 7525H to 7539H, finally rolled off the production line in November 1918, the same month as the Armistice was signed (11 November), and, as such, were never actually used on military field railroads. A stroke of luck for the narrow-gauge lines in Saxony, seeing as the widely-used IVk loco had reached

The Saxon VIk: Popular and superior both as a prototype and a model

its peak. Clearly this situation needed to be resolved quickly, and the Saxon State Railroad, which had a reputation for thriftiness, seized the opportunity with both hands and purchased all fifteen machines. They were handed over

by May 1920 and registered as locos no. 210 to 224.

Trial runs were carried out soon after delivery of the first locos, initially on the line between Hainsberg and Kipsdorf near Dresden. This is where the new loco demonstrated its supremacy. Boasting 330hp, it was roughly 50 percent more powerful than the IVk. However, there was one disadvantage with the relatively heavy 40-ton machines: Their rigid frame and the five coupled wheel sets were prone to derailling on the soft road-bed of most routes, which meant they



The model of the Saxon VIk displayed in this article is a demonstrator version and, as such, some of the separately-applied details such as boiler pipes, whistle, etc. are still missing.

had to be reinforced and modified. These measures were urgently implemented, allowing use of the locos on the hilly routes of the Ore Mountains from 1920 onwards. The powerful VIk certainly proved its worth, although smoothness of ride was not always given due to the missing leading axles, and the locos were notorious for lurching and swaying down the tracks. Ownership of all the machines passed to the German State Railroad Company (DRG) and they were allocated road numbers 99 641 to 99 655 of class K55.8. The locos were so popular



The powerful design and rather spacious cab made the reconstructed VIk hugely popular with engine crews (here: Öchsle Railroad).

that the DRG decided to purchase more in order to discontinue and withdraw the last Ik locos and the oldest IVk locos from service. Another 47 of these locos, no. 99 671 to 99 717, were manufactured between 1923 and 1927. They were supplied by Sächsische Maschinenfabrik in Chemnitz, Henschel & Sohn in Kassel, and Maschinenfabrik Karlsruhe. Upon delivery, the locos were equipped with the standard counterweight handbrake, a steam brake, and the Heberlein cable brake. A vacuum brake was fitted soon after receiving the locos, which led to ▶

removal of the steam brake. On later locos, no. 99 679 to 99 683, a Westinghouse compressed air brake was factory installed, as these machines were to be operated in Württemberg where the cable brake and the vacuum brake were not widely available at the time. These locos were also equipped with an air pump and a large main air tank in front of the smokebox.

Machines 99 650 and 99 651 arrived in Stuttgart in the 1930s and eventually ended up running on the Bottwar Valley Railroad. The locos with road numbers 99 643 and 99 647 found their way to the Waldviertel narrow-gauge railway in 1938, and two other locos headed to Austria and the Vellach Valley Railroad in Carinthia. Several locos were destroyed during

the Second World War or failed to return from active duty on Russian narrow-gauge railways.

Ten locos were placed in service by the German Federal Railroad (DB) after 1945, with the two locos on the Bottwar Valley Railroad remaining in service the longest. In fact, the 99 651 even received – as the only German Federal Railroad narrow-gauge steam loco – a computer number. The loco was later installed as a monument in Steinheim an der Murr before being transported to the Öchsle Museum Railroad in 2016. A total of 27 locos were welcomed into the ranks of the German National Railroad (DR) in the GDR. They were based in Zittau, Radebeul, Nossen, and Wilsdruff and were used on

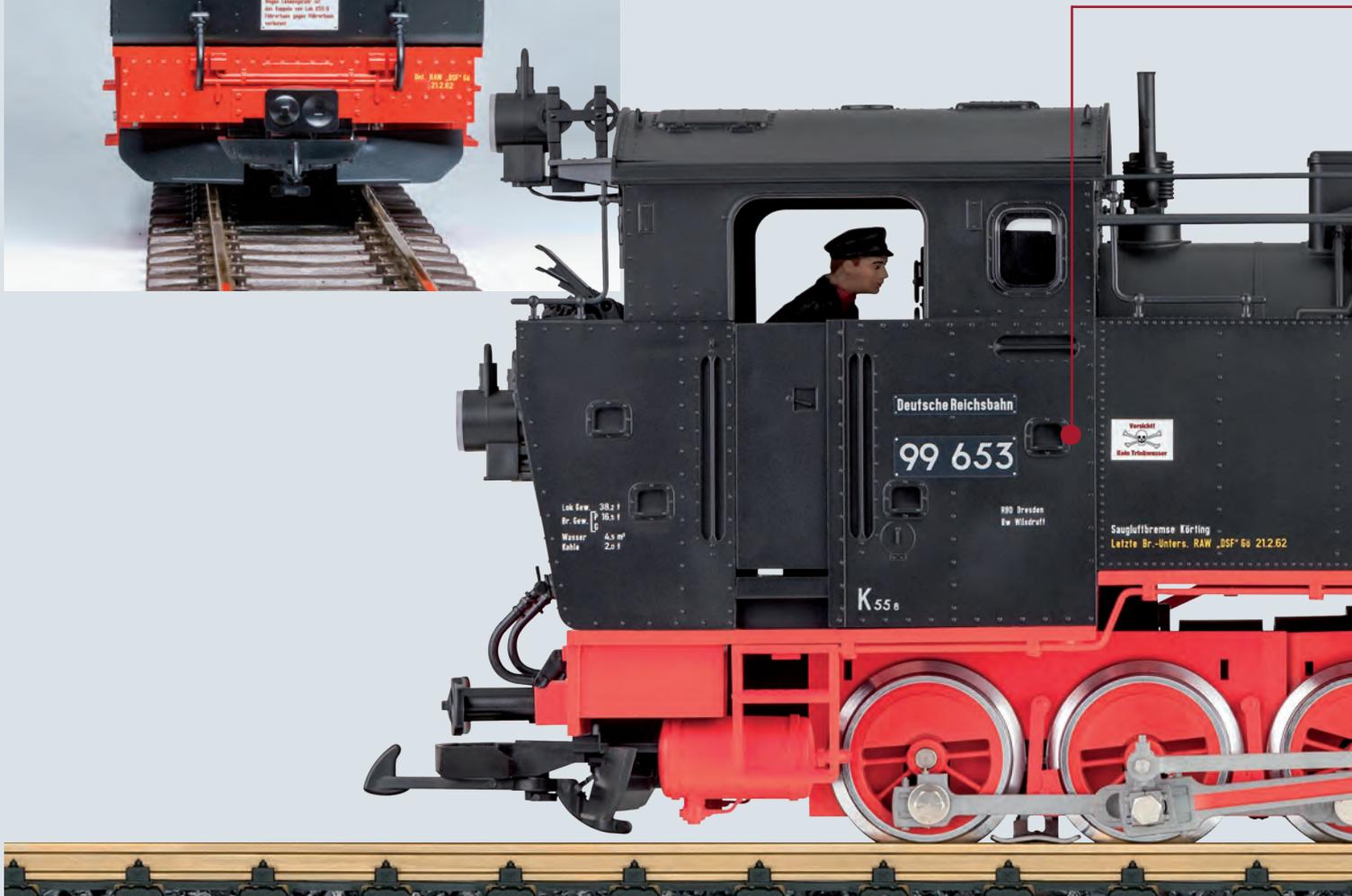
DR STEAM LOCOMOTIVE 99 653



HIGHLIGHTS

DR steam locomotive 99 653, era III, item no. 20480

- 1 Two powerful Bühler motors with a ball bearing design, traction tires
- 2 mfx/DCC digital decoder
- 2 Flickering of the firebox and cab lighting
- 4 Smoke generator with wheel-synchronized steam ejector
- 5 Cab doors and smokebox door can be opened and closed
- 6 Length over buffers 16.1"

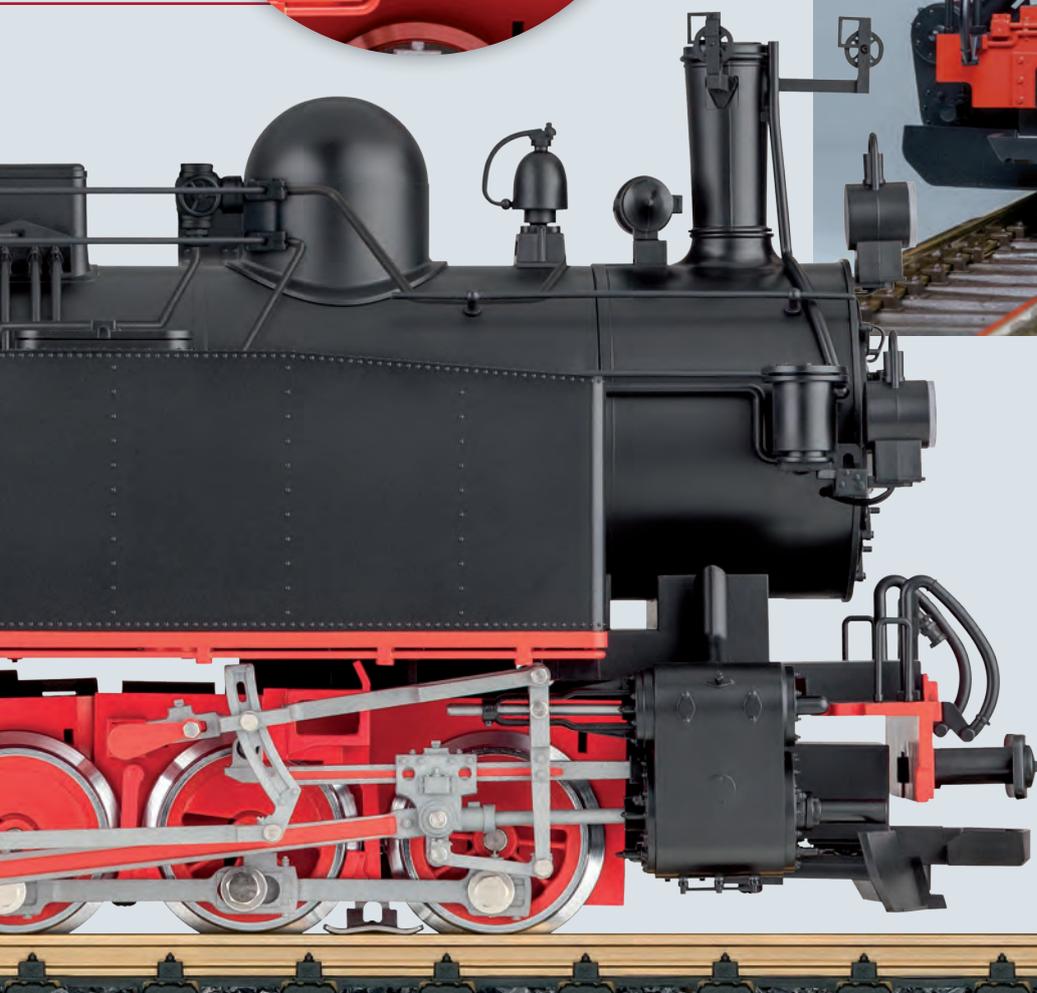


the local narrow-gauge lines there. The DR subsequently united all the locos at the depot in Wilsdruff.

While discontinuation of narrow-gauge steam locos was on the cards from the early days of the German Federal Railroad, the German National Railroad in East Germany continued to rely on these machines for many years. Some of the locos were fitted with a new boiler at the beginning of the 1960s – however, it was not only the boiler that had seen better days, the frame, cab, and storage tank also required a complete overhaul. A decision was therefore taken in 1964 to fully modernize the locos – although the German National Railroad at the time referred to this process as reconstruction work. To achieve a certain level of standardization with other

narrow-gauge locos, the engineers basically used as many assemblies as possible from class 99.73. The initial plan was to install two driving axles, but this was not implemented due to the efforts and costs involved. Nevertheless, the refit was so extensive that the locos almost resembled a new build. The modernized locos were hugely popular with engine crews due to their capacity and the large cab. A total of 20 locos were designated for the introduction of computer numbers in 1970, but this was never fully implemented.

Four of these locos survive to this day; however, not all of them are in working order. These beautiful machines can still be seen hauling historic trains, particularly on narrow-gauge lines in Saxony. ▶



Garden railroad model of the Vlk

Steam locos have always had a special appeal to garden railroaders, you only have to think of the Saxon IVk or the 'Harzbulle' (Harz Bull). So it is hardly surprising then that garden railroad fans have kept asking for another steam loco that can be chiefly used on Saxon-themed layouts. Well, their wishes were finally fulfilled at the Nuremberg international toy fair 'Spielwarenmesse 2017': LGB presented the Saxon Vlk in an era III design of the German National Railroad (DR). Technically speaking, the Vlk is very similar to its big brother – the 'Harzbulle' (Harz Bull) – and also has an articulated frame and two Bühler motors with a ball bearing design. This enables the loco to conquer tight R1 curves (23.6"). Needless to say the equipment includes an mfx/DCC decoder that enables

extensive light and sound functions in digital mode. The running sound is also fully functional in analog mode, while the many other functions can be enjoyed in digital mode. Another standard feature for modern-day large steam loco models is an installed smoke generator with wheel-synchronized steam ejector and cylinder steam. The loco is equipped with three alternating headlights for the direction of travel, cab lighting, running gear lights, and a flickering light in the firebox – all digitally controllable, of course. The cab doors and the smoke-box door can be opened and closed. An engineer and a fireman are also included to ensure the loco is operated with the right crewmen. In addition, there are many highly detailed parts, such as the bell, whistle or the electric generator – the latter is a key component as the prototype of the LGB model was equipped with electric lighting, even though this was not

a standard feature of the locos upon initial delivery. A real eye-catcher though are – just like on the original – the moving flaps that can be used to close the coal box located behind the cab. Many of the separately installed pipes are carefully modeled from wire that gives them a prototypical look and feel, while providing them with authentic stability.

This is a model of loco 99 653 from the depot in Wilsdruff that was in service in the early 1960s (era III). It will be available to LGB fans from the summer onwards (item no. 20480). Seeing as over 60 of these locos were in full-time operation on narrow-gauge railroads, you can expect to see further variants of this stylish, chunky-looking loco in the coming years.

But what good is a loco without a car? Not much, really! So it goes without saying that LGB also provides matching cars for the Vlk loco. Two Saxon passenger cars (item no. 36353 and 36354) are available in a riveted steel design, along with two baggage cars (item no. 30321 and 30322). Excursion trains – especially on Sundays – often incorporated an observation car like the one available from LGB (item no. 32350).

The loco can obviously haul various freight cars, and the two powerful motors ensure no train is too long. This is yet another loco that can be used on Saxon-themed backyard railroads, and is an ideal partner for smaller locos – be it the small Ik or the vintage IVk – while providing garden railroad enthusiasts with endless hours of fun hauling trains around the track.



The last 'original' 99 651 was the only narrow-gauge steam loco of the German Federal Railroad to receive a computer number. It has been drawing visitors to the Öchsle Museum Railroad since 2016.

A PICTURE-PERFECT SAXON TRAIN

- 1 'Saxon Convertible': An open-top observation car of class KB4, era III with finely detailed, prototypical interior fittings and metal wheel sets (item no. 32350)
- 2 Model of a 2nd class passenger car for narrow-gauge railways of the German National Railroad (item no. 36353)
- 3 Like 2, but with a different road number
- 4 Model of a baggage car of the German National Railroad, class KD4, era III. Newly tooled with prototypical details, e.g. a strutted frame at the floor of the car (item no. 30321).



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The VIk was so popular on Saxon narrow-gauge railways that 47 of them were eventually built. Luckily, a few of these locos are still busy at museum railroads, such as the Öchsle Railroad or, as can be seen in the picture, the Pressnitz Valley Railway in the Ore Mountains.



HIGHLIGHTS

DR 2nd class passenger car, item no. 36353/36354

- 1 Authentic paint scheme and lettering of era III
- 2 The platform doors can be opened and closed
- 3 Complete interior details
- 4 Metal wheel sets
- 5 Length over buffers 22.8"

These two passenger cars, which came into service in 1906, were the quintessential example of narrow-gauge trains in Saxony for many decades. The two new LGB models are available with two different road numbers.



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