

# TEST ELEKTRA BECKUM



PHOTOGRAPHS BY GMC / ANTHONY BAILEY

## Elektra Beckum's HC260C planer is put through its paces by a fastidious Colin Eden-Eadon

**T**he HC design used in this Elektra Beckum 260C has been around for some years in various guises, and as such it is tried, tested and even copied. Despite it being a small machine, I have seen it cope with quite large oak beams, so it has a good track record. There are several

improvements on this new entry-level model – micro switches and thicker body casting for example.

### CONSTRUCTION

This again was a kit of parts. The only useful things in the instruction manual were the drawings, and there was

nothing at all about actually putting it together. Fortunately, it is not rocket science, but there were one or two head-scratching moments.

It is reassuringly heavy, despite its aluminum main user parts and everything is cleanly cast and well finished. Tables are well finished too, and even though the castings seem quite light they were fine in use. The thickening bed has a cast table too, and the sides, to which everything is bolted, are nice and heavy.

### FENCE

One thing I liked about this planer was the fence mountings. They were not stamped out thin plate, but actually cast aluminum. The fence was surprisingly good and firm, and it locks down well with Bristol levers holding it all in place. The levers are cast – much nicer than plastic ones – and I have a feeling they will last. There are sometimes problems getting fences square, especially when you tighten them. But no problem here, I am happy to report, as the fences were perfectly square.

### IN USE

The controls are well mounted on a metal plate with a neat two-way switch with which you select the function – surfacing or thickening. There is a continental-type two-pin plug into the machine which you need to get the right way round or, as I found, it won't start! It wasn't that obvious, honest!

The HC has a two-knife cutterblock with disposable knives, and there are re-sharpenable blades available too. The finish is good with a very acceptable pitch mark. Depth of cut is as with most planers – a threaded knob at the rear of the in-feed table. The bridge guard is another plus point for this machine and again, it is all metal. It has an unusual, serrated rack-and-pinion lever, which is fine at the higher positions but tended to lose grip on the smaller dimension pieces. It wasn't really a problem, just a little irritating at times.

### EXTRACTION

My only real gripe is with the extraction. It worked well enough but is rather





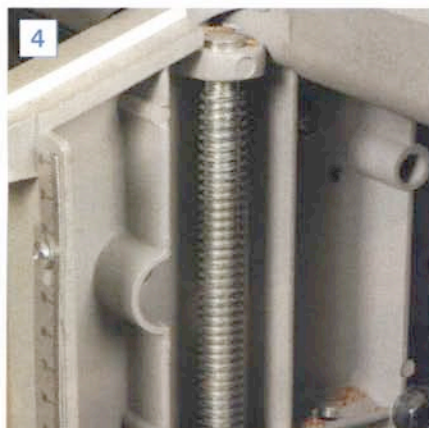
**Great to see on an entry-level machine, a precise fence set-up!**



**Slightly quirky height adjustment, but good guard**



**The outfeed table is taken off to thickness, note the locking lever**



**Extraction hood flips over and you then have to attach the surfacing shoot to it – slightly fussy**



**Good strong castings, table is cast iron**



**Rise-and-fall has a detachable handle, so don't lose it!**

flimsy and is held in place by winding up the thickening table. The out-feed table has to be taken off to thickness, a simple operation involving two levers which lock down on two lugs on either side of the machine.

The extractor hood then folds up onto the in-feed table, and you then have to attach the surfacing extractor shoot to it. A bit fussy really but it does work.

## THICKENING

The table has the four thread type mechanism, one in each corner, with the rise-and-fall operated by a detachable lever. The table is actually cast iron – one of the new improvements designed to give it more strength and durability. It works nicely, and there was virtually no snipe.

## THE VERDICT

I was impressed with this little planer. The build quality was great, as was the finish on the component parts.

Despite being brought up on a diet of cast iron during my training years, I found myself liking it. It's quiet for a planer too, and very user friendly.

A neat and well put together machine – ideal for a small home workshop and light work, but also quite capable of bigger work undertaken with care. A very pleasing buy.

## SPECIFICATIONS & PRICE

Motor: 2.2kw  
Table sizes 1090mm x 260mm  
(43in x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ in) 400mm x  
260mm (19 $\frac{25}{32}$ in x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ in)  
Comes with a two-knife block  
Price: £586.33 inc VAT

## CONTACTS

Elektra Beckum  
Tel: 023 80732000  
or visit:  
[www.elektra-beckum.co.uk](http://www.elektra-beckum.co.uk)



**Plenty of safety features – three micro switches**