

What colour were the LMS 0-8-4 tanks?

The 0-8-4 tank engines built by the LMS in 1924 were some of the most powerful goods engines in the country. They were designed under H. P. M. Beames when the LNWR had already merged with the LYR and the first one entered service in January 1924, the first month after the Grouping. Though there were only 30 in the class no less than four different livery styles were applied to them when first built:

1) LNWR lined black, with LNWR numberplates but with 'LMS' on the tank sides in LNWR style. 2) Plain black with LNWR numberplates. 3) LMS 'crimson lake' with gold lining. 4) Plain black with 'LMS' in small letters on the bunker side and the number in gold on the tank.

Someone who produces kits for models has pointed out that the list of which engines had which livery details given in *London & North Western Eight-Coupled Goods Engines* differs from information given elsewhere. However, having thought a bit more about it, I am confident my list is correct. The information came from W. L. Harris, who was actively compiling LNWR loco details at the time and was in contact with C. Williams, exchanging information with him. These people saw the engines at the time and CW had access to Crewe records. His brother worked in the works and passed info to him. WLH offered me his records for use in my books and the information fits with photographic evidence. There is no reason why such meticulous and dedicated recorders should be wrong and people looking at photos 40 or 50 years after the event should be right.

It is wrong to assume that any loco with "LMS" in small letters on the bunker or cab side is painted red. Many LNWR locos, including 4-6-2 tanks, were black with "LMS" on cab or bunker. Does anyone suggest Super Ds (plate 113) were red? A nice idea! But not true. The engine in Plate 259 is certainly black. This is reproduced from a good quality print. The red locos had gold lining, even on the wheels, but plate 259 has no lining whatsoever. If it was painted red, the lining would be visible. A few photos of red 0-8-4 tanks exist but none that I know are good enough for reproduction in a book.

The same person who pointed out this difference was very complimentary about the sketch of an 0-8-4 tank footplate. Luckily I was able to get this from Harold Walkley, formerly a fitter at Abergavenny. Harold has an excellent memory for all the details of his work and Andy Lowe kindly converted Harold's sketches into a form suitable for reproduction. (ET)