

Product Review – Hornby 8F

By Ian Forsythe

When I reviewed the all-new Hornby Black 5 last year my last comment was “what will the 8F be like” well the waiting is over. The 8F is a cracker, I think that the model is better than the Black 5 and that would take some doing! Well they’ve done it in my opinion.

The prototype.

No 48154 being built at Crewe in 1942. and was shedded at various sheds through out her career such as Woodford Halse and Nuneaton.



The 8F's were a great success with 852 being built (with 663 operating in the UK after the war). There are even several lying on the bottom of the Mediterranean Sea. They operated in many areas of the Middle East during WW2 such

as Iraq, Persia, Turkey and Egypt etc. All four-railway companies were building them during the war years. Luckily there are several examples persevered and one on main line duties.

The model itself.

Please take care when removing the model from its box, as it's a very tight fit. I have already managed to brake the rout vacuum pipe off the buffer beam twice! The first thing that strikes you is the vastly improved chassis (or in railway parlance the frames If you compare the view model to the old tender drive version (in itself not a bad model) the beautifully fine valve gear is most prominent and it's all there this time ! The motion



support bracket is commendably fine. Notice the brake shoes almost touching the wheels but not quite.

The sandpipes are put on for you this time, unlike the Black 5 and again beautifully modelled. The brake rods are fitted for you and look fine.

The wheels are commendably fine and are flanged on all drivers unlike the earlier model.

Moving on to the body, again a beautiful piece of work. All the rivet detail appears to be there if compared to photo's of the prototype. The steam pipes have, I'm glad to say the correct profile this time, whereas the Black 5 didn't. Did Hornby read the review in the DOGA magazine ?

Anyway well done Hornby they're correct this time. The model carries correctly the Silvertown type lubricators with the delivery piping provided, beautifully to scale. The sand fillers are very fine and look very much to scale, as is the pipe work to the top

feed. The 8F has like the Black 5 an opening roof vent and ash guards fitted to the cab side windows. Cab doors are also there as is all the backhead details along with a very nice fall plate. The model has a separately fitted Stanier hooter, which the earlier model didn't. The smokebox dart is a masterpiece, incredibly fine and it's made of plastic!

The numbers on the side of the cab very neatly applied; this particular locomotive carries a star under its number. This denotes the loco has been 50% reciprocating balanced for higher speed running. The builders plate on the front frames is quite legible under a magnifying glass and carries the correct information, as one would expect from Hornby these days. Sprung buffers are fitted to loco and tender. There is a small bag of add on bits for the owner to fit at their leisure, including front steps.

The tender again is a beautiful model in its own right. It again has the builders plate on the back of the tender and can be read under a magnifying glass. To Hornby's credit the build date and tender number are different to the Black 5, full marks to Hornby for paying this amount of attention to small details. The brake rigging is fitted for you. Otherwise the tender is a standard non-riveted Stanier 4000 gallon tender.

The running quality of the model is excellent and will only get better after a period of running in.



Would I change or carry out any modifications to the model? Well only a few.

Firstly I have already broken the coupling on the tender, this fell off on its second test train with 25 Hornby 21 T hoppers! I would have removed the coupling anyway and replaced it with a piece of .45mm brass wire soldered to a copper clad

sleeper which in turn is glued to the under side of the tender body. I have two Black 5's and one of them suffered the same fate! Is there a weakness in the design? As the loco is to be run on the large exhibition layout belonging to the Newhaven & District MRC and is based on the Great Central in BR days the front coupling-mounting block on the front bogie will be removed and scale screw couplings fitted. Some real coal in the tender and fitting a crew in the cab. The loco will need to be weathered down a bit just to give it that "in service" look and that will about do it.

Overall this is a very fine model and congratulation to Hornby. They can and should feel very proud of this model.
Well done Hornby.

PS since this article was written a trial took place at the Newhaven club. The 8F moved a train close to 20ft long, the vehicles in that train came from various manufactures and ran around the layout with no real problems.

I e-mailed Hornby on Saturday requesting a new set of add on pieces, my original pack

had two right hand front steps! E-mail acknowledged on Monday and parts arrived Tuesday morning 1st Class. I call that excellent service.

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