

Liveries: locomotives, rolling stock, buildings and structures

Staff pointers for livery and paint research

Colour accuracy

Colour accuracy, particularly for pre-nationalisation liveries, can be problematic. This is due to such things as different manufacturers producing slightly different shades; variations in paint constituents (for example some pigments produced from chemical or vegetable dyes can fade quickly if exposed to sunlight; others perhaps with oxide as a constituent, can darken. An "original" paint sample is not therefore a guide to be relied on, nor is photographic evidence as colour film was rare until the post war period and even then the sensitivity of early colour films to particular light wavelengths means that colour photography can be misleading. Comparing against the colour of particular vehicles in the collection is also fraught with risk as there are numerous known errors. So it's not really possible to be 100% accurate when it comes to colour, but, by all account, no two locomotives were the same colour anyway!

Another thing to note is that colour doesn't "scale" very well, so modellers in smaller scales such as OO have to take this into account. The same paint used on a full size locomotive will probably be far too dark when applied to a small model locomotive, and will need lightening up somewhat to look "right". Modellers in smaller scales are usually best advised to look at the commercial paint ranges that are produced by a number of model paint suppliers. This becomes less an issue the larger the scale model.

Sources for British locomotive liveries (pre-1923)

The situation before 1923 was extremely colourful, but in the absence of contemporary colour photography precise definition of the colours

employed can at times be extremely problematical. Colour plates appeared in early 20th century railway periodicals, such as the *Locomotive Magazine* (LM) and *The Railway Magazine* (RM), and the 2 volume *Our Home Railways*, by W J Gordon (1910). These all have the value of being contemporary, but the so-called F Moore artwork in the *Locomotive Magazine* was probably the most accurate. Printed specifications for tendering purposes are also useful, but frequently refer to colour samples/panels, now lost, which would not only have provided shade but also lining detail.

Railway	Contemporary	Specifications	Retrospective
Caledonian	4-4-0, LM 6/1898 4-6-0, RM 9/1907	4-4-0/4-6-0, 1922 SPEC/CR/1	<i>Caledonian Railway Livery</i> M1/71
Cambrian	4-4-0, RM 4/1901		
Furness	0-6-2T, RM 11/1909	4-6-4T, 1919 SPEC/FR/1	<i>Cumbrian Railways Circular</i> May 1977
Glasgow & South Western	4-6-0, RM 8/1904 4-6-4T, LM 12/1922		
Great Central	4-4-2, RM 9/1906	4-4-2, 1905 SPEC/MISC/1	
Great Eastern	4-4-0, RM 1/1901 4-4-0, Gordon Vol.1 4-6-0, RM 3/1912		<i>Great Eastern Jnl</i> (Blue) July 1994, (Grey) April 1995
Great Northern	4-2-2, LM 6/1900 4-4-0, LM 11/1911 4-4-2, LM 5/1908	2-4-0, 1881 0-6-0, 1897 SPEC/GNR/1	
Great North of Scotland	4-4-0, RM 8/1901		<i>Great North of Scotland Railway Locomotives,</i> E8E/463
Great Western	4-2-2, LM 1/1899 4-6-0, RM 1/1905 4-6-2, LM 3/1908		<i>Great Western Way</i> M1/19
Highland	4-4-0, RM 12/1908 4-6-0, RM 2/1902	0-6-0, 1901 SPEC/MISC/1	<i>Highland Railway Liveries, M1/30</i>
Hull & Barnsley	0-6-2T, RM 1/1903		
Lancashire & Yorkshire	4-4-2, Gordon Vol.2		See M1/7P
LNWR (green)	2-2-2, RM 2/1907		<i>LNWR Liveries</i>
London & North Western (black)	4-4-0, RM 3/1905 4-6-0, LM 7/1913		<i>LNWR Liveries</i> M1/38

London & South Western	4-4-0, RM 9/1903 4-6-0, RM 3/1908		<i>HMRS Livery Register No.3, M1/3</i>
LB&SCR (yellow/green)	4-4-0, LM 1/1900	4-4-0, 1900 0-6-0, 1898	
London Brighton & South Coast (umber)	4-4-2, RM 6/1906 4-6-4T, RM 11/1916	4-4-2, 1905 SPEC/LBSC/1	
London Chatham & Dover		4-4-0, 1890 0-4-4T, 1890 SPEC/SEC/1	<i>Invicta (30) Spring 1988</i>
London Tilbury & Southend	4-4-2T, LM 1/1908	4-4-2T, 1879, 1897 SPEC/MISC/1	<i>Midland Style M1/4</i>
Manchester Sheffield & Lincolnshire	4-4-0, LM 7/1897		
Maryport & Carlisle			
Metropolitan		4-4-4T, 1919 SPEC/MISC/1	
Midland (green)	2-4-0, LM, 7/1913	2-4-0, 1875, SPEC/MR/1	<i>Midland Style M1/71</i>
Midland (crimson)	4-2-2, LM 1/1898 4-4-0, RM 11/1907 0-6-4T, RM 3/1909	4-4-0, 1900 SPEC/MR/1 0-4-4T, 1899 SPEC/MR/4	ditto
Midland & Great Northern	4-4-0, RM 2/1911	4-4-0, 1893 SPEC/MGN/1	<i>Liveries of the M&GNR etc, M1/65L</i>
North British	4-4-0, RM 6/1904 4-4-2, LM 2/1912		<i>NBR Study Group Jnl Nos.96/100</i>
North Eastern	4-4-0, LM 1/1901 4-4-2, LM 1/1912		<i>North Eastern Record Vol.3 M1/45/3L</i>
North London	4-4-0T, RM 8/1902		
North Staffordshire	0-4-4T, RM 12/1907 0-6-4T, RM 4/1917		
Somerset & Dorset	2-8-0, RM 6/1914	0-6-0, 1879 SPEC/MISC/1	<i>Midland Style M1/4</i>

South Eastern			<i>Invicta</i> (33) Autumn 1989 (34) Spring 1990
South Eastern & Chatham	4-4-0, LM 7/1901 4-4-0, RM 8/1908 4-4-0, RM 12/1914	4-4-0, 1899 0-6-0, 1899 4-4-0, 1913 SPEC/SEC/1	<i>Invicta</i> (31) Autumn 1988 (32)Spring 1989
Taff Vale	0-6-2T, RM 1/1902 0-6-2T, RM 11/1908		<i>Great Western</i> <i>Way</i> , M1/19

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Other resources

There are painting diagrams within some of our works drawing collections, the lists for these collections can be found on our website:

<https://www.railwaymuseum.org.uk/research-and-archive/research-help/catalogues>.

There are also a number of unlisted painting specifications, diagrams and other paint related material mainly unlisted. Please email search.engine@railwaymuseum.org.uk if you would like to view this material.