LNER Class N8 0-6-2 Tank
Manufactured by: The late George Norton

This engine is very similar to the N9 reviewed elsewhere (see the LNER Class N9). The kit, so far as I can tell, is the precursor of that for the N8/N9, before Fourtrack (and before them I think, London Road Models) bought and improved it. Writing a conventional review is not appropriate here as this particular version has not been available for many years. My client and I (same client as for the N9) found it on the bring and buy stand at an exhibition, probably Telford but it may have been Langley. It had been partially started but no actual construction had been done. Consequently, many parts had been separated from the frets so identification would be just a tad more of a problem. The box contained numerous parts that were not part of the original kit, including a nice set of Guilplates for 1644 that would not be used.

There are great differences between this and the Fourtrack (now Gladiator Models) version, the chassis and rods are etched in thick brass rather than nickel silver. Needless to say, the rods were scrapped and replaced with a set from Laurie Griffin, nice, but expensive. The boiler, like the Fourtrack kit, is brass tube but very thick and turned down to leave the raised smoke box and the curved joint ring with the boiler, so that bit will be a lot simpler to do. On the other hand, the smoke box has to be extended for this job so there will be problems anyway.

In its day the kit was probably state of the art but by today's standards is rather crude. It has clearly been blown up from a 4mm original so many of the holes and slots are too large. I do not remember the Fourtrack version like this so the art work must have been updated considerably for the later version. Nevertheless, it makes a good basis for producing another LNER 0-6-2, not for a beginner though.

All the components for the frames were cleaned up and made ready for assembly. Drive will to be rear wheels so no cut-outs for horn guides were made there but brass bushes were fitted, as they were too in the rear radial truck. There were dimples in the frames for drilling holes to fit plunger pick-ups but I decided this time to use wipers.
The wheels, Slater’s, were next dealt with by rubbing the back of each on 120 grit wet & dry placed on a sheet of glass until the rim and brass boss were both shiny. The 12BA nuts and bolts were discarded and the holes for the crank pins run through with a 10BA tap. A 10BA, countersunk, bolt was then screwed in tight and a threaded brass bush run along it, with the flange tight to the face of the wheel. The tyres were blackened back and front and the axle shoulders fettled to be a good fit. Now, to start assembling the frames and horn guides. The leading and centre axles will be compensated, which needed further modifications to the frames for the pivot. The extra holes in the ash pan were filled in with some brass rod soldered in place.

Before completing the frames with the brake gear, I ran it all in for several hours so that it all runs smoothly. Now it is ready for another, very long, running-in session. The result is a chassis that runs very smoothly now.
Meanwhile, the footplate was started. As with the N9 I strengthened it with 1mm square stock, which also helped to ensure that the valances and buffer planks were vertical. One possible reason why the kit was on the second hand stand is that whoever had started it had cut both of the valances into two pieces. It made construction just a little more difficult and will require some filler at a later stage but here is the footplate ready to start building on the cab and tank sides.
Here are the main parts of the bodywork ready to be assembled. It follows closely that which I used for the N9, though I have changed to order and methodology slightly. The hardest part is shaping the flare on the back of the coal bunker, so not really a difficult job at all.

The body is now largely complete save for detailing. In the meantime I cut out the slot for the motor to fit into the boiler barrel, exactly as for the N9.
Keeping everything square is key to this, not helped by the tank extension inside the cab being wildly out of true.

The next stage will be to fabricate an extended smoke box, which the kit does not allow for nor the drawings show any detail. Fortunately, the 7mm e-group has come up trumps with some information, thank you Mick Nicholson and I expect more from my client in due course. So this build has turned out to be very different in its way from the first N9. The roof is in process of being put together with some shaped spacers so that it can be simply clipped in place. More on this later.

The coal rails were plated for this version. As for the for N9 I deemed the supplied part not up to the job and replaced it with some copper shim and half round brass wire. The wire was soldered to the copper and then folded up to fit the bunker, after which the holding tabs were soldered in before fitting to the bunker proper.

The smokebox needed to be extended. Not an easy proposition given the thickness of the boiler smokebox assembly - a huge heat sink. I started by producing a circular former around which to wrap the extended former. Then, using the smokebox end piece, made two more and sweated all three together and then bolted and Araldited this unit to the new smokebox drumhead.
Here is the new drumhead fitted. There are large quantities of fittings and pipes still to be fixed to the smokebox and boiler.

This engine is to have both Westinghouse and vacuum brakes as well as steam heating pipes (that should make coupling up with screw couplings interesting!)
The Westinghouse and vacuum pipes went either side of the footplate, as shown here in these views.
There is much yet to be done but a great deal of it is detailing. The next two big jobs will be fitting the pick-ups and then the side sheets to the smokebox sides where they protrude in front of the sand boxes.

After a large consignment from Laurie Griffin to aid in the completion of this engine, work recommenced.

Finally complete but after building the excellent backhead from Laurie, I had to rebuild parts of the inside of the cab so that it would all fit. Here are some detail shots of the completed body.
Here it is in works grey (which may become the norm for future stock going to the client for painting) with the chassis chemically blackened on my private siding awaiting delivery.
An interesting build that proved quite taxing at times, especially the extended smoke box. The next thing for this client is a steam railmotor, to which I am looking forward.