

Hornby O Gauge Bumpers

There has not been much documented on Hornby O gauge bumpers. Price guides that often have descriptions and dates are hard to obtain outside the UK. The following will describe several bumpers made by Hornby and to the best we know from the 1920's through the 1950's based on the type shown.

Hornby began making trains in 1901 and in 1920 had its first O gauge items. The O gauge trains were produced in 3 lines of O gauge trains: #1, #2 and #0. #1 was the common line, #2 the deluxe line begun in 1921 and #3 in 1922 that were the first O gauge non kit (ready to run) trains known then as Zulu trains.

An early Hornby bumper came in both lighted and unlighted versions. It has been found in gray, black and tan paint. European toy train manufacturers typically made bumpers with only 2 rails regardless of whether they were applied to clockwork or electric motored trains.



These early bumpers had tin bases and diecast bodies. The bumpers were spring loaded with extra long bumper posts. These are believed to be offered in the #2 line of train items.

Another version of the diecast body type of bumper is shown below. It simply snapped onto a piece of track. The bumpers were spring loaded and had short posts. A simulated end light was cast into the body.



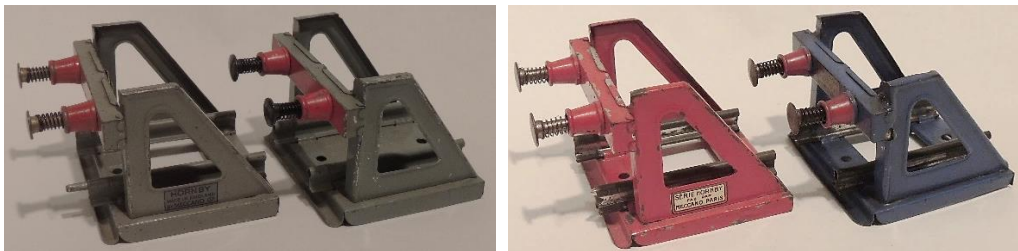
Diecast clip-on type bumper

The more common type of Hornby O gauge bumpers are the all tin type and are believed to be made both in prewar and postwar product offerings. They are believed to be offered in the #1 line of train items. They came in two basic types of

bases made of stamped metal. There were the open bases and the fully closed bases. It is not known if they were made at the same time or if the open bases were made later. Many manufacturers found ways to make train items lower cost so the amount of material and labor were both considered for reduction. The bumpers can be found in gray, red, blue, green and tan paint. Postwar bumpers can be found in silver. Bumper posts can be found in original metal finish or a blackened metal finish. Bumper bars are typically the color of the entire bumper except for postwar bumpers that were painted red. A Hornby or Meccano decal was often attached to a bumper in various locations.



Silver postwar bumpers



Gray with open & closed bases

Red & blue open bases



Green open base

Hornby began a factory in Paris in 1926 that produced similar but different O gauge trains. They carried French National Railway names and French wording. The bumpers were an exception and were identical to the British made bumpers but had a French decal.