

Fireless steam locomotives

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A list of fireless steam locomotives preserved in Britain.

Locomotives built by Andrew Barclay:

Works number/build date, site of preservation

Locomotives built by W.G. Bagnall:

Locomotives built by other manufacturers:

Builder, works number/build date, site of preservation

A fireless steam locomotive is similar to a conventional steam locomotive, but has a reservoir, known as a steam accumulator, instead of a boiler. This reservoir is charged with superheated water under pressure from a stationary boiler. The engine works like a conventional steam engine using the high pressure steam above the water in the accumulator. As the steam is used and pressure drops, the superheated water boils, replacing the used steam. The locomotive can work like this until the pressure has dropped to a minimum useful level or the water runs out, after which it must be recharged.

Any factory which possessed a stationary boiler could use it to charge a fireless steam locomotive for internal shunting operations. As there is no risk of sparks the use of a fireless locomotive removes the chance of igniting flammable materials and as they do not emit any exhaust except steam, they can shunt into buildings without endangering the workforce with noxious fumes.

The 0-6-0F locomotives delivered to the Ministry of Munitions had rail washing gear fitted to its leading and trailing coupled wheels. This was reduce the risk of sparks by easing the travel over sharp radius curves within the confined spaces of the munitions sites.

They are also very economical as shunters when there is a good supply of steam available.

The first British manufacturer of fireless locomotives was Andrew Barclay Sons & Company, Ltd of Kilmarnock, Scotland, which started producing these engines in 1912. This was a narrow gauge engine (Works No 1212) which was converted to a standard steam tank engine - possibly before being delivered.

The first one to be deployed was a narrow gauge engine (Works No 1307) which was delivered in November 1913 to the Admiralty for Bedenham at Portsmouth.



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