

A Nuclear Powered Fireless Loco?

16 March 2021

Following on from Steve Mills' article on the fireless steam locomotive which operated at Castle Meads Power Station at Gloucester Neil Howarth wrote:-

Fireless locomotives were favoured for working coal stocks since they posed a negligible risk of igniting the coal (which could be quite warm and releasing flammable gases).

When I was at Heysham Nuclear Power Station we had, for a short while, the only Nuclear Powered Steam Engine! It had been donated by Lancaster Power Station to move Nuclear Fuel Flasks around the site. As described it was charged with superheated steam bled from the main boilers which were heated by the nuclear reactors.

However, the configuration of railway sidings was such that it had to pull the flask into the loading bay where it might have to stay for a week loosing pressure and the ability to move. The alternatives were either to install more high pressure steam pipework or to buy a small diesel locomotive for the weekly move. The answer was obvious!

while Peter Harris wrote:-

This item puts me in mind of holidays with the son of family friends. His father was manager of the Saltend Petroleum Installation on the River Humber near Hull. Various activities were arranged for us. These included a tour of a large sea-going tanker, sailing, and driving oil barges up into St. Andrews Dock to 'bunker up' some of the fishing trawlers which included steering the barge up the Humber. They also had a small loco used for shunting petroleum tanks around the sidings of the installation which I recall looked very similar to the one in Steve's article and which was powered by compressed steam. A fired steamer was an absolute no-no in a Petroleum installation. We spent many hours driving this loco under the supervision of the engine man

and Stephen Cook provided this splendid image of the Castle Meads fireless loco at its new home at the Vale of Berkeley Railway at Sharpness in July 2020



Stephen Cook July 2020