

PREPARING A GWR LOCOMOTIVE FOR DAY'S WORK

Time allotted was based upon the size of boiler, 45 minutes for smaller boilers, 60 for larger and 75 for Castles and Kings.

I am going to describe the fireman's duties.

Inspect chart for engine number allocated.

Collect keys from stores for tool boxes and a bucket with various utensils in it. These being hand brush, flexible pet pipe for hosing coal and footplate, various spanners, driver's feeder (long spouted oil can).

Find engine, climb onto footplate, and place your coat and food box away in tool box/locker. If dark, light a flare lamp as this was the chief source of light, this you carried with you.

Place feeder and oil bottles to warm. Quick check of water level in boiler, the steam pressure, the state of fire and type of coal. If satisfactory, give sand levers for front and back wheels a quick pull, open all dampers to inspect ash pan later.

Take hand brush, walk round engine, tap sand pipes with brush to be sure sand is running, check contents of sand box to see if it requires replenishing. Go under engine to see if ash pan is empty, climb onto front footplate and look into the smoke box to see if spark arrester is in place, the jumper ring on blast pipe is free, no stays blowing, if all ok tighten up smoke box door and sweep smoke box ash from front footplate. Trim and position headlamps.

Return to footplate, check on firebox and also tube plate. Push fire over the fire bars and start building up fire. Test all water injectors to boiler. Examine water gauge test cocks. Trim tender or coal bunker to be sure coal is safe. Check all tools are there, shovel, clinker shovel and fire irons. Check that there are a dozen detonators and red flags, also a spare gauge glass. Give footplate a good tidy up and wipe eyeglasses inside and out.

The driver may want the engine moving a bit to do his oiling. The best position for him to do this is with the right hand big end at the bottom back position. This brings the left hand side at bottom front.

When ready, draw up to the water column and fill up.

Peter Chater.