

NATIONAL COAL BOARD (NORTH WESTERN AREA) 0-6-0 SADDLE TANK "FRED"

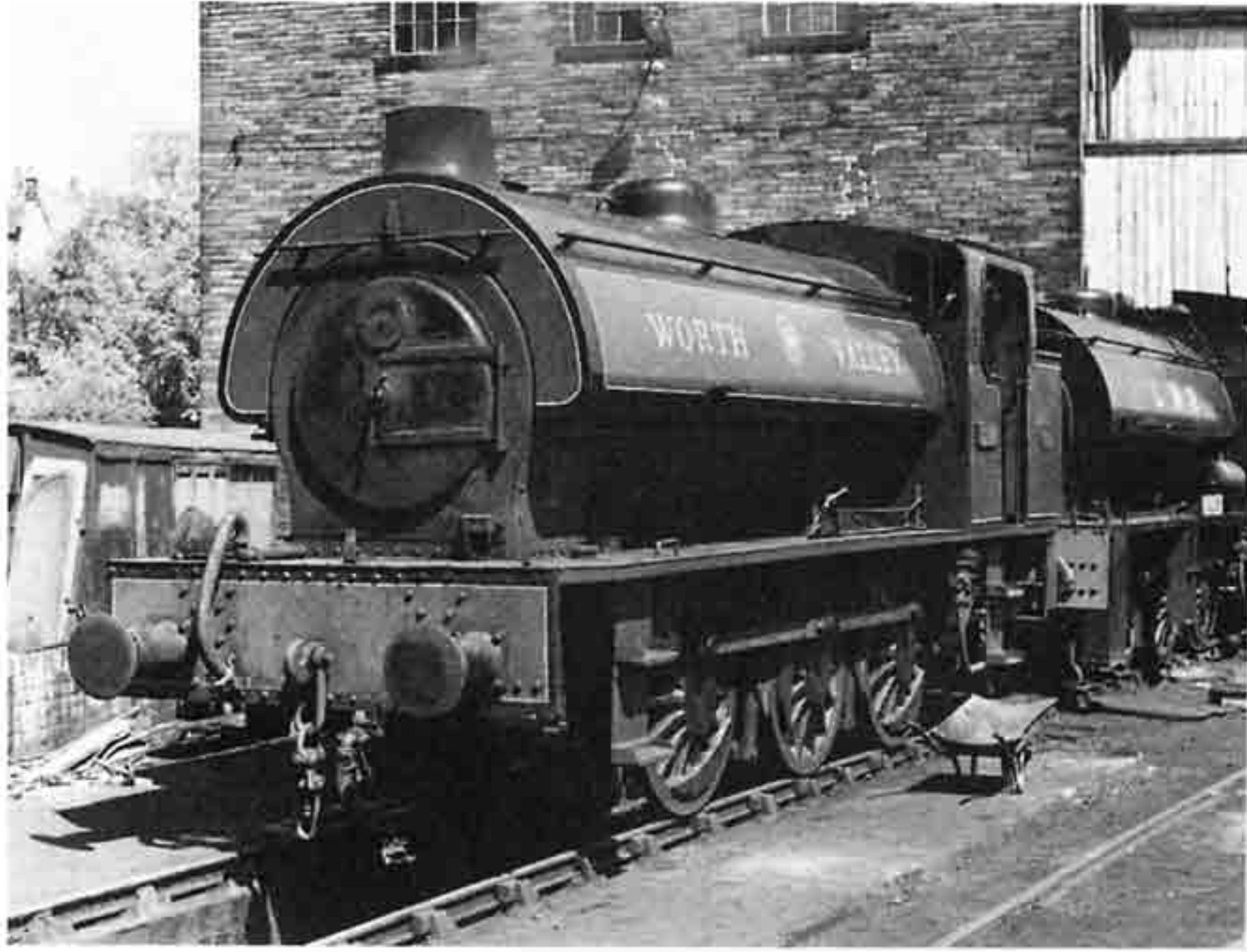
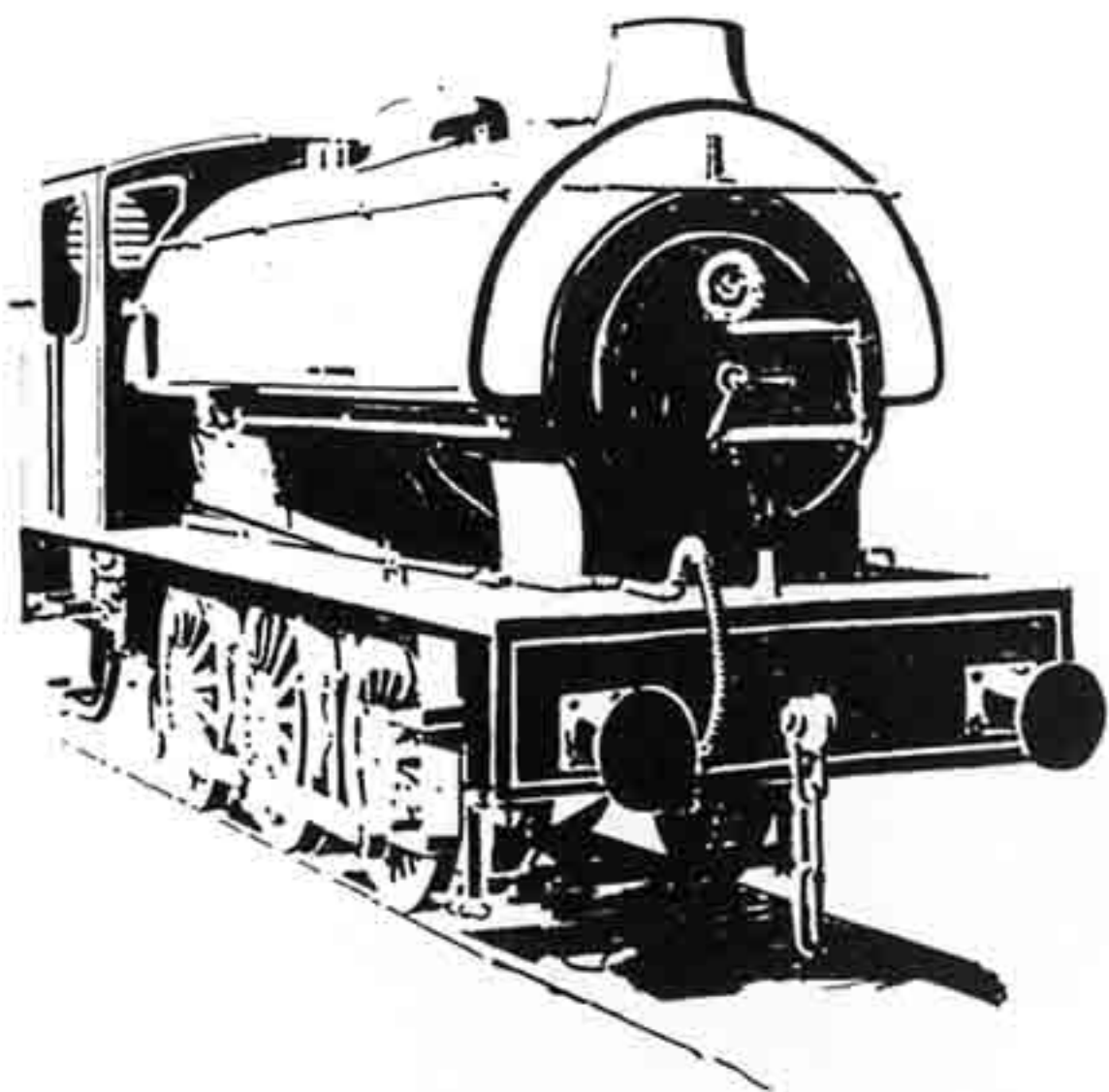


Photo: J. Sagar

The shunting locomotive design adopted as standard by the Ministry of Supply under the direction of Riddles during World War II was a derivation of a standard 18in. cylinder design by the Hunslet Engine Company of Leeds. Several hundred of these "Austerity" 0-6-0 saddle tanks were built in the years 1943-46 by Hunslets and a number of other private locomotive builders. After the War, the L.N.E.R. bought 75 of them from the M. o. S. for general shunting work, designating them Class "J94". Many others were snapped up by industrial railway operators such as the National Coal Board, whilst the War Department itself retained a substantial number of these new machines for use at military installations up and down the country.

In the postwar period, these engines could almost be regarded as the standard design for the new industrial steam engines of any size, Hunslets continuing to build them up to 1964. Some of the later machines were built (and earlier ones rebuilt) from 1961 with refinements such as underfeed stokers, making them some of the most sophisticated steam engines in the country. This resulted from several years' development work at Hunslets, the primary aim being to enable steam engines to meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. A greater overall efficiency was also achieved.

"Fred" was built by Robert Stephenson & Hawthorn of Newcastle in 1945. It was purchased by Manchester Collieries in 1946 and spent almost all its working life at collieries in the Walkden and Leigh areas of Lancashire. Several of the engines on this system were named after prominent colliery employees and this engine is appropriately named after the late Mr. Fred Hilton, a one-time locomotive superintendent of the Manchester Collieries railway system. It was rebuilt in 1964 with underfeed stoker and patent producer gas system, including a multiple-nozzle blastpipe and matching chimney. It came to Haworth in January 1969 by rail; by this time, the underfeed stoker was defunct and has since been removed but the front-end arrangement and producer gas system remain.



For the size of the engine, its capabilities on the heaviest Worth Valley passenger trains are a constant cause of surprise, and a clear demonstration of what could have been achieved with many more British steam engines if better combustion arrangements had been pursued. "Fred" has been retubed at Haworth and has received quite a lot of attention to keep it in good order. It was, of course, fitted with vacuum brake equipment to make it suitable for use on passenger services. The unusual chimney cowl and unmistakable sharp exhaust

blast make this a most distinctive locomotive.

RSH No. 7289; War Department No. 71480; Manchester Collieries and N.C.B. North Western Area "Fred".