

## **Swanage Railway – Diesel Locomotive 4210132 – “May”**

This loco was one of a batch built by John Fowler & Co (Leeds) Ltd in 1957.

It has a mechanical transmission and was one of the last to be constructed before they changed to hydraulic transmissions.

It weighs about 18 Tons and is powered by a McLaren M6 150bhp engine.

It was supplied to the British National Oil Corporation (now Britoil plc) for use at their Bramhall Oil Terminal in Poynton, Cheshire. This is now a ConocoPhillips UK depot. No sparks could be caused in the terminal, for obvious reasons, so many safety features were incorporated. It came with a water-filled silencer, fabric covered buffers, composition brake blocks and a low voltage electrical system.

It was impossible to use a crane in the depot, for fear of sparks from the metal lifting strops, so “May” had to be towed to British Railway's nearby Newton Heath depot by a Class 47.

A crane was hired to lift the Fowler onto a semi-trailer of D J Hedgeman Ltd of Wool. This was undertaken during the archetypal Manchester downpour on Thursday 31st August 1978. A speedy journey on the 250 Mile route south allowed arrival at Swanage on Friday 1st September. Unlike at Manchester the unloading was accomplished in blazing sunshine.

The loco operated with air brakes but, with the generous donation of equipment from Northey Engineering of Parkstone, the loco became capable of controlling vacuum braked trains.

It was used extensively on works trains from the Autumn of 1978 and was the loco allocated to haul the early Swanage Railway passenger trains. The first Swanage Railway passenger train comprised “May” and Bulleid Brake coach No. S4365 and ran from underneath Northbrook Road bridge, for a few hundred yards to a point beside King George V Playing Fields. These first Swanage Railway trains commenced on Saturday 4th August 1979.

The locomotive is currently being cosmetically restored by the Railway's Sygnets group, and it is hoped to eventually return it to complete running order.

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