

= Fairy Queen (locomotive) =

The Fairy Queen is a steam locomotive , plying between the Indian capital of New Delhi and Alwar , in Rajasthan . It was certified by the Guinness Book of Records in 1998 as being the world 's oldest one in regular operation after being restored to haul a luxury train in order to boost tourism in Rajasthan . The Fairy Queen runs on the same basis as the Palace on Wheels , the tourist train launched in 1982 , and in 1999 was awarded a National Tourism Award .

The 5 ft 6 in (1 @, @ 676 mm) Indian gauge locomotive was built in England in 1855 , and has a two @-@ cylinder engine with a power output of 130 horsepower (97 kW) , producing a top speed of 40 kilometres per hour (25 mph) . It was placed in service by the East Indian Railway Company in West Bengal , where it hauled troop trains during the Indian Rebellion of 1857 , and was withdrawn from service in 1909 and displayed on a pedestal in Howrah until 1943 . Heritage status was accorded in 1972 and the locomotive was restored as an exhibit at the National Rail Museum in Delhi . Restored to full working order , in 1997 the Fairy Queen returned to commercial service for the first time in 88 years .

In 2011 , it was discovered that rare locomotive parts that were " as good as irreplaceable " had been looted . After a substantial rebuild , the engine was returned to working order in December 2012 .

= = History = =

The locomotive was constructed by Kitson , Thompson and Hewitson at Leeds , in England , in 1855 , and reached Kolkata , then known as Calcutta , in the same year . On arrival , it was given fleet number " 22 " by its owner , the East Indian Railway Company , not receiving a name until 1895 . Initially , the 5 ft 6 in (1 @, @ 676 mm) gauge locomotive was used to haul light mail trains in West Bengal , operating between Howrah and Raniganj , and during the Indian Rebellion of 1857 hauled troop trains . It was later consigned to line construction duty in Bihar , where it served until 1909 .

The Fairy Queen spent the next 34 years on a pedestal outside Howrah station . In 1943 , the locomotive was moved to the Railway Zonal Training School at Chandausi , in Uttar Pradesh , where it served as a curiosity object for many of the students based there .

= = = Express = = =

A number of similar locomotives were built around the same time as the Fairy Queen . These were supplied by Kitson , Thompson and Hewitson and also by Stothert , Slaughter and Company of Bristol . One of these , Stothert @-@ built Express , had been preserved at Jamalpur Locomotive Workshop , in Bihar , since 1901 . As the inscription on Express ' pedestal claimed that it was the first locomotive to operate between Howrah and Raniganj , and it was numbered " 21 " by the East Indian Railway Company , it has been claimed that Express is the older of the two . Express was restored for running in 2011 , making it a contender as the world 's oldest operating steam locomotive .

= = Specifications = =

The Fairy Queen was built by Kitson , Thompson and Hewitson at Leeds in England in 1855 . The coal @-@ fired engine is powered by two outside cylinders measuring 12 by 22 inches (300 mm × 560 mm) , and has a power output of 130 horsepower (97 kW) , producing a maximum speed of 40 kilometres per hour (25 mph) . It carries 3 @, @ 000 litres (660 imp gal ; 790 US gal) of water in an underslung water tank . The locomotive weighs 26 tonnes (26 LT) , and the coal tender 2 tonnes (2 @. @ 0 long tons ; 2 @. @ 2 short tons) . Built for the 5 ft 6 in (1 @, @ 676 mm) Indian gauge , it has a 2 @-@ 2 @-@ 2 wheel arrangement , developed by Robert Stephenson and Company in 1833 , with a driving wheel measuring 1 @, @ 829 millimetres (72 @. @ 0 in) in diameter .

= = Restoration = =

The Indian government bestowed heritage status on the Fairy Queen in 1972 , rendering it a national treasure . It was restored and given a special spot in the newly built National Rail Museum at Chanakyapuri , in New Delhi .

Following the success of the Palace on Wheels , the locomotive was restored to full working order in 1997 , in preparation for its first mainline journey in 88 years and its return to commercial service on 18 July . The two @-@ day excursion saw the train plying the 143 kilometres (89 mi) from New Delhi to Alwar in Rajasthan , with passengers spending an overnight stay at the Sariska Tiger Reserve . The locomotive hauled a carriage capable of carrying 60 passengers at a maximum speed of 40 kilometres per hour (25 mph) , with a service car holding a generator , compressor and pantry . The operation was repeated between December and February in the following years . It was certified by the Guinness Book of Records in 1998 as the world 's oldest steam locomotive in regular operation . The following year , the train received a National Tourism Award for the most innovative and unique tourism project from Atal Bihari Vajpayee , the then Prime Minister of India .

In 2011 , it was discovered that rare locomotive parts that were " as good as irreplaceable " had been stolen , and the locomotive was moved to Perambur Locomotive Workshops at Chennai , in Tamil Nadu , for repair . On arrival , it was found that an estimated 50 to 60 parts had been looted , including the boiler , condensor , lubricator and flow tubes . The Deputy Chief Mechanical Engineer at the workshops stated " What we received is a dead body , a piece of metal whose every removable part has been removed , leaving only the metal shell . The list of parts to be procured is huge . " Officials estimated that it could take at least a year to restore the engine , even if suppliers of replacement parts could be found . Following a substantial rebuild , in which the workshops had to construct the missing parts themselves , the locomotive returned to service on 22 December 2012 .