SPIRIT OF
LOCOMOTION

The National Railway Museum at Shildon

Anthony Coulls

Since opening in September 2004, Locomotion – The National Railway Museum at Shildon has attracted one and a quarter million visitors to a part of County Durham which is steeped in railway history. From the opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway in 1825 through the long heritage of the North Eastern Railway and latterly British Railways wagon works, the museum celebrates both the local and national story through its location, buildings and being home to some 70 vehicles from the National Collection. The display varies on an almost weekly basis, and no two visits are the same.

A vibrant programme of events ensures that there is always something to see, and operating steam train rides on selected occasions brings the site to life. Over the last eight years, Anthony Coulls the National Railway Museum's Senior Curator of Rail Vehicle Collections has been intimately involved with the setting up and operation of the museum and his camera has never been far away. In this handy-sized hardback book containing over 60 photographs, he presents a selection of the everyday and the special occasions, giving a unique insight into the life of the museum – the first National Museum in the North East of England.
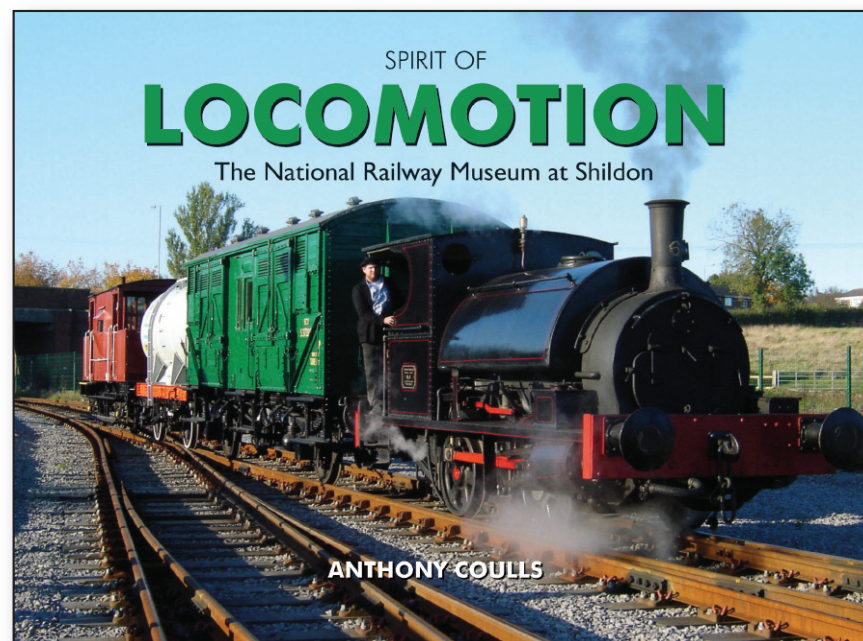
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anthony has worked in industrial and transport museums since graduating from the Ironbridge Institute in 1997. He worked initially at the National Railway Museum as a Curatorial Assistant, then as a Research Associate working on railways as World Heritage Sites. In 1999 he moved to become Assistant Keeper of Working Life at Leicestershire Museums, which included rebuilding the colliery railway at Snibston Museum in Coalville. 2001 saw a move north to be Curator of Energy at the Museum of Science & Industry in Manchester until he moved eight years ago to the National Railway Museum's second museum at Shildon in County Durham. Late in 2009 he became Senior Curator of Rail Vehicle Collections and works between York, Shildon and wherever the collection happens to be. He has also been an active volunteer on the locomotives of the Talyllyn Railway since 1990.

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Arguably the most famous of them all – A4 class "Mallard" spent a year at Shildon from June 2010, arriving hauled by "Tornado" and here about to be put on display after cleaning.

London Midland & Scottish Railway "Crab" in its new guise as 13000 was rolled out in December 2010 after a repaint and conservation and is good enough to use as a Christmas card!

Thousands came to the 2009 Steam Gala to see "Oliver Cromwell" which had arrived off the main line. The National Collection engine took part in a photo session at Locomotion on the Sunday morning as seen here.
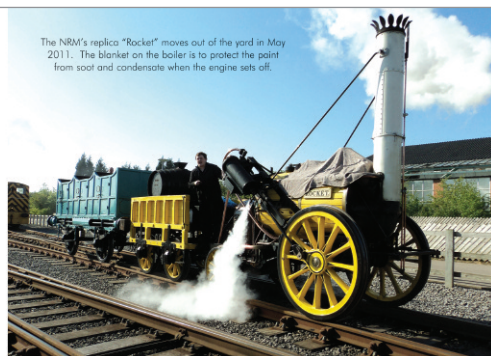
Example of a double-page spread

The NRM's replica "Rocket" moves out of the yard in May 2011. The blanket on the boiler is to protect the paint from soot and condensate when the engine sets off.

The NRM has good relationships with many heritage railways including the Severn Valley Railway, who lent Standard 4 Class No. 80079 for display in Spring 2005.

50 years of Deltic locomotives was celebrated on 7-8 October 2011 with a gathering of all 7 surviving locomotives including the Prototype Deltic from 1955.