

Editor's Report

S&DR Podcasts

The fourth S&DR podcast went live on the 27th May and it is all about Building Bridges – two in particular – The Gaunless Bridge (newly revealed at Locomotion) and the Skerne Bridge. Thank you to **Anthony Coulls** at Locomotion for chatting about the Gaunless Bridge and the New Hall. It also featured the voices of actor **Lee Morris** (Ingnatius Bonomi) and student **Alfie Nixon** (John Carter). Listening numbers/downloads are now at 806 (on the 29th May), so it would be good to have a bit of a push and get more people to tune in. You can access them all here: <https://talesfromtherails.podbean.com/>. Please forward this link to as many people as possible and spread the word. You can listen to these while doing other things, such as mowing the lawn, driving, cooking, trying to sleep (!) or just staring at the sky!

I am hugely grateful to **Dave Reynolds** (of the Stute in Shildon) for composing the theme music for the podcast and to **Archie Mackay** of SW Durham News who manages the technology and edits despite working full time on various local newspapers.

The next one (June) will be about Locomotion No.1 and Dr Michael Bailey has kindly agreed to join me and talk about his detailed report on the locomotive. July will acknowledge the opening of Hopetown with a discussion about that part of the S&DR and all the buildings that are or were there.

Do let me know of any events coming up and we will include them in the podcast and on the Friends' web site.

The next walk booklet revision

Work is virtually finished on updating the text and sourcing new images for our walk booklet between Shildon and Heighington. This is generously being funded by Husqvarna who are located along the route on Preston Road on the Aycliffe Business Park. Thank you to everyone who joined me on the walk/train ride on May 11th and to those who took photographs for the booklet. If you took part, you have been consulted on the draft content.

S&DR Music

The music project is underway; the recording of the music and videos will take place on August 1st and 2nd in Cambridge (where the specialist antique instruments are). So, it won't be long before you can listen to the opening day tunes as they would have sounded in 1825.

The Globe

Last call for papers for the next Globe please! So far we have two juicy offers of articles and editing has begun. We do need more though, or it will be a bit thin.

Webmaster's Report

It has been a quiet month of sales on our web site with 10 products sold amounting to £77.48. The main item sold was membership and the revised walk booklets and World on Track continue to sell well.

The Locomotion pens made by Andy Simmons, a descendant of John Falcus Carter of Heighington Station fame, are still available if anyone wants a special gift for someone. These are sold in order to raise funds for our Save Heighington Station Campaign.

Don't forget that we have a number of publications for sale in our [online shop](#) and the beautiful Hattersley maps of the S&DR and A3 sized prints of John Dobbin's Opening of the S&DR.

Other things

I gave the Blue Badge guides a presentation on the S&DR so that they can now devise paid for tours of the S&DR in 2025.

We have been approached by BBC 2 about two documentaries on the S&DR to be broadcast in 2025. We are also getting ongoing enquiries in relation to scripts for plays, yarn bombing, a locomotive visiting the UK in 2025, an engineering heritage award for the S&DR, an exhibition of engineering on the S&DR for 2025, 1825 costumes, establishing a working relationship with the Wear Rivers Trust, providing images for the forthcoming Bradley's Railway Guide, damage to remains on Cockfield Fell (Haggerleases line), providing materials for interpretation at Hopetown, and invitations to give presentations.

Niall and I had a student, Alfie Nixon, work with us for a week in May. He went through archive material on the Skerne bridge and created a chronology of archive material, he featured on our bridges podcast, he worked with Jane Hackworth-Young for a day archiving and he helped with the health and safety recce for the guided walk on the 11th May. Many thanks to Alfie (now a Friend of course!) for his hard work.

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