

Editor's Report – October 2024

S&DR Podcasts

The eighth podcast went live on the 27th of September and was appropriately celebratory in tone. If you haven't listened to any yet, I'd urge you to listen to this one because it had a number of contributions that really lifted it and will get you in the party mood. If you just click on this link, it will take you straight there and you can sit down and listen, or crack on with something else while it plays in the background.

<https://talesfromtherails.podbean.com/e/celebrations/>

The next podcast to be released on the 27th October will hopefully be about education and the role of The Stute (the world's first Railway Institute in Shildon). We will be joined by Dave Reynolds to discuss his book *A First for Knowledge* (Dave also wrote our theme music). The Star of the S&DR will be about Timothy Hackworth, The Stute's first president.

You can access all our S&DR podcasts here: <https://talesfromtherails.podbean.com/>. Please forward this link to as many people as possible and spread the word.

As always, do let me know of any events coming up and we will include them in the podcast and on the Friends' web site. Obviously for the podcast I need to know well in advance as it only comes out once a month and we record about ten days in advance to give Archie time to do the editing.

The next walk booklet revision

The walk booklet between Shildon and Heighington was officially launched at Locomotion on the 27th September. Husqvarna who sponsored it generously organised and funded the launch and provided party bags and an amazing cake of the walk route. It was delicious too. They are also providing two specially designed robotic lawnmowers (with a plugwheel inspired design and The Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway written on them) which we can raffle to raise funds. These are worth in the region of £3,000 each, so I am investigating a suitable place for the raffle(s) which will attract as many people as possible. I hope you will all buy a ticket or two.

It was a surprise to be handed a cheque at the event from Husqvarna for an additional £2,500 for another walks booklet. This has given us the budget to crack on with our next one in Darlington. I'll be in touch in a few weeks to organize a walking the line event as part of updating the Darlington Circular.

Many thanks to Locomotion for providing the venue for the launch and to Pam Porter and Sarah Price for all their help. We really appreciate the policy of allowing us to use Locomotion for free as partners. A special thank you to Husqvarna's chief party planner (and Manufacture Manager), Daniel Wilkinson and Caraline Robinson, Husqvarna's Manufacturing Director.

S&DR Music

The music and videos are now available for you to listen to and download. Just visit our web site and you'll see a short cut link to the S&DR music page here:

<https://www.sdr1825.org.uk/>

There are some great tunes on there. My favourite is the rendition of Weel May the Keel Row, but all the tunes from the opening day in 1825 sound fantastic largely down to the specialist musicians from Queen Victoria's Consort and the music arranger Steve Robson. The videos will introduce you to some of the weird and wacky instruments of the early 19th

century too. If you would like any of the tracks sent to you direct for your events, just let me know and I'll give you a link.

The Globe

The next Globe is due out in December, but I'd like to receive contributions by 28th November to give me plenty of time to produce it. The Globe can only be as good as the contributions, so please do what you can to pass on content.

Webmaster's Report

Nothing much to report. Most sales have related to the coffee table book. The web site generates a lot of enquiries which are increasing the nearer we get to 2025. Most people are keen to share ideas for events, want images or information, and of course invitations to talk.

Limited Edition Coffee Table Book

We are making great progress on this and now, thanks to a significant order from A.V. Dawson, we have half the funding needed and can now proceed and get it on the shelves in the New Year 2025. If you would like your name listed at the front, please get you pre-order in soon. Once it goes to the designer (probably November) it will be too late to have your name listed, but you will still be able to buy it. You can pre-order it here:

www.sdr1825.org.uk

S&DR competitions

I'd like to remind you of two competitions that we are supporting.

1. Write on Track is the creative writing workshop. We're looking for poetry, short stories and memoir pieces related in some way to trains and railways. These don't need to be specifically about the Stockton & Darlington Railway - we just want to see a clear link to railways, tracks and trains within the work. You can find out more at the Tracks Darlington web site www.tracksdarlington.co.uk/wot-home
2. The SDR200 Research on the Rails competition is being organised by the Cleveland and Teesside Local History Society and the Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway for original research into the S&DR. The best entries will be published in their journals (The Globe and Cleveland History), or we may decide to publish a separate new, joint publication. The original research can be on any subject connected to the history of the Stockton & Darlington Railway up to 1863, including its impact beyond that date. It can be about people, technology, events, archival research, impacts – the choice is yours. There are more details being circulated with these papers.
The prize will be up to £1,000, provided jointly by Cleveland & Teesside Local History Society and The Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway and awarded to the author(s) of an essay which fulfils the criteria of the competition and which in the opinion of the judges merits the award.

Guided walks training

We are holding our training for walk leaders at Locomotion on the 14th October at Locomotion 10am-1pm. If you intend leading any walks, or acting as rear guard, then you need to be on this course. We are almost at capacity, but can probably squeeze in a couple more.

IMechE

The Institution of mechanical Engineering has awarded the S&DR an award for engineering innovation. George Stephenson was its first president. We have been looking at the location and number of plaques to be positioned along the line, and the wording on the plaques. This is surprisingly challenging!

Correspondence

As 2025 approaches, we are becoming very popular! We are receiving about 2-3 requests a week to give talks next year (all over the UK) and diaries are filling up for the rest of 2024 (another request has just come in as I write this!). My best job in relation to this in the last month was to judge a poetry competition on railways by the Durham County Federation of Women's Institutes. We are also receiving a wide variety of queries via the web site ranging from requests for images, advice on content, advice on copyright, specialist advice for funded projects and approaches for joint Fringe events in 2025. Amongst the latter I have met with Stockton Libraries (with Barry Thompson) to discuss options which unsurprisingly featured books, walks, film, music, and beer.

Early Railways Conference Darlington 22nd-26th September 2025

Niall and I have been working on the synopses of two papers being given at next year's conference. One on the development of the railway station on the S&DR to be given jointly with Eric Branse-Instone of Historic England and the other a keynote address on the S&DR. The draft programme looks fascinating and I'd urge as many of you as possible to attend next year.

Caroline Hardie caroline@aenvironment.co.uk