

Editor's Report – September 2024

S&DR Podcasts

The sixth and seventh podcast went live on the 27th of July and 27th August. The former was on Hopetown and the historic buildings there and George Stephenson, the manager (not the engineer). The latter was on how the S&DR influenced the development of the railroad in America and the Stars of the S&DR were Edward and Rachel Pease. Huge thanks to Jonathan Ratcliffe for sharing his knowledge. It is a fascinating subject where we learned about the Quaker Line (Not the S&DR!), the importance of dinner parties in innovation, the perception of Hackworth as a tinkerer and Stephenson as a digger – these are fond perceptions based on admiration by American engineers, believe it or not! We had some oakum in the tubes with Archie going down with Covid and so Niall stepped in to help co-present the Hopetown podcast. Lots of other people have helped too or agreed to be interviewed and I am very grateful to all of them. The next podcast to be released on the 27th September will be about how we have commemorated the S&DR in the past and how the celebrations differed between those organised by the S&DR and those organised after its amalgamation with the NER in 1863. The Star of the S&DR will probably be Thomas Meynell.

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.

Our podcasts have been downloaded 1600 times so far.

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 a sit only comes out once a month.

The next walk booklet revision

The walk booklet between Shildon and Heighington is now for sale on our web site. Husqvarna who sponsored it are generously organizing a launch at Locomotion which I hope all Friends will receive an invite to. It has been provisionally arranged for 4-6.30pm on the 27th September. We are promised cake! Many thanks to Pam Porter at Locomotion who has been very helpful (Locomotion are providing the venue free of charge as the Friends are partners) and to Daniel Wilkinson at Husqvarna who is generously now giving his time as a party planner.

I am starting work on the Darlington Circular walk book but we still need a sponsor to help with the costs. I know here are businesses out there looking to help, so this could be your chance.

S&DR Music

The music has now been recorded. Watch this space!

The Globe

You should have received July's Globe in July unless you wait for a hard copy in which case it is a little later. Thank you to everyone who submitted content. The next Globe is out in December.

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. The photographer Peter Giroux has been once along the line and is now doing a return trip. I have set out the whole book, written most of the text including an introduction and a more detailed section on the opening day. We have some additional material now including songs and poetry, especially commissioned art by John Wigston, some additional photography by other keen photographers and drone footage. Permissions are in place to use historic artwork including the Cuneo painting of the race between Locomotion No.1 and the stagecoach. Lord Peter Hendy has kindly agreed to write a foreword.

We do however need more people to pre-order the book. This is how we are funding it and although we have over 50 pre-orders, we need many more. Remember if you do, you will have your name listed at the front. If you prefer you can have the name of a departed relative or friend listed in the In Memoriam section. So if you haven't pre-ordered the book, please do so on our web site now. www.sdr1825.org.uk

Edward Pease's House

Things are still moving ahead here and the next meeting for an update on progress is later this month. I visited the site with Julia McCabe from Darlington Borough Council, the architects Nappers and the conservation officer Gaby Rose in August. The kitchen fittings have been taken out and this has helped to reveal layers of wall coatings which go back to the time when Edward Pease lived there (the particular wall I was looking at was put in after Rachel Pease died). There are also some timber window details there but as it is only a fragment I don't know whether it is Pease date or 1866. Probably the latter.

Other things

I have taken part on various family and storytelling activities this month and ran a creative writing workshop on Women of the Railways. One sentence, but such a lot of work!

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