



Chair's Report/Activity for May 2024

Dear Friends,

Warmer days and better weather are on the way and with them many of our volunteer groups are getting out and doing things, as well as more visitors along the S&DR. Lots of projects and initiatives continue to bubble under towards development and exciting conclusions, the question is for some things will they be delivered in time for 2025?

One project that has been completed is New Hall at Locomotion, Shildon which opened on 23rd of May. An excellent opening event was attended by partners from along the line and further afield and it was a great opportunity to catch up with people and make the case for many initiatives close to our hearts. The excellent New Hall is well worth a visit, and we look forward to the improved story of the S&DR and Shildon which space in the original building can now accommodate. Well done to all our friends at Locomotion and the NRM on the conclusion of an excellent project. Despite all the wonderful rail vehicles under cover, my own highlight is seeing the Gaunless Bridge back close to where it belongs and painted in surprisingly 'bright' Georgian colours of green and white, all accurate and informed by paint scrapes.

A little east along the line at Heighington we continue our project to buy and restore the site, the world's earliest railway station. Donations keep coming in with over £15k pledged by several hundred people, £10,000 from the Healdy Trust and several other applications submitted. We now need to submit our major grant application to the Community Ownership Fund by 26th June and if successful we will hear by early September. Lots of work still to do on the business plan, but all is looking promising with much appreciated support from Durham County Council. Thirty or so members and volunteers undertook a fantastic tidy up around the building on Saturday 25th May, thanks to them all and to Margaret Fenwick and John Raw for organising. Please do continue to circulate the webpage details (<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/save-heighington-station>) to everyone you know and spread the word. If you can't afford to donate then you can show your support by signing our petition at <https://forms.office.com/r/9sfYKNLbHr>

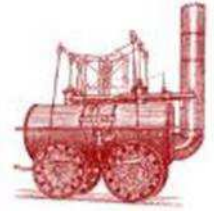
In Darlington we look forward to the imminent completion and opening of the revamped and extended North Road Railway Museum as 'Hopetown' on the 16th June. I was pleased to have a walking meeting with Councillor Chris McEwan Deputy leader of Darlington Council and a long phone conversation with Councillor Steve Harker about a number of things. In particular we identified concern over the state and security of the Lime Cells on Hopetown Lane, the opportunity being discussed with Network Rail regarding the site of the 1827 Merchandise Station (directly opposite the new entrance to Hopetown) to remove rubbish and display the site properly; and the other opportunities of Dobbin View (a mini park where John Dobbin's famous view could be recreated), and the future of Edward Pease's house. With regard to the Pease house we continue to discuss with Darlington council its restoration and possible use by the Friends as our offices. Our local Darlington Interest Group (DIG), continue to flourish and my congratulations on their enthusiasm with litter picks, walks, repairs to the Haughton Road

**Chair, Friends of the S&DR CIO, Marian Cottage, Lartington, Barnard
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Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway.

WWW.SDR1825.org.uk. Registered Charity 1177252



Coal Depot wall and the re-setting of stone sleeper stones along Tornado Way being fantastic examples of their recent work.

We continue to revise and update our self-guided walk booklets and hope to have all of these done by 2025. Each book for revisions, design and print costs around £2500 Husqvarna have kindly sponsored the Shildon-Heighington book and we'd be delighted to talk to any other businesses along the line if they would like to sponsor as well. The revised booklet was 'tested out' by a volunteer group recently guided by our walk booklet author and editor Caroline Hardie and should be in print very soon.

Caroline also provided a talk and briefing session for North East Blue Badge guides held at Locomotion on 20th May. The Blue Badge Guides intend to provide a bespoke guide service for tourists and visitors in 2025, all part of making the S&DR an established visitor attraction.

I continue to give illustrated talks on requests and recently spoke to Wylam Mens' group (which do allow women as well!) Fantastic to visit Wylam with its strong railway links to Hedley, Stephenson and Hackworth. A really worthwhile conversation afterwards may lead to possible NE Region heritage rail promotion.

Our recent Trustee meeting lasted a marathon 2.5 hrs and we enjoyed a presentation from Jill Read (S&DR Communications and Stakeholder Mgr with Stockton on Tees Borough Council), and from Richie Starrs the S&DR Programme Manager who confirmed a bid for digital interpretation along the S&DR has been submitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and we should have an answer in around eight weeks. Other key topics at trustees included the consideration of Insurance and risk assessment for the Friends as our business and ownership of property continues to develop. On the subject of risk assessment for activities. I'm grateful for member Gerry Wilkinson's help and support in this area, a great example of the wide range of skills and expertise within the Friends. If you have skills you feel we can use please do offer to help in any way you can. Trustees also warmly welcomed member Yvonne Richardson as a co-opted trustee and we look forward to her enthusiasm and contacts adding to our work.

Our future business planning project supported by the local authorities and being supported by Tricolor Associates is moving towards a lottery bid in July to provide funds for future development work.

At Fighting Cocks the new mural was completed and an opening day on Saturday 27th of April went well, only being marred by the weather. Here as with everywhere along the line my thanks goes out to all our volunteers and trustees without which none of our work would be possible. We can of course always do with more active workers so if you have time or skills you can spare to help with then please do get in touch.

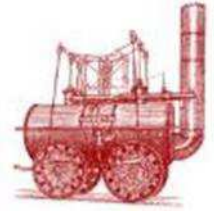
2025 Planning.

Again we are still waiting for September when the official 2025 Festival programme is announced.

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And finally a reminder for contacts:

Cait Barratt the 'S&DR Heritage & Community Participation Manager' is the person to talk to regarding the S&DR community Fund which can provide grants of a few hundred to a few thousand pounds and which are available over the next 4 years to help people celebrate and conserve the S&DR. If you have an idea then get in touch with Cait and she will provide initial feedback on your idea and if it fits the community grant objectives encourage you to submit an application. Ideas can be submitted to Cait on the following email address s&drcommunitygrantsscheme@darlington.gov.uk. Cait also now has two officers supporting her in volunteer and education development and we hope to meet them at our March monthly meeting, contact details to follow.

The team of various officers in the local authorities including Niccy Hallifax the 2025 Festival Director, can all now be contacted through one single email address which is info@sdr200.co.uk which people should use for any general enquiries.

As ever if you want to discuss anything S&DR related drop me a line at Chair@sdr1825.org.uk.

All the best.

Niall Hammond,
Chair, Friends of the S&DR. 30/05/2024.

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Planning Officer's Report; S&DR Friends Meeting 6 June 2024

Any further updates or new applications will be reported at the meeting. Otherwise, this report will be taken as read unless members have comments or questions to raise. Decisions and new applications are highlighted in **red**.

1 DURHAM COUNTY

k DM/22/01891/FPA Craggwood Holiday Park proposed extension

No change. The expected details of how the embankment of the Haggerleases Branch is protected have not yet been submitted.

l DM/23/00486/FPA Proposed Bluestone Solar Panel Farm, High Lands, Cockfield

We await consultation on the interpretation panel(s) required by condition 21;
Within 6 months of the commencement of development detail including construction and content of proposed site interpretation material based on the local heritage and including a timescale for installation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The interpretation material shall be erected and maintained in accordance with the approved details.

n DM/22/03739/FPA New wall etc at Northern Metal Recycling. Hackworth Industrial Park, Shildon

No change. We await being consulted by Mr Bell on the design of the mural.

2 DARLINGTON BOROUGH

i North Road Rail Heritage Quarter – Hopetown

23/00186/CON Details for the Head of Steam Station Building

No change. Revised details have been submitted but the Conservation Officer still has concerns about some of the proposals.

24/00133/CON Details relating to alterations to the Hopetown Carriage works building

No change. The Conservation Officer has advised improvements to the submitted details.

23/01175/DC Formation of a play area etc.

Further to previous reports, **this application was approved** by delegated officer powers on 28 May. The officer's report makes no response to our request to use the spelling 'waggons' or to have discounted admission charges for local children, although these are not planning matters.

m 21/01353/FUL Site of Former Corus Works (East Site) Whesoe Road

No change. Further to previous reports, the applicant is preparing revised proposals to take into account comments received. We raised concerns about the appearance of the development from the railway and the need to include a link to the Walking and Cycling Route.

o 22/00213/FUL Installation of a solar farm on land north of Burtree Lane

Some details have been submitted for approval, but these do not relate to matters of concern to us, eg landscaping, information displays and the walking and cycling route.

p 22/01342/FULE Greater Faverdale (Burtree Garden Village) Phase 1 re-submission

This application was **recommended for approval** subject to conditions and legal agreements at the Planning Applications Committee on 15 May. We will continue to recommend a suitably landscaped lineside corridor for the walking and cycling route, when later phases are proposed.

y 24/00083/DC Walking and Cycling Route; Upgrade between Mill Lane to St George's Way, Middleton St George.

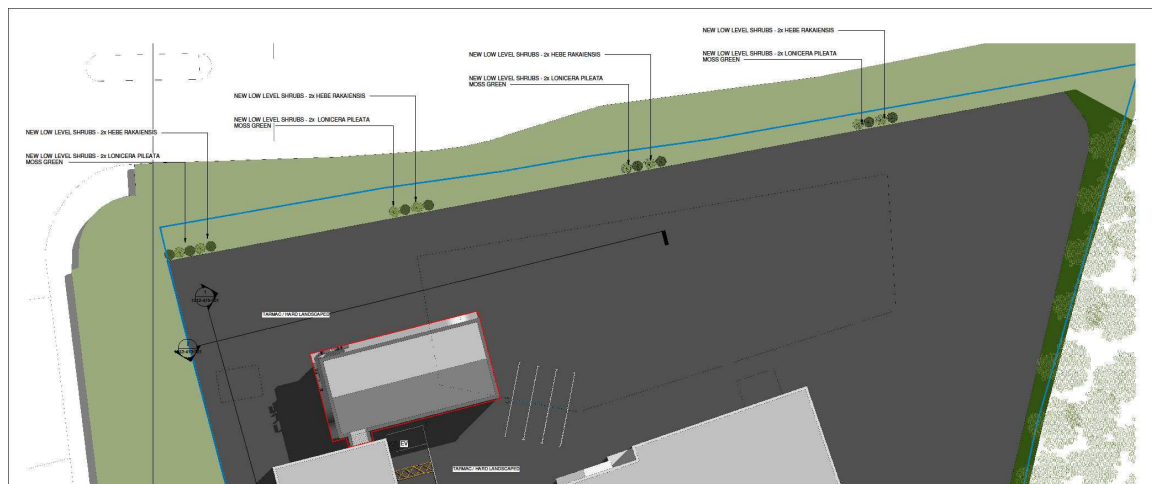
The extension of time to decide this application has been put back until 5 July. We requested seating along the path.

z 24/00179/FUL Erection of extension to form additional showroom and sales office; S G Petch Ltd McMullen Road

Further to last month's report, this application was approved by delegated officer authority on 17 May. We asked for a hedge and some trees to screen the open storage of vehicles.

The officer's report says;

The comments of the FSDR are noted. These do however relate to an existing issue, which is unaffected by the proposed development and will not alter as a direct consequence of it. Nevertheless, the applicant was asked to provide some limited landscaping to satisfy net gain requirements. The proposed landscaping plan satisfies this requirement and whilst it will not fully achieve the aims / intentions of the FSDR comments, it will also improve the visual appearance of the site.



3 STOCKTON BOROUGH

m 23/1768/DCH discharge condition no5 (Soft Landscaping) of planning approval 21/2240/FUL - Erection of industrial/business units at Urray Nook Road Eaglescliffe.

No change. There has been no progress with this application since November 2023

n 23/2223/FUL Erection of 87no. dwellings on land East Of Mandale Park Urray Nook Road Eaglescliffe

Further to last month's meeting, I submitted the following comments;

The Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway are disappointed to see that the line of trees along the Urray Nook Road frontage of the site as shown on the proposed site layout submitted on 1 December 2023 do not appear on the revised layout submitted on 23 April. The Friends therefore now object to the application.

The comments submitted by the Friends on 19 December 2023 explain that it is necessary for the trees to be planted in order to protect the setting of the former Stockton & Darlington Railway as required by policy HE3 of the Local Plan. Your attention is drawn to the agreement of Mr Good to the Friends' request.

The proposed site plan should be amended to include the previously proposed trees.

p 24/0249/COU Application for the conversion of 1no dwelling into 2no dwellings to include associated external works and new boundary wall at 519 Yarm Road Eaglescliffe

No change. Tees Archaeology have been consulted (at our request) and they agree that a condition requiring archaeology work be attached to a permission.

4 MIDDLESBROUGH

Draft Local Plan

No change. The Council has acknowledge receipt of our comments but have not yet responded to our request for a meeting to discuss policy to protect the 1830 S&DR extension.

Ross Chisholm, Planning Officer, 30/05/2024

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.

Caroline Hardie caroline@aenvironment.co.uk

FRIENDS of the S&DR

CHECK LIST for WALK LEADERS

- 1) A RISK ASSESSMENT must be carried out before each walk and the Walk Leader must have walked the route in advance so as to identify any particular hazards from stock, mud or difficult stiles etc.
- 2) The Walk Leader must collect the name, mobile number (where available), house no. & post code of each participant and their emergency contact, and the Leader must have all mobile numbers on the walk. The Leader must carry a mobile phone and ensure each walker has the number. The Leader must carry a minor First Aid Kit. Should the police/ ambulance have to be called, the Leader is charged with calling these services.
- 3) The Walk Leader is responsible for timing between stops (he/she must bear in mind that some people are slow and many will ask questions). The Leader should wait for walkers at the rear to arrive at a stop before addressing the group, and allow the last walker to catch his/her breath before setting off again. The group must be moved on when falling behind schedule, particularly if other parties are to be met along the way (the Leader should recognise that not every artefact needs explanation)
- 4) When there are more than 6 participants, someone must be appointed as rear guard.
- 5) All participants must wear sturdy walking boots or shoes and be dressed in suitable clothing for current weather conditions and carry water.
- 6) Dogs may accompany owners on most of the walks as long as they are kept under control and the owners have leads. Owners should register with the Walk Leader that they wish to have a dog with them.
- 7) Walkers should abide by the government guidelines in force at the time in relation to Covid or any other pandemic. Participant should have masks with them which, at the current time (March 2022), must be worn when entering buildings but not necessarily in the open

Date of walk..... Walk Leader.....

Guided walks were discussed at last Thursday's DIG; Steve Green and Hugh Jackson offered to become walk leaders, subject to them receiving training and being awarded insurance and public liability cover. Other members of the Group will assist as required.

The Group will be working on details of the walks (and numbers of participants) for the Bicentenary festival but can not guarantee having a firm programme to submit to Niccy by September.

The Group is clear that there needs to be a central system for the public to book places on the walks and also those being offered by Peter, John and Jane (and others?) elsewhere along the line.

A central administrator should take bookings (and payments?) and provide leaders with the names and necessary personal details of participants.

Everyone at the meeting agreed that leaders should not be responsible for taking bookings as this will subject them to a barrage of requests from all over the world by telephone, email, texts etc from this September onwards. Also, it would be simpler for the public to select their walks (and other events) from a programme and make only one booking request.

Ross Chisholm

Membership Report – 31 May 2024

Fees & Donations: - 27 September 2023 to 31 May 2024:-
Ordinary Members - £3238.52 (including donations of £309.23)

Corporate Members - £800
Total - £4038.52

Membership

Individual Members – **278** (8 new members & 1 member re-joined)
Members on Facebook – **31.65 %**

Corporate Members – **16.**

Membership renewal

I will be sending renewal invitations end of August/beginning of September.
As with the last 3 years the emphasis will be on renewal via Standing Order.
All new members since 27 September 2023 were advised in their welcome email that renewal would be via Standing Order.
The problem is with existing members who joined prior to 27 September 2023.
Despite my efforts these members are reluctant to set up a Standing Order and therefore I have to contact them every year and then wait weeks/months for them to pay by whatever method.
Every member who renews via Standing Order is one less member to contact each year.

The member who re-joined is the seventh member to do so since 27 September 2023. Had they set up a Standing Order this situation would not have occurred?

Peter Bainbridge
Membership Secretary
31.05.2024

B I GROUP report

The section of cycling/walking route continues to be slow progress. Sections from J Bell Recycling Yard to the Hackworth end of Locomotion are now installed. However the chain is broken at the former Mason's Arms Crossing as the cycle way running parallel to stone sleeper blocks is still not in. Neither is the crossing of the Main Road at this point. Oh for a set of level crossing gates, at this junction.

Shildon T C continue to cut grass at both sites. The next S DR walk from St HELEN will end Brusselton on Friday 14th June.

For anyone interested in becoming involved, the next meeting of B I Group will be taking place on Saturday 6th July 10.15 in the former Whistle Stop Cafe Redworth Road New Shildon.

E I W P C GROUP

The group will be showing their new display boards for the first time at this years Toft Hill Fair. from noon on 6th July. There is an open invite to members and their significant other to attend our GARDEN PARTY from 13.00 on Sunday 15th September in the garden of our Hon Sec Mary Smith. Whilst this will be free entry, so we may know just how many at attending it will be necessary to book, by contacting jraw2883@aol.com

The promised work along the former track bed promised by D C C has not as yet started along the entire section from the start point to St Helen

john raw hon sec



Friends of the S&DR Risk Assessment

Activity: Guided Walks

Assessment carried out by:

G Wilkinson

Date: 6th June 2024

Hazard	Risk	How to control the risk	What further action is required?	Action by who?	By When?	Done
Pre-walk surveillance required as per Friends of S&DR Checklist for Walk Leaders	below as applicable	communication by Walk Leader	Walk Leader to carry mobile phone for any emergencies	Walk Leader	day before the walk	
moving/speeding vehicles	walkers being struck and injured	Walk Leader keep walkers away from roads with traffic where possible. Communicate safe parking locations in advance of the walk. Cross roads promptly as a group	consider appointing a walk rear guard as well as a walk leader	Walk Leader	on the day	
Inclement weather	hypothermia, depleted energy	walkers to carry warm and waterproof clothing with them if rain is forecast or likely and a packed lunch for longer walks	check weather forecast on the day before the walk is planned and consider cancellation in severe weather	Walk Leader	day before the walk	
hot sunny weather	dehydration is principal risk but also, sunburn and sun stroke risk to walkers	walkers to carry water, sun screen and sun hat	have spare bottles of water available at start of walk	Walk Leader	day before the walk	
hidden obstacles in vegetation/ uneven terrain, soft ground	tripping and falling injuries	walkers required to keep to the paths and shorter grass. Preferably wear sturdy footwear	walkers to consider using walking poles for hilly terrain	Walk Leader	day before the walk	
large farm animals	risk of trampling/crushing by cows with calves, horses with foals etc.	walk slowly through field as a group to avoid location of animals. Keep dogs on a short lead at the back of the group and release dogs from lead if animals approach walkers with dogs.		Walk Leader	on the day	
stiles, fences	risk of tripping and falling injuries	take care and take time when climbing and stepping over stiles and fences	Assist other walkers as necessary	Walk Leader	on the day	
walkers wandering away from the group	individuals could get lost on their own away from the path	Walk leader to count the number in the group at the start and at intervals during the walk	Walkers can leave the walk if the walk leader is informed of reduced numbers	Walk Leader	on the day	
barbed wire, sharp edges	cuts and sprains	walk leader to carry basic first aid kit for use as appropriate		Walk Leader	on the day	
Walking long distances and climbing ascents	Exhaustion with weaker or elderly walkers	communicate the difficulty of the walk to more vulnerable people. Allow plenty of time for the slower to keep up.	Plan rest periods and locations and comfort breaks. Consider a plan 'B' shorter walk with a deputy leader.	Walk Leader	before the walk and on the day	
Covid	infection and debilitation from virus	Follow government communicated guidance		Walk Leader	on the day	