

Editor and Webmaster's Report 2023-4.

Caroline Hardie

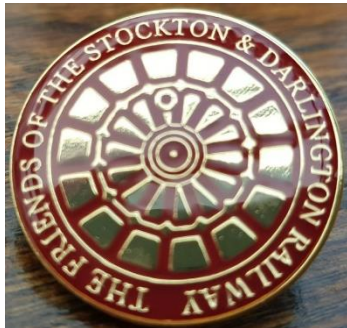
The Globe

Two Globes have been produced this last year in December 2023 and July 2024. Hard copies are sent by Peter Bainbridge to those who expressed a preference and copies have also been sent to the British Library. To all those who have submitted articles in the last year, thank you on behalf of all our readers. If you would like to submit something S&DR related in the future, ask me for our guidance notes – this can save time later. The deadline for contributions for our next Globe is 28th November 2024.



We print 100 hard copies a year, although most members prefer a PDF copy. Currently there is no additional cost to members who request a hard copy, but I do think we will need to review that in future.





Badges



This last year we have also had rather attractive dark red and gold badges made, modelled on Hackworth's plug wheel. New members will receive a badge while stocks last. Additional badge can be purchased for £2.50 in our online shop here, or at any events: <https://www.sdr1825.org.uk/product/friends-sdr-badge/>

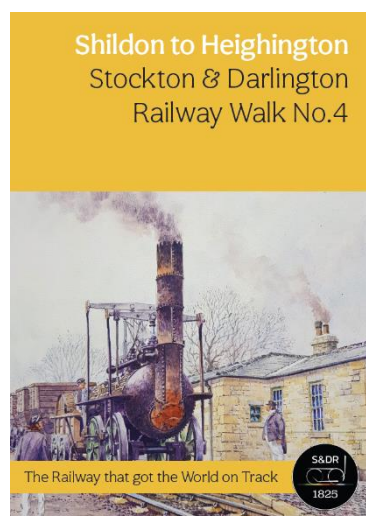
Walks booklets

This year we have updated one of our self guided walk booklets thanks to sponsorship from Husqvarna (and a fun launch at Locomotion thank you Husqvarna and Locomotion). That was the Shildon to Heighington stretch. The revision of the Darlington Circular is underway; look out for your invite to try out the walk soon. Once the Darlington Circular is complete we will have updated four booklets:

-  West Auckland to Shildon,
-  Shildon Circular,
-  Shildon to Heighington and,
-  the Darlington Circular

and produced attractive folders which can be used to hold complete sets of walks booklets (or Globes).

These are all for sale on our web site. <https://www.sdr1825.org.uk/store/>



The next booklets to be reviewed will either be Witton Park to West Auckland or Darlington to Fighting Cocks/Goosepool. The timetable is set by the new walking and cycling route being constructed. Options for different routes at the Stockton end are still being considered with support from Barry Thompson.

Coffee table book

At the time of writing we have had 123 subscribers plus an additional 80 ordered by A. V. Dawson in Middlesbrough (who will have their logo included as part sponsors of the book).

Subscriptions received so far, excluding those purchased by A.V. Dawson, have raised £4,225 excluding postage costs. That will help towards the printing costs. The text (by me, Caroline Hardie) and photography (by Peter Giroux) is nearly finished and the content is being reviewed by a small editorial team before going to wider consultation. I am thrilled that we have also had contributions from other photographers and artist John Wigston, plus poets Ann Cuthbert, Lizzy Lovejoy and Hary Gallagher as well as music by Sam Slatcher.

The book should be ready in January or February 2025. I hope that local bookshops plus Locomotion will stock it. Sadly if Hopetown continue their policy of not selling books we won't be able to sell it there, nor will we be able to sell the guided walk booklets that cover the Hopetown buildings!

S&DR Music



The project to replicate the musical sounds from the opening day is complete. This also includes videos of the musicians playing the authentic 1825 period instruments. 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/>

The musicians are Queen Victoria's Consort and the music arranger Steve Robson. The music and videos are free for

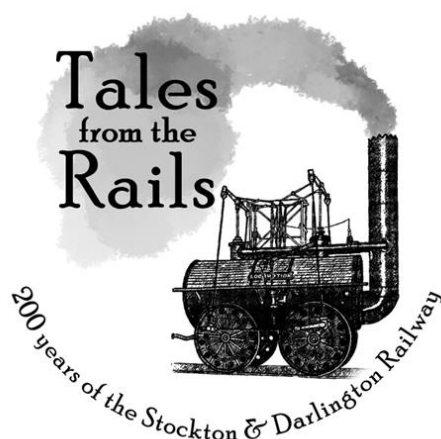
you to download. Why not use this music at your next S&DR event?

Podcast – Tales from the Rails

We have now generated 9 podcasts in the hope of reaching a slightly different audience. These were on (click on the title if you want to listen):

1. [The Opening Day of the S&DR](#)
2. [The Importance of the S&DR](#)
3. [Heighington Station – the World's Earliest Railway Station \(with Niall Hammond and various interviews\)](#)
4. [Building Bridges \(The Gaunless and the Skerne Bridges – with Anthony Coulls\)](#)

5. [Locomotion No.1 \(with Michael Bailey\)](#)
6. [Hoptown \(various interviews\)](#)
7. [Getting America on Track \(with Jonathan Ratcliffe\)](#)
8. [Celebrating the S&DR \(with Sam Slatcher, Lizzie Lovejoy and Quenn Victora's Consort\)](#)
9. Educating Early Railway Workers and The Stute (with Dave Reynolds and Jane Hackworth-Young (no link as it was still being edited at the time of writing))



They have been downloaded over 2,000 times but I'm not sure how that relates to listening numbers when the podcast isn't downloaded.

I'll be honest, they are a lot of work! It takes time to write the content and it probably takes even longer for them to be edited – editing is the job of Archie MacKay of SW Durham News – a big thank you to him for doing this. We are keeping all the howlers for a special edition called Fails on the Rails.

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; it will make all the hard work

worthwhile.

Website

The web site is mostly busy accepting orders for the coffee table book, accepting donations for Heighington Station, renewal or new of memberships and regular and frequent requests for talks in 2025 amounting to 1-2 requests a day at times. We have had approaches in the last year from organisations wanting help with 2025 activities, with members of the public carrying out family history and especially media organisations looking for help in generating content for documentaries in 2025.







Sales from the online shop vary but was particularly active when Andrew Simmons made a number of limited edition pens to support our Save Heighington Station campaign. These have raised through the web site £350, although Andrew has also sold many direct at events and now through eBay. Thank you to Andrew for doing this and to George and Cindy Alderslade who donated attic timber from their station master's house at St. Helen Auckland

for the Station Master's pen. Thank you also to Andrew who has now purchased a debit card machine for the Friends so we can accept debit card payments at events.

We have also been donated beautiful maps of the S&DR by Jean Hattersley printed from original artwork by Bob Hattersley. The funds raised will be split between the Friends and a cancer charity. We were also given prints of John Dobbin's Opening ay of the S&DR by staff at Hopetown and these too are available in our online shop.

In total the online shop has had 222 orders (up from 85 in 2022-3) the considerable increase due to the coffee table book. The top sellers apart from the coffee table book are:

-  New membership
-  Locomotion Pens
-  The Railway that got the World on Track book (we had a reprint of this done in January 2024 to make sure we have enough to get us through 2025)
-  Membership renewal

A new archive was added to the Friends' web site – the Mike Satow archive These are stunning black and white images that record the construction of the replica Locomotion No.1 in 1975. If you haven't had a scroll through yet, you'll find them here:

<https://www.sdr1825.org.uk/archives/the-mike-satow-archive/>

And other stuff....

Little Inventors

We have agreed to help with this project which is part of the S&DR Festival. This is to generate short videos about the railway (we will do this at Heighington) and issue a challenge to school children to invent a solution to a rail-related scenario. Five of the 'best' ideas will be brought to life in an exhibition and possibly also working with local businesses.

Discover Game

This is a digital game exploring the S&DR. As part of that there will be a series of short videos. I have agreed to do one on women of the railways.

S&DR competitions

We are involved in running two S&DR competitions.

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.

The editor is one of the few people in the Friends who regularly gives talks on the S&DR (the others are Niall Hammond and Alan Townsend). We do these in return for donations to the Friends. In the last year I have given 3 talks in Darlington, one in Heighington, 1 in Newton Aycliffe, 1 in Tudhoe, 1 in Shildon, 1 in Durham and 1 judging of a poetry competition (which I really enjoyed!) and I've done readings and family activities at Hopetown, on the Story Train in Stanhope, in Darlington as part of the S&DR takeover day and the library takeover day. The requests are increasing as we approach 2025. Currently I am booked for 15 in 2025, so if anyone else wants a talk on the S&DR in 2025, do get in touch soon.

Institution of Mechanical Engineering



The IMechE are awarding the S&DR an innovation in engineering award and as such three plaques are likely to be put up next year at Shildon, Darlington and Stockton. Ideally I'd also like one at the New Inn Cross Roads or Etherley Incline, but this may not be possible. I also nominated the painting of George Stephenson in Pease's Parlour by Rankley to TVs the Repair Shop for conservation but I am sorry to say they have not responded despite being chased up several times. They have missed an opportunity to mark 2025 in their

programme. I have also worked with IMechE on exploring options for an exhibition on engineering and have now passed this on to Niccy Hallifax, the Festival Director.

S&DR Film

Film producer Austen Atkinson of Fitztooth Ltd , continues to tout the idea of a film about Hackworth and the S&DR to various commissioning agencies. However I am no longer confident that this is going to result in a production, as the industry is in a very poor state and few businesses are spending money on film making. Further a story populated by middle aged white men polluting the atmosphere is proving to be a hard sell. Austen continues to speak to documentary film makers such as Discovery and this might bear fruit.

Caroline Hardie

October 2024