

STOCKTON & DARLINGTON RAILWAY FESTIVAL 2026

August—September



Photo: Catherine Yates



Sponsored by:

HITACHI

FOREWORD

Welcome to the S&DR Festival 2026!

Hopefully many of you enjoyed last year's memorable 200th anniversary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway, celebrating the 'Railway that got the World on Track' back in 1825. While this year's Festival will be a smaller affair than last year's big birthday, we still have some exciting events and venues to entertain people of all ages.

Whether you are visiting our world class museums at Locomotion (Shildon), Hopetown (Darlington) or Preston Park (Stockton), or travelling along the S&DR Trail of Discovery (with its fab phone app) which follows the 1825 line, travelling on the Weardale Railway or going on a guided walk or event, there is something for everyone to enjoy and celebrate our world changing history.

A highlight of the Festival is on the 27th of September, the 201st anniversary of the S&DR, with a chance to visit Heighington Station, the oldest in the world. There will be steam power, rides on a miniature railway, blacksmithing workshops, tours of the interiors of this historic building, listen to Little Loco readings or to fabulous live music while enjoying food and drink.

Thank you to our wonderful range of partners and sponsorship from Hitachi Rail. We would like to thank Hopetown Darlington for creating the ongoing S&DR festival brand. Happy travelling and have a great Festival!



Niall Hammond, Chair of Trustees



EVENTS

August

Date:	29 th – 31 st August
Event Title:	Steam Train Rides
Times:	10.30 – 15.00
Address:	Hopetown Darlington, McNay St, Darlington, DL3 6SW
Booking:	www.hopetowndarlington.co.uk/whats-on/Steam-Train-Rides
Description:	Climb aboard a beautifully restored 1910 built, luxury Edwardian style London & South Western Railway No.1520 passenger carriage, finished in classic salmon and brown livery, hauled by Andrew Barclay Works No.2134 known as 'W.T.T'.
	
Date:	30 th – 31 st August
Event Title:	Heritage Train Ride
Times:	Green Timetable
Address:	Weardale Railway, Stanhope, DL13 2YS
Booking:	www.weardale-railway.org.uk/green-timetable
Description:	Enjoy a leisurely ride through the Wear Valley onboard one of our 1960s diesel railcars or 1980s pacer. Our heritage service runs between Stanhope and Bishop Auckland West on Green Timetable days, offering a round trip of 32 miles. Our day rover fares allow unlimited travel on the day with the option to hop on and off the trains at our intermediate stations, providing the ideal means to explore the dale by rail!
	

EVENTS

Throughout September

Date: Throughout September
Event Title: **Exhibition S&DR Knitted Toppers**
Times: Always Open
Address: Haughton Village Green, DL1 2DD

Booking: No need to book, just turn up and enjoy!

Description: Knitted bollard toppers on an S&DR theme displayed around Haughton Green.



EVENTS

September

Date: 1st – 4th September
Event Title: **Heighington Station Archaeology**
Times: 10.30 – 15.00
Address: Heighington Station, Heighington Lane, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 6QG

Booking: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1996433076073?aff=oddtcreator

Description: Get hands on with history and join an archaeological investigation into the world's oldest railway station. No previous experience is necessary. Booking is only required if you would like to participate in the excavations. Please do feel free to turn up and have a look at the work in progress during the excavation times.



Date: 2nd September
Event Title: **Heritage Train Ride**
Times: Purple Timetable
Address: Weardale Railway, Stanhope, DL13 2YS

Booking: www.weardale-railway.org.uk/purple-timetable

Description: Enjoy a leisurely ride through Weardale onboard one of our 1960s diesel railcars or 1980s pacer. Our heritage service runs between Stanhope and Wolsingham on Purple Timetable days, offering a round trip of about 12 miles. Our day rover fares allow unlimited travel on the day with the option to hop on and off the trains at our intermediate stations, providing the ideal means to explore the dale by rail!



EVENTS

September

Date: 5th September
Event Title: **Barnard Castle Circular Guided Walk**
Times: 10.30
Address: The walk starts and finishes outside the entrance to the castle behind Barnard Castle Methodist Church on Galgate.

Booking: <https://sdr1825.org.uk/event/free-guided-walk-barnard-castle-circular-walk-2/>

Description: This circular guided walk explores the story of how the S&DR transformed the picturesque market town of Barnard Castle into a Pennine railway hub. Learn about the long campaign for Barnard Castle to be connected to the railway against opposition from powerful landowners, great engineering feats and connections to disaster and war.



Date: 5th September
Event Title: **Walk the Locomotion Way**
Times: 11.00
Address: Oakleaf Sports Complex, School Aycliffe Ln, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 6QZ

Booking: Booking forms available from St. Michaels Church or Heighington Spar.

Description: Walk the Locomotion Way. Sponsored walk from the Oakleaf Sports Complex, 5 or 10km. Designed to raise funds for St. Michael's parish church in Heighington. Further details and registration forms from the church or the local Spar in Heighington.

EVENTS

September

Date: 5th September
Event Title: **Teesdale Tracks and Derailing Dukes**
Times: 14.00 – 15.30
Address: Hopetown Darlington, McNay St, Darlington, DL3 6SW

Booking: www.hopetowndarlington.co.uk/whats-on/North-Eastern-Railway-Association-Lecture-Series

Description: Chris is well-known as Features Editor of the Northern Echo. He will describe the rise and fall of Teesdale's railways: how the dale's most powerful landowner went to dastardly lengths to prevent railways from arriving, yet when they came, they were the most extraordinary lines anywhere in the world over the wildest of terrain and the most stupendous of viaducts.



Date: 5th – 27th September
Event Title: **Steam Festival 2026**
Times: 10.00 – 16.00
Address: Hopetown Darlington, McNay St, Darlington, DL3 6SW

Booking: www.hopetowndarlington.co.uk/whats-on/SDR201-Steam-Festival-at-Hopetown.

Description: Celebrate the enduring legacy of the Stockton & Darlington Railway during a month packed full of steam and heritage for a special S&DR201 Steam Festival, recreating the spirit of the pioneering 1825 railway journey. Get up close to magnificent steam locomotives, watch famous engines come to life, and immerse yourself in over 200 years of railway history where the modern railway began.



EVENTS

September

Date: 5th – 6th September
Event Title: **Steam Train Rides**
Times: 10.30 – 15.00
Address: Hopetown Darlington, McNay St, Darlington, DL3 6SW

Booking: www.hopetowndarlington.co.uk/whats-on/Steam-Train-Rides

Description: We're thrilled to announce that for the first time ever – and to celebrate the 201st anniversary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) – you will be able to journey behind Replica Locomotion No.1, travelling in the remarkable Experiment coach used during the S&DR200 festival celebrations. This is a rare opportunity to experience a recreation of the train that changed the world right here in the birthplace of the modern railway.



Date: 5th September
Event Title: **Crafts at Hopetown Darlington**
Times: Purple Timetable
Address: Hopetown Darlington, McNay St, Darlington, DL3 6SW

Booking: <https://tickets.hopetowndarlington.co.uk/>

Description: Create Mini Locomotion No.1s and design your own badge at Hopetown.



EVENTS

September

Date: 5th September
Event Title: **Memory of a Journey: Final Station**
Times: 10.00 – 16.00
Address: Hopetown Darlington, McNay St, Darlington, DL3 6SW

Booking: www.hopetowndarlington.co.uk/sdr201

Description: Thousands of hand-crafted peg dolls – each telling its own story – come together in a powerful, large-scale exhibition marking the end of S&DR200, featuring a photographic exhibition by Diane Muldowney. Created by participants throughout the entire festival, these figures represent journeys taken, places remembered and people connected through a railway journey.



Date: 6th September
Event Title: **Heritage Train Ride**
Times: Green Timetable
Address: Weardale Railway, Stanhope, DL13 2YS

Booking: www.weardale-railway.org.uk/green-timetable

Description: Enjoy a leisurely ride through the Wear Valley onboard one of our 1960s diesel railcars or 1980s pacer. Our heritage service runs between Stanhope and Bishop Auckland West on Green Timetable days, offering a round trip of 32 miles. Our day rover fares allow unlimited travel on the day with the option to hop on and off the trains at our intermediate stations, providing the ideal means to explore the dale by rail!



EVENTS

September

Date: 7th – 10th September
Event Title: **Heighington Station Archaeology**
Times: 10.00 – 15.00
Address: Heighington Station, Heighington Lane, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 6QG

Booking: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1996433076073?aff=oddtcreator

Description: Get hands on with history and join an archaeological investigation into the world's oldest railway station. No previous experience is necessary. Booking is only required if you would like to participate in the excavations. Please do feel free to turn up and have a look at the work in progress during the excavation times.



Date: 12th September
Event Title: **Weardale Explorer Railway Steam Charter**
Times: 06:08 – 21:47
Address: Weardale Railway, Stanhope, DL13 2YS

Booking: www.railwaytouring.net/we-12-09-26

Description: Join us for a memorable day of classic railway adventure as our special train departs London King's Cross and journeys north toward the rugged beauty of County Durham. After a fast run up the East Coast Main Line, we reach York, where the true spectacle begins – our train will be taken forward by a magnificent steam locomotive for the onward trip.



EVENTS

September

Date: 12th September
Event Title: **Free Guided Walk: Stockton Circular**
Times: 10.30
Address: Stockton Town Hall, High Street, Stockton-On-Tees, TS20 1DR

Booking: <https://sdr1825.org.uk/event/free-guided-walk-eaglescliffe-stockton-area-walk-venue-tbc-12/>

Description: Circular walk visiting various locations connected with the S&DR in 1825, the extension of the S&DR across the River Tees in 1830 and the arrival of the Leeds Northern Railway (LNR) in 1852.



Date: 12th September
Event Title: **Free Guided Walk: Pease and Backhouse – the families who brought the S&DR to life**
Times: 10.30
Address: Darlington Market Place Circular Benches by entrance to St Cuthbert's Churchyard, Church Lane, Darlington, DL1 5QD

Booking: <https://sdr1825.org.uk/event/pease-and-backhouse-the-families-who-brought-the-sdr-to-life-15/>

Description: In Darlington's Quaker burial ground, many members of the Pease and Backhouse families are buried. These were the characters responsible for the development of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. We will explore their stories of the origins and early years of the Railway. We will meet some of these characters, and some of their interesting and colourful family members.



EVENTS

September

Date: 12th – 13th September
Event Title: **Locomotion Heritage Open Days**
Times: 10.00 – 16.00
Address: Locomotion Shildon, Dale Road, Shildon, DL4 2RE

Booking: www.locomotion.org.uk/whats-on/heritage-open-days-2026

Description: Step into the story of Shildon – the ‘cradle of the railways’ – and discover more how the development of the Stockton and Darlington Railway helped shape the modern world.

LOCOMOTION

Date: 19th – 20th September
Event Title: **Steam Train Rides**
Times: 10.30 – 15.00
Address: Hopetown Darlington, McNay St, Darlington, DL3 6SW

Booking: www.hopetowndarlington.co.uk/whats-on/Steam-Train-Rides/

Description: We're thrilled to announce that for the first time ever – and to celebrate the 201st anniversary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) – you will be able to journey behind Replica Locomotion No.1, travelling in the remarkable Experiment coach used during the S&DR200 festival celebrations. This is a rare opportunity to experience a recreation of the train that changed the world right here in the birthplace of the modern railway.



EVENTS

September

Date: 19th September
Event Title: **Free Guided Walk: Why the Railway came to Darlington (daytime walk)**
Times: 10.30
Address: Darlington Market Place Circular Benches by entrance to St Cuthbert's Churchyard, Church Lane, Darlington, DL1 5QD

Booking: <https://sdr1825.org.uk/event/why-the-railway-came-to-darlington-daytime-walk-65/>

Description: We will visit some of the key sites and learn about some of the people behind the birth of the world's first passenger railway, the Stockton & Darlington Railway, which is 200 years old in September 2025.



Date: 19th September
Event Title: **Litter Pick at Bowesfield Nature Reserve**
Times: 10.00 – 12.30
Address: Bowesfield Nature Reserve

Booking: www.facebook.com/people/Eaglescliffe-Community-Litter-Project/61574063446390/

Description: Join in with a litter pick at Bowesfield Nature Reserve.



EVENTS

September

Date: 20th September
Event Title: **Guided Walk: In the Tracks of Stephenson, Hackworth and 600 passengers in 1825 between Shildon and Heighington**
Times: 10.45 – 13.00
Address: Shildon Station
Booking: <https://sdr1825.org.uk/event/guided-walk-in-the-tracks-of-stephenson-hackworth-and-600-passengers-in-1825-between-shildon-and-heighington/>

Description: We will travel together by train along the same route taken on the opening day of the S&DR on the 27th September and arrive at Heighington Station, the world's oldest railway station at 11.04 am. We won't be visiting the inside of the old station on this trip but there may be opportunities to do so the week after (see other SDR Festival Events). We will then walk back to Shildon, finishing at Locomotion.



Date: 20th September
Event Title: **Locomotion Trail Runs**
Times: 10.00 – 13.00
Address: Various depending on route
Booking: www.sientries.co.uk/event/locomotion-trail-runs-2026?elid=Y

Description: Celebrating the 201st Anniversary of the S&DR railway and the pioneering Northeast Engineering history, the Locomotion Charity Run has a choice of 2 routes (10 miles or 5 miles) partially along the original railway route. Proceeds to the Great North Air Ambulance and MND (Motor Neurone Disease Association).



EVENTS

September

Date: 20th September
Event Title: **Heritage Train Ride**
Times: Green Timetable
Address: Weardale Railway, Stanhope, DL13 2YS

Booking: www.weardale-railway.org.uk/green-timetable

Description: Enjoy a leisurely ride through the Wear Valley onboard one of our 1960s diesel railcars or 1980s pacer. Our heritage service runs between Stanhope and Bishop Auckland West on Green Timetable days, offering a round trip of 32 miles. Our day rover fares allow unlimited travel on the day with the option to hop on and off the trains at our intermediate stations, providing the ideal means to explore the dale by rail!



Date: 23rd September
Event Title: **Free Guided Walk: Allen's West Station to Preston Park via Eaglescliffe Station**
Times: 10.30
Address: Allen's West Station

Booking: <https://sdr1825.org.uk/event/free-guided-walk-eaglescliffe-stockton-area-walk-venue-tbc-13/>

Description: A linear walk from Allen's West Station to Preston Park via Eaglescliffe Station. Distance is about 2 miles. Terrain is a mixture of paved and gravel paths.



EVENTS

September

Date: 24th September
Event Title: **Be it Remembered**
Times: 14.45 – 16.00
Address: Darlington Library Hoskins Room,
Crown St, Darlington DL1 1ND

Booking: [£3 per ticket. T: 01325 349 630](#)
E: local.studies@darlington.gov.uk

Description: Come and get to know the remarkable
Mr William Lister, a lesser-known character
of the Stockton & Darlington Railway.



In this talk by Gillian Bryant, hear how
his life developed from a poor child in
Durham, to a wealthy business man in
Darlington; and view some of the maps,
books and documents which provided
evidence of William's life-story.

Date: 26th – 27th September
Event Title: **Shildon's Wagon Legacy**
Times: 10.00 – 17.00
Address: Locomotion Shildon, Dale Road,
Shildon DL4 2RE

Booking: www.locomotion.org.uk/whats-on

Description: The opening of the Stockton & Darlington
Railway transformed Shildon into one
of the world's first railway towns. But
what came after 1825? As the town grew,
Shildon Works became a powerhouse of
wagon construction and repair, supporting
industries, communities and railways across
Britain. Find out more, as Locomotion
celebrates Shildon's wagon building legacy,
in this special S&DR anniversary event.

LOCOMOTION

EVENTS

September

Date: 26th – 27th September
Event Title: **Train Rides**
Times: 10.00 – 17.00
Address: Locomotion Shildon, Dale Road,
Shildon DL4 2RE

Booking: [www.locomotion.org.uk/whats-on/
train-rides](http://www.locomotion.org.uk/whats-on/train-rides)

Description: Hop on board for an authentic train ride
at our museum behind our replica Rocket.
The half-mile journey takes you along the
original line of the Stockton & Darlington
Railway, past the museum's Main Hall and
back towards the historic coal drops.
Tickets are available from the Welcome
Desk on the day of your visit. Please note
this event has limited capacity. Rides are
subject to availability and the engine used
may be subject to change.

LOCOMOTION

Date: 26th September
Event Title: **Steam Train Rides**
Times: 10.30 – 15.00
Address: Hopetown Darlington, McNay St,
Darlington, DL3 6SW

Booking: [www.hopetowndarlington.co.uk/
whats-on/Steam-Train-Rides/](http://www.hopetowndarlington.co.uk/whats-on/Steam-Train-Rides/)

Description: We're thrilled to announce that for the
first time ever you will be able to journey
behind Replica Locomotion No.1, travelling
in the remarkable Experiment coach used
during the S&DR200 festival celebrations.
This is a rare opportunity to experience a
recreation of the train that changed the
world right here in the birthplace of the
modern railway.



EVENTS

September

Date: 26th September
Event Title: **Free Guided Walk: Eaglescliffe Station to St. John's Crossing via Preston Park, Bowesfield Junction and 5 Bridges across the Tees**
Times: 10.30
Address: Eaglescliffe Station, Station Road, Eaglescliffe, Cleveland, TS16 0BT
Booking: <https://sdr1825.org.uk/event/free-guided-walk-eaglescliffe-stockton-area-walk-venue-tbc-13/>
Description: A linear walk from Eaglescliffe Station to St. John's Crossing via Preston Park, Bowesfield Junction and the site of 1830 S&DR Suspension Bridge. Distance about 4 miles. Terrain is a mixture of paved and gravel paths with a short walk next to the River Tees under the A66 and 2 railway bridges.



Date: 27th September
Event Title: **SDR 201st Anniversary Celebratory Day at Heighington Station**
Times: 10.00 – 16.00
Address: Heighington Station, Heighington Lane, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 6QG (Park nearby at DL5 6AP – just follow the signs)
Booking: <https://sdr1825.org.uk/events/>
Description: Including live steam traction engines, have a go at blacksmithing, stalls, food, live music, tours of the world's oldest railway station interiors, story telling and games for children.



EVENTS

September

Date: 27th September
Event Title: **Steam Train Rides**
Times: 10.30 – 15.00
Address: Hopetown Darlington, McNay St, Darlington, DL3 6SW
Booking: www.hopetowndarlington.co.uk/whats-on/Steam-Train-Rides/
Description: On 27th September and continuing the S&DR201 celebrations, one of the nation's most famous steam locomotives will take charge of the train. 60163 Tornado will be performing the steam train ride duties! A railway icon. A modern legend. A locomotive that has captivated enthusiasts across the world.



Date: 30th September
Event Title: **Evolution of the Railway Station on the S&DR**
Times: 14.00 – 15.00
Address: Local Studies Centre, Darlington Libraries, Crown Street, DL1 1ND
Booking: £3 per ticket. T: 01325 349 630
E: local.studies@darlington.gov.uk
Description: A talk by Caroline Hardie about how the railway station was invented by the S&DR by accident!



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