

Charity registration number: 1177252

Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway

**Annual Report and Financial Statement
for the Year 27/09/2021 to 26/09/2022**

Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway.

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1. Introduction

This Third Annual Report is an account of the activities of the Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (FSDR), for the year 27th September 2021 to 26th September 2022. The FSDR year runs from the anniversary of the opening of the railway on 27th September 1825.

The Friends became a constituted group in 2013 and a registered charity in 2018. The particular legal form of the charity is as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

This Annual Report reflects a year of recovery and reestablishment following the COVID pandemic, and while activity was significantly improved, the after effects of covid in terms of volunteer numbers, activities and volunteers was still notable. Nevertheless volunteer groups did meet and in particular our participation in numerous working groups with partners in local authorities and government agencies continued in the planning for the S&DR bicentenary in 2025 and in putting in place a lasting legacy beyond.

Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document	Para 1.17	To advance the education of the public about the Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR) and its seminal role in the development of the modern railway through its national and international influence and the conservation of the structures, archives and artefacts of the S&DR.
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2. Acknowledgements.

As ever, the work of the FSDR would not be possible without the significant support and work of many people. We work with many individuals, communities, and organisations and while there is always a danger in missing out someone, we would in particular like to thank the following for continued support and participation;

- The Trustees and our many other volunteers within our Area Groups, those who attend our meetings and events, or simply follow us on Facebook. Those, whose physical and administrative tasks have kept the charity growing and our objectives to be worked towards.
- The staff and elected members of Durham County Council staff, Darlington Borough Council, Stockton Borough Council and the Tees Valley Combined Authority who continue to support us in our efforts and to work in partnership, together with institutions such as the staff of the SMG at Locomotion in Shildon.
- The local organisations, businesses and communities along the S&DR who have provided us with physical help and support.
- To those who have provided funding for our work, in particular this year Historic England for Capacity Grant Funding through the S&DR Heritage Action Zone; and to the Culture Recovery Fund and staff at the National Lottery Heritage Fund for support during a difficult time.

3. Chair's Report.

The last year has seen something of a return to normal after the Covid pandemic, and the work of the Friends has continued to grow. On the positive side this has seen significant progress in many areas, but at the cost of considerable time and effort for trustees and volunteers. Much of this work is unseen but essential, commenting on planning matters, lobbying local authorities, and people of position and influence, attending innumerable meetings, and in the general bureaucracy and administration of running a charity whose work and finances continues to expand. As ever I urge and invite more members to get actively involved and help out directly with this fantastically worthwhile work.

I begin this year's Chair's report with three 'highlights'; firstly, by announcing we have purchased Locomotion No.1...sadly not the original but a wood and metal full size sculpture previously displayed at Durham University's Stockton campus. Bought for a nominal £1 from Durham University, our volunteers intend to restore this with financial support from Stockton Council for use at events up to and including 2025. Secondly, we have also acquired our first property at Fighting Cocks. Here the site of the S&DR Coal Depot adjacent to the station and former pub is in the process of being transferred to us along with a cash donation. This will allow us to bring together several smaller projects at Fighting Cocks and with support from Middleton St George Parish Council and our wonderful neighbours Mr and Mrs Holmes in the Station House, bring back the railway character to this important site. Thirdly and finally, I'm pleased to report that the long-standing work of the Brusselton Incline Group (BIG), has been acknowledged by Durham County Council with the award of an annual grant of £5,000 per year for the next three years. This will be used to help our volunteers bring in professional help to make sure the Incline and an area of land at the Mason's Arms crossing, continue to be kept in excellent condition through to the bicentenary in 2025.

The grant to the Friends/BIG to maintain and look after sections of the line may be a taste of things to come. As the S&DR Heritage Action Zone initiative enters its final year, a key outcome of this is a study to look at how the 26 miles of the S&DR outside of the main museums can be looked after beyond 2025. By 2025 there will have been restoration of structures, opening up of paths and the installation of interpretation, but it is essential if there is to be a long-term legacy and respect for our heritage that this is cared for and maintained in the years afterwards. Tricolor Associates (<https://tricolorassociates.co.uk/>) have been appointed to look at the best way to deliver this and options include an enhanced version of current arrangements with a partnership led by local authorities, or placing the responsibility for the work into the hands of a supported charitable body or not for profit company. The results of the study will be known before the end of 2022 following which support and transition arrangements will be mapped out. Our view is that while the support of local authorities is essential, the care of the S&DR would be best achieved by a single focussed charitable body, a solution which has worked successfully on other heritage sites across the UK and abroad. As in previous years I once again take great pleasure in complementing our amazing volunteers and partners along the line for the work and passion they show in caring for our railway heritage. Our membership continues to hold steady and accounts are in healthy shape and for this I'm grateful to trustees Peter Bainbridge and Ian Ross for their hard work in these areas. I pay thanks to all of those volunteers along the 26 miles who continue to celebrate our rail heritage in whatever way they can, be it through repair works, guided walks, events, litter picking, tree planting or just trying to enthuse their neighbours and relatives to get involved. This year we marked the 197th anniversary of the S&DR opening with a fantastic and well attended public Railway Market in Stockton High Street organised again by trustee Barry Thompson and our Stockton group, and a wonderfully enjoyable walk for invited members from the Etherley Incline to St Helen Auckland with hospitality at the former station master's

house courtesy of members George and Cindy Alderslade. There was also a slightly low-key launch of the three years count down to the bicentenary with a new entry point website supported by the local authorities and Tees Valley Combined Authority. Although this wasn't the big launch I think we'd all hoped for, it is a start in improved marketing and communications and for which we provided the website address. <http://sdr200.org>. Please do log on to this and sign up for planned newsletters and updates.

A key date which was celebrated this year by ourselves was the 200th anniversary of the official start of building the S&DR with the laying of the first rail at Stockton on May 23rd 1822, marked by a walk, small ceremony and later a showing of the First Rail film and a celebratory ale at Stockton. Work also officially began on Thursday 3rd March, with a symbolic cutting of the first turf ceremony to mark the start of construction work at the Darlington Rail Heritage Quarter. We've also been pleased to support and contribute to the S&DR film being produced by Lonely Tower Films which itself was launched at Head of Steam in April.

Much of the work of myself and the Trustees is not so obvious but is absolutely essential in building partnerships, commenting on and steering planning applications along the line and providing guidance on solid factual information on the S&DR and early railways to ensure our story is told properly; my continued thanks to trustee Ross Chisholm our lead on planning work. Our continued support for and input to the proposed 26-mile S&DR walking/cycling route is such a worthwhile but time-consuming task. We were pleased that Durham County Council received c.£7 million pounds of Levelling Up Fund grant to take forward this and new works at Locomotion Museum. The hard work of negotiating with landowners and addressing concerns over illegal use of such a path through detailed design for instance are not to be underestimated and we're very pleased to be working with DCC and helping take this forward. The walking/cycling path will of course need interpretation and signage adding once the agreed route has been confirmed, here lies another mammoth task to make sure the text, information and images tell an accurate and engaging story.

We are nearing the end of our three year package of Historic England capacity grant aid. This has allowed us to run events and projects which have engaged many thousands of people in various ways from our 'Walking the Line' branch line studies to walks, talks, events and publications. One key publication has been our own engaging fully illustrated 'The Railway that Got the World on Track' booklet', designed to explain just why the S&DR is so significant. It has been distributed to schools, members and partner organisations to spread the word. Additional copies can be downloaded as a pdf from our website or hard copies purchased for £5. If you know of any schools who would like free copies just let me know. The booklets often sell well at the many illustrated talks a number of Trustees provide for local societies and groups. This year we have spoken to amongst others Stokesley Local History Society the Durham Architectural & Archaeological Society, G5 Locomotive Company's annual dinner, Bishop Auckland U3A, The Stephenson Locomotive Society, St Helen and District History Society and Darlington Local History Society.

In this year's HE grant programme we have begun a programme of information and training for volunteers on 'Caring for the S&DR'. This is both a simple on-line recording form for anyone to use to report damage, fly tipping, anti-social behaviour etc along the 26 miles; or more detailed training for volunteers on how heritage protection and legislation works and assessing the condition of heritage structures. In both cases information/reports will be passed on to Historic England and local authorities for action, with an annual report produced. Other projects include a research and workshop project on the Quaker influence on the S&DR and regional industry, and planning for arts events with other groups such as Darlington for Culture.

The early railway Inns of the S&DR are as we know of considerable heritage significance as the forerunner of the railway station. Just how influential the design and function of these buildings was, is being looked at in context with facilities for passengers on the S&DR and other railways across the UK and overseas up to 1842 in a study by WSP consultants funded by Historic England and supported by the Friends. This is based on original research by several of our members, but in particular the late Brendan Boyle. The study will be published in early 2023, following which we hope to receive a grant from Historic England to publish our own more specific research on the S&DR Railway Inns. One new publication produced this last year was on the Yarm Branchline; excellent work by our members and in partnership with the Cleveland Industrial Archaeology Society and launched appropriately at the Cleveland Bay to an enthusiastic audience and talk by our own Vice President Chris Lloyd of the Northern Echo. Plans are also in place for other publications on S&DR branchlines and hopefully a major redesign and updating of our well received guided walk booklets which continue to sell well both directly at events and museum through the sterling work of Jane Hackworth-Young and also through our excellent website which continues to develop and expand in content thanks to our editor Caroline Hardie for whom I also offer thanks for our journal The Globe; far more than the original newsletter we began and now containing substantial new research to a high academic standard. Our website is also part of our essential social media for the modern age containing news of events and a means of paying for membership and publications which continues to grow in popularity. We also maintain a Facebook page for members and non-members which now has over 2000 followers and can only continue to grow as 2025 approaches with people eager to find out about what's going on and share information, thoughts and memories.

While talking about early railway inns, I should mention the former Heighington Station at Aycliffe Lane originally the Kings Arms and more latterly the Locomotion Pub. Although a listed building it has stood empty now for several years at increasing risk of vandalism and loss. We continue to talk with the owner and press Durham County Council to help find a solution for what may be the world's first purpose-built line side railway station, something which should be safe and publicly accessible for 2025. All of this research continues to inform the work of our partners at Historic England and in the conservation offices of the local authorities. In the last year a major redefinition of the boundary of the scheduled monument which protects the first five miles from Witton Park to Shildon has been accurately redrawn; several new 'buildings' have been given listed status including bridges between Simpasture and Whesoe which were previously thought to be c.1860, but which we now know are just after 1830 and part of major improvements to the line. We've also helped produce a 'Local List' of lesser structures which while not listable, now have additional protection. We also look forward to the creation of an S&DR Conservation Area, covering and protecting long lengths of the line and further enhancing its protection from poor or inappropriate development.

Very shortly (we think late November), the National Lottery Heritage Fund will make a decision on our joint bid with Darlington Borough Council. If we're successful then the key headlines for ourselves will be a new home in the restored 1840 Lime Depot at Hopetown Lane Darlington, the appointment of three officers on five-year contracts to help support and coordinate volunteer work and projects, and the establishment of a £200,000 community fund for ourselves and other to use in our on-going work and events along the line.

Every year I'm amazed at the passion and time given by our volunteers and there are frankly too many people to thank individually, but my gratitude in particular goes to our trustees who work incredibly hard and without whom we wouldn't be pushing forward with such great promise as we are; and finally to Alan Macnab our secretary and founder member who is

retiring as secretary and trustee this year and without whom the FSDR may never have got going in the first place.

I conclude with a note of caution, while there is significant and substantial activity and funding from many partners large and small, we are now only just over 2 years away from the start of 2025. If all our aspirations to have in place a world class visitor attraction are to be realised in time for the bicentenary, we and our partners need to keep pushing to ensure all these wonderful plans come to fruition. I'm sure with everyone's continued support we can achieve great things but there can be little time wasted from here on in.

Niall Hammond, Chair, Friends of the S&DR.

4.Membership Secretary's Report

Fees & Donations:- Ordinary Members - £2517.11 (including donations of £367.23)
Corporate Members - £974.45
Total - £3491.56

Gift Aid on membership fees and donations - claim to be submitted to HMRC.

Membership as of 26 September 2022

Ordinary Members – 210. Corporate Members – 20.

Membership renewal for 2022 to 2023 (Ordinary Members).

Renewal invitations issued to members on 10 August 2022 except for the following:-

Members who paid via Standing Order for 2021 to 2022.

Members who have set up a Standing Order for 2022 to 2023 and beyond.

Renewal reminders issued to members on 13 September 2022 except for the following:-

Any members who had paid their fees since 10 August 2022.

Any members who had set up a Standing Order since 10 August 2022 for 2022 to 2023 and beyond.

Final reminders issued to members on 30 September 2022 except for the following:-

Any members who had paid their fees since 13 September 2022.

Any members who had set up a Standing Order since 13 September 2022 for 2022 to 2023 and beyond.

Membership renewal final reminder - closing date is 31st October after which anyone who has not responded will be deemed to be a lapsed member and will be removed from our database.

Peter Bainbridge, Membership Secretary

5. Planning Officer's Report

1. It is the job of the planning system, through Local Plan policies and decisions on planning applications, to serve the aims and objectives of the Rail Heritage Board and facilitate the proposals of the Programme and Delivery Plan of the Heritage Action

Zone. Throughout the last year, the Friends have continued to try to ensure the protection, enhancement and promotion of the S&DR by responding to opportunities to comment on emerging Local Plans, on other studies and on planning applications.

2. All three councils (Durham County, Darlington Borough and Stockton Borough) have adopted Local Plans (Darlington's was formally adopted in February) each of which contain a specific policy for the S&DR. The policies maps show the main S&DR line and the Haggerleases, Black Boy, Surtees, Darlington (Coal Depot), Croft and Yarm Branches, although it took some effort on our part to ensure that they were accurately plotted. Middlesbrough BC have started to prepare a new local plan, so we will campaign for a policy for the 1830 Middlesbrough extension to Port Darlington and the New Town.
3. Since the last AGM we have been involved with 39 planning applications, 16 of these were carried over from the previous year. Three have been withdrawn, one permission has expired, 18 were approved and 3 were refused. The rest remain to be decided.
4. It remains a problem that some applicants are either unaware of policies for the S&DR or that they choose to ignore them when justifying their proposals. It is important that we draw attention to these discrepancies when commenting on applications as we cannot always be sure that the planning officer responsible for the case is fully aware of the situation. We comment on applications which physically encroach onto the line or affect its setting or require provision of the walking and cycling route. It is rare for us to object totally to an application. Wherever possible we recommend how an application could be improved to become more compliant with policy or where a financial contribution to the line's enhancement can be justified. Very few applications obtain our unreserved support. We are not normally notified of new applications affecting the line; this means I have to carry out a regular check of the councils' websites to keep up to date and not miss any deadlines for commenting.
5. It was a disappointment that Darlington Planning Applications Committee approved two applications to extend private gardens on to the Croft Branch at Hurworth Place. This was despite objections from local residents, the Parish Council, the Council's own footpaths officer and the Heritage Action Zone Projects Manager.
6. On a positive note, we have, after several years of campaigning, secured the promise of a permissive footpath alongside the Bishop Line at Forrest Park, Newton Aycliffe. We also have a regular virtual meeting with the Darlington Planning Officer to discuss informally issues raised by various applications. This is very useful, but we do not have a similar arrangement with Durham or Stockton Councils.
7. Permissions have been granted for various developments we have generally supported, including North Road Rail Heritage Quarter, NRM Shildon extension, Bank Top Station enhancement, Castlegate redevelopment at Stockton and Eaglescliffe Station footbridge and car park.
8. Of the applications not yet decided, these include the proposals for a solar panel farm at Burtree, Darlington and an extension to Craggwood Holiday Park at Ramshaw. Discussions are continuing and we hope for positive outcomes.
9. We have been consulted on other forthcoming developments. We suggested improvements to the Burtree garden Village Design Guide, but these were not included in the officer's report to Darlington Council on consultations. The prospective developer of a solar panel farm at High Lands near Cockfield contacted us and we are having talks to see how the development could assist our objectives to promote the Haggerleases Branch and other railway heritage in the locality.
10. Since the AGM in September 2021, I have logged approximately 180 hours in performing my duties as planning officer. This includes time spent on monitoring the

three Councils' online planning registers for applications on or adjacent to the S&DR and its branch lines; identifying any issues which need to be addressed, visiting the sites and submitting comments after consulting the Trustees and Friends. In some cases there are meetings with developers and negotiations to modify the proposals to resolve any problems. As a last resort to achieve a satisfactory outcome, we sometimes have the opportunity to attend the Planning Committee and address members.

11. I am again very grateful for help given to me by individual Friends and those in the various local interest groups for their local knowledge, visiting sites, taking photographs, talking to local residents and notifying me of any issues they come across whilst 'out there' and think needs attention.

*Ross Chisholm, Planning Officer and Trustee*⁶. *Research & Archives Officer's Report.*

6. EDITOR AND WEBMASTER'S REPORT

While there are too few officers to cover both the editor's role and the webmaster's, I have joined them into one combined report. For ease we have also added to this report a record of book sales at events.

Editor's report

Three Globes have been produced in the last year (December 2021, April 2022 and July 2022) and hard copies sent to those who expressed a preference. The December and July editions were packed with interesting articles, but the April one was a little thin, although still full of good stuff. This sometimes happens and can't be helped as The Globe is wholly reliant on submissions. Sometimes a long-awaited article doesn't come to fruition, conversely there can be editions that are overwhelmed with contributions and so we carry articles over to the next one. It is a reminder that we rely on members and other interested parties to submit articles or to promote events and activities via The Globe. To all those who have contributed something in the last year, thank you on behalf of all our readers and the editor. If you would like to submit something S&DR related in the future, ask me (caroline@aenvironment.co.uk) for our guidance notes – this can save time later.

The Globe now has its own ISSN numbers and these cover all editions from 2016 and into the future; hard copies and online copies have separate numbers. The first edition to have the ISSN number printed on it will be December 2022. The ISSN is an established international standard that uniquely identifies serial publications to avoid confusing them with other publications of the same name. A copy of The Globe is lodged with the British Library as an example of the series. This doesn't cost us anything, but it helps readers find us and makes us a little more professional.

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. The costs of printing are however increasing – each hard copy currently costs £1.30 to us. We sell spare copies at £3.00 at events and on our web site so there is still a little profit there to put into our work. We will keep the costs of printing under review.

Webmaster and Sales

The web site has had additional information added to it, although not as much as I would like - we could do with someone else to help add content to the web site. We have new 'People of the Line'

entries one of which is Thomas Storey. You will hear more about him soon but working with John Raw and the owner of Storey's house, we are currently developing an historic S&DR plaque scheme the first one of which may be fixed to Storey's house (subject to the necessary consents and funding) in St. Helen Auckland.

Reports such as the Haggerleaves Trackbed Audit and Darlington's Rail Heritage Quarter Conservation Management plan are now accessible in our online library as is the report commissioned by Historic England on the Hopetown Carriage Works in Darlington. Globes have been added too as PDFs (there is a delay of 3 months to allow members the benefit of seeing it first) and hard copies for sale.

The shop also now sells the Yarm Branch book and the Cradle of the Railways CD recorded here in Shildon. A huge amount of gratitude is due to the family of Dr Peter Holmes who have donated his surplus copies of Passenger Services of the S&DR and also his railway book collection. The books are being added to the web site shop as and when I have time, although some are being retained as they may be useful additions to the Friends' own library. We are also selling some at our events. These books from the Holmes collection have incurred no cost to us so are an excellent way of raising funds and have so far raised £97. Do have a look when you are doing your Christmas shopping. Buying second hand is better for the planet!

We were also donated Holmes' archive which included his notebooks and photograph albums from along the S&DR. We have handed over parts of this to the Ken Hoole Study Centre at the Head of Steam Museum and are in discussion with them about scanning the notebooks, transcribing them and making them available online in a joint Friends/ Museum project.

We still have a backlog from another archive donated to us – the Ibbetson Collection and this too needs to be made accessible online. Volunteers have already scanned the material.

In total the online shop has had 143 orders in the last year totalling £1874.60 (£1,621.10 net) sales.

Here is a summary of online book sales for the past year:

Globes 2

Self-guided walks booklets (full set) 8

Self guided walks booklets (singles) 10

We also sold another complete set abroad paying by IBT 1

Royal George products (cards, postcards, prints) 5

The Railway that got the World on Track 56

The Yarm Branch 15

Passenger traffic on the S&DR 4

Three Greeners of Etherley and a model steam engine 4

Timothy Hackworth & the Locomotive 3

Pre-owned books from the Peter Holmes collection 3

The web site is also a place where membership can be purchased or renewed. There were 72 orders for new or renewed membership via the online shop in the last year resulting in £720.50 net sales.

Finally, three people bought their tickets to this AGM online before September 26th.

We also sell our books at events and Jane Hackworth-Young co-ordinates this along with volunteers attending the events. Here is a list of sales at events compiled by Jane:

Titles held by the Friends:

S&DR Walk Booklets Single copies 5 87 Full Set of 8 40 Total 127

Author: George T Smith: Hartlepool Railways 1 Railway People 1 Thomas Hackworth Railway Engineer 0 Wylam 2

Three Greeners of Etherley and a model steam engine by Tom Walker 5

Timothy Hackworth & the Locomotive by Robert Young 2

Other Titles held by the Friends, administered by Trustees – the following were sold by Jane Hackworth-Young or on the Friends stall at Stockton 24.09.22:

The Globe 28. (3 of these were sold at Stockton and 4 given to Young family members - Peter has sold further copies over the year)

The S&DR – The Railway that got the World on Track 27. (10 of these were sold at Stockton/one given to Angela/Shop Locomotion)

The Yarm Branch 7 (6 of these sold at Stockton)

The web site is also the first point of contact from many people who have queries relating to the S&DR – Google has us third on the search page listing S&DR related queries. These queries are rewarding but surprisingly time consuming. In the last year most enquires were from people carrying out family history into ancestors who worked for the S&DR and through this route we are learning much more about the S&DR. Look out for future articles in The Globe and on the web site. This is also where the press approach us and people planning trips to the area.

We had a Walking the Line event along Haggerleases Line over two days in March 2022 – this fed into the trackbed audit for the line which included various management and interpretation recommendations. Thank you to all the stoic stars who attended. In February I gave a talk to the St Helen and District History Society on the significance of the S&DR and progress towards 2025. I have had some discussions with Durham and Tees Valley Music Services and Queen Victoria's Consort over creating authentic recordings of the various 'airs' performed at S&DR opening ceremonies. I have also had some preliminary meetings with film producers and regional media funders regarding S&DR/ Hackworth based films, TV programmes and documentaries and digital media for younger people. I hope to have more news on this soon.

Caroline Hardie Trustee, editor and webmaster and Jane Hackworth-Young, Vice President

7. Archivist and Researcher Report

In the last financial year, I spent more than 200 hours on research. I answered numerous enquiries from members and the public, all of which always took longer than anticipated! This often resulted in neglecting my own research! I still have not completed the transcription of the Samuel Holmes' letters, an invaluable new source of information on the S&DR.

I visited Search Engine at the NRM twice, once with cousins in order to pass over family papers and once to look at the Raisbeck Collection and to pass over my biography of the work of my father, Reginald Hackworth Young, as a Mechanical, Civil and Electrical Engineer, together with my research on the S&DR House Plaques & the setting up of both the Timothy Hackworth Museum and Locomotion. I also visited the Fitzhugh Library in Middleton and passed over records to the Shildon Railway Institute. I gave Locomotion my lists of items which went from Hackworth's house to Durham Record Office and sent Andrew McLean of the NRM our research on the engineers from abroad who visited Timothy Hackworth at Shildon between 1825 and 1830,

The biggest project has been working with our member, Maggie Pulle, in deciphering my father's research notes, which I think will be of great value to future historians.

I have drawn up the Young Family Tree, assisted Mike Norman in his research for 'Its Not Rocket Science' and written the Foreword for the book

Other S&DR research projects include the laying of the first rail, Etherley Incline, the Quakers and Stockton & Darlington Railway people, in particular those buried in St Helen's Churchyard.

There is always more to do, and I am concerned that the way in which this information is retained is not sufficient to enable easy access by future researchers.

JANE HACKWORTH-YOUNG. Researcher, Friends of the S&DR.

8. LOCAL GROUP HIGHLIGHTS (WEST TO EAST)

Report of the Etherley Incline Witton Park Colliery Group (EIWPC)

The group exists to promote and educate around the issues of the importance of the section in the west of the S&DR. The group has a working relationship with the majority of the land owners and the local parish council. It is also attempting to work closely with DCC.

To mark the 200th anniversary of the Stephensons' (father/son) original survey in October 1821, the group re-enacted this walk in October. The group continue to meet and carry out walks along sections of the route as far as St Helen. Recently the group have produced a booklet The Etherley Inclines a Short History.

John Raw, EIWPC

Report of the West Auckland and St. Helen Auckland Group (WASH)

This group continues to go forward with its efforts to educate and tidy its section. General progress has been made on several fronts. First the negatives! There has been no joint working with Northumberland/ Durham Dry Stone Walling Group as hoped. The idea to restore a section of the wall was first mooted on 1st October but 2021 funding has not been released. Second DCC WASH had really hoped for progress around the Gaunless Bridge Abutment area from DCC but despite a useful display back in February and several agreed dates,

deadlines have come and gone. The owners of the Station Masters House at St. Helen Auckland have still not been approached by DCC. There has still been no action on the graffiti first reported on 16th November 2021.

Enough gloom. On the upside, the group have formed a partnership with Northern Rivers Authority and the Brusselton Incline Group (BIG) and regular litter picks have taken place along the line. DCC now cut the grass on a timetable in St Helen Parish Church. Links have been established with the current owners of Thomas Storey's former home – the group attended an open house event there in August. A talk has been given to the St Helen and District History Society in February. Two members of the committee stood down during their term due to frustration with slow progress and new members have replaced them.

George and Cindy Alderslade have continued to restore their home which also acts as our meeting room. Several stone sleeper blocks have been put in to their garden. The Japanese knot weed on site has been tackled. The Clean Green cutback of vegetation in the trackbed aligned to Leazes Lane, St Helen Auckland during 2019 has not had a maintenance plan/follow up. An ongoing issue with scramble bikes is spasmodic. A successful event was carried out on 27th September and further events are planned.

John Raw, WASH

Report of the Brusselton Incline Group (BIG)

This report covers the period between August 2021 and October 2022 due to the group having its own AGM later than usual. Our activities through these 14 months have been principally ongoing maintenance of the sites at Brusselton and Shildon as well as exhibiting at several local events and hosting guided walks. Work at Brusselton has followed that of other years with Mark Hicks again flailing as much of the banksides as he can reach and Michael Spence continues to trim the banks on the west side of the highway. The heavy growth unable to be reached by the flail continues to be an issue which volunteers alone cannot deal with. Shildon Council regularly mow the level sections on the top of the embankment. Niall Hammond has led the initiative in pursuing a grant with DCC following the maintenance plan delivered last year. This led to a site meeting in May when details were discussed. Since then the proposed plan and grant have gone back and forth to DCC but I believe we are now at the point of agreement. This will allow us to employ contractors to carry out work which is beyond our volunteer capabilities and will include the landscaping at the Shildon Masons Arms site. The grant will span three years and I do hope that we can have work done at the latter site to ensure we get three growing seasons before the 200th anniversary in 2025.

We have input to the interpretation plans for the whole route through the Friends but still await specific details for each site including where, if any, replica Chaldron wagons are going to be located. My thanks go yet again to the small number of volunteers who regularly carry out work on the Incline and Shildon sites. Despite our Facebook membership now standing at 238 we are not attracting new volunteers.

Trevor Horner, Chair, BIG

Report of The Middleton St George S&DR Heritage Steering Group

Middleton St George S&DR Heritage Steering Group was set up in January 2020 by the Parish Council in conjunction with the Friends of S&DR and interested residents of Middleton St George in order to preserve and enhance the S&DR heritage in Middleton St George, in particular around Fighting Cocks (Fighting Cocks Heritage Hub). The work of the Steering Group has been ongoing since its inception, and has been documented. The Group may have met only once during the year, but its members have been active. Ross Chisholm spoke about

the heritage of the S&DR and its influence on the history of Middleton St George at the Annual Parish Assembly on 14 May. A revised version of the Illustrated Guide to the Fighting Cocks Heritage Hub was published and hopefully it can be made available to view on the Friends' website. The Steering Group invited senior members and officers of Darlington Borough Council to see for themselves and have explained the various projects. The Chief Executive (Ian Williams), the Assistant Director Community Services (Ian Thompson), the Deputy Leader and Holder of Local Services Portfolio (Cllr Andy Keir) and the leader of the Darlington Green Party (Cllr Matthew Snedker) attended.

The team of volunteers, led by Peter Bainbridge, met on 12 February and 3 September to help Maz Holmes, occupant of the former Station House, in her keeping the site neat, tidy and in floral splendour. They keep the loading dock wall and the crane base in good order. However, volunteers can only do so much; skilled services, corporate responsibility and financial support are needed to deliver the projects to create a legacy befitting the area's railway heritage. Maz replaced her boundary with a new fence in NER traditional style (project 2a) and was rewarded by a grant from the Friends towards the cost. Members of the Steering Group have submitted recommendations for the Conservation Area to be designated along the line. We have submitted details of a locomotive and carriages to be incorporated on the mural proposed for the garage wall (project 4). Recommendations to include several buildings and structures in a 'Local List' of buildings of interest have been submitted. The proper maintenance and management of the trackbed, features and lineside trees/vegetation are of concern and we are discussing opportunities to secure this with the consultants Tricolor Associates.

A bid is to be made by the Friends for Heritage Lottery funding for the more complex projects of the Heritage Hub, but there are outstanding issues to be resolved first, including securing contributions from housing developers Story Homes and the satisfactory transfer of land from the developers of the Sainsbury's foodstore. We can only hope that the bid can be made soon and is successful to allow work to start to get the job done in time for the 2025 celebrations.

Ross Chisholm, MSG S&DR Heritage Steering Group

Report of the Stockton Interest Group (SIG) (including the Yarm Branch Group)

Notable events originating from members of the Stockton Interest Group (SIG) of the broader FSDR in the previous year include:

"The First Rail" Film. The premiere of the film "The First Rail" took place on Monday 23 May 2022 at Stockton ARC. This date was significant, being 200 years to the day since the laying of the first rail of what was to become the Stockton & Darlington Railway took place, with great ceremony and celebration, in Stockton on Thursday 23 May 1822. The film, an animation of approximately 20 mins duration, was written and produced by members of the Friends, and is available for showing to any societies, groups, etc who would be interested. A decision on whether to make the film available publicly, for example, on YouTube) is pending following discussions on the possibility of entering the film around the film festival circuit.

A special beer – "First Rail Ale" - was brewed in support by Three Brothers Brewery of Stockton. A strong "Olde English Ale" in style, only five casks were produced.

Locomotion No 1 Model

Ownership of the full-size model of Locomotion No 1 has been transferred from the University of Durham to the Friends, who intend to conduct a full refurbishment. As an interim measure, the model has been placed in temporary storage at Stockton Borough Council's Bridge Road

Depot, very close to the destination of the first train, pulled by the real Locomotion No 1 of course, in 1825.

Stockton 197 – Celebrating the 197th Birthday of the S&DR – Saturday 24 September 2022
Following the success of the Stockton 196 event last year, Stockton Borough Council asked that we repeat the event this year (and likely future years in the run-up to 2025). The focal point of the event was as ever a marquee in Stockton High Street housing a railway-themed market. A slight change of location means that the marquee was smaller than last year, leading to a reduction in the number of traders / exhibitors accommodated. The marquee was however fully populated, with the centre-piece being a large interactive “Thomas” model railway layout from the “Sodor Appreciation Society”.

New Book – “S&DR - The Yarm Branch”

Three years of work by a number of Friends (known as the Yarm Branch Study Group), led to a new book being launched on Wednesday 27 July 2022 at the Cleveland Bay, Eaglescliffe. The book gives a detailed history of the 1825 S&DR ‘Yarm Branch’ which ran from the present-day Allens West station to the present-day Cleveland Bay. Produced in partnership with the Cleveland Industrial Archaeology Society (CIAS) the 120-page book retails at a cover price of £15 and is available at Friends events, and via the Friends web site at www.sdr1825.org.uk

Barry Thompson, SIG and Trustee.

8. Financial Statement.

Profit and Loss Account to 26 September 2022 shows a loss for the year of £428.71

The Balance Sheet as at the same date, there are reserves of £29,640.48, of which there is £16,490.44 of projects still to be spent. The Charity is in a healthy financial position.

Income and Expenditure FY Year 27/09/2021 to 26/09/2022

Income	20,218.82
Expenditure	20,647.53
Balance	-428.71

Balance sheet year - 27/09/2021 to 26/09/2022 september

Current Account - 26/09/2022	29,640.48
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FINANCED BY:

Revenue Reserve 2017/2018	2,359.98
Revenue Reserve 2018/2019	3,983.05
Revenue Reserve 2019/2020	625.07
Revenue Reserve 2020/2021	23,101.09
Revenue Reserve 2021/2022	-428.71

<u>Total</u>	<u>29,640.48</u>
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Ian Ross, Treasurer