



Chair's Report/activity for June 2022

I write this a few days before our regular monthly meeting knowing that for the first time in a while, I won't be with you as sometimes things like taking your wife away for her birthday have to be prioritised!

Myself and our treasurer Ian Ross had a meeting with our independent auditor this month to help prepare our annual accounts and reports for the Charity Commission. We were particularly successful in 2020/21 in attracting grant aid for a number of projects which pushed our income over £25,000 for the year which means a much more detailed reporting requirement. As a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, we also are listed at Companies House and so we need to report also to HMRC. All of this is a considerable burden of work for myself and your trustees but is also a measure of our success in gradually growing our capacity and influence.

With financial support from Historic England, we began an education project somewhere go under the guiding hand of our former chair Trish Pemberton who was an experienced former teacher. With family commitments meaning Trish had to step down, and covid delaying things we're now back on course with this. Working with Historic England and colleagues at the Museums at Locomotion, North Road and Preston Park, we are now about to commission work to review, assesses and fact check existing education material for schools; talk to partner schools along the line about what information/materials they need to teach the inspiring storey of the S&DR; and finally to produce a range of materials which will be available amongst other places as downloads from our website both for local and further afield schools to use.

Meetings continue with the Rail Heritage Board taking forward specific pieces of work to look at fund raising and sponsorship for 2025 and beyond; Julia Holberry Associates continuing to develop an Activity Plan for volunteers/community along the 26 miles as part of our National Heritage Lottery bid with Darlington council; and Tricolour Associates beginning their commission to look at how the S&DR along its full length can be managed and looked after post 2025 and for which we hope to play a major part. All of these studies will be reported to members at future meetings, hopefully with feedback from the consultants involved, before the end of the year.

Eric Brance-Instone of Historic England continues his work to identify and designate for protection parts of the S&DR (the most recent being a major review of the first five miles including the Etherley and Brusselton Inclines), while we continuing working with Durham, Darlington and Stockton councils on the boundaries of a conservation area which will hopefully protect significant parts of the S&DR along with the development of a local list of historic S&DR buildings. Members will have received emails on much of this in recent months and I urge you to write to me so that we can make a strong case for protecting the land and buildings which make up the S&DR and its subsequent railway heritage.

We continue to negotiate with Durham County Council for an annual grant to allow the Brusselton Incline Group to maintain the Incline in the fantastic condition they have brought it to, as well as a smaller area of land at the Masons Crossing. We are also hopeful that long term discussions over the former depot at Fighting Cocks will come to fruition very soon and allow us to take forward some significant restoration and interpretation works.

**Chair, Friends of the S&DR CIO, Marian Cottage, Lartington, Barnard  
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**Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway.**  
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Thanks as ever to our wonderful trustees and other keen supporters and helpers without who we would have achieved very little. As our AGM approaches (in October), I'd urge members to consider putting themselves forward to either help in specific areas or as trustees. Please give me a call to discuss if you'd like to particulate in a more hands on way.

All the best. Niall Hammond, Chair  
Friends of the S&DR. 03/07/2022.

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