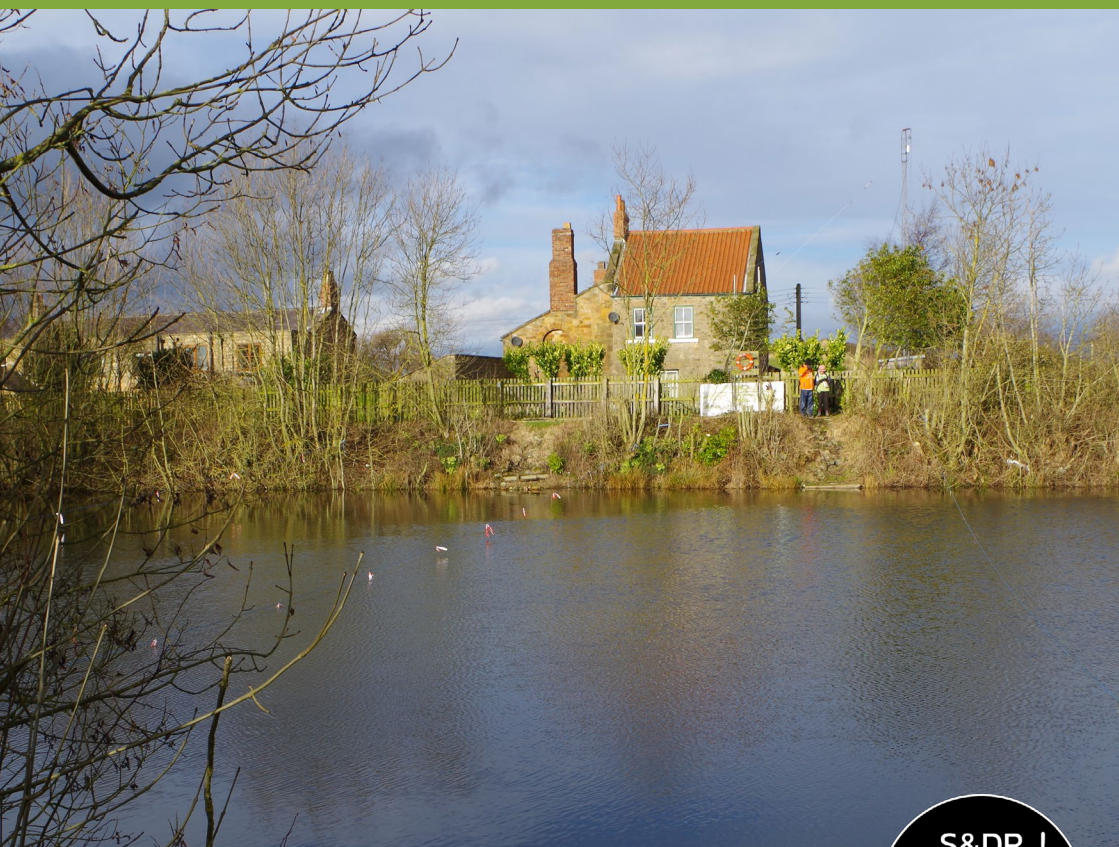


West Auckland to Shildon

Stockton & Darlington

Railway Walk No.2



The Railway that got the World on Track



THE ROUTE OF THE S&DR 1825: West Auckland to Shildon

Stockton & Darlington Railway Walk No. 2

The Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway were formed in 2013 to bring together all those with an interest in the S&DR to plan for the bicentenary in 2025, and ensure a lasting legacy of recognition and protection for the 1825 Stockton & Darlington Railway line as the birthplace of the modern railway.

This booklet is part of a series along the 26-mile stretch of line from Witton Park to Stockton and represents the first stage in improving the interpretation and access to the line. We also aim to ensure that the standing remains are conserved and have proper legal protection. Other booklets in the series can be found on our website: www.sdr1825.org.uk/store.

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Ordnance Survey maps are reproduced under licence 100042279. Ordnance Survey "Explorer" Map 304 is a very useful resource for exploring the remains of this part of the S&DR.

This self-guided walk booklet was funded through the 'Sharing Heritage' fund of the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2016 and updated in 2023 thanks to funding from Brightwater Partnership and volunteer time from the Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway.

Image: S&DR Chaldron waggon

1825

Phoenix Pit, Witton Park Colliery, on the morning of 27th September 1825

At seven in the morning, on that momentous day, 12 waggons of coal were hauled from the Phoenix Pit at Witton Park to the foot of Etherley Incline, and pulled up the North Bank 1,100 yards by a stationary engine. Then the waggons descended Etherley Incline South Bank to the road to West Auckland where crowds gathered to witness the spectacle.

From West Auckland, this train of waggons was joined by another waggon, filled with sacks of flour, and then the waggons were led by horses, across level land, to the foot of Brusselton Incline. Here waggons were roped together and hauled by a stationary steam engine over Brusselton Hill which was too steep for a locomotive and down the other side to Shildon.

Brusselton Incline, between West Auckland and Brusselton was 1,960 yards (1.8km) long, with an ascent of 150 feet (c.46m); whilst the incline between Brusselton and Shildon was 880 yards long, with a descent of 90 feet (c.27m). After the opening day, the use of the line was contracted out to private users and, at the foot of the incline, James Garthwaite supervised the hauling and coupling of

the waggons as well as collecting tickets. Private users paid according to the weights of their loads. It follows that there must have been a weigh house and tally cabin, somewhere near Bankhouse Lane, where the loads were processed.

At Shildon, the train of waggons was coupled to the locomotive later called 'Locomotion No.1', along with 21 other waggons including the first railway passenger carriage 'Experiment', before it made its way to Darlington.

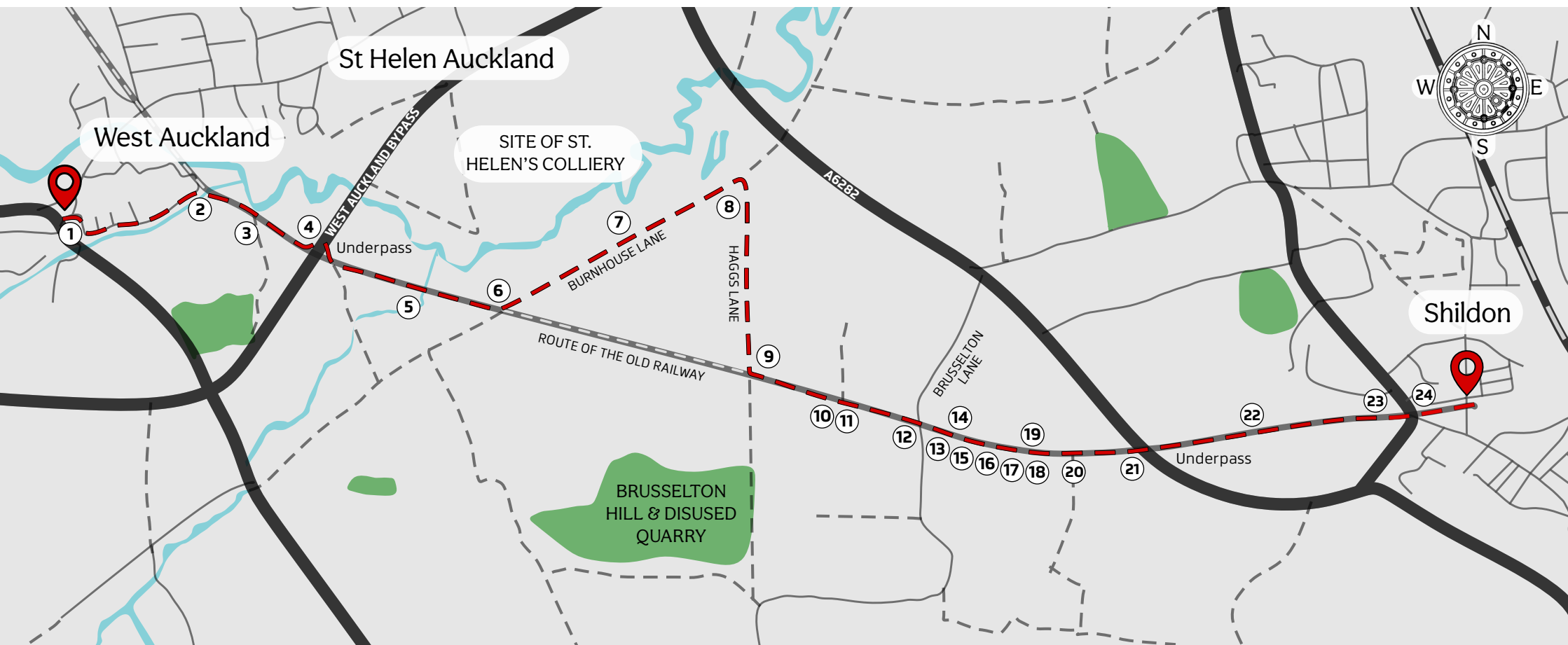
This walk picks up the journey, on the level section prior to the ascent of Brusselton Incline and continues to Shildon.

Where the line is not accessible in one section, this guided walk follows the ancient Roman Road "Dere Street". There are possible links back into West Auckland, and from there, to Auckland Castle and Kynren, Binchester Roman Fort, Escomb Anglo-Saxon Church and also the walk along Haggerleazes Branch to Cockfield Fell. Information on local buses can be found here: <https://bustimes.org/localities/west-auckland>. Information on trains (Shildon) can be found here <https://www.thetrainline.com/stations/shildon>

1 If you have arrived by car in West Auckland, you can park at the east end of the village green at the car park (NZ 18258 26345. DL14 9HJ). This is just off Station Road and east of the A68. Walk south from the car park past the pillar box and phone box, then turn left (east) along Oakley Green. Continue along this road with the housing estate on your left and the grass area and Oakley Beck on your right until the road starts to bend towards the left. Across the road on your right you will see a concrete culvert and just beyond a small stone bridge over a beck. Walk across the track on your right towards this bridge.

2 Beyond the modern concrete culvert you can see the original stone built 1825 culvert (NZ 18701 26411). This carried Oakley Beck below the S&DR trackbed.

From the stone bridge walk up on to the old trackbed which survives as an earthwork with some trees on top. There is a track along the top. If you wish to carry on towards Shildon via the Brusselton Incline, head to your right and continue along the embankment until you see a sloping boundary wall on your left and a worn narrow track on your right (NZ 18855 26306). If you haven't seen the Gaunless Bridge from the walk booklet covering Witton Park to West Auckland, head towards the left instead. Just after two stone walls of a former accommodation bridge, you will see the stone wing walls of the Gaunless Bridge crossing the river. Then return and follow the track until you get to a sloping wall on your left.





Original 1825 culvert south of West Auckland viewed from below the railway embankment.



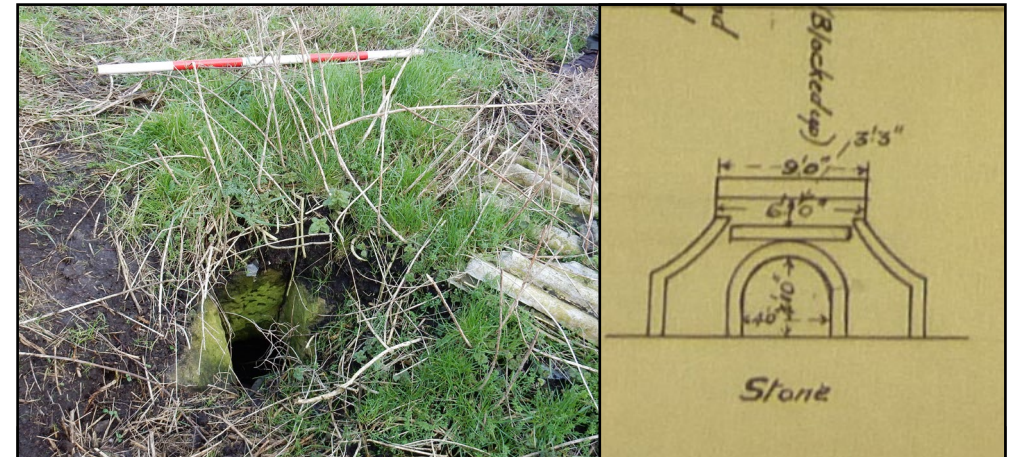
Two gateposts mark the site of a 19th century footpath, which was accommodated by the construction of a footbridge below the railway embankment of 1825

- ③ Go down the track on your right and look into the adjacent field back the way you have come. This is the site of a former 19th century footpath, and two stone gateposts can still be seen on the north west side of the embankment (NZ 18838 26306).

Climb back up the embankment, and on your right, before you reach the top, you might spot the fragmentary buried remains of a small pedestrian tunnel which once allowed people to walk under the line using the footpath. (Beware! This is a tripping hazard and possibly too inviting for small dogs). However, only the keystones of the arch are visible (NZ 18855 26301), or more ruinous remains on the left side, adjacent to the stretch of sloping boundary wall (NZ 18863 26312).

The sloping wall, with triangular cope stones on the left of the embankment, is one of many fragments of boundary wall that you will see along this stretch of line. The wall slopes here because it formed wing walls on either side of the tunnel.

- ④ The next section of line has been cut through by the West Auckland bypass, the A688. (The trackbed remains were preserved below the road). The right of way continues across the busy bypass (cross carefully) or you can leave the track 100m before you reach the bypass and head left (NE) using another signed bridleway. This takes you in a loop NE, then under the bypass where it crosses the river Gaunless, then head



The buried remains of a pedestrian tunnel below the embankment on the south west side and a sketch dated 1923 of the now buried foot tunnel.

1821

Taking you further: boundary walls along the S&DR

The S&DR property boundary had to be defined along its entire length. There were strict rules in the 1821 Act of Parliament, making it clear that the line could be no more than 15 yards wide except where there was a need for sidings and loading bays, in which case the line could be no more than 60 yards across without the landowner's consent. Landowners were also paid compensation for the land taken for the line and so delineating that land was important. Along this part of the line, the boundaries were marked with stone walls, often topped with arched or triangular coping stones. In other places, hawthorn hedging was used. Bills and receipts from the construction of the line in 1823-5, held in The National Archive, include quantities of 'arc' stones, which are presumably coping stones for the boundary walls and bridges. As you walk along the line, you will see fragmentary remains of these boundary stone walls along both sides of the embankment.



Sloping boundary walls adjacent to a now-buried tunnel. The boundary walls along this stretch of line were all topped with triangular cope stones.

back to the entrance to Broom Mill Farm Shop and Cafe (NZ 19292 26145, DL14 9PJ) landing on the opposite side of the road. If you are going to the farm shop, take the track to the left, but if you are continuing your 1825 journey, take the track straight ahead between the fences, but be aware that this is a working farm.

5 The original boundary walling can still be seen here, although in places it is almost reduced to ground height. About 150m. from the farm buildings, the track crosses the Hummerbeck over a bridge. This is an original 1825 structure, best seen from the right side of the track (NZ 19444 26044).

6 Boundary walls continue on the left side of the railway route before it joins another track at a crossroads. This is Burnshouse Lane (NZ 19708 25980) and beyond this point, at Bankfoot Farm (DL14 9PJ), the line is private property. The farm originally comprised two Stockton & Darlington Railway cottages, but these have been greatly altered. This is where waggons were hitched up to the Brusselton Incline; it is therefore also where a weigh house would be located and where tickets were presented to James Garthwaite in 1825 in order to use the incline. This is also the area where the first passenger coach 'Experiment' ended its days. The coach was made redundant by Dan Adamson's new coach 'Perseverance' taking passengers between Shildon and Darlington from 1827, and so was turned into a shed for railway workers at the foot of Brusselton bank, where it remained for a few years until it was accidentally destroyed by fire (Holmes 1975, 20). The line itself was partially destroyed by the open-cast mining of coal after the Second World War.

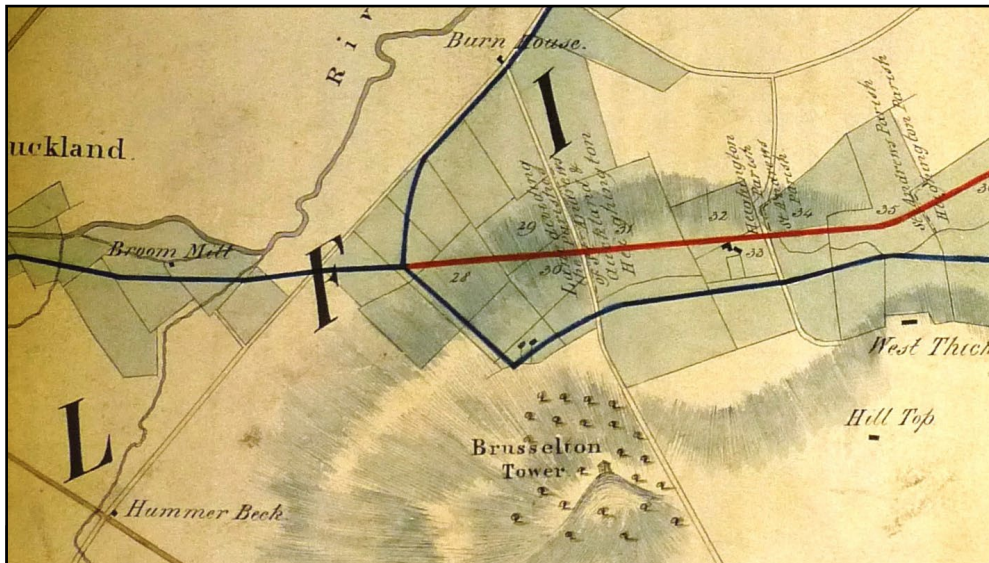
"On Monday last, aged 37, Thomas Lamb. His death was occasioned by a fall of earth and stones while working in a cut near Brusselton, on the Stockton and Darlington Railway. He has left a wife and small family to lament his loss"

1824

County Advertiser, Saturday 21st February 1824



The Hummerbeck Bridge of 1825.



Stephenson's proposed route in red between Broom Mill Farm and Brusselton Lane. The route past Broom Mill farm was set out by George Overton in 1821, and was unaltered by Stephenson (DRO Q/D/P/8/2.)

7 The railway route going forward is now private property, so the walking route now deviates to rejoin the S&DR further along. Turn left along Burnhouse Lane, heading north east – this is a pretty country lane with hedgerows on either side. On the left, you will see evidence of a branch line near a green steel bridge. This branch line was opened to serve St. Helen's Colliery in 1831.

8 After 970m you will reach a road now known as Haggs Lane (NZ 20549 26455), but which was a Roman Road 2,000 years ago, later called Dere Street. Turn right on to Haggs Lane and head up the road.

9 After 697m ignore the wooden stile half-hidden in the hedge, and cross the wooden stile on your left (NZ 20578 25749) next to a green cabin, just before you get to the entrance of Brusselton Farm on the right. You are now back on the track of the SD&R railway. This trackbed originally ran under the road and travellers had to duck because the height of the road bridge was rather low. There is no evidence left of this bridge – the land on both sides of the road was mined by open-cast methods after the Second World War.

10 Turn left over the stile heading east. The footpath runs along the right of the hedge in the field. However, the line probably ran in a cutting on the left of it. Follow the footpath alongside the hedge until you get to the end of the field. The tree - topped hill to your right is called Brusselton Hill (NZ 20342 25256). During the 18th century, a folly was built on the top, which was furnished with mosaic floors and was once used as a dance hall. The S&DR Company briefly explored using this as a signalling point. The folly has since been demolished and trees have grown over its site.

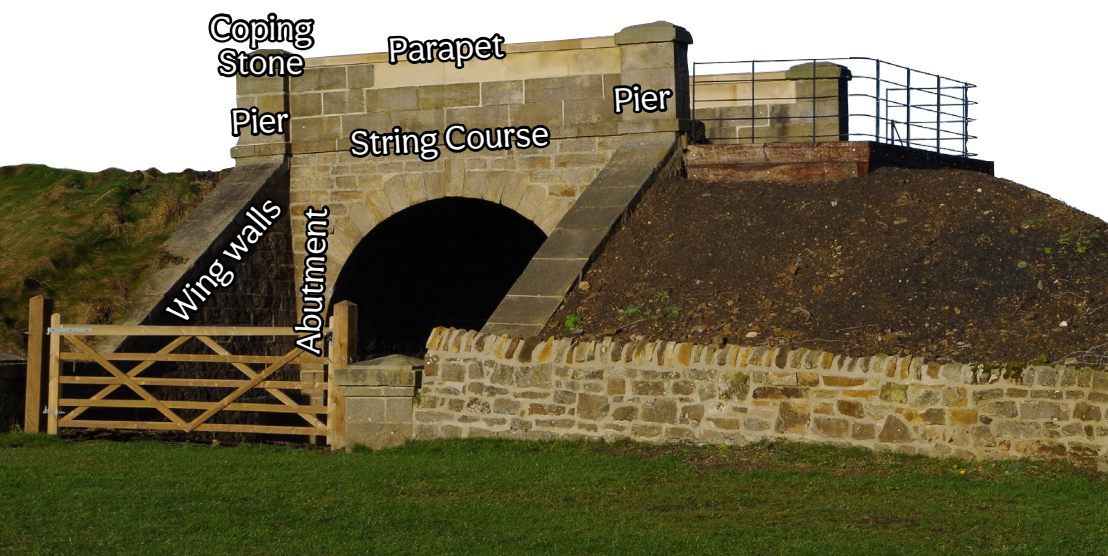
11 Continue straight ahead, keeping the hedge to your left, and go through a kissing gate just before Low West Thickley Farm (NZ 21036 25609). This farm was already old when George Stephenson and his team surveyed the proposed route of the incline. You are now walking along the surviving line, with 1825 stone boundary walls to your left. Some of the walls here have been repaired with two-hole stone sleepers. These sleepers are of the earliest type used by the S&DR, and were probably on the line on the very day it was launched in September 1825.



The road bridge before its demolition in 1954, with the accommodation bridge to the left (photo courtesy of the Armstrong Trust)

Architectural Glossary

- Wing walls – walls built at an angle to the entrance to a bridge; so as to funnel traffic under it.
- Abutments – supports for the span of a bridge.
- String course – a linear embellishment along a structure
- Parapet – the walls along the top of a bridge
- Pier – vertical structural support
- Coping stones – shaped stones used for capping a wall



12 As the footpath continues past the farm, you will start to see some stone sleepers visible in the ground and probably in their original position. These sleepers are not all of the same type, and some still retain metal fixings which held the chairs in place which were used to carry the rails. As you go over the next wooden stile, you will see a two-hole sleeper, but the majority are of the four-hole type. These were larger and heavier replacements, introduced in the 1830s, to allow chairs to be attached with four pins, to reduce movement of the rails. The fact that both types survive here is interesting, as it marks the transition between the two types of sleeper.

You should now be standing on the Brusselton accommodation bridge which is one of the best surviving structures of this type on the S&DR route. It was built in 1832-3 to allow the farmer access to the land on either side of the line (TNA RAIL 667/8 134). It was, and still is, an attractive structure with its sloping wing walls terminated in coped piers; with a string course and prominent pilasters to the parapet corners. There are good views from here back towards West Auckland.

Take the stone steps down the side of the accommodation bridge. Some of these are made of upcycled stone sleepers. The steps were built more recently, so the line can be used as a footpath.

Carefully cross the road. In 1825 there was a road bridge here to allow the incline to pass over the top. It repeatedly suffered from being hit by lorries during the 20th century, and was demolished in 1954, when the road was widened. You can see where it once stood; there is a concrete scar on the wall on the same side as the accommodation bridge and this terminates with the remains of a stone wing wall and coped pier.

13 Before heading up Brusselton Incline, with care, walk up Brusselton Lane (head right from the accommodation bridge) to the other side of where the road bridge once stood, and look to your left at the bottom edge of the incline embankment. If the vegetation is not too high, you might see a small square stone with the initials S and R carved on to it, just above the culvert and drain. This is an S&DR parish boundary stone, and the letters refer to the parishes of Redworth and Shildon. The S&DR Company had to ensure that such administrative boundaries continued to be marked, after the line was built.



The parish boundary stone



The Brusselton Incline with extant sleepers and an S&DR milestone

- 14** Walk back to where Brusselton Lane meets the incline and turn right towards the village of Brusselton (DL4 1QA). Use the steps with a rail, to walk on top of the incline. You will see sleepers sitting on the surface and a possible S&DR milestone (NZ 21211 25585) positioned on your left; this stone has weathered over time and lost its surface detail. The incline boundary walls survive on both sides.

The braking system on the early waggons required considerable modification. The brakes could only be applied from inside the vehicle, but if the rope on the incline snapped, un-manned waggons would run away, smashing into anything that stood in their way. Young lads were employed to stand by the side of the incline, ready to jump aboard a runaway train and apply the brake.

1831

Near the foot of the bank, the last braking device consisted of men, with huge blocks of wood and tree trunks, which they threw into the path of the rolling waggons to derail them deliberately (Northern Echo 22.11.2014). In 1831, a waggon carrying S&DR Committee members Joseph and Henry Pease, Timothy Hackworth and William Kitching (also of Kitching's ironworks on North Road, Darlington) was descending Brusselton incline towards Shildon when the rope snapped. All jumped to safety, except Kitching who was a rather large man, and who attempted to apply the brake (Young 1975, 133).

A gang of youths, led by John Summerson, jumped aboard and managed to slow the waggon down to 8mph, by the time it reached the bottom of the incline. Mr Kitching was badly shaken, and Summerson was given a shilling for his efforts (Northern Echo 22.11.14, but unsourced). Timothy Hackworth subsequently invented a system (called the cow) whereby if the rope snapped and the waggon lost control, it would be thrown off the tracks, thus limiting any subsequent damage. This may have been small comfort to Mr Kitching (Northern Echo 22.11.2014, but unsourced).

- 15** Follow the line up to the top where the sleepers disappear under the tarmac. You are now in the village of Brusselton which was created by the S&DR when it built the engine house and the domestic accommodation to house its workers and families. This is a good time to

look back down the incline and enjoy the view, but also appreciate the height and slope of the land which had to be negotiated by waggons, powered by horse and rope, between Etherley and Brusselton. With such steep descents, a good braking system for the waggons soon became a necessity.

16 Continue up the incline and road until you reach a pair of stone terraced houses on your right (NZ 21473 25505. DL4 1QA). This was two S&DR properties built to house the engineman and his family on one side and the blacksmith/fireman and his family on the other from 1825. Timothy Hackworth lived here briefly in 1825 until his new house was ready in Shildon in 1826 and when he moved out, James Stephenson, brother of George, also lived here temporarily (S&DR Committee report 14th April 1826, part of the RAIL archive, TNA). The house has since been extended on the west side and to the rear. Along with all other houses and terraces belonging to the S&DR, in which its employees lived, a black and white ceramic plaque was installed in 1857 giving the properties a unique reference number. The cottages here were labelled H1 and the plaque survives, albeit repositioned on the later extension.

17 An S&DR milepost has been inserted recently into a dwarf garden wall further along the road. This marks 20½ miles from Stockton – however it is not in its original position. The next stone building, with its gable to the road and a blocked archway, is the Engine House.

1825

Taking you further: The Enginemen

The Engineman in 1825 was William Moutrey, who was paid as a sub-contractor 1¼d per ton to draw the loaded waggons and haul the empty ones, and to maintain them. He was also responsible for paying his assistant's wages, the fireman's wages and to source supplies. The Company reverted to a waged structure of 22 shillings a week and 18 shillings for the assistant, presumably because it cost less, but then reverted to subcontract terms at a reduced tonnage rate. Moutrey left his position to become an engine driver and was replaced by Robert Young in 1827.

Young was introduced to the S&DR by Timothy Hackworth and moved here from the Tyne. It was said 'he stood in his engine house for twenty years without taking a holiday' (Young 1975, 310). Robert's only son George Edward Young married Timothy Hackworth's youngest child, Jane.



The remains of the engine house and an S&DR milestone, rebuilt into the garden wall.

1823

Taking you further: The Engine and Engine House

The stationary engine was ordered in November 1823 from George Stephenson's son's newly created company, Robert Stephenson & Co. This was the company's first big order.

It was Robert Stephenson, a mere lad at 20 years of age, who designed the engine before he went abroad in June 1824 (Young 1975, 129). The newly-appointed Resident Engineer, Timothy Hackworth, spent many hours and probably some blood, sweat and tears ensuring that everything at the incline worked well in time for the opening day on the 27th September 1825.

The building of the engine house at Brusselton was put out to tender on the 1st May 1824, and included the construction of Etherley Engine House. The tender was advertised in the local press, by Robert Stephenson & Co, referring prospective masons and joiners to contact Thomas Storey at Saint Helen Auckland, where they could view the plans.

The engine cost £3,482 15s. It had two 20 feet by 8-foot (c.6 x 2.4m) diameter boilers, feeding two 30 horse power engines with 30-inch (76cm) cylinders (Jeans 1875, 54). The stonework came from Brusselton Quarry which also provided the sleeper blocks for the track.

The rope that wound around the drum which was turned by the engine, was a simple hemp rope, 1850 yards long (c.1.7km). It hauled the waggons up the incline at a steady 8mph. A shorter, 825-yard length (0.75km), lowered the waggons to New Shildon. These were both supplied by John Grimshaw of Bishop Wearmouth in 1822, at a cost of £33.13.0, and were ordered by George Stephenson.

The engine, boilers and winding gear were to be a source of trouble, and constantly needed to be repaired. It was the job of one man to stand by the drum with a crow bar to make sure the rope coiled around the drum smoothly. In fact, the rope often coiled around irregularly resulting in sudden slack which made the waggons jerk backwards, the rope would break and the contents of the waggons would spill in all directions (Young 1975, 129).

Timothy Hackworth carried out major modifications in 1826 which increased the amount of traffic the incline could handle threefold with half the power. He did this by introducing double-acting drums of diameters proportioned to the respective lengths of the inclined planes. So, the momentum of the waggons descending one side of Brusselton's incline assisted the engine in hauling the ascending waggons up the other. His alterations also included a number of safety features to improve the breaking and the safety (Young 1975, 131). He replaced the engine in 1831 with a more powerful, 80 horse power one built by R & W. Hawthorn of Newcastle. This engine could haul six sets of waggons an hour which was a considerable

improvement (Young 1975, 133). The new drum house spanned the track and the boiler house was built on the north side; it is this arrangement that can be seen on historic images. The original engine house was subsequently converted to residential use.

The incline was also used for passenger traffic. Coaches were hitched to the rope and pulled up the hill in the same way as waggons, however those passengers sitting on top of the coach were very close to the drum house which crossed over the track; in 1834 an unfortunate traveller gashed his head on the drum house which he hadn't spotted in the dark. The coach's guard received an official warning from the company for not providing any light during the hours of darkness (Smith 2019, 28).

1. Low West Thickley Farm. Boundary wall includes sleeper fragments
2. Incline embankment with stone sleepers
3. Accommodation Bridge
4. Brusselton Lane with the remains of the bridge abutments
5. Parish boundary stone
6. Incline embankment with stone sleepers and extant milepost
7. Original engine house with alterations of 1831, engineman's house and mile post
8. Sleeper fragments incorporated into walls
9. Reservoir to feed engine house



Aerial photo: Mark Ingleby



Left: Reused split sleeper blocks

Right: Brusselton before many of the terraced houses were demolished.



Brusselton Engine House; chimney and winding house now demolished (undated, but possibly c.1880). The large empty building of 1831 held the winding gear which consisted of large drums which sat above the line, powered by the steam engine adjacent. This was a replacement of the first Engine House which still partially survives on site today as a domestic house (to the right).

Taking you further: Early signalling

The engineman at the top of Brusselton Incline had to be told when waggons, which were a mile-and-a-half away, were ready to be hauled up.

A tall pole was erected at the bottom, with a disc on top of it. When the disc was spinning, it meant the waggons were ready. To see the disc, the engineman had a telescope permanently fixed near his chair. However, when visibility was poor the disc couldn't be seen, so long wires attached to bells, or rappers, were installed.

Opposite the Engine House, the ground rises up, and results from forty-two, former terraced houses, known as North Terrace and built c.1900, being demolished in 1971. Presumably the demolition debris was left and grassed over. Continue past the Engine House, and you will see a large retaining stone wall on your right. A number of stone sleepers have been split and reused in the building of this wall. These, along with the other dressed stones, probably came from the demolition of the winding house and boiler house which once spanned the line.

18 At the end of the wall, a rough track leads around the back of the Engine House. You can walk along here and see the reservoir that fed the steam powered engine (NZ 21489 25456). In 1825 there were two round reservoirs, but they were combined into this larger pond to increase the water supply to the engine in the 1840s or early 1850s.

19 Once you have seen the reservoir, walk back to the incline and turn right so that you continue along it, where it is in a cutting, with some exposed stone sleepers. This stretch of incline was re-cut for the 1975 celebrations of the S&DR. Unfortunately, some of the sleeper blocks were repositioned the wrong way around! North Terrace once ran beyond the extent of these sleeper blocks. On the right there was a loading platform and sidings, which remained in use until the 1950s. Their remains may still survive below ground.

1842

Taking you further: decline & closure of Brusselton Incline

From this point onwards the incline started to descend towards Shildon. This was shorter than the stretch from West Auckland to Brusselton; consequently, a shorter length of rope was required to deliver the waggons to Shildon, and a smaller drum required in the engine house to wind the rope around. Brusselton Incline had largely been made redundant when the Shildon Tunnel Branch was constructed in 1842 to meet growing traffic flows. However, the formal closure was not announced until 13th October 1858.

In 1859 the engine was sold by private contract (Darlington & Stockton Times 23.7.1859), but the inclines, unlike those at Etherley, were maintained as a contingency route until the 1880s, in case the Shildon Tunnel became blocked (see S&DR Walk: The Shildon Circular).

20 Continue along the incline until you reach the abutments of what is now known as Milk Bridge (NZ 21688 25473). This was an accommodation bridge, designed to allow the farmer to take his or her dairy cattle across the incline. It lost its decking in 1958/9 but the abutments survive. A long ramp approached the bridge from the lower fields on the right side

Continue past the bridge and along the footpath towards Shildon; the line was probably located to the left under the vegetation. The boundary wall for the line can still be seen on the right hand side of the footpath. This stretch of line east of Brusselton and west of Shildon was gradually taken into the Waggon Works, and was even electrified as part of the Shildon to Newport route around 1914 - the electric locos having a shed directly adjacent to the Incline route (thank you to Trevor Horner, Brusselton Incline Group, for this information.)

Image: Signal Post at Mason's Arms (Stop 23)

21 The footpath diverts from the line through a timber gate and down to a concrete subway which allows safe crossing below a busy road (NZ 21963 25466). This is safer than trying to remain on the 1825 route. Once on the opposite side of the road, your route continues along the 1825 embankment; this is much altered but the ground still drops a long way on your right down to a drainage ditch, just as the embankment would originally have done.

22 When the path forks, take the right side and walk past the concrete wall and hedge on your right. You will soon approach the Hackworth Industrial Park (named after the S&DR's first locomotive superintendent and manager) and a long straight road which runs along the 1825 route. This route was once surrounded by the Shildon Works which covered an area of 55 acres by the 1960s. The Works closed in 1984 with the loss of 2,500 jobs.

23 None of the buildings here date to the time of the S&DR but some are railway buildings that originate with the North Eastern Railway which amalgamated with the S&DR in 1863. Altered and extended, some with rails still surviving in the yards, these buildings replaced the earliest engine sheds and round houses of the S&DR.

As the road bends to the right, you will see a path to the left heading towards a cream rendered building across the road. Follow this path. On your left are sleeper blocks which were removed from the site in the 1980s and recently replaced with samples of early rail types. To your right is where the S&DR's first engine shed was built and it is also where Timothy Hackworth's first house was built by the S&DR along with a row of other terraced houses for railway workers. Later, British Rail offices were built on the site of these early buildings and are where workers once clocked in. Today the buildings are being reused for, amongst other things, a micro brewery.

Before crossing Byerley Road, look to your left and you will see the exit from the works, still guarded by a semaphore signal. This is much later than 1825, but in time this crossing point became very busy with frequent rail traffic. Consequently, the road was gated, the gates not being removed until 1985 after the Works closed (and when the sleeper blocks were first uncovered).



The former Mason's Arms and site of the Mason's Arms Crossing with sleeper blocks returned to the site and sample early rail types added.

(24) The cream rendered building in front of you is the former Mason's Arms (now Cape to Cairo). This is where railway lines later converged and was known as the Mason's Arms Crossing. This was an important point during the 1825 opening day....



The Mason's Arms as it was during the 1970s when the rail line still ran across to the Shildon waggon works. Photo courtesy of the John Proud collection.

In preparation for the opening ceremony of the Stockton & Darlington Railway on the 27th September 1825, Locomotion No.1, initially called Active, had been transported from Newcastle where it was made, by horse-drawn waggon and put on the rails at Heighington from which it was brought to the Mason's Arms crossing in Shildon (Corkin, 1977). The railway as conceived by George Stephenson and George Overton started near Witton Park Colliery, but at 8 o'clock the procession reached Brusselton where waggons filled with sacks of coal and flour (and quite a few passengers) were hauled up by the stationary engine located at Brusselton – a journey of eight minutes. These were then lowered down to the east, a journey of five minutes, and coupled to Locomotion waiting at this spot. Hundreds of onlookers lined the

1825

track to witness the spectacle and see George Stephenson at the controls of his steam engine pulling the waggons and passenger coach Experiment, filled with local dignitaries and investors. Three hundred tickets in all were issued for the journey but over 700 people were thought to have pushed, scrambled and elbowed their way on board for the momentous journey (only 553 passengers by the time the train got to Darlington according to the *Zion Herald* of November 1825). There was some debate and confusion about the order of the procession, and contemporary reports varied, but it (probably) consisted of:

- The Company's Locomotive Engine No. 1
- The Engine's Tender, with water and coals
- Five waggons, laden with coal
- One waggon, laden with flour
- One waggon, containing surveyors, engineers etc.
- 'The Experiment', containing the Committee and
- other Proprietors totalling between 16-18 people
- Six waggons, with workmen and others standing
- Fourteen waggons, with workmen and others
- Six waggons laden with coal

The *Durham County Advertiser* later reported:

The scene, on the moving of the engine, sets description at defiance. Astonishment was not confined to the human species, for the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air seemed to view with wonder and awe the machine, which now moved onward at a rate of 10 or 12 mph with a weight of not less than 80 tons attached to it (1st October 1825).

The steam-hauled public train began its historic journey here by letting off steam, resulting in a scattering of the

remaining on-lookers, who feared an explosion. Timothy Hackworth shouted 'All ready!' and the procession left and headed towards Stockton with a blue - scarfed man positioned between each waggon, ready to apply the brakes whenever required (Heavisides 1912, 61). It would reach Darlington nine miles away, after two hours, at 12 o'clock following an eventful journey requiring three stoppages lasting 55 minutes (Heavisides 1912, 65).

In the absence of a railway station (no such thing had been invented in 1825) up until 1842, when Shildon's first purpose built railway station was opened, tickets to use the trains could be bought at the Mason's Arms. The S&DR company also rented a room here for meetings. The inn has been altered on a number of occasions, most notably around 1875 when the S&DR was celebrating its 50th anniversary, however the rear parts with the wide carriage opening, is the original coach entrance.

The impact of that day, 27th September 1825, was to have a profound effect on this area. There had been just a small village called Shildon to the north, but then New Shildon sprang up and transformed the landscape.

In 1854 a journalist working for the *Darlington and Stockton Times* observed the changes when he took "a run among the Auckland collieries" starting in a horse drawn coach at Shildon.

Going at a quiet pace there is time to observe the country which, between this place and West Auckland, is essentially a coal district. On every hand are to be seen steam engines, puffing and sobbing as they bring to the surface the results of the labour of those who are toiling below".

This was a radical change from the more rural landscape which had existed before September 1825.

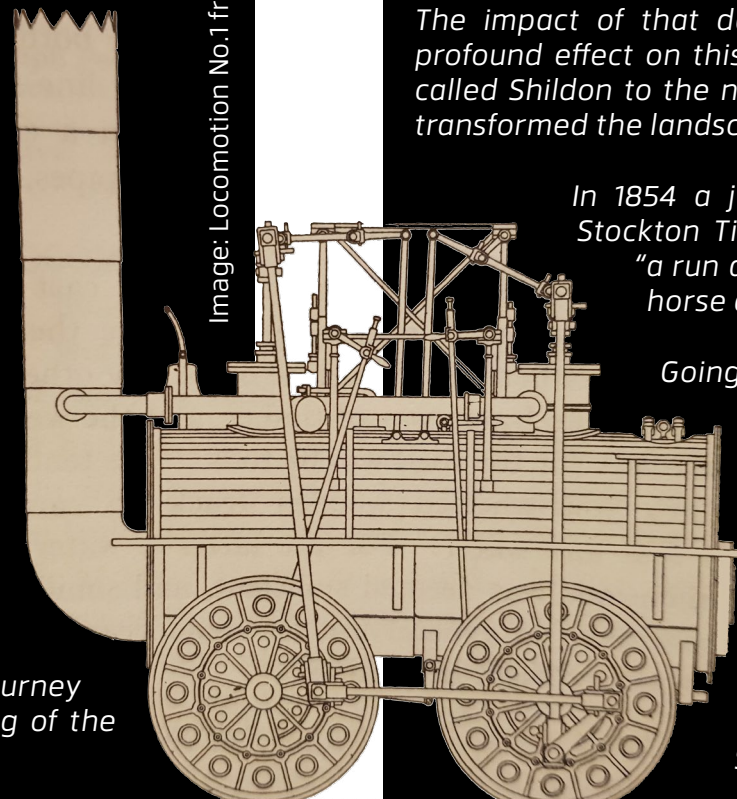


Image: Locomotion No.1 from Engineer

"I have known Shildon for fifty years when there was not a house of any sort at New Shildon, much less a Mechanics Institute. When I surveyed the lines of the projected railway in 1821, the site of this New Shildon Works was a wet, swampy field – a likely place to find a snipe, or a flock of peewits. Dan Adamson's was the nearest house. A part of Old Shildon existed, but 'Chapel Row', a row of miner's houses, was unbuilt or unthought of."

(John Dixon, Company Engineer in the Bishop Auckland Herald, 3.9.1863)

(25) To the right of the Mason's Arms (now Cape to Cario) is a landscaped area. Follow the tree lined path that runs parallel to Station Street. This is the route of the 1825 line and will take you back to Locomotion opposite Timothy Hackworth's house.

From here you can visit the historic railway buildings or walk to the modern Shildon Station and catch a train to Heighington, Darlington, Dinsdale, Eaglescliffe or Thornaby, near the terminus of the 1825 S&DR route. Alternatively, you can walk past the coal drops (1846/7 in date and where locomotives were refuelled) and on to the museum engine sheds with toilets, a café and car parking.

This, then, is the start of the next walks in the series – the Shildon Circular or the Shildon to Heighington Walk.

This leaflet has been compiled with information from:

Corkin, R 1977 Shildon, Cradle of the Railways; George Stephenson's Book of Reference September 1822 in the Durham Records Office DRO Q/D/P/8/2; Glass, J 1875, *A Railway Engineer of 1825; Being a Short Outline of the Life and Character of the Late Mr. Thomas Greener, Formerly of Etherley*; Heavisides, M 1912 *The History of the First Public Railway (Stockton & Darlington). The Opening Day and What Followed*; Holmes, P. J 1975 *Stockton and Darlington Railway*; Jeans, J.S 1875 *History of the Stockton & Darlington Railway*; Smith, G. T 2019 *A Railway History of New Shildon*; Fieldwork by Friends of the S&DR, Friends of the NRM and the Brusselton Incline Group; Caroline Hardie, Archaeo-Environment Ltd, original text; Yvonne Ramage, Friends of the 1825 S&DR, editor; Professor Alan Townsend, Friends of the 1825 S&DR, proof reader.



Hackworth's House. Photo: Dr Sarah Price



The Goods Shed at the west end of Locomotion. Photo: Trevor Horner

STOCKTON & DARLINGTON RAILWAY | 1825-1830

INTRODUCTION

Map showing the extent of the S&DR by 1830. It also went on to expand to Barnard Castle, Tebay, Redcar, Saltburn and Weardale. It was amalgamated with the North Eastern Railway in 1863.

KEY

1825 Main line and the route of the opening day on 27th of September 1825.

-  1825 Main line and the route of the opening day on 27th of September 1825.
-  S&DR Branch Lines
-  S&DR line still in use
-  Map Locations

MAP



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Artwork by Bright White Ltd



1 Etherley Incline



2 Gaunless Bridge



3 Brusselton Incline



4 Locomotion Railway Museum, Shildon



5 Heighington Station



6 Darlington Railway Museum



7 Skerne Bridge



8 Fighting Cocks



9 Preston Park Museum & Grounds



10 Stockton

4 miles

6.2 kilometres

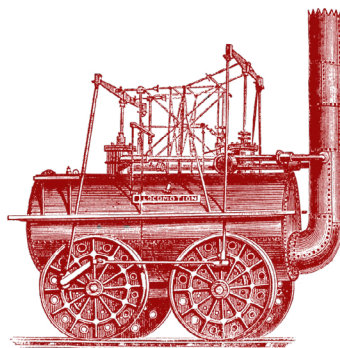
1.5 hours

@ 3mph walking pace



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