

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE STOCKTON AND DARLINGTON RAILWAY

PART 5-INFRASTRUCTURE AND LEGACY

INTRODUCTION

In Part 4 of our history we witnessed the transformation of the S&DR, from its opening in 1825, into a “Railway Empire” exercising both direct and indirect control over a complex transport network.

We conclude our history, in Part 5, by looking at some of its supporting infrastructure, established practices and the rise of the rival railways that lead to its amalgamation in 1863; and finally its legacy!

COMPANY OFFICES

Throughout its existence the administration of the S&DR was located in what was to become very much a railway town, “Darlington”. Before the main-line was completed early shareholder and various other meetings were held at the Kings Head Hotel, on Priestgate. The first railway offices, from 1821, were above a shop at No 9 Highrow, a truly modest beginning for what was to become a complex enterprise.

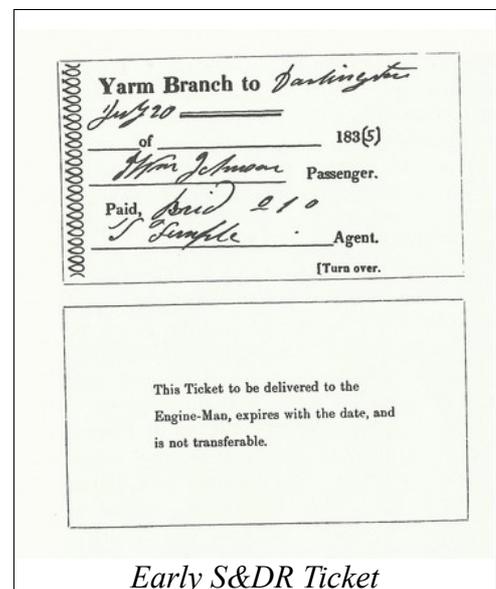
In 1829 the offices were moved to an elegant purpose built premises on the corner of Northgate and Union Street, these offices being subject to expansion and modification as the companies business flourished. This building continued to be railway offices until about 1912, some 49 years after amalgamation with the North Eastern Railway. Parts of the original building remain visible to this day, but are now quite difficult to identify due to part demolition and later shop front works



TICKETING AND PARCELS

The first tickets issued to members of the public to ride on a “steam hauled railway” were the 300 complimentary tickets issued to “gentlemen and strangers” to travel on the inaugural train, including a number of invitees from the nobility and gentry. The element of these tickets that required posting to non invited passengers was done so from the Darlington High Row office ; therefore **in the strictest sense No 9 High Row was the world's first railway ticket office.**

For the brief period prior to the handover of the passenger service to private operators in May 1826 a number of fare paying tickets were handled by Richard Pickersgill, of Darlington, and a Mr Tully of Stockton, who in essence were both agents for the railway. After the handover tickets to travel were issued either at inns belonging to the various private



operators .Some inns and hostelrys which happened to find themselves on the route also served as ticket offices, such as the Fighting Cocks at Urray Nook,which is probably the oldest building still standing from which tickets were issued. Railway stations and booking offices as we know them today were non existent in the early days of travel and for some years after the introduction of locomotive hauled passenger trains, in 1833, a significant proportion of travelling passengers would pay either the driver or the guard.

As to the first passenger fares those announced in the timetable for the companies coach Experiment were at a flat rate of one shilling for the 11 mile journey from Darlington to Stockton, this flat rate was to later change dependant on whether one travelled inside or outside the carriage.

In addition the company also offered a parcel service with parcels and passengers being collected at the same place The pricing structure for parcels was dependant on weight .As we will see many of the customs and practices so adopted were often inherited from the stagecoach era but have persisted,little altered, to the present day.

CARRIAGES

As previously described the first railway passenger carriages were either largely adapted stagecoaches, with their running wheels adapted to suit flanged rail, hence the continuance to this day of the terms coach or carriage to describe railway passenger vehicles.

These first coaches ,typically 16ft long with a 4ft-6in wheelbase, were adapted to be primarily hauled by horses with shafts provided at both ends enabling the coach to be pulled in either direction.

When in 1833 S&DR took passenger services back under its own control,with locomotive haulage, a new and improved design of coach was introduced ;the first was named “Union” (not to be confused with the horse drawn coach of 1826). Operating from November 1833 it operated exclusively between Stockton and Darlington. Initially these new coaches were turned out in a variety of colours but 1842 saw the adoption of“crimson lake”as the company standard.

Although rectangular in profile their sides displayed curved lines ,betraying their coaching origin. They were composite in construction with a central first class carriage flanked by second class apartments at either end .Each compartment had two rows of inward facing seats,with the first class better finished and upholstered .



Early S&DR Railway Carriage

ESTABLISHMENT OF RAILWAY PROTOCOL

The early practices of the S&DR, often articulated on their timetables was in many ways to establish “railway protocol” for the years to come :

- a no smoking rule was introduced as early as 1840, it was not until 1868 provision was officially made for smokers on British railways
- the introduction of a fares structure linked to a class designation i.e. first, second and third and pitched at a level passengers could realistically afford to pay. Whilst these classes to some extent reflected social structure first and second class were derived from either “inside or outside travelling” on the original coaches.
- a structure for charging for children was developed around 1847, with children under three travelling free and reductions up to the age of ten
- special fares and special trains were introduced from the 1840's, with day tickets at reduced fares being offered from 1846. There were also mixed trains running carrying both passengers and livestock where only second class fares were charged

- S&DR were amongst the first to realise the need for standardised time and from about 1837 made specific reference to the companies clocks kept in line with those of the General Post Office (GPO) in London; in doing so referring members of the public to various clock-makers premises where clocks could be consulted, on in the case of Stockton the town clock. These notices heralded the later provision of clocks at principal stations for the benefit of the travelling public (This introduction of “railway time” in the 1830's paved the way for the introduction of Greenwich Mean Time in 1847 and overcame the considerable difficulties encountered by stagecoach operators as the result of local communities observing their own sun-time, which differed dependant on location east or west).
- refreshment rooms were provided at North Road Station from as early as 1845
- the practice of allowing passengers to carry with them a limited amount of free baggage also originated with the S&DR. In 1846 this allowance was 100 lb. Parliamentary sanction for free luggage was given in 1849 with 150 lb for first class travellers and 100lb for second and third class
- the modern practice of issuing separate winter and summer timetables also originated with the S&DR ,with winter arrangements commencing on the 1st October 1840.

WORLDS FIRST RAILWAY STATION

In August 1833, just prior to the commencement of a permanent steam worked passenger service, S&DR converted a North Road warehouse into a place “convenient for passengers waiting to take the railway coach”. Incorporating a booking office and waiting room it was S&DR's first station with a shop and dwelling house later added.

Located just to the east of the North Road turnpike crossing it was replaced in 1842 by a purpose built station some 350 yards to the west . Whilst subsequently modified and extended this station was always to be known as “Darlington North Road”. Initially consisting of a train shed and carriages shed ,separated by a wall and with only one platform. Shortly afterwards a company goods depot was built to the south-east ,consisting of two parallel sheds with a pitched roof.

North Road Station stands today as part of the Darlington Railway Centre and Museum with the goods sheds used by the Darlington Railway Preservation Society and most famously for the construction of the 4-6-2 A1 Peppercorn Class Pacific Tornado, which travelled for the first time under its own steam in 2008.



S&DR First Station

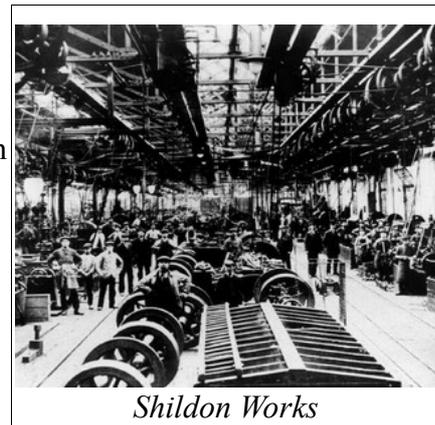
ENGINEERING WORKS

SHILDON

The S&DR itself built its first engineering works at New Shildon ,in 1833, located at a strategic point alongside the line at the foot of the east Brusselton Incline, where static steam haulage gave way to locomotives. Originally consisting of only one engine shed, with space for two locomotives, along with a narrow shed for joiners and blacksmiths.

Initially used as only a repair and maintenance depot, with a workforce of about 50, as for a number of years the company continued its initial practice of subcontracting out the building of locomotives. Locomotion, Hope, Black Diamond and Diligence by Robert Stephenson and Co ;of the next twenty six nine were built by Timothy Hackworth and 17 by outside contractors.

Whilst Shildon works began life as the headquarters of the S&DR locomotive department, both housing and maintaining locomotives the emphasis eventually changed to wagon building and in doing so Shildon Works gained the double distinction of being both the oldest railway main works and in time the largest and most important wagon works in the British rail empire. The capacity of the Shildon Works peaked in the 1960's, by then the works occupied a site of some 55 acres and employed nearly 3,000 men plus supporting a vibrant local industry of dedicated suppliers. Contraversial closure, very much resented by the proud people of the area, came in 1984. The Shildon Works to a large extent found itself the victim of freight traffic transferring from rail to road!

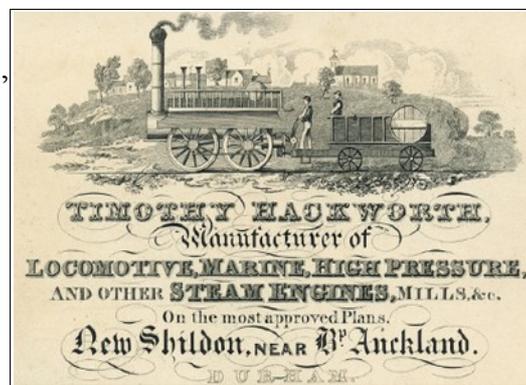


Shildon Works

THE SOHO WORKS

Earlier in our history we touched on the contribution of Timothy Hackworth to S&DR's success; it is one of the ironies of history that this contribution will always be overshadowed by the iconic figure of George Stephenson, whose direct association with the S&DR diminished significantly after the opening of the line.

The formation of Hackworth's private venture the "Soho Works" was in many ways a natural consequence of this paradox as Hackworth's relationship with the S&DR was always somewhat unusual. Although still directly employed, in 1829, he was allowed to construct his own entry for the Rainhill trials, Sans Pareil, in direct competition Stephenson's Rocket. The relative merits of these two engines is still argued over to this day and is beyond the scope of our history, that said its failure, at the trials, represented one of the few setbacks suffered by Hackworth in his long career.

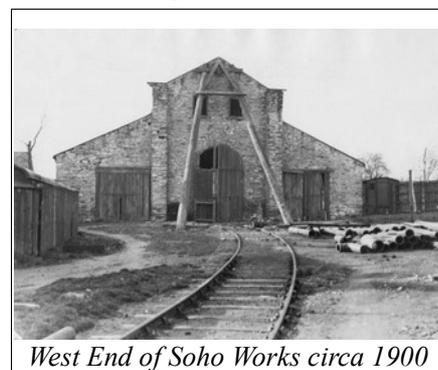


In 1833 Hackworth left the companies direct employment and as such was able to expand his own business interests leading to the formation of the Soho Works, initially managed on a full time basis by his brother Thomas. There was in reality little or no conflict of interest with the S&DR and Hackworth continued to use the companies Shildon works; by 1840 he was devoting all his time to Soho business.

The works themselves were located half a mile to the east of the Shildon Works in the angle between the Surtees Railway and the Black Boy branch and a matter of yards from the main line. The works built locomotives for the S&DR and other railways as well as winding engines, hydraulic presses and grinding mills. Growing to cover an area of about 6 acres between 1840 and 1850 with the addition of coal drying ovens, iron foundry, blacksmiths and boilermakers shops, warehouses, stores, pattern shop, offices, workman's cottages and Hackworth's own residence. At a later date a separate erection shed was added, big enough to house ten locomotives at one time.

The first locomotive to be built was the 0-4-0 No 41 Dart, delivered to S&DR in 1840 and not withdrawn from service until 1879, in the days of the NER.

Five years after Hackworth's death, in 1850, the Soho Works was acquired by the S&DR and used as an extension of their New Shildon works until 1883, when it was finally closed.



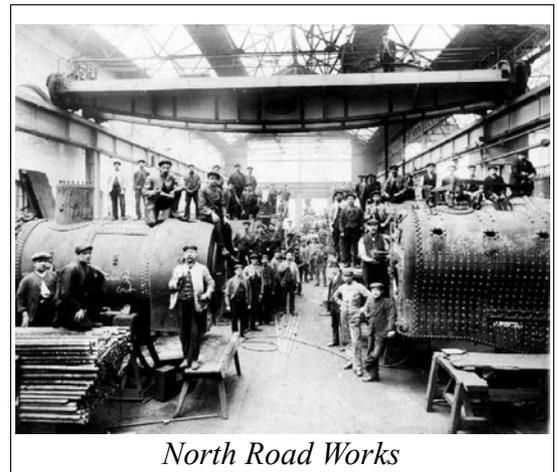
West End of Soho Works circa 1900

DARLINGTON WORKS (NORTH ROAD SHOPS)

Within a few years of S&DR's acquisition of Timothy Hackworth's Soho Works, at New Shildon, it became obvious the combined works were too small to meet current needs. In 1857 a decision was taken to build at Darlington; and to some extent the subsequent transfer of locomotive related operations to Darlington from Shildon signalled a change in the relative fortunes of the two towns. Shildon going forward to concentrate on wagon construction with Darlington the main player in locomotive engineering.

The new works, initially a six acre development on a twenty acre site, was opened rather ironically in January 1863, barely six months before the amalgamation with the NER. Soon to become known as "North Road Shops" the works were for the fabrication, erection, repair and maintenance of the companies locomotives. Some 150 staff were transferred from Shildon, including the locomotive engineer and superintendent William Bouch and the first locomotive to be completed was No 175 Contractor, in 1864 and in honour of the Darlington Quaker Sir David Dale.

The Darlington works, like Shildon, continued in production for over a hundred years, on the North Road site, repairing and building locomotives, eventually to include to include DC electric and diesel-electric locomotives with before turning over completely to diesel locomotive construction in 1962. The same year British Rail Workshops Division was created with centralised control and a policy of rationalising the many workshops, a policy to which Darlington was to fall victim. After a spirited and at times acrimonious struggle North Road shops finally closed in 1966, with a then reduced staff of more than 2500. The one thing closure could never do was to take away Darlington's position as a true "railway town" with a heritage of engineering excellence.



North Road Works

HOPETOWN WORKS

Darlington's history of private locomotive builders pre-dates the building of the North Road Shops in 1863.

William Kitching, a Darlington Quaker, involvement with the S&DR can be traced to 1824 and in 1830, under the name of William and Alfred Kitching, they established a foundry at a site at Hopetown, just to the west of the Darlington coal depot. From this site locomotives were supplied to the S&DR from 1835. Sixteen locomotives were supplied in total including most significantly No 25 the Derwent, now preserved, it represented the concluding form of Hackworth's 0-6-0 Royal George Class

The history of W&A Kitching is typical of Darlington's transformation into a "railway town" with a natural progression from the existing and numerous small forges and light industries that previously catered for the needs of the agricultural hinterland and woollen industry.

RIVAL RAILWAYS AND THE JOURNEY TO AMALGAMATION

The Stockton and Darlington Railway Co's journey to amalgamation, in 1863, was to feature a blend of acrimonious rivalry, co-operation and at times pragmatism in its approach to other railway companies, as it sort to both protect and enhance it's commercial and territorial interests. In reality although some eleven years were to elapse from the opening of the S&DR before another railway

penetrated the Darlington area, the story of that interaction with its various suitors and rivals, as told briefly below, was to have many twists and turns very similar in many ways to a “Shakespearian Drama”.

THE CLARENCE RAILWAY

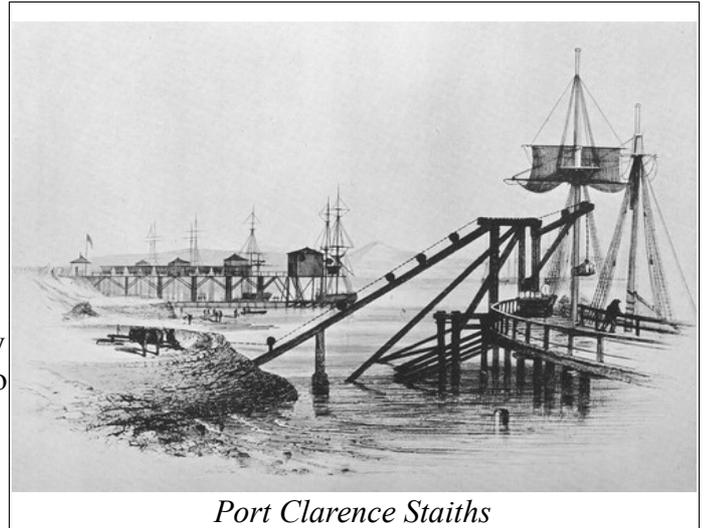
The Clarence Railway was the brainchild of Christopher Tennant and was regarded from the outset as a real threat to S&DR's monopoly of the lucrative south-west Durham coalfield ; providing a shorter route to the mouth of the Tees. Tennant himself who was to prove a shrewd operator was driven by the negative impact of S&DR's Middlesbrough extension on Stockton trade, a venture he and the other Stockton shareholders had opposed from the outset. He was in many ways to the S&DR's “bête noire”

Despite sustained S&DR opposition the Clarence Railway Act received Royal Assent in May 1828, less than 3 year after the opening of the S&DR. Commencing at a junction with the S&DR at Sim Pasture Farm (2 miles east of Shildon) the first coal exported reached Haverton Hill in January 1834 and the final terminus at the newly constructed Port Clarence staiths by the end of that year.

In doing so the Clarence Railway presented a totally credible west to east route some 6.30 miles shorter to Stockton than that provided by the S&DR and from the outset began to make heavy inroads into S&DR traffic. Its one area of vulnerability was the lack of an independent access to the south west Durham pits, as it was obliged to use the S&DR line as far as Simpasture junction. Accordingly S&DR responded by imposing a levy on coal passing over its line, and then on to the Clarence route to Stockton and beyond.

Despite resultant financial difficulties the Clarence railway struggled on and during its life put down a number of branch lines and importantly formed a joint venture association with another independent, The West Durham Railway (WDR). This arrangement provided a strategic outlet to that section of the south-west Durham coalfield centred on Crook; again the S&DR vigorously opposed this arrangement.

It is somewhat ironic that the Clarence Railway, in the guise of the West Hartlepool Harbour Railway, with which it amalgamated, outlasted the S&DR by some 2 years to 1865.



Port Clarence Staiths

INVADING RAILWAYS

GNER

The promotion and involvement of the S&DR's shareholders of the Great Northern Railway Co (GNER) was entirely consistent with George Stephenson's dream of an east coast route from London to Newcastle and on to the borders. The first stage of this achievement was to be the construction of the line from Newcastle to York, via Darlington, and upon announcement of the prospectus, in 1835, every shareholder of the S&DR received a copy with a statement from the management committee “**that it would be exceedingly desirable that S&DR shareholders should also become shareholders of this new undertaking**”

Not only would this give the S&DR proprietors a valuable strategic foothold in developing the trunk rail network of eastern England but it would also increase mineral traffic, particularly coal, into the North Riding and to York itself. The GNER line was authorised in two stages in 1836 (Newcastle to Croft) and 1837 (Croft to York) .The work on the line, masterminded by Robert

Stephenson started on the southern section in November 1837. Despite vigorous objections, from the Co Durham shareholders, it was this southern section that was constructed first, opened to mineral traffic in January 1841 with a passenger service commencing in March of that year. The route comprising a 5 mile link from Darlington to Croft and a southerly section from Croft to York, at last Darlington was linked to London! The first engine used for the Darlington to York run was the Hackworth designed "Pilot," with other S&DR locomotives working on the GNER route on loan or on hire.

By 1841 the GNER had used up all of its capital, having reached only as far as Darlington, leaving the northern section in limbo. Much to the outrage of the S&DR the northern route was opened, in 1844, with the active involvement of George Hudson, the Railway King, via his Newcastle and Darlington Junction Railway Co (N&DJR), with a parlous GNER forced to negotiate a leasing arrangement. Although the line as originally constructed stopped short at Gateshead.

On the 18th June 1844 "the grand opening train" set out from London and reached Gateshead at an average speed of some 37mph, much to the chagrin of the S&DR directors!

The N&DJR line crossed the S&DR at Albert Hill, half a mile south of North Road station; this was achieved by one of the few right hand crossings on a UK main line.

The first station on the new line was a wooden shed, erected by GNER, on a site in Darlington that was to become Bank Top Station in 1888.

The GNER set up its offices in an elegant Georgian building at the junction of Crown St and Northgate and opposite those of the S&DR.

Despite the real animosity felt by S&DR towards George Hudson once the route from Darlington to Gateshead was opened the two companies recognised the need to co-exist and an element of co-operation ensued, with the provision of spurs on the S&DR crossing enabling passengers and goods traffic to transfer from one system to another without a break.



Albert Road Crossing

LNR

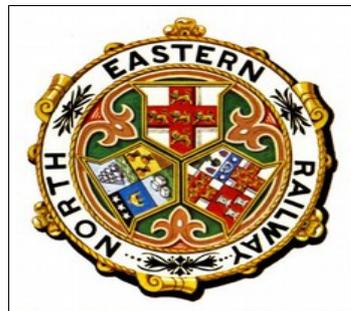
Completion of the 42 arch brick and stone viaduct, designed by Thomas Grainger, at Yarm in 1849 signalled another invasion of S&DR territory, followed by a later tunnel constructed under the Yarm Depot Coal Branch.

Constructed by the Leeds Northern Railway (LNR) this intrusion into S&DR country was met by pragmatism with negotiations of mutually beneficial line crossings and additional line provision. This included "Allen's Curve" to enable trains to travel south over LNR lines.

AMALGAMATION

By 1846 there was barely a mile north of Leeds and east of the Pennines over which Hudson did not have a level of influence except that belonging to the independent and stubborn S&DR. Despite this stubborn independence the S&DR was not immune to commercial pressures and railway politics. In fact in 1849, driven by a financial crisis in its affairs, it was only Hudson's fall from grace that prevented him from leasing the S&DR lines.

The next suitor, the North Eastern Railway (NER) formed in 1854 presented more formidable opposition. Itself arising from a number of railway company amalgamations, including that with the LNR, it became one of the great regional railway companies controlling ultimately some



720 route miles through North Yorkshire, Durham and Northumberland, and as such had many points of contact with the S&DR.

Relationships between the two companies had always been cordial, neither provoking each other by territorial incursions and amalgamation was mooted as early as 1859, the east-west configuration of the S&DR network being an ideal compliment to the north-south orientation of the NER's own lines. By March 1860 agreement to amalgamate had been reached in principle and the two companies began working together from 1861, with amalgamation finally concluded in February 1863. **After 42 years, for 38 of which they had been operating locomotives, the S&DR ceased to exist as a separate entity!**

At the time of the amalgamation the S&DR and its subsidiaries had built up a network of over 200 route miles, with running rights over other lines totalling some 55 miles.

In reality the amalgamation made little difference to the running of the S&DR's previous domain. The managing Darlington Committee, comprising a majority of former S&DR directors, remained in place until 1876 and as such was granted almost complete autonomy over its previous area, before it ultimately became the central operating division of the NER

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The Stockton and Darlington railway was almost an inevitable consequence of the “insatiable appetite for resources” of the Industrial Revolution, where the need to economically transport essential inland mineral reserves was achieved by a combination of business endeavour and engineering genius.

As can be seen from our history it made an indelible imprint on the landscape and very society of the North-East of England, and beyond, from which it could never revert to its former state, either willingly or unwillingly.

Whilst the S&DR itself is celebrated as the public railway to uses locomotives it should be remembered more correctly as the first clear demonstration of the commercial transformation that could be produced by the construction of a railway!

The impact of this transformation on the railway's heartland, of County Durham was dramatic, the very quickening pace of economic change resulting in a population explosion, with the North-East as a whole becoming one of the principle growth areas of Victorian Britain. A society of small scattered agricultural communities was quickly changed into an industrial and urbanised society, with for the first time with the rise of the “railway towns” such as Shildon, Darlington and in its initial stages Middlesbrough.

This rapid and unforeseen expansion created a “new world” for the people of the region and as a result they struggled to adapt to a new way of living, in cramped urban conurbations where their welfare and sanitary needs often fell foul of unsympathetic landowners and landlords. The people themselves however responded with typical resilience and a new sense of community, and where necessary in an organised way to battle social injustice.

From our history the listing of the number of “firsts” associated with the construction and development of what was to become a railway empire seems almost endless, including the establishment of a railway related protocol that lives with us largely unchanged to this day.

In finishing it is well worth noting that the indelible imprint of the S&DR on the very landscape of the region continues to be recognised. In deciding to site their new multi-million pound carriage assembly plant just a few hundred yards from Heighington Station, where Locomotion No 1 was first placed on the line, Hitachi Rail Europe made specific reference to part the unrivalled railway heritage of the region played in that decision.

