



# THE ROCKET

The Newsletter of the Robert Stephenson Trust - April 2010

## NEWS FROM THE TRUST

The Heritage Lottery Fund has announced that legacy of engineer Robert Stephenson will be preserved for future generations thanks to two projects supported by Heritage Lottery Fund grants totalling more than £25,000. The projects will keep the achievements of the railway pioneer alive while the Robert Stephenson Trust makes arrangements for new premises following the loss of its South Street Works museum in Newcastle.

A touring exhibition, to be organised by the Trust, will visit several venues throughout the region while a collection of books and papers detailing Stephenson's work will be preserved and catalogued in a project to be run by The North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers.

The Trust's project – which has received a £12,500 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) – will create an exhibition The Art of Robert Stephenson – Images of the Man, His Life and His Works. Over a three-year period this will tour the Tyne and Wear region with venues already confirmed in Alnwick, Berwick, Darlington, Morpeth and Shildon.

The exhibition will be complimented by a series of talks, activities for children and families, and an education pack for schools. The Institution of Civil Engineers and Newcastle City Council will be assisting the Trust in this work to engage children in practical activities that demonstrate the importance of engineering in the past and today.

The second project, for which the North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers has received a £12,900 HLF grant, concentrates on the Institute's Wood Memorial Hall Library which has care of the Robert Stephenson Trust's collection of books and papers. The grant will enable the Grade II library itself to be cleaned and the Trust's collection to be classified, labelled, catalogued and placed on-line making it widely available to the public for the first time. This project will

recruit up to 15 volunteers to undertake the work, offering the chance for local people to gain new skills.

Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North East Ivor Crowther said: "Taken together, these two projects will help to underwrite the legacy of Robert Stephenson and ensure that his many achievements in engineering and transportation are not only appreciated, but also introduced to a new generation."

Chairman of the Robert Stephenson Trust Bob Longridge said: "Our exhibition and associated events would not have been possible without funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. We are very grateful."

Commenting for the North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers, the president Malcolm Tilley said: "We are delighted to be working in partnership with the Robert Stephenson Trust and HLF. Robert Stephenson's was our vice-president when he died in 1859 and left £2,000 in his will, a huge sum of money in those days. It is fitting we can assist the Trust that honours his name in this way. Housing the Trust's book collection complements our own collection entirely and highlights the common ancestry and links between the railways and coal industry. We are also delighted to be able to welcome more volunteers who play such a vital role in maintaining Britain's heritage and we look forward to members of the public being able to use this important collection by Easter."





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## Wylam Scoutrail



Several hundred people – young, old and in-between – flocked to the Wylam Institute recently for Scout Rail.

exhibited classic Hornby 'O' gauge models with four other enthusiasts said "We brought steam outline locomotives, dating from the 1920s to the mid-1960s. Also delighted with the level of public interest



The Trust took the opportunity to mount an exhibition using the new 'Pop Up' display stands acquired with the grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

at the event was Wylam resident Mike Johnson, from the Robert Stephenson Trust, which had four display boards and an audio visual presentation.

Trustees Mike Johnson and Michael Taylor were on hand to tell visitors more about Robert Stephenson and the work of the Trust.

"We were very pleased with how it went," he said. People know all about George Stephenson but less about Robert, who was very well-known in his day.

Scout Rail, now in its third year, was the brainchild of a local parent, keen to use the area's history as a spring board for a fundraiser. And, of course Robert Stephenson was godfather to Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell founder of the Scout movement.

"He was an incredible engineer and yet his achievements are rarely recognised. His first biographer attributed a lot of his work to George and those myths have persisted ever since. Historians now know its wrong but getting that across to the public is not easy."

One of the organisers Ken John said "It was busy all day - there was a lot of interest in it," and Stocksfield resident Grant Robinson, who

### "POP UP HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE"

The Trust is particularly interested in hearing of opportunities where the 'Pop up' boards could be displayed. They are very portable and equally appropriate for day events or for longer periods.

Whilst history based events are most appropriate others may also present the opportunity for the displays to be

used.

If you are aware of any events such as history fairs, model railway exhibitions, village fete that might be interested in having the display then please get in touch with Michael Taylor

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You can now find  
Robert Stephenson Trust  
on Facebook as well as  
robertstephensontrust.com



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## PRODUCTS OF THE WORKS

Invicta was built by Robert Stephenson and Company in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1829. She was the twentieth locomotive built by Stephenson, being built immediately after Rocket.

the locomotive was built for £635 to work on the Canterbury and Whitstable Railway. Named after the motto on the Flag of Kent, "Invicta", meaning undefeated, she was shipped by sea from Newcastle to Whitstable and hauled the inaugural train into Whitstable Harbour station on 3 May 1830. Modifications were carried out in 1835, but these were not successful.

Invicta was retired in 1836 as the stationary engines proved adequate to work the line and was offered for sale in October 1839 but did not find a buyer. However Invicta came into the ownership of the South Eastern Railway and was exhibited at the Golden Jubilee of the Stockton and Darlington Rail-

way in 1875 and at the Newcastle Stephenson Centenary in 1881.

Restoration started in 1892 and for many years Invicta was displayed in the Dane John Gardens, Canterbury. It wasn't until 1977 that a full restoration was undertaken, with help from the National Railway Museum. Invicta returned to Canterbury in time for the 150th anniversary of the Canterbury & Whitstable Railway on 3 May 1980.

Invicta is currently on display at Canterbury Museum, cosmetically restored. In November 2008, it was announced that a £41,000 Heritage Lottery Fund planning grant had been made to Canterbury City Council to develop a new museum at Whitstable to house Invicta and a stationary winding engine built at Robert Stephenson's works. In 2009, the owner of "Invicta" - The Transport Trust - gifted the locomotive to the Whitstable Museum.



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## Engineering Activities signal fun time for youngsters

The Trust joined with The Institution of Civil Engineers North East to help children from across the region to learn about structural engineering and railway signalling during a week of activity at Locomotion: The National Railway Museum at Shildon.



ICE Education Officer, Mike Gardiner with Trustee, Michael Taylor at Locomotion

The sessions, run by volunteers from the Institution of Civil Engineers, ran in parallel with an exhibition of photographs and artefacts organised by the Robert Stephenson Trust.

Youngsters learned about the old-style railway signals and how they were used, then were helped to make models using paper tubes.

Mike Gardiner, education co-ordinator for ICE North East, commented: "Semaphore railway signals are not very common nowadays so most of the children had no idea when they arrived about what it was they were being asked to make.

"Fortuitously, however, there was such a signal on the Darlington to Bishop Auckland line immediately outside where they were working. They all seemed to enjoy the experience and each youngster went away with his or her model. In all, we probably made enough signals to cover the line from Darlington to Newcastle!"

## The Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 Painting by Henry Windham Philips



Prince Albert looks at plans for the Exhibition: Edward George Geoffrey Smith Stanley, Lord Derby, who served as Tory Prime Minister in 1852-53, 1858-59, and 1866-68 sits at the right while Robert Stephenson, an Exhibition Commissioner, stands at the right. Next to him is Sir John Peel, Conservative Prime Minister in both 1830s and 1840's.

John Russell, Whig prime minister from 1846 to 1852 and 1866 to 1868, stands behind the Prince Consort facing left. Sir Joseph Paxton, whom Robert Stephenson advised, leans forward with his finger on the table. William Cubitt, who was president of The Institute of Civil Engineers and was Chairman of the Building committee of the Great Exhibition, sits in the front, and a Mr. Fox stands behind him. Sir Henry Cole is the shortest of the three men standing at left.

Robert Stephenson's image is very similar to that depicted in the Philip's 'Presidential painting' commissioned by the Institution of Civil Engineers.



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## *The Art of Robert Stephenson Images of the Man his life and his works*

### Exhibition held at Locomotion, Shildon

The set up period for the exhibition occurred during the worst snowstorm for 20 years necessitating the canceling of the planned 'preview' for invited guests. Never the less the exhibition opened as planned on 13th January 2010. The exhibition covered an area of 600 square feet which were roughly split into specific topic areas which were outlined in feature descriptive panels.

Throughout the display small illustrated descriptive panels "did you know" were dispersed with the aim of engaging the casual viewer. The core displays were supplemented with a number of ad hoc images and facts such as Robert Stephenson's connection with the founder of the Scout movement, Lord Baden Powell. Frank Mason etchings also figured in this section.

Three Audio Visual DVD presentations consisted of a 3 minute biography of Robert with commentary by BBC's Colin Briggs. A four minute folk song "George and Robert Stephenson", accompanied by images of both men and a 3 minute long slide show of wreath laying in

Newcastle and Westminster Abbey on 12th October 2009. High Level Bridge restoration film by contractor May Gurney was shown in the 'Syphon G' coach converted to theatre. The 13 minute award winning film featured commentary by Tim Healey.



The museum records show that 14000 people visited the venue during the exhibition period including those from a special excursion train from Kings Cross who spent two hours at the museum



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## The Victoria Bridge



Victoria Bridger in 1898

Victoria Bridge is a bridge over the St. Lawrence River, linking Montreal, Quebec, to the south shore city of Saint-Lambert. The construction of the bridge began in 1854 when more than 3,000 workers, mostly Irish, began constructing the span for the Grand Trunk Railway.

The Victoria Bridge was completed in 1859, and the first passenger train rolled across it on Dec. 17 of that year. It took six minutes to travel through the tunnel, in darkness and with no holes in the sides of the tunnel to allow the smoke from the engine to escape.

It is credited with opening up Montreal to trade with the rest of North America, since before it was built the only way to reach the island was by boat or over ice when the river was frozen.

The chief engineer was James Hodges. The original deck was a long structural metal tube made of prefabricated sections made in England and designed by Robert Stephenson, and Alexander McKenzie Ross, Resident Engineer. The contractors were the English partnership of

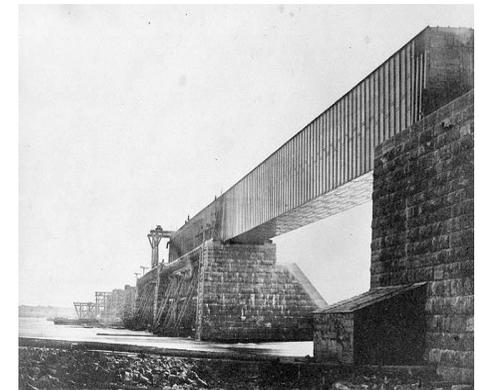
Peto, Brassey and Betts. In 1897–1898, the metal tube from 1860 was replaced by metal trusses, common at the time, together with a second track and two roadways cantilevered out from the bridge to accommodate pedestrians and carts. Without disrupting train traffic, they dismantled the tube and re-christened the bridge the Victoria Jubilee in honour of Queen



Victoria Bridger tubes under construction on travelling gantry

Victoria's 60-year reign. The stone piers from 1860, slightly altered in 1897, still testify to the excellent original engineering.

While there have been a number of changes over the years, including a new configuration when the St. Lawrence Seaway was built, the Victoria Bridge continues to serve the same purpose it always has.



Victoria Bridger under construction



## Viz founder Chris Donald's pick of history

Question: What links the light bulb, trains and a particular type of gun?

Answer: They are the objects chosen by cartoonist Chris Donald when asked to pick the three items he thought had transformed society in the north-east of England.



Chris presented his selection on Inside Out on BBC One as part of the A History of the World series.

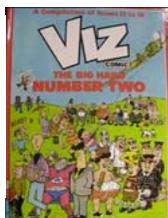
Chris's first choice was the electric light bulb designed by Joseph Swan and demonstrated at Newcastle's Literary and Philosophical Society in 1879. Swan's house in Low Fell was the first in the world to be lit by electric light.

The second object on Chris's list was the number one gun developed by Lord Armstrong in 1855. It helped to make Newcastle's West End a hive of industry and also revolutionised armaments.

Last, but not least, Chris chose the railway engine.

The programme featured Chris talking to Trust Historian, Victoria Haworth at Stephenson Museum, North Tyneside about 'Billy' locomotive.

Chris then was seen at Tanfield Railway riding on the Robert Stephenson and Company locomotive which he had fond memories of watching the train carrying Rolo sweets from the factory in Fawdon go past his childhood home.



## Robert Stephenson 150th The Anniversary Statistics

The events organised by various bodies to commemorate the death of Robert Stephenson have proved very successful in helping towards the Trust's objectives.

Twelve Exhibitions attracted more than 15,000 visitors. Eleven lectures were attended by 684 people. Film Nights attracted 391 attendees and over 300 children attended activities associated around a Robert Stephenson theme.



Guided Walks & Heritage Open Days events were attended by 1,813 attendees. The Photographic Competition of engineering icons 150 entries and a dramatisation of The Royal Border Bridge opening by Queen Victoria performed by Berwick Youth Theatre was attended by 80 people.

Wreath Laying ceremonies in Newcastle and London were attended by 80 people, Evensong 40 attendees.

The Panel for Historical Engineering Works had a Robert Stephenson theme for its Annual General meeting.

AND Media Coverage which has a total advertising value of £67,200 consisting of seven TV items with advertising value equivalent (AVE) of over £23,000. One 1 Radio interview almost £4,000 AVE and 23 printed articles and 26 on line articles with a Media value of £40,200. Totalling 2,382,020 opportunities to see.



## The Water Tower

The Trust is in an advanced stage of negotiation with Network Rail and its property arm Spacia to secure a long lease of the Water Tower, a three storey building immediately to the south of Newcastle's Central Station. Its name comes from a large water tank on the top, but below are six rooms which have been used as offices.

The building has been unoccupied for some time. Even though there is no connection with Robert Stephenson, one of the Trust's purposes is to preserve notable railway buildings and this has a Grade II designation.



If we can reach agreement on the terms of a lease the Trust will launch an appeal for funds to restore the Water Tower and make it available for activities which will be designed to attract a wide range of people. Watch this space!



## Model Train Exhibition, New South Wales

The 1<sup>st</sup> Class No3. class of locomotives was ordered by the Sydney Railway Company & opened the Sydney to Parramatta railway for the Government Railways on 26th Sept, 1855. The locomotives were built by Robert Stephenson & Co.



No 1 of this class is preserved as a static exhibit as the Power House Museum Sydney. In service the locomotive weighted 47.205 ton.

Model trains operating on the day of the exhibition were trains that ran between Sydney & Bathurst from 1876 to the present day.

The shed housing these model trains measures 100 feet by 40 feet. The layout was developed by John Brown & owned by Paul Hennessy of Brewongle, NSW.



A **blog** is a type of website, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video.

You can contribute to the Robert Stephenson Trust Blog at <http://apps.robertstephensontrust.com/Blog>