



THE ROCKET

The Newsletter of the Robert Stephenson Trust - August 2008

STEPHENSON QUARTER DEVELOPMENTS

At the time of writing (August) the planning application remains to be determined and negotiation of the Works lease continues. Whilst the future remains uncertain the Trust continues to be very active in trying to secure a satisfactory outcome.

The Trust has commissioned some brick-work pointing on the western wall adjacent to Sussex Street as part of the ongoing obligations to maintain the building.

Silverlink holdings have formed a new subsidiary known as Stephenson (Special Projects) Ltd. (SSPL) with the objective to deliver an arts and culture programme together with a historic interpretation programme for the Stephenson Quarter during and after the regeneration. The company has appointed Harry James to develop ideas with the aim of fulfilling the objectives.



*Stephenson Monument
Westgate Road, Newcastle
by John Graham Lough (1798-1876)*

In April 1859 Lough's plaster model was exhibited in the nearby Literary and Philosophical Society before it was sent down to London to be cast in Bronze. On 3rd October 1862 the monument was inaugurated at an elaborate ceremony attended, so it was claimed, by over 100,000 spectators.

Schools Event

Supporting "The North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers" the Trust were involved through the very active participation of Trustees, Vicky Haworth and Margaret Hague in a schools event.



Following morning sessions at the Mining Institute the children visited Stephenson Works where they undertook a variety of activities.

"We loved learning about the trains and Robert and his dad. We especially liked learning how to design bridges. I think we were all surprised how much it took to design and build a train"



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Guided Tours of Stephenson Works.

Thurs 11th, Fri. 12th, Sat. 13th, Sun 14th, September. 11am to 3pm
Entrance free

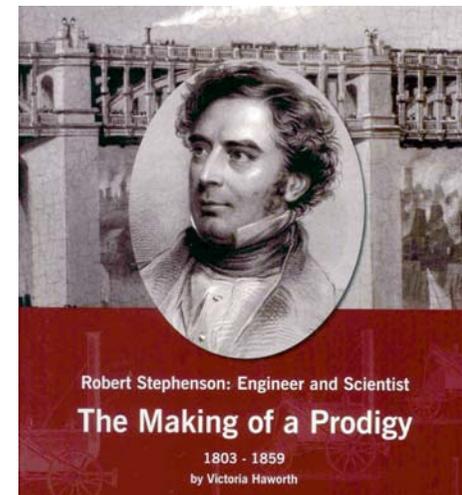
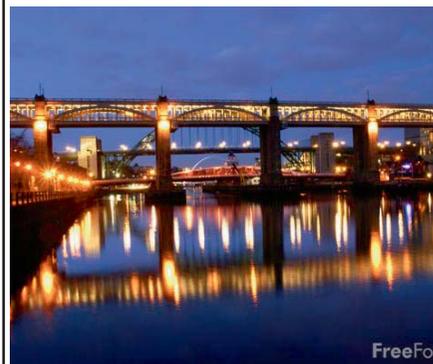
Come and see.....

The oldest locomotive factory in the world.

High Level Bridge reopened to vehicular traffic on 2nd June 2008



The final element of the works was the installation of extra crash barriers on each side of the roadway, leaving space for only one lane of traffic. The bridge now carries only southbound bus and taxi traffic together with both north and southbound pedestrians.



Robert Stephenson was called 'the greatest engineer of the present century'. No one challenged this emphatic eulogy made after his death on 12 October 1859. Robert's colleagues ensured a resting place in the nave of Westminster Abbey. Joseph Locke, President of the Institution of Civil Engineers, was a pallbearer. Members of his profession; age-long associates in other fields of interest, notably the Electric Telegraph Company of which he was President, surrounded the grave placed centrally in the nation's mausoleum. Few were present out of duty. Communication being the key word of his ambition, everyone throughout the civilized world travelling for anything other than a short distance went by train, powered by what had become universally known as the Stephenson locomotive.

Drawing largely on contemporary sources, this book tells the compelling story of Robert's immense achievements in the field of locomotive history and engineering and is written by the founder of the Robert Stephenson Trust, Victoria Haworth.

92 pages softback. ISBN 0 9535 1621 0.
Price £11.80 including UK post and packing.

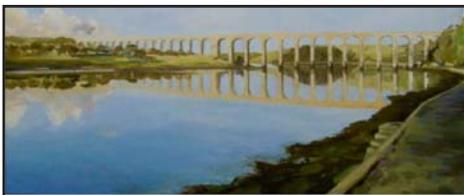


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Institution of Civil Engineers commission painting of Royal Border Bridge

The Institution of Civil Engineers North East has made a special presentation to mark the retirement of one of its team.

Michael Taylor MBE has recently retired as regional development engineer for ICE North East, a position he took up in June 1999.



As a Trustee of the Robert Stephenson Trust, a print from a painting commissioned by ICE for the regional Robert Stephenson Awards was presented to Michael on his retirement. This depicts one of Robert Stephenson's finest structures..

Royal Border Bridge is a Grade I listed railway viaduct built between 1847 and 1850, when it was opened by Queen Victoria. The bridge is 659 metres long. It has 28 arches, constructed of brick but aesthetically faced with stone. The bridge is 38 metres above the river itself. In the 1990s it underwent significant repair work for the first time.

The Robert Stephenson Awards are ICE North East's Merit Awards named to mark its centenary in 1991. The objective of the Robert Stephenson Awards is to give recognition to outstanding examples of design and construction undertaken by members within ICE North East.

In 2003 Jon Hall (the limner) was commissioned by ICE NE for a series of 12 paintings as prizes for the Robert Stephenson awards.

Boilershop Gossip

The Northumberland Scouts Exhibition celebrating 100 years since the movement was founded by Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell, godson (and some say son) of Robert Stephenson has transferred from Woodhorn Museum to the boilershop.

The exhibition can be viewed during normal open weekends or on other occasions by special arrangement.



A special descriptive panel has been prepared to highlight the founder of the Scouting movement and Robert Stephenson. Featured on the panel is a reproduction of a portrait of Baden Powell's mother and friend of Robert Stephenson, Henrietta, third wife of Professor Powell and a socially ambitious lady keen for her children to be successful.



August 2008



Scouts Were...Scouts Are... Exhibition at Stephenson Works

It is perhaps a little known fact in Scouting circles that the godfather of the founder of the Scout movement was Robert Stephenson. Baden-Powell's full name was Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell and he was a frequent visitor to the North East. More of Baden-Powell's life is featured in the 'Scouts were.... Scouts are.....' exhibition which has just opened at the Stephenson Works, 20 South Street, Newcastle.

The exhibition includes photographs of Scouts in the region throughout the years, alongside uniforms, memorabilia and personal stories and items contributed by Scouts past and present.

Visitors also have the opportunity to tour the offices of Robert Stephenson and Company, the world's first dedicated locomotive factory and who were at one time one of the largest employers on Tyneside.

The Stephenson works and exhibition is open on 9th 10th August, 11th 12th,13th and 14th September between 11am and 3pm. Groups can arrange to visit at other times by contacting the Robert Stephenson Trust on 0191 222 0905.



On Saturday 28th June a photograph of the statue of George Stephenson at Chesterfield Station was unveiled at Tapton House, the last residence of George. It is in the hall of the building in a prominent position. Trustee and Trust genealogist Robert Stephenson Roper was present and had an opportunity to view the house which has been well preserved notwithstanding being altered for use as a grammar school for about sixty years.





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Europa Nostra's 2008 Annual Congress

The congress was held in the North East from 11 to 15 June 2008. Apart from fruitful meetings of Europa Nostra's governing bodies, the Congress introduced the cities of Newcastle and Gateshead to the Europa Nostra Members: the bridges linking the two cities, among them the renowned and recently reopened High Level Bridge, the new developments on the banks of the River Tyne, and the beauty of the surrounding countryside of Northumberland.



On 12 June, Europa Nostra UK organised a "Celebration of the contribution of heritage to intercultural dialogue" that consisted of presentations and workshops of traditional skills and crafts that were enthusiastically attended. The celebration took place in the Stephenson's Works - a great honour for the Trust.



Full steam ahead for new engine



The first steam engine built to run on the UK mainline for almost 50 years has made a successful trial run.

Tornado was funded and assembled by steam enthusiasts in Darlington in an 18-year project costing £3m.

The 72ft (22 metre) engine is based on the Peppercorn A1 locomotive, which British Railways withdrew from service in the 1960s.

The loco made its first public move under its own steam on Friday morning in front of a crowd of onlookers.

Once fully running and certified it will be used to haul charter trains operating on Network Rail.

The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust project has raised more than £2.9m through deeds of covenant, commercial sponsorship and loans, but a further £66,000 is needed to pay for tests and trials.



August 2008

Letter to Editor

Tenterden
Kent

Dear all,

Hi my name is Sarah I am 11 years old and I go to Wittersham primary school. I am doing a project on Robert Stephenson and I need a lot of information, photos, pictures, newspaper clippings and anything else that would be useful. Mum spoke to John Clayson (Tyne and Wear museums) and he suggested I write to you. Please can I have an information pack and postcards. If you need any money or permission please phone my mum. - Diane.

I think Robert Stephenson was brilliant - away ahead of his time. If it was not for (sic) him do you think trains are what they are today. We have a lot to thank him for and not a lot is known (sic) about him - I've had trouble getting anything on him, please can you help me? Mum tried to ring you and has left a message on the phone. She hates talking to leave messages. Anything on Robert Stephenson would be good - do you have a school education pack for school children who are doing projects on him? My mum could have one please. thankyou

Sarah.

Tenterden
Kent

hello,

Its me Sarah. I've put £15 in this letter for the things on Robert Stephenson. I took the money from my piggy bank. Thankyou for phoning my Mum- it was very nice of you. I hope to hear from you soon. your friend

Sarah

20, South Street
Newcastle upon Tyne

Dear Sarah,
Here is a schools education pack some fact sheets on Robert Stephenson, company, and Locomotive works, some leaflets and postcards. I hope you find them useful.

yours,
Robert Stephenson Trust

Would you like an education pack



Contact the Robert Stephenson Trust at 20 South Street, Newcastle. 0191 222 0905