





# THE ROCKET



The Robert Stephenson Trust was founded in 1988, both to halt the advertised demolition of a derelict Listed Grade II Robert Stephenson & Co (RS&Co) building, forming a boiler plate shop & offices and to promote Robert Stephenson's life and achievements

The Trust then ensured the upgrading to Grade II\* and enabling the opportunity to gain grant aid from English Heritage.

That Robert Stephenson is the only Englishman born north of the River Trent to be buried in Westminster Abbey has been largely forgotten. From 1988-99, Trustees give talks to small groups and lectures to institutions in order to promote the acknowledged greatest engineer of the 19th century and also the RS&Co site. The Science Museum, London; the Newcomen Society, Liverpool University and Barnsley Metropolitan Council published some of these important papers.

With the completion of Stephenson's Works in 2001, the promotion of Robert Stephenson continued in his prestigious offices built in approximately 1850 as well as exhibitions showing the development of RS&Co.

At the age of nineteen, Robert became the youngest known working manager of a company, RS&Co. The first locomotive factory in the world was situated in a fast

developing industrial area in the vicinity of Forth Street, Newcastle upon Tyne in 1823.

The first premises were in fact situated in the south eastern extremity of the cul-de-sac South Street, then after 1829 rapidly expanded on both sides of another cul-de-sac to the west, Sussex Street, yet the factory was referred to generally as the Forth Street works.

Robert Stephenson & Co left Newcastle in 1904 and Stephenson's Works again became a centre of innovation when occupied by George & Jobling. Pioneering aircraft were designed and constructed before and during World War I. This firm was also motor car manufacturers; important Ford chassis and built bespoke bodies to' order. After World War II, the buildings continued to be used by the motor trade until the early 1980s.

The RST got the key of 20 South Street Stephenson's Works in 1988. The Friends was formed in 1996. Thank you for your support.

*Enquiries should be made to:  
E-mail: [rstrust@hotmail.com](mailto:rstrust@hotmail.com)  
Letter: Stephenson's Works,  
20 South Street, Newcastle upon Tyne,  
NE1 3PE.*



**Managing Partners Office**



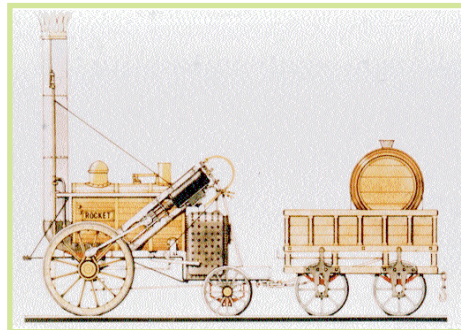
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The Newsletter of the Robert Stephenson Trust - Spring 2007

## The Rocket

The Newsletter has been renamed and it is hoped that it will now give Friends of the Trust and others interested in the South Street Works and the life and times of Robert Stephenson an opportunity to become more informed and involved with the Trusts activities.

The newsletter is not intended as a replacement for GAZETTE which will continue to be published twice per year. Items for inclusion in either publication is welcomed.



**Silverlink Property  
Developments Ltd. to re-  
develop Stephenson Quarter.**

It is understood that the owners of the Stephenson Works will soon submit a planning application to redevelop the area known as Stephenson Quarter.

Whilst the Trust has a long lease on the Stephenson Works it is imperative that the Trust undertakes imaginative initiatives to safeguard the restored Works and the important archive which has been set up.



## An invite to all 'Friends'

George Stephenson, was born on 9th June, 1781 and Friends are invited to come along to the South Street works on 9th June and celebrate an early 'Fathers Day'. There will be the opportunity to see recent acquisitions, new exhibitions, hear of plans for the future and meet other Friends.

The works will be open as usual at 11am and will close to the public at 3pm when Friends can join the Trustees for refreshments and see the the launch of two recent publications - the first being *Robert Stephenson Abroad - Egypt 1847-1859* by Alan C Clothier (special Friends price £3.99) and the second published by shire Publications, *George Stephenson* by Adrian Jarvis price £4.99. Both authors will be present to sign copies.

It would be most helpful if Friends who intend to come to the book launch either telephone or email the Trust.

e: [rstrust@hotmail.com](mailto:rstrust@hotmail.com)  
t: 0191 222 0905





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## Recent Acquisitions

A half full size reproduction of a 1851 portrait by John Lucas (1807 -1874) of Robert and George has recently been purchased. It has been reproduced by kind permission



of the owners, Institution of Civil Engineers. The original measures 2.13m by 2.09m and hangs on the Grand Staircase of One Great George Street, Westminster, London, the headquarters building of the Institution of Civil Engineers. Also on loan from the Institution is a copy of the 1866 painting of by Henry W Phillips of Robert.

Consulting engineers, Arup have loaned the RST a number of original Robert Stephenson contract drawings for the London and Birmingham Railway and these are displayed in the Exhibition room situated on the first floor of the Works.

During a recent visit to the works the great granddaughter of Arther George donated many interesting photographs, his flying helmet, racing goggles, original pilots licences and a map of the race circuit at Brescia, Italy. These kind donations greatly add to the information held about George and Jobling's occupation of the works from 1904 onwards.

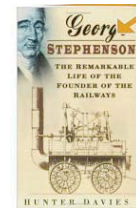
It is the aim of the Trust that at least part of the Microfilm and CD-ROM's of the Robert Stephenson & Co Archives held in the State Collections be made available electronically to Friends. in the meantime those interested in these documents or other archive material should make an appointment to visit the works.

[stephensonworks.org.uk](http://stephensonworks.org.uk)

Friends involved with locomotive model-making may also be interested in the huge collection of engineering drawings.

Another purchase of major importance is the four volumes *Railway Practice* by SC Brees. These books were published 1837-1847 and include plate drawings of important Robert Stephenson structural engineering achievements over the 10 year period.

A number of books have been acquired for the Library and these are available to visitors to South Street for consultation:



*George Stephenson, Creator of Britain's railways.*  
by John Rowland  
Publisher: London, Odhams Press [1954]  
239 pages

*George Stephenson: The Remarkable Life of the Founder of the Railway*  
by Hunter Davies  
Publisher: Sutton Publishing (22 Jul 2004)

*Disaster on the Dee: Robert Stephenson's Nemesis of 1847*  
by Peter R Lewis 224 pages  
Publisher: NPI Media Group (14 Feb 2007)

*The Triumphs of steam*  
by Unknown author  
5th edition of childrens book first published in 1857



## Boilershop Gossip

The current tenants of the boiler shop are Dott 07 (Designs of the time) which is a year long project exploring how design can make a positive difference to our lives. It's a collaboration between the Design Council and the regional development agency One North East and will be working with communities and individuals in the region over the next twelve months. The aim is to involve people in a variety of design projects as active participants.

An initiative of the Design Council and the regional development agency, One NorthEast, Dott 07 enables communities and individuals in North East England to collaborate with designers in real-life situations. These projects are small but important examples of what life in a sustainable region might be like.

Dott 07 projects set out to improve six aspects of daily life in practical ways. They deal with health issues, food, school, energy, tourism, and travel.

Inspired by the question, 'Who designs your life?', Dott 07 focuses on grass roots community projects; but there are also projects involving more than seventy schools, plus exhibitions and events in museums, galleries and rural sites. All events explore how design can benefit our lives in meaningful ways.

The year culminates in a twelve day Festival in NewcastleGateshead in October 2007. The Dott 07 Festival will bring together the results of projects and enable all the people involved to share experiences. The Festival will be an opportunity not only to celebrate their achievements but, more importantly, for many more people to find out how to do similar projects for themselves.

## Longridge talks to Newcomen



In November 2006 Trust chairman, Bob Longridge, 3 times great grandson of founding partner Michael Longridge, gave a talk to the Newcomen Society in Discovery Museum, Newcastle.

During the same month Robert Stephenson Trust historian, Vicky Harworth, presented a paper at Imperial College, London *Robert Stephenson, engineer, scientist and philosopher*.

Amongst many interesting points covered by Vicky's paper was the following:

"On 14 July 1856 Michael Faraday was a guest at Thomas Sopwith's house in Northumberland. Sopwith wrote in his daily diary how: *the eminent philosopher came to stay at Allenheads ... our conversation turned on subjects which I had once discussed with Robert Stephenson... the minds of Faraday and Stephenson were freely open on some of the most curious and a wonderful problems which philosophy has ever disclosed... On this occasion, Faraday unfolded in a clear manner his views respecting centres of force, the undulations of light, the difficulties surrounding the received theory of atoms and other similar matter*. Sopwith describes the nature of these conversations as deep and of an engrossing interest.

The Age of Enlightenment was a crucial element in the achievements of two great 19th-century scientists, Michael Faraday and Robert Stephenson.

In March 2007 Vicky gave another paper '*Nicholas Wood and George Stephenson*' to The North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers.





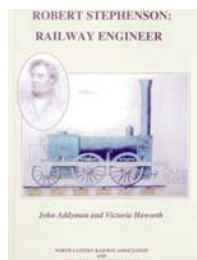
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## Publications

PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE BY MAIL ORDER  
Special rates for Friends (Limited to one copy per Friend)

### Robert Stephenson: Railway Engineer

full price £19.95

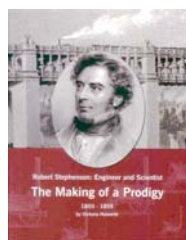


This 176 page A4 size publication is printed on gloss art paper throughout with a casebound colour cover. There are in the order of 110 monochrome photographs and line drawings together with 4 pages of colour illustrations.

£24.45 including p+p to UK address.

### The Making of a Prodigy

Full price £11.80



Robert Stephenson - Engineer And Scientist - The Making Of A Prodigy 90pp. by Victoria Haworth. Robert Stephenson was undoubtedly one of the greatest engineers of his time - and this book charts his illustrious

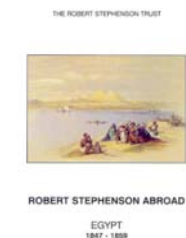
past.

ISBN 0 9535 1621 0.

Special Friends price Price £8.95 plus £1.55 p+p to UK address

### Robert Stephenson Abroad, Egypt 1847-59

Full price £5.45



This 44 page book written by Alan C Clothier, Trustee and Hon. Curator of the Stephenson works charts Robert Stephenson's work in Egypt.

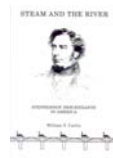
Special Price on launch to Friends on 9th June

2007 £3.99

### Locomotive Engine Works

special Friends price £2.00 (including postage to UK address)

This 25 page booklet is a brief history of No. 20 South Street, Newcastle upon Tyne and its importance as part of the world's first purpose built locomotive works.



### Steam and the River

special Friends price £1.00 (£1.50 including postage to UK address)

Steam and the River: The Stephenson Family in America by William Poschmann Carlin, Publisher: Rocket Press 24 Pages.

ISBN 0 9535 1620 2.

### The High Level Bridge and Central Station

Special Friends price £11.80 (including postage to UK address)

The High Level Bridge and Newcastle Central Station: 150 Years Across the Tyne by John Addyman and Bill Fawcett. Published by the North Eastern Railway Association. Paperback 152 Pages.

### Shire Publications

*Beam Engines* Geoffrey Hayes  
*Isambard Kingdom Brunel* Richard Tames  
*Robert Stephenson* D. J Smith  
*Richard Trevithick* James Hodge  
*The Victorian Engineer* Adrian Jarvis  
*The Victorian Railway Worker* Trevor May

All publications are available by post from The Rocket Press, 20 South Street, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 3PE.

[robertstephensontrust.com](http://robertstephensontrust.com)



Contractors, May Gurney are making steady progress on the maintenance works on the High Level Bridge, Newcastle which started in 1999.

Steve Jagger, May Gurney's Engineering and Project Services Managing Director, said: "Many of the team have worked there for a number of years, and take great pride in their involvement in renovating this historic, Grade 1 listed structure."

The bridge, has stood the test of time well - but is now beginning to suffer from corrosion and fatigue damage. Work has included a detailed study of the structure including unique testing of the cast iron parts of the bridge, as well as renovation of some of the cast and wrought iron elements.

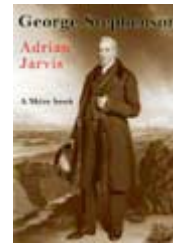
Consulting civil engineers, MacDonal, identified that works were required to the overbeams, facias, wrought iron hangers, tie chains and road deck. The bridge will also be grit blasted and repainted before being reopened to traffic



Restoration of the Grade 1 listed structure, which is also a scheduled ancient monument, is now due to be completed by the summer of 2008.

The next GAZETTE contains an excellent article on the subject of High Level Bridge

### George Stephenson



George Stephenson is among the most famous engineers of all time. His rise from 'rags to riches' is a stirring story of its kind, but many of the works attributed to him should in fact be credited to young subordinates, not least his son, Robert.

But much of the work of innovative engineers for his period lay not in the work itself but in persuading people that such work was desirable and necessary. It was in this field that George Stephenson excelled, providing openings in which his young proteges could change the world. They did not let him down and, while we may now deride some of his previously concealed engineering mistakes, we should give him full credit for being 'The Father of the Railways'.

#### About the author

Adrian Jarvis was for many years Curator of Port History at Merseyside Maritime Museum, where he specialised in 'the history of port planning, engineering and management, on which he published four books and edited several collections.

Since retirement he has worked at the University of Liverpool, where he is Honorary Fellow in History, on research into the merchant community of late nineteenth-century Liverpool, and on a number of freelance projects.

Published by Shire Publications Ltd price £4.99 available from Robert Stephenson Trust at £7.50 including p+p to UK address. e:RSTust@hotmail.com

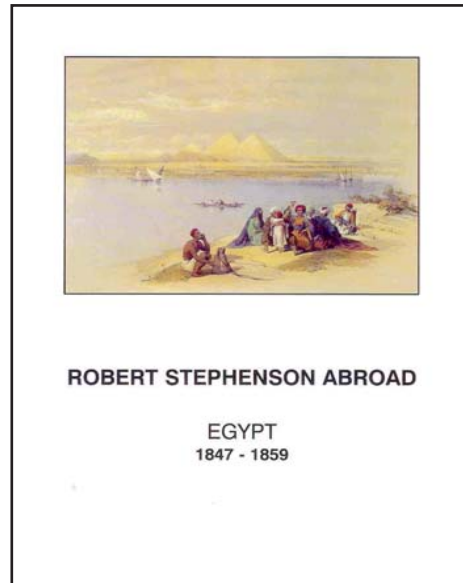
ISBN 978 0 7478 0605 9 (LL 45)  
48 pp, 27 colour and 16 b/w ills.



## Robert Stephenson's Work Abroad - Egypt 1847-1859

(ISBN 0 9535 1622 9)

### About the author



Egypt wasn't the first overseas country to feel the influence of Robert Stephenson's hand but it was one of considerable importance largely because of the part it played in the Transit of people and goods between Europe and the East. After the first part he played in surveying for a canal route to shorten this sea-route it was hardly surprising that his next sphere of influence was a railway to connect Alexandria with Cairo and for which in due course the many passengers making the Overland connection would be very thankful. Construction of the line had its problems, not least the corvée system of providing fellahin labour which Stephenson abhorred; soon there was a major re-routing inspired by the French and then the deprivations of the annual flooding of the Nile which affected bridge foundations and extended the forecast completion. The locomotives supplied during Stephenson's lifetime are mentioned and those from the South Street works in more detail. 48pp with two maps and nine illustrations.

Alan Clothier's first interest in railways was fostered some 75 years ago hence he has been witness to what has been the period of greatest change in the world's railways. He was also a part of this scene having joined the GWR as a Premium Apprentice at the Swindon Locomotive Works in 1944. His subsequent career took him through a wide range of managerial posts for the most part concerned with the overhaul and maintenance of locomotives and rolling stock. His final fifteen years, spilling over into retirement, were spent as a Senior Consultant with Transmark one of British Rail's wholly owned subsidiaries undertaking transport consultancy world-wide. During this time he spent a number of years in Egypt during which he became more fully aware of Robert's involvement there and decided to study it in greater detail. Alan has always had a fascination for the history and development of railways and his researches have also embraced the 200 year era of waggonways which preceded it.

He is a Chartered Engineer and a Fellow of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (whose first and second Presidents were George and Robert Stephenson) and is a member of several railway organisations his favourite being the Stephenson Locomotive Society.

He is a Trustee of the Robert Stephenson Trust and has been its Honorary Curator at Stephenson's Works since its inception but will be retiring from that position on his forthcoming 80th birthday.







Letters to Robert

Dear Robert,  
My great grandfather James Cameron Armstrong (1839 -1868) may have worked for Robert Stephenson and Company. Records show his was living in Elswick in 1861. I wonder if you have any record of him working for the company?  
yours faithfully  
Michael Wellington

*Dear Mr Wellington,  
I have searched our available records, which I have to say represent a very small percentage of the folk who must have worked for Robert Stephenson & Co. at these works in the period 1823-1904, but unfortunately have failed to find his name.*

*However the Trust is always very anxious to learn of people who have worked at the works and I hope you will let us have any information you find out.*

*You might also like to post an enquiry on the web discussion forum where you might possibly find another interested party who can supply more information.*  
regards  
Robert

Dear Robert,  
I have been researching my family history and came across an article about my 4 x great grandfather Robert Roscoe affectionately named Bob. He was born 1818 in Lancashire and entered the railway service in 1844 where he was the driver of Robert Stephenson's engine 'Bright Star'. In 1847 he transferred to 'Sultan' which he drove on the Paddington to Bristol line (untill around 1872) and drove the first train on the Paddington to Birmingham line in 1852. In 1867 he parted from 'Sultan' and was given the 'Lord Of The Isles' which he drove untill he retired from service in 1883. He also drove The Royal Train for a time.

I am trying to collect as much information as I can on Bob and was hoping that you may be able to help or may point me in the direction of anyone who can. Any information you may have would be very much appreciated.

With thanks,  
Lisa Robinson.

Dear Lisa,

*Bob Roscoe born in Worsley, and I assume his second wife and family, though I am not certain about George Roscoe as Grandson, perhaps you can explain that better.*

*Bright Star was one of the Star class. The first was North Star which RS&Co built for the GWR. Probably Sultan was one of Daniel Gooch's built at Swindon, as was Lord of the Isles. This latter was shown at the 1851 exhibition, but as unfortunately scrapped in 1905 as it was "taking up too much space".*

*You may find some details of these engines from the Stephenson Locomotive Society. The National Railway Museum at York may also have info, as also may the Great Western Society at Didcot.*

*Robert Roscoe was certainly in the top link of Great Western drivers. We at the RS Trust would be glad to hear any more that you may find about a driver who drove one of our locos.*

We look forward to hearing from you.  
Regards,  
Robert

