



Little Door to the Seventh of December

The Stockton & Darlington Railway

While the Stockton & Darlington Railway was neither the first railway to transport passengers (the horse-hauled **Swansea and Oystermouth Railway** which opened in 1807 already existed) nor the first public railway in Britain (predated by **Lake Lock Railroad** near Wakefield, which opened in 1798; and the **Surrey Iron Railway**, authorised in 1801), it still has a place in history. Originally, the main purpose of their railway was to exploit a rich vein of coal on the coast of Darlington (County Durham, England). Edward Pease first wanted to use horses to transport the coal, but George Stephenson (who built several steam engines for the Killingworth colliery) told Pease that the steam engine could pull 50 times the load a horse could draw in 1821. **Pease was impressed by this and on September 27, 1825, the first engine ran from Darlington to Stockton.** 450 people were carried at a speed of 24 km/h.

But here's the important part of what Stockton & Darlington Railway contributed to history: *"What marks the S&DR out as being so significant was that in the 1820s it was the most complex railway that the world had seen to date: it was improving steam locomotives and developing operating principles via trial and error; it was growing and returning a healthy profit; and most importantly, it was very open to sharing data and experience with visiting engineers and the promoters of other railways. It was a pioneering railway bringing earlier ideas together, adapting them, and sharing the results, influencing the development of other pioneering railways, many of which it learned from in turn from 1830 onwards."*

Even if you can't be the first at doing something, you can be the first to improve something!



The painting shows the first train in Germany. She was imported from England and served for 22 years between Nuremberg and Fürth. The train was manufactured by the English locomotive factory Robert Stephenson & Co.

Sources

1. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Stockton-and-Darlington-Railway> |
2. <https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/research/a-brief-overview-of-the-stockton-and-darlington-railway/> |
3. <https://dbmuseum.de/nuernberg/fahrzeuge/adler>