

# Women in Rail Past, Present and Future



## Women in Rail Yorkshire and North-East



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# Welcome



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# Annual Event Agenda



## Opening and introductions

### Speakers section

#### Past (6:05-6:20pm)

- Charlie Barron, Interpretation and Exhibitions Officer, The Story, Durham
- Alison Grange, Collections Engagement Manager, Hopetown Darlington

#### Present (6:20-6:50)

- Jo Griffiths – Programme Director TRU, Network Rail
- Ellie Burrows – MD Eastern, Network Rail

#### Future 6:50-7:20pm

- Ashley Bijster Group Manager and Clair Clarke Chief Talent Officer – Modaxo
- Sam Barker – Head of Investment & Industry Partnership, ECDP, Network Rail

#### Panel 7:20-7:35pm

#### Close 7:35-7:40pm

#### Networking 7:40-9:00pm

# Past

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Celebrating 200 years of Women in Rail Local museum curators and Festival Director will talk us through some fascinating tales from the Past.

**Charlie Barron**, Interpretation and Exhibitions Officer, The Story, Durham  
**Alison Grange**, Collections Engagement Manager, Hopetown Darlington

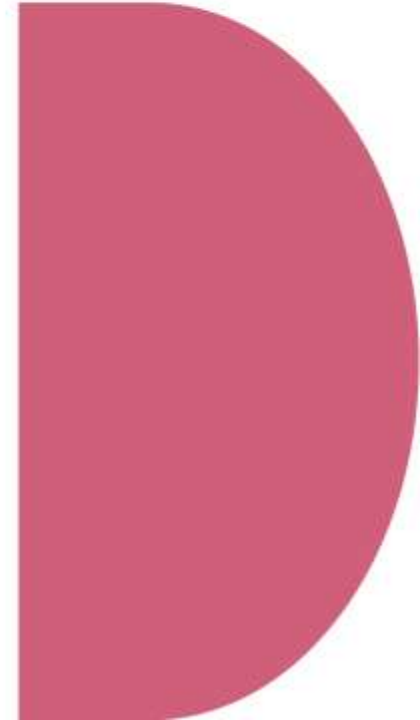
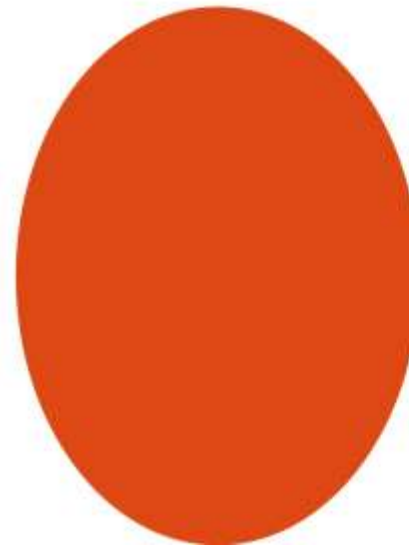
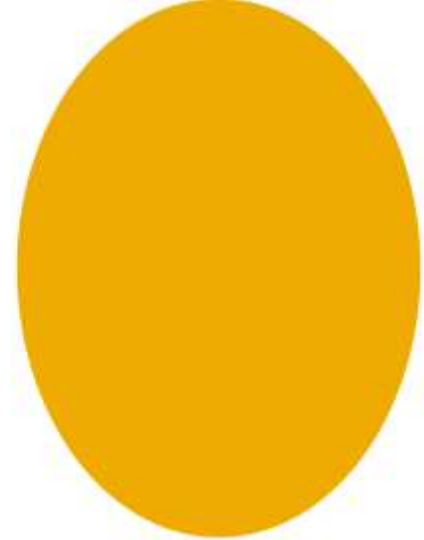


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# Women on the Line: Reformers and Rail workers from Durham to Darlington.

**Charlie Barron** Interpretation and Exhibitions  
Officer, The Story, Durham

# THE STORY







Burials 1645

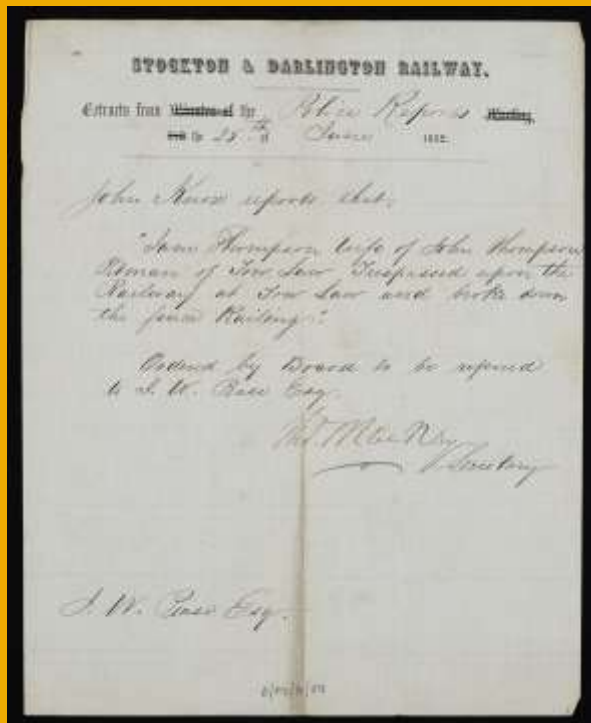
to George Chandler 19<sup>th</sup> Feb  
Elizabeth, to John, Couf mo<sup>th</sup> 22<sup>th</sup> Octob  
Two Children to widow, Harbord at wagon  
gate in the Forge  
One Child to Elmer marley widow  
22<sup>th</sup> Octob.

All the Lands comprised in this Book of Reference  
are situated in the County of Durham  
This Book of Reference was deposited in the  
Office of the Clerk of the Peace of the County of  
Durham on the twenty eighth Day of September  
1822 -  
John Dunn - Deputy Clerk of the Peace  
for the County of Durham

8 Elizabeth Broth	Robert Harrison	do	do
90 James Brotherton Esq. and Elizabeth Brotherton	Richard Smith	do	do
91 David Brotherton Esq. and Elizabeth Brotherton	Thomas Mauley	do	do
92 James Brotherton Esq. and Elizabeth Brotherton	Richard Smith	do	do
93 James Brotherton Esq. and Elizabeth Brotherton	Richard Smith	do	do
94 Dorothy Dunn Esq. and Elizabeth Dunn	Robert Pallister	do	do
105 Elizabeth Pickering	Thomas Chilton	do	do
106 Thomas Pickering Esq. and Elizabeth Pickering	John Gant	do	do
129 Dorothy Galt	William Galt	do	do
243 Margaret Britain	John Mauley	do	do
352 Sarah Barton	Thomas Chilton	do	do
367 John Galt Esq. and Elizabeth Galt	Thomas Galt	do	do

Women on the Line: Reformers and Rail workers  
from Durham to Darlington





## Women on the Line: Reformers and Rail workers from Durham to Darlington

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Celebrating the  
birth of the  
Modern Railway

## The Celebration Year- Women in rail

Niccy Hallifax  
Artistic & Festival Director

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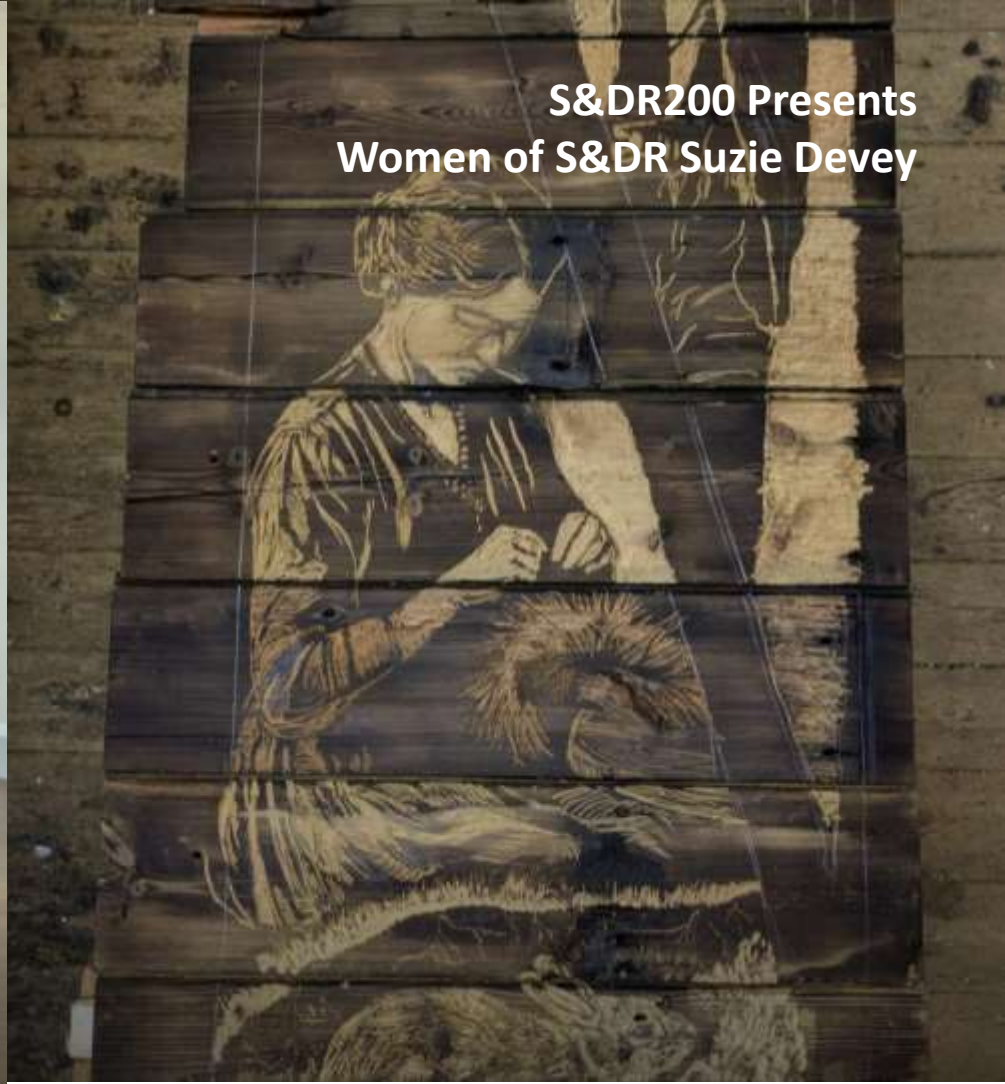




Celebrating the  
birth of the  
Modern Railway











Delivered by



Funders



Partners



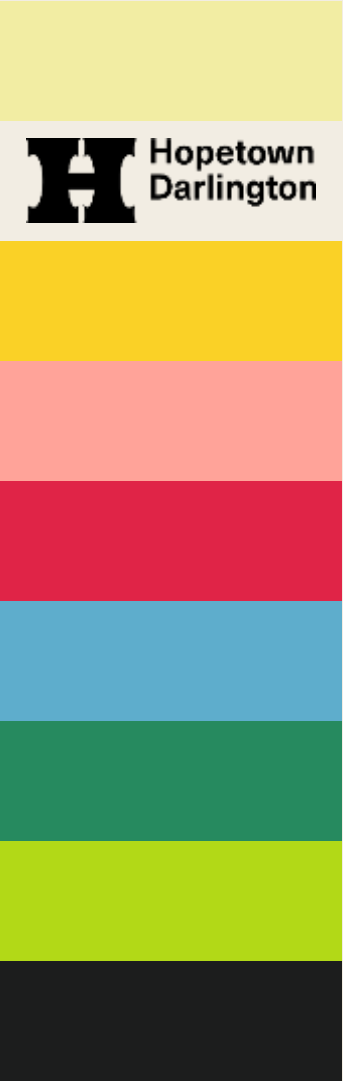
With thanks





Parcels Office Staff – West Hartlepool 1916

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Parcels Porters – Darlington 1918



# Present

Sharing her personal journey through the rail industry - from early challenges to leadership success, and reflecting on the importance of representation, resilience, and progress for women in rail today.

**Jo Griffiths**, Programme Director, TRU, Network Rail





# Present

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Sharing her personal journey through the rail industry - from early challenges to leadership success, and reflecting on the importance of representation, resilience, and progress for women in rail today.

**Ellie Burrows**, Regional Managing Director – Eastern, Network Rail.  
Winner of Women in Rail's Inspirational Women of the Year 2025



# Future

We will learn how emerging technologies are shaping the rail industry and hear some personal stories of progress in the industry.

**Ashley Bijster**, Group Manager, Modaxo





## Women Driving the Future of Rail



## Emerging Technologies Shaping the Rail Industry



High-speed and  
Maglev Trains



AI and automation



IoT and Digital  
Twins



Sustainability and  
green energy



Smart  
Infrastructure



Cybersecurity



Passenger centric  
innovations



Hyperloop  
concepts

# Innovation and Invention

## Visibility Improvement

Mary Anderson's invention of the windshield wiper greatly enhanced safety by improving visibility in transportation vehicles.

## Track Stability Innovation

Catherine Gibbon's Double Girder Lap-Joint Track reduced maintenance and increased track stability with fewer components.

## Passenger Comfort Advances

Olive Dennis improved passenger experience by introducing reclining seats, air conditioning, and stain-resistant upholstery.

## Legacy of Rail Innovations

Women inventors set standards in rail technology, inspiring future engineers and emphasizing diversity in progress.



# Women in Rail Technology

- Driving Innovation
- Bridging the skills gap
- Improving system design
- Leadership in Tech transformation
- Creating a more inclusive industry







# Challenges for Women in Rail/Transportation

## Under representation & Attrition

Women make up only 23-26% of the rail workforce and c50% leave before age 34

Leadership roles disproportionately male; actively measure % females hire and promote

## Structural Barriers

Removing gender stereotyping and unconscious bias - role models; stories; training and support

Create more flexible working, inclusive PPE, expanded facilities

## Mental load and Wellbeing

Women often shoulder disproportionate domestic responsibilities affecting mental health and progression



# Mentorship and Inclusion

## Diversity in Perspectives

Unique experience of female rail passengers

Modal shift requires representative workforces to design networks that meet diverse needs

## Innovation & Collaboration

Foster open communication, resilience, long term vision - key to technology, user centric transport systems and sustainability

## Mentoring Future Talent

Active mentorship shapes the next generation of rail professionals, fostering inclusive and dynamic environments.



# Pathways to Leadership & Influence

## Development & Mentoring

Programs like Women In Transport's LEAD and mentoring programs transform careers, build confidence and visibility

## Strategic Frameworks

Women in Rail's 2025-2027 'Attract, Engage, Support and Promote' offering tangible steps for progression

Modaxo Leaders Accelerator program

## Practical Steps

Encourage participation in leadership development, public speaking and volunteering.

Encourage networking across portfolios and build connections

Advocate for flexible work, inclusive recruitment, better succession planning and gender diversity tracking



Thank you.

# Future

We will learn how emerging technologies are shaping the rail industry and hear some personal stories of progress in the industry.

**Sam Barker**, Head of Investment & Industry Partnership, ECDP, Network Rail





# My Career so far...

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Chartered Institute of  
Management Accountants

CIMA

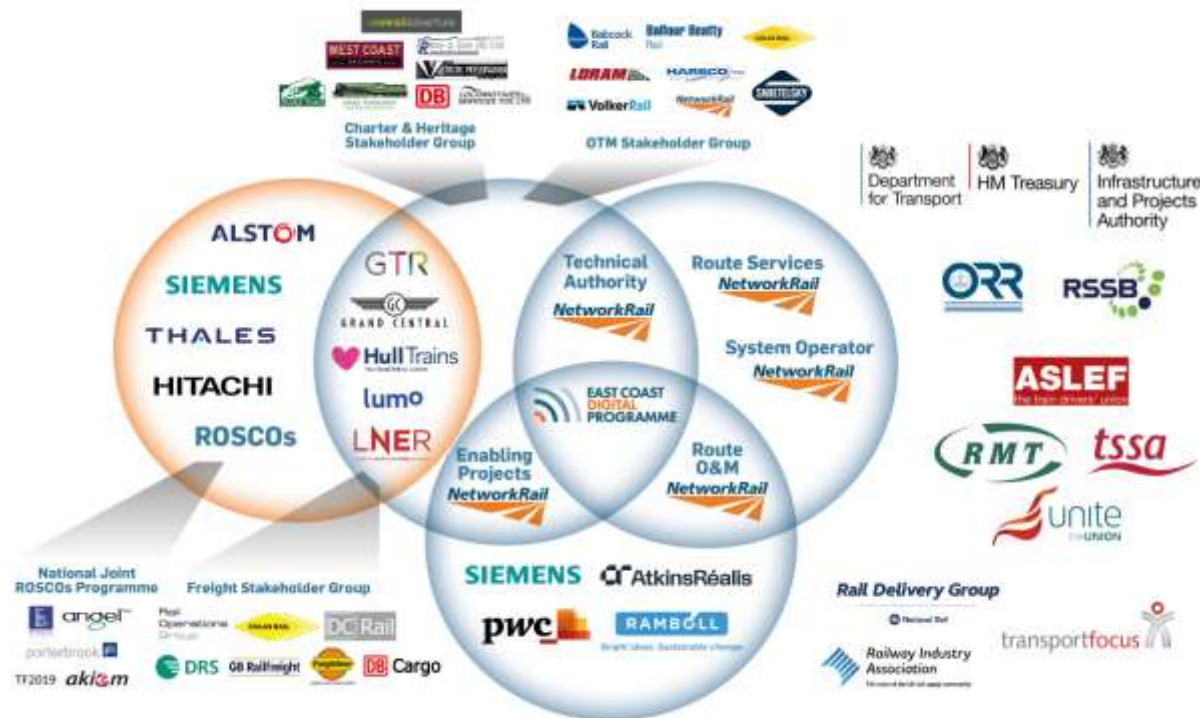


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# East Coast Digital Programme



# The future of rail...

*Tenacious*

*Caring*



*Pioneering*

*Inclusive*

Thank you



# Panel Discussion



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# Thank you!

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