



Press Release

Release date: 19th September 2016

End of Season Gala Weekend

Sittingbourne's Steam Railway's 2016 Season comes to a close this weekend with the End of Season Gala featuring three working steam locomotives and two diesels too.

Trains will be running from 11am both days, finishing at 7pm on Saturday and 4pm on Sunday. There will be a mix of passenger and freight trains operated by steam locomotives 'Leader', 'Melior' or 'Superb' or diesel locos 'Edward Lloyd' or 'Barton Hall'. The full timetable can be found on the Railway's website www.sklr.net

Running until 7pm on Saturday gives passengers the opportunity to experience the Railway at night, an opportunity usually reserved for Steam & Beer, as passenger and freight trains used to run 24 hours a day in Bowater's days.

There is no additional charge for this event - return fares are:

- £7 for adults
- £5 for concessions
- £3 for children aged 3-13 years
- Under 3s travel free
- £19 for a family ticket (2 adults and up to 4 children)

- Other fares, such as single or rover, are available.

A return trip can take as little as an hour but it is recommended that you allow at least two hours for your visit - why not bring a picnic or eat at the Footplate Café.

The Railway will close for the autumn maintenance period and will reopen for the three weekends before Christmas when Santa Specials will operate - bookings are now being taken - fares this year are £13 for over 3s and £10 for under 3s. Children receive a present from Santa (they will be able to choose a gift from a range of quality toys) and older children & adults will receive seasonal refreshments. There is up to £1.50 off fares for the first weekend of December - call 01795 428269 to book or visit the website for more information.

For more information on the Railway visit www.SKLR.net or call the Talking Timetable on 01795 424899, email info@SKLR.net, follow @SandKLR on Twitter or see our Facebook Group at www.Facebook.com/groups/SandKLR

Sittingbourne Viaduct station has free parking opposite McDonalds and behind KFC in Sittingbourne Retail Park and the pedestrian entrance is behind Pizza Hut, follow the amazing mural. Sat. Nav. users should use ME10 2XD or The Wall as their destination.

The station is atop a high embankment with 22 metal steps to climb. The ticket office can be found close to the top of the steps. Please arrive at least ten minutes before departure time as there can sometimes be a queue at the ticket office to collect tickets.

The first kilometre of the journey is on Milton Regis Viaduct, this reinforced concrete structure consists of 118 spans and six bridges. Constructed a hundred years ago, the Railway has invested a further £20,000 into maintenance of the structure during winter 2015/16.

Kemsley Down is the main base of the Railway, here you will find the Footplate Café, shop, toilets, picnic area, museum, displays, wildlife garden and see the other steam locomotives at the engine shed as well as two standard gauge locomotives.

The Railway's SOS Campaign has an aim to raise at least £75,000 to provide decent staff and visitor facilities at Sittingbourne Viaduct station including an access ramp. Donations can be made regularly or one-off at www.justgiving.com/SKLR and UK tax payers can contribute even more by choosing to Gift Aid their donation as the Railway is a registered charity. The Railway is also keen to hear from any companies who would like to sponsor it, please contact info@sklr.net to offer your support.

(End)

Information for the media:

1. The Railway is rare in the preservation world as it was donated by the then mill owners, Bowater's United Kingdom Paper Co Ltd, in 1969 for preservation and still uses original locomotives, equipment and buildings. The SKLR is now the longest continuous operator of the railway and is operated and maintained entirely by volunteers.
2. Following a fire in June 2014, the last of the Railway's usable buildings was destroyed at Sittingbourne Viaduct, prompting the relaunch of the Railway's SOS Campaign - this time to Sort Out Sittingbourne - with the aim of raising £75,000 to improve visitor and staff facilities at Sittingbourne Viaduct station.

3. The SKLR is a registered charity, number 1057079. Postal address: SKLR, PO Box 300, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 2DZ.
4. Photographs of the Railway can be found on the Press Officer's website: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/stopem/> . To download images – click on the photo, click on 'ALL SIZES', 'Original' and then 'Download the Original size'. Feel free to use them without a fee but please credit 'SKLR'.
5. Press releases can be downloaded from the Railway's website: <http://www.sklr.net/latest-news/press-releases/>
6. The Press Officer is available for interviews and recording sessions at the Railway or studios. Other members may be requested for interview through the Press Officer.
7. Media enquiries to Paul Best, Press Officer, telephone 07973 192938 or email stopem@stopem.net