



Sittingbourne's Steam Railway

Registered charity number: 105 7079

Press Release

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Jack, Edward and Lil

Sittingbourne's Steam Railway celebrated the second bank holiday weekend of the Season with the return of Jack the Station Cat and Edward Bear and introduced a new railway and a new locomotive – Lil.

Jack the Station Cat, star of the series of children's books of the same name, visited the Railway on Sunday and Monday for a mouse hunt, crafts and fun at Kemsley Down. The Railway's own mascot, Edward Bear, was also happy to help entertain visitors.

On Monday, Roger Dilley, an illustrator of the Jack the Station Cat books, was on hand to read stories from the books and to formally open the new 5-inch gauge ride-on railway, called the Grovehurst Docks Miniature Railway, and unveil a new statue at Kemsley Down.

The Grovehurst Docks Miniature Railway runs along the Creekside-fence at Kemsley Down. Trains are hauled by a small green battery-electric locomotive and two coaches from Maxitrak in Staplehurst. Later this year, the locomotive will

be named 'Lil' in memory of Lil Chisman, long-time member of the Railway who passed away recently. There is no additional charge to ride on the miniature railway although donations are welcome.

Tim Embleton from the project team said: "We are delighted to have 5-inch gauge ride-on railway at Kemsley Down again. The original one closed in 2008 and has been sorely missed. We look forward to providing rides for children and adults alike for the rest of the season."

A new statue featuring two cats, celebrates the Railway's connection with Jack the Station Cat and the wild cats that live on the site at Kemsley Down. Painted by Lynne Reynolds, the statue is located next to the wishing well and memorial garden.

Alan Cliff, author of the Jack the Station Cat series of books, often sends food parcels or donations for cat food to the Railway for the wild cats. There has been a family of cats at Kemsley Down for at least 20 years and they are fed by our volunteers when someone is on site.

For the rest of May, trains will be running to the ordinary timetable on Sundays 7th, 14th and 21st, departing Sittingbourne Viaduct station hourly 1-4pm. On Sunday 28th May, we will be holding a Teddy Bears Picnic with trains hourly 11am-4pm, children with a teddy bear and fare-paying adult will travel free. Bring a picnic or buy one at Kemsley Down. On bank holiday Monday 29th May, trains will be running hourly 11am-4pm but there will be no special events – this would be a good opportunity to visit for longer and complete the Wheels of Time activity (for children aged 5 to 11).

Fares for 2017 are the same as last year but we have extended the child fares from 3-13 to 3-15 year olds, in line with the national network. Return fares (other fares are available) are:

- Adults (aged 16+) - £7
- Concessions - £5
- Children (aged 3-15) - £3
- Family (2 adults and up to 4 children) - £19

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 page at www.facebook.com/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.

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.

(End)

Information for the media:

1. Photographs of the event can be found here: <https://goo.gl/jruAEo>
2. 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.
3. The Jack the Station Cat series of books are written by Alan Cliff, who lives in Wales. Sittingbourne's Steam Railway features in two of the books and a new title has recently been released which is available from the Railway Shop at Kemsley Down – for more information visit www.jackthestationcat.co.uk
4. Grovehurst Dockside Miniature Railway has been funded by individual members and not the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway Ltd.
5. Sittingbourne's Steam Railway is delighted to be part of the Wheels of Time initiative encouraging 5-11 years olds to visit heritage sites across Kent, for more information visit www.wheelsoftime.uk
6. Postal address: SKLR, PO Box 300, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 2DZ.
7. Photographs of the Railway can be found on the Press Officer's Dropbox folder: <https://goo.gl/9c3zrD> Feel free to use them without a fee but please credit 'www.sklr.net'.
8. Press releases can be downloaded from the Railway's website: <http://www.sklr.net/latest-news/press-releases/>

9. 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.

Media enquiries to Paul Best, Press Officer, telephone 07973 192938 or
email media@sklr.net