



Press Release

Release date: 25th September 2017

End of Season Gala Weekend success

The 2017 Season at Sittingbourne's Steam Railway came to a close at the weekend with the End of Season Gala. The Railway will now be closed until Santa Specials in December.

A mix of steam and diesel passenger trains ran on Saturday and a freight train ran on Sunday, albeit breaking down and disrupting the timetable until 1pm! The Railway apologises for the inconvenience caused by the freight train and cancelled a later train, replacing with an additional passenger train to keep passengers moving.

The event attracted more passengers than last year, they enjoyed the Paper Mill Micropub's Micro Beer Tent, admired Bowaters Models' kits for reproducing the Railway's trains in garden railway scales, saw photos of steam locomotive Superb's holiday to the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway in North Wales, watched various trains running on the Garden Railway and enjoyed the Railway's other attractions.

This was the first time that steam locomotive Superb has run with its chimney pointing towards Sittingbourne for almost 50 years and all steam locomotives point in the same direction for the first time since preservation.

The Railway is now closed until December when the Santa Specials operate every December weekend until Christmas (excluding Christmas Eve). Bookings are being taken now, there will be four trains a day, at 11am, 12pm, 2pm and 3pm.

Fares for Santa Specials will be:

- 2nd/3rd December - £11.50 for everyone aged over three, £8.50 for under 3s
- 9th, 10th, 16th, 17th and 23rd December- £13 for over 3s and £10 for under 3s

Fare includes a return trip from Sittingbourne Viaduct to Kemsley Down, children visit Santa's Grotto and choose a present and adults receive seasonal refreshments. The return trip takes around two hours, passengers must return on the allotted train.

Pre-booking is essential to ensure presents and food are available for everyone. Places book fast so call the Booking Hotline now on 01795 428269 or download a booking form from the Railway's website (www.sklr.net).

The Autumn Work Weekend programme will start on Saturday/Sunday 7/8th October and then every fortnight until December. There are numerous projects to be completed before Santa visits the Railway and all help is appreciated. A Works Train will depart Sittingbourne Viaduct station at 10am, returning at about 4pm. Refreshments, tools and training will be provided. Check the Railway's website for more information or email info@sklr.net

(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 media@sklr.net