



# Sittingbourne's Steam Railway

Registered charity no. 1057079

## Press Release

Release date: 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023

### Premier award winner!

On Saturday, the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway won one of the most sought after and prestigious awards in the heritage railway industry – the Coiley Award for Steam Locomotive Engineering – for its restoration of the Railway's first locomotive *Premier*.

Heritage railways and tramways across the UK celebrated their successes at the Heritage Railway Association's Annual Dinner and Awards in Birmingham on 11<sup>th</sup> March. Nearly 200 of Britain's leading preservationists came together to highlight best practice in everything from income generation to waggon restoration over 12 award categories.

As the HRA explains: 'the 2ft 6in gauge Sittingbourne and Kemsley Light Railway were the surprise winners of the Coiley Award for Steam Locomotive Engineering for their restoration of 0-4-2ST *Premier*. The 1905-built Kerr Stuart was painstakingly returned to as-built condition from photographic evidence and returned to steam on the former

papermill line. The level of detail shown and the commitment from a small team at the SKLR saw the little 'Brazil' class machine triumph over a string of more famous competitors'.

At the awards ceremony, Liz Fuller, Chairman of the Railway, Paul Best, Vice-Chairman and John Fuller, Finance Director were joined by Michael Fuller, Locomotive Engineer, Dan Shaw and Paul Williams who worked tirelessly on the locomotive's rebuild.

"We were delighted to be shortlisted," explains Paul Best, "so to win the award was incredible, against such big competition, we are absolutely delighted! Passengers will be able to see the award on display at Kemsley Down."

*Premier* will be returning to public service over the Easter Weekend, trains depart Sittingbourne Viaduct station at 11.30am, 12.30pm, 2pm, 3pm & 4pm all four days of the weekend. Return fares are £8 for adults, £7 for senior citizens, £4 for children aged 3-15 years, under 3s go free and a family ticket for two adults and up to four children is £22.

(End)

---

**Information for the media:**

1. The Heritage Railway Association post can be found here:

<https://www.hra.uk.com/news/wight-celebrations-slate-jubilations-and-premier-triumphant-at-hra-awards>

2. The SKLR is now the longest continuous operator of the railway and is operated and maintained entirely by volunteers.

3. Postal address: SKLR, PO Box 300, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 2DZ.
4. Photographs of the Railway can be found on the Press Officer's Flickr account [www.flickr.com/stopem](http://www.flickr.com/stopem) Feel free to use them without a fee but please credit 'www.sklr.net' or '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.

Media enquiries to Paul Best, Vice-Chairman and Press Officer,

telephone 07973 192938 or email [media@sklr.net](mailto:media@sklr.net)