

# A new “Manor” of train visits Devon for Christmas

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A new steam locomotive is visiting South Devon Railway (SDR) in time for its Christmas event.

A British Railways built 78xx Class locomotive, No. 7820 *Dinmore Manor* will join the SDR and take part in ‘*The Polar Express Train Ride*’, which runs throughout November and December.

Brought to the SDR in conjunction with PNP Events Limited, ‘*The Polar Express Train Ride*’ event is proving to be hugely popular, with the majority of services already sold out and only limited tickets remaining.

The train is being provided courtesy of Dinmore Manor Locomotive Ltd and home-railway, the Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Steam Railway.

The SDR is also holding a three-day winter steam gala, entitled ‘*Mince Pies, Manor and More*’, from Friday 31 December to Sunday 2 January, which will feature *Dinmore Manor* working with locomotives from the home fleet. Further details of the gala are being released by the SDR shortly – but they are already promising each passenger a free mince pie.

SDR general manager Ernest Elsworth-Wilson said: “We are delighted to be having Dinmore Manor visit the SDR and wish to thank owners Dinmore Manor Locomotive Ltd and the Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Steam Railway, for facilitating the visit.

“Our new event for Christmas, the Polar Express Train Ride, will provide an amazing festive experience for all of our visitors, and having the magnificent Dinmore Manor at the head of our trains will further add to the Christmas magic!

“We are also very excited to be able to once again operate a steam gala after what has been a difficult couple of years and, being right in the middle of winter, this should provide a very atmospheric experience for our visitors and staff as Dinmore Manor and some of our home-based locomotives haul trains alongside the River Dart on the crisp winter days.”

The Manor class of locomotives was originally designed and built by the Great Western Railway as a smaller locomotive to others in their fleet to enable operation on routes with a lower route availability (the rating which determines the size and weight of locomotives allowed to operate on a certain section of line), including the well-known Cambrian Line in Wales.

The first Manor entered service in 1938, and the design proved successful with 20 of the locomotives being in service by 1939. A further batch of locomotives was delayed due to the war effort, however British Railways were allowed to order another 10 in 1950, and *Dinmore Manor* was the first of those built for British Railways, being completed in November 1950.

Although not seen on services on the Buckfastleigh line when it was part of the national network, other Manor class locomotives have previously run on the SDR and have proven to be very popular visitors, fitting in well with the line’s quintessential Great Western branch line atmosphere.

*Image credit: Copyright M Thoms, provided via SDR*