

Bustling Gala and Easter at North Norfolk Railway

April 21, 2023



A busy Easter weekend followed by a popular Spring Steam Gala, both featuring visiting West Country pacific 34028 “Eddystone” have contributed to a busy start to the North Norfolk Railway’s main summer season with daily loadings for the Easter holiday period up 13 per cent on the same period in 2022.

Bagnall No. 401 “Vulcan” was the line’s second gala visitor and the powerful 0-6-0ST performed well, impressing crews and visitors alike as she tackled the NNR’s demanding 1 in 80 gradients with a variety of train formations. “Vulcan” appeared courtesy of the North Tyneside Railway and is due to return to Embsay where she is on a long-term hire.

34028’s visit was slightly longer, with the SR thoroughbred working Poppy Line trains for 10 days from Good Friday, 7 April, until the conclusion of the Gala on 16 April. The express 4-6-2 drew favourable comments from passengers and enginemen and will return to the Swanage Railway later this week.

Graham Hukins, Commercial Manager, said: “We are buoyed by the start to the season with Easter, the Gala and the midweek running all up on 2022. Calendar changes mean we have run on 16 days over the Easter holidays this year compared to 18 last year but total passenger numbers are fractionally up and

daily loadings have jumped by 13 per cent.

“Of course it’s very early days but with parts of the sector struggling and slashing services or heavily discounting tickets, it’s heartening that our approach of fine tuning the timetable and calendar to trim costs while still providing plenty of activity, great visitor experience and value for money has landed well with the key family market.”

Overall the line welcomed 2,001 passengers across the three days of the gala to travel behind the visiting locomotives plus home fleet 9F 92203, Standard 4 76084, WD 90775 and Class 37 D6732 which covered the WD’s diagram on Saturday and Sunday as the 2-10-0 was receiving attention from the fitters. Easter services were handled by 34028, 76084 and D6732 and the four-day weekend saw 2,918 passengers carried.

The Railway’s next special events are Dad’s Army Live on 29, 30 April & 1 May and the Mixed Traction Gala and Rails & Ales Showcase on 9, 10 & 11 June. Main season services run on almost every day until October with visitors able to enjoy unlimited travel on the 5½ line with Day Rover tickets, as well as special discounts for booking online in advance – full details can be found at www.nnrailway.co.uk.