

Enthusiast event success continues at the Severn Valley Railway

January 5, 2024



The [Severn Valley Railway](#) is celebrating after its brand-new Winter Diesel Day event attracted unexpectedly high visitor numbers last week.

The event, which took place on Friday 29th December, drew more than 1,000 paid passengers plus hundreds more shareholders. It brought in an impressive £30,000 in ticket revenue alone, which was 35% higher than the heritage railway had been hoping for.

“It’s fair to say that, once again, the SVR has absolutely smashed it,” said Managing Director Jonathan ‘Gus’ Dunster. “We’d never before tried to run a short, diesel-enthusiast event like this in the winter season, but we wanted to give it a go, and we’re very pleased that we did.

“We saw a timetable that ran perfectly, and a strong sense of team purpose across the railway, for which we are hugely appreciative. This is yet more proof of how the SVR’s strong commitment to enthusiast events continues to be the right one.”

Highlights of the event included the long-awaited return-to-service of the SVR-based Class 108 Diesel Multiple Unit and the provision of steam heat, thanks to Class 40 40106, Class 46 D182 and pannier tank 7714 double-heading with various diesel locomotives.

“This aspect of our winter event brought a nostalgia all of its own,” added Gus. “We took passengers back to the days of the late 1960s and 1970s when diesel steam heating was the norm, before BR phased it out by the mid-80s. I heard many positive comments from visitors about how much they valued this feature of our event; the atmosphere across the line, particularly as the light faded, was absolutely wonderful. I was rostered as the volunteer driver on the Class 50 on the rear of the last train of the day, hauled by the Class 40, into Kidderminster at 21.45, and you can probably imagine how much of a pleasure that was.”

Buoyed by 2023’s success, the SVR’s Visitor Engagement Manager Lewis Maddox is already planning an extra enthusiast-focussed event for later this year, in addition to the four steam and diesel galas that are already well-established in the railway’s calendar:

“This one is going to be a mixed traction and real ale festival and we’re looking at holding this in June. We think the combination of these two attractions is going to prove extremely popular, and we’ll be announcing further details as soon as we can.”

Further information and tickets for the Winter Steam Gala are available at svr.co.uk