

# How does the SVR keeps its steam locomotives in good shape? Now's your chance to find out

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Inside the motive power depot at Bridgnorth, the [Severn Valley Railway's](#) engineers use their considerable skills to maintain, overhaul and restore the railway's fleet of steam locomotives. Usually, it all happens behind closed doors, because for safety reasons the public are not allowed to visit these operational areas. But on selected weekends in June and July, that's set to change.

On June 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, plus July 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, visitors will be able to book onto expertly guided tours, as they go behind the scenes and discover how the SVR keeps its steam loco fleet in shape.

The groups are being kept deliberately small; with a maximum of eight people per tour, visitors will get up close to a range of locomotives in varying stages of repair and overhaul, including the new-build Riddles BR 3MT 2-6-2 No 82045 and Stanier Mogul No 13268, which is nearing the end of its overhaul.

A number of the SVR's volunteers will lead the tours, sharing their experience and passion with participants. Shed master Martin White has volunteered at the heritage railway for 47 years, and says

visitors are guaranteed a real insight into what goes on:

“There’ll be a mixture of routine maintenance and heavy overhaul tasks taking place, on both the SVR’s home fleet as well as contract work on locomotives owned by other organisations. The youngest steam locomotives are now more than 60 years old and the oldest are well over 100 years old, and they’re all at different stages of their repair, from almost complete to stripped down into basic components.

“We think these tours are going to be really popular, as opportunities to visit the works on a guided tour are extremely rare. You’ll get the chance to take as many photographs and ask as many questions as time allows. We’re keeping the numbers low so this can be a more personalised experience.”

The hour-long tours will take in the locomotive yard, works, machine shop and paint shop. The first tour of each day has been timed so passengers arriving for the first service of the day from Bridgnorth at 11.55 can fit it in before catching their train. The six dates will run as a trial, and the railway plans to add more in the coming months if they prove successful.

Bridgnorth works guided tours can be booked at [svr.co.uk](https://svr.co.uk). Participants must be at least 16, and have stout footwear.

*Photo credit: Michael Howard*