

Severn Valley Railway back in business

August 3, 2020



On Saturday 1st August, the Severn Valley Railway reopened to the public. The first service of the day, hauled by GWR 2857, left Kidderminster town station at 10.15am with hundreds of excited visitors on board.

This was the first public service this leading heritage railway had been able to run since mid-March, and it represented a huge achievement for the volunteers and paid staff. After four-and-a-half months in lockdown, the SVR was well and truly back in the game!

For general manager Helen Smith, there was relief and pride: "It has taken an incredible effort from everyone across the Railway to pull together and deliver this new excursion experience for our visitors, and it's just what we needed to get back open again in a controlled manner to ensure visitor and staff safety. Today we've witnessed a sea of smiling faces, and this tells us we've got it right.

"This doesn't mean all our problems are solved because we still have a mountain to climb. Not only do we have a large business interruption bank loan to pay back, but we also need to work hard to make sure everyone adheres to the social distancing regulations, so we can protect our staff and visitors, and start to make money again."

For the entire month of August, the Railway is running three excursion services every day. There's one from Bridgnorth at 10.45 and two from Kidderminster at 10.15 and 10.45. Travel is within a private compartment, seating up to six people and at £75 per compartment, represents very good value. There are concessions for shareholders, loyalty pass holders and SVR members. In the past few days, extra compartments have been made available to these groups, on top of the original allocation of 30%.

The reopening services on Saturday and Sunday were sold out and the SVR says that sales for the rest of reopening week are looking very healthy. Whilst they're encouraging advance booking, there may be some on-the-day places available, and this information will be advised on social media and on www.svr.co.uk the day before.

Photo credit: Tom Clarke

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