

# Severn Valley Railway's first Winter Steam Gala is a runaway success

January 12, 2024



A brand-new event at the [Severn Valley Railway](#) has been declared a 'winner' by organisers, after it attracted higher-than-expected numbers of visitors. The Winter Steam Gala on 6 and 7 January saw more than 2,500 passengers, and generated twice the hoped-for revenue.

"Yet again, we've shown that the SVR is second-to-none when it comes to enthusiast events," said Managing Director Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster. "We'd never done an event of this sort at this time of year before, but our instincts were that it would be a winner, and we were absolutely spot on!"

"I was genuinely overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of visitors and volunteers who thanked me personally for putting this event on in what is traditionally a quiet period for enthusiasts. We definitely got the formula correct – nothing too complicated – and people supported it in their thousands."

The weekend saw bright weather and a packed timetable, including local services stopping at Eardington. 21C127 'Taw Valley' in wartime black joined Pannier tank 7714, which thanks to some remedial work was able to appear at the gala as planned. Meanwhile 7812 'Erlestoke Manor' and recently

overhauled Stanier Mogul 2968 both made their gala debuts.

The planned guest locomotive No 2253 'Omaha' suffered a failure in the final week of December, due to a leaky boiler plug, and despite valiant efforts, repairs could not be completed in time for the gala.

Fortunately, BR Class 4 75069 was prepped to appear on Sunday and so stepped up to cover for 'Omaha' on the Saturday.

The weekend also saw the final trip of 43106 'The Flying Pig', hauling a special train on Sunday. Departing Kidderminster at 5.30pm, this marked the end of another successful decade of service for the popular SVR-based locomotive as its 10-year boiler ticket came to an end.

The railway will be closed for the next few weeks, but passenger services resume for the half-term holiday on 10/11, 13-15 and 17/18 February. The next steam enthusiast event at the SVR is the Spring Steam Gala on 18-21 April, for which two visiting locomotives have already been named - Lambton No29 and No 72 'Fenchurch' - with a third guest announcement promised soon.