

South Devon Railway reveals line up for winter steam gala

December 8, 2022



The [South Devon Railway](#) is holding a Winter Steam Gala over the weekend from Friday 30th December to Sunday 1st January, featuring three locos in steam, which include two visitors.

The gala weekend comes on the back of a very busy Christmas period with record sales of tickets for The Polar Express™, which is running from November right up to Christmas.

Taking advantage of the use of Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Railway-based No. 7820 Dinmore Manor, which masquerades as The Polar Express™ loco No. 1225, complete with American-style cow catcher and headlight, the 1950 Swindon-built 4-6-0 will be returned to its BR livery and operating trains throughout the three-day gala.

7820 was the first of the batch of Manors to be built by British Railways after nationalisation. Originally allocated to Oswestry, she later became a West Country engine with stints at Laira, Truro and St Blazey, before a return to Wales, finishing her career at Shrewsbury.

The Manor will be joined by Ivatt Class 2MT 2-6-2T No 41312 from the Mid Hants Railway. Built at Crewe in

1952, 41312 was first based in Kent before being moved to Barnstaple Junction working on the Southern Region's lines in Devon. After working on the south

coast and hauling the last train on the Lymington branch, she spent her last three months on the mainline at Nine Elms.

The two visitors will be supported by 1937-built GWR 0-6-0 pannier tank No. 6430 which joined the SDR's home fleet in 2021, having been Buckfastleigh based in the early days of the line as a source of spares before sale to Hugh Shipton and a complete rebuild.

South Devon Railway general manager, Ernest Elsworth-Wilson, said: "We held a Winter Steam Gala after our Christmas trains last year and it was immensely popular, so we're delighted to be repeating the event, again with 7820 but also with the Ivatt as well, two engines with a great West Country heritage and providing an opportunity to ride behind locos rarely seen on the branch. We're grateful to the Dinmore Manor Fund and Mid Hants Railway for agreeing the hire of the engines."

He added: "The middle of winter is a great time to travel on our line, as the lack of greenery on the trees allows for some stunning views of the river and hills beyond. We are hoping to welcome lots of visitors during the last weekend of the festive break."

An intensive service will run between Buckfastleigh and Totnes Riverside on each day. The line will also be open with a three-train daily service between Boxing day and 29th December.

Tickets can be pre-booked at www.southdevonrailway.co.uk or purchased from the line's booking offices.

Photo credit: South Devon Railway