

Spring Steam gala promises to 'deliver the goods'

March 30, 2022



The Watercress Line's much-loved Spring Steam Gala is back on track this year, from Friday 29 April to Monday 2 May, with a Goods Train theme.

A range of heritage locomotives, from heavy goods to local freight, will be on show during the popular event, as well as fascinating tours and restoration exhibitions at the stations.

Visitors will enjoy a journey into a bygone era with home-fleet and guest steam locomotives running along the Watercress Line's 10 mile line throughout the four days.

There will be two visiting locomotives – GWR 28xx2857 designed for heavy goods trains, courtesy of Severn Valley Railway – this type has not worked over the Watercress Line before; and LMS 8F 48305, courtesy of Great Central Railway, Leicestershire – believed to be the first 8F to visit the Watercress Line (with the exception of two occasions where they have operated in the Alton area).

The Watercress Line's home-fleet will include the fast freight S15 Class 506 and 30925 'Cheltenham' – a powerful 4-4-0 type locomotive used for goods and passengers. Local goods train 7F 53808 will also run,

courtesy of Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust.

There will be an enhanced timetable of steam locomotives allowing guests to hop on and off any train to explore the heritage stations along the way.

The Spring Steam Gala will feature 'behind the scenes' tours at Ropley Station's workshop and yard where locomotives under restoration will be on show. There will also be society stalls and displays at Ropley.

The new museum at the Old Goods Shed at Alresford Station will give a fascinating glimpse of Somerset and Dorset Railway Trust artefacts to visitors. Don't forget to visit the gift shop there for a great range of Watercress Line themed memorabilia.

At Medstead & Four Marks Station, the Goods Shed will have the 'Delivering the Goods' exhibition and, in the sidings, on Saturday 30th April and Sunday 1st May, Wickham Trolley rides will be on offer.

After all the excitement, visitors can enjoy refreshments at Alresford's West Country Buffet and Ropley's T-Junction and Beer Junction.

The Watercress Line's Acting Managing Director Alison Houghton said: "Our much-loved heritage railway will spring into action at this four day gala. Fans of steam railways are sure to have a great day out.

"The heritage goods locomotives will make a nostalgic impression as they travel along the Watercress Line's famous route. There will be plenty to see and do at all the picturesque stations, so don't miss out – please book your tickets in advance."

For more information and to book tickets, please visit www.watercressline.co.uk