

# 'Vulcan' joins SVR Gala line-up, and Eardington welcomes first arrivals in 41 years

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The Severn Valley Railway has announced that industrial locomotive No 401 'Vulcan' will be the second guest visitor at its Autumn Steam Gala, between 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> September. The railway has also confirmed that for the first time in more than 40 years, Eardington Halt will feature as a stopping point throughout the four days of the event.

The appearance of 'Vulcan' will be the first time a Bagnall-built steam locomotive has ever visited the Severn Valley Railway, but 401 is no stranger to the West Midlands. It spent a number of years at the Austin Motor Company's Longbridge works until its withdrawal from service in the early 1970s.

Appearing courtesy of North Tyneside Steam Railway and Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway, 'Vulcan' looks set to be a crowd-puller, with its bright red original Steel Company of Wales livery and unusual outside valve gear.

"It will be real pleasure to welcome this particular guest," said SVR managing director Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster. "The class was commissioned in the early 1950s to compete with the diesel shunters that were growing in number and usage. It featured what was very modern technology at the time, such as roller

bearings, Walschaerts valve gear and a rocking grate. They were notorious for their rough riding, and got the nickname 'camel class'. We're delighted to be welcoming the first-ever Bagnall locomotive to the SVR!"

'Vulcan' joins the visiting Class B1 61306 'Mayflower' at the Autumn Steam Gala, as well as members of the SVR's home fleet. The autumn enthusiast event continues the celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the 'Big Four' railway companies, and another guest announcement is anticipated very soon.

The news that trains will once again stop at Eardington Halt has been warmly welcomed by the loyal band of volunteers that has looked after it over the decades. Local trains between Bridgnorth and Highley will make several stops each day at the tiny Shropshire station, often referred to as the SVR's 'hidden gem'.

"Our last timetabled train stopped in 1982," said Eardington's station master Steve Downs. "and it's no exaggeration to say that it's a dream come true that we're back on the map again in 2023.

"Getting to this point hasn't been simple. We worked closely with the Office of Rail and Road as well as the SVR's operations department to make sure all the paperwork was in place. We've had tremendous support from the railway's management, who couldn't have done more to help us achieve this result.

"Visitors to Eardington can sample our world-famous home-made cakes, and we'll have an historical display about the station, which is unique in being the only entirely oil-powered station that's left in the UK."

The Autumn Steam Gala also features two nights of overnight running, and there's more information and booking details at [svr.co.uk](https://svr.co.uk)