



THE SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY

July 2016

EXPRESS POINTS

WORKING MEMBERS NEWSLETTER



Express Points
The Working Members Newsletter
- Contact -

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- About -

Express points is distributed on the first Sunday of each month by sending a reminder link to more than 500 email subscribers. Printed copies are also sent out.

This newsletter is intended for the information of Working Members & Staff of the Severn Valley Railway only.

- Deadline -

Articles & photographs should be submitted before the last Sunday in the month.

-Cover photo -

7812 climbing Eardington bank with a Kidderminster to Bridgnorth service on 17th June 2016 (Ian Murray)

Welcome to the July edition of Express Points

Our aim is to bring you news from all corners of the Railway and this edition is packed with information. There are updates on current work taking place in Engineering Motive Power Services in Bridgnorth, Carriage & Wagon in Kidderminster, along with news from the Infrastructure department. Broadening things out a little, we report on developments in the SVR's catering and retail outlets, there's an invitation to take part in a walk along the P-way and support the SVR Junior Club at the same time, an appeal for spooky volunteers, plus updates from the Charitable Trust and on some of the special events that have taken place recently.

Other Working Members want to hear from YOU!

Please get in touch and tell us what's happening in your area so we can spread the word. Express Points is all about keeping Working Members in the picture about what's going on in your department. Don't worry about the need to produce a carefully crafted article – we are more than willing to assist with producing final copy. If you can include a digital photograph to accompany your news – even better!

We'd also like to know what you'd like to see in future editions of Express Points? Is there something we could do more of? Anything you'd like less of? Perhaps you have a question you'd like to ask one of the Railway's senior managers or heads of department? Contact us on ExpressPoints@svrlive.com

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'Severn Valley Railway Official Site' & 'Express Points'

SVR contact email addresses

General feedback to the SVR on any topic should go to: feedback@svrlive.com

For staffing issues, please contact the Volunteer Liaison Office: vlo@svrlive.com

Membership enquiries: membership@svrlive.com

Any opinions or views expressed in this newsletter are entirely the opinions of the contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Directors of either Severn Valley Railway (Holdings) PLC. which owns the Severn Valley Railway, or Severn Valley Railway Company Limited, the members of which are responsible for its operation.

BRIDGNORTH UPDATE

As we go to press, the SVR is still awaiting planning permission for the re-development from Shropshire County Council. They asked for an extension, in order to fully consider local residents' objections regarding the height of the service tower in the proposed accommodation block. A full-scale scaffolding mock-up was erected to allow all parties to determine the likely impact of the tower, and there was a consultation meeting with both the residents and a planning officer from the council. As a result, SVR will slightly modify the tower's location to satisfy the objectors.

The preferred contractor has been chosen – Ludlow-based Iris Construction – after much deliberation. They're currently preparing the second stage tender which should provide cost certainty by the end of June.

A number of pre-construction surveys for drainage and asbestos have taken place. New BT and power supplies have been ordered as these have significant lead times, and we need to take advantage of the service trench that will give access from Oldbury Road.

Some architectural items are also being purchased in advance, these need to meet specific designer requirements, and are being offered directly to the SVR at a very advantageous price.

Volunteers have already cut down and cleared a number of conifer trees as part of preparing the site for construction. In due course the bar stores building is to be dismantled and will be re-erected at Bewdley where it will become storage for events materials.



EXPRESS POINTS TO GO ONLINE ONLY FROM JANUARY 2017

The demand for printed copies of Express Points has been steadily dropping for some time now. Additionally, we hope to make the publication bi-weekly in the near future. Printing off copies is very expensive and time-consuming. All these factors mean that a switch to digital publication would be a sensible move. We have given a good deal of warning about the change, and urge you to sign up with your email address as soon as possible at ExpressPoints@svrlive.com.

Please let us know if you are worried that you will no longer be able to receive Express Points after we switch to digital only by writing to: Express Points, One Comberton Place, Kidderminster, DY10 1QR.

PASSENGER NUMBERS ARE UP

Passenger numbers at the Railway for May were up by 2,000 overall compared with 2015, and came in at 1,000 passengers above budget. Special events were up on budget by more than 5,000 passengers, and this was due to the highly successful-Spring Diesel Festival and the Peppa Pig Visit, which outperformed budgets by 2,300 passengers and 600 passengers respectively.

CREAM TEAS IN THE OBSERVATION SALOON

Forthcoming dates: 13th & 14th July, 7th & 8th September, and 27th October.
£7.50 supplement per person.

VOLUNTEER MONTHLY VOUCHER DRAW

Congratulations to Jerry Beddows of Arley, the latest winner of the SVR £20 gift voucher.

The Volunteer Monthly Prize is drawn at random by the Volunteer Liaison Dept. Each month a £20 voucher is won and the winner is published here. In December four names are drawn.

TTIs HELP BOOST DONATIONS



TTIs Bob Vincent and Richard Smith, ready to distribute donations envelopes

As part of a drive by the SVR Charitable Trust to widen the number of donations, Leigh Weston has kindly agreed that TTIs will get involved by placing donations envelopes on trains. The hope is that as visitors relax and enjoy their journey along the beautiful Severn Valley, they'll take a few minutes to read the leaflet inside the envelope, and will begin to understand how important it is to raise funds for the long-term future of the Railway.

The Charitable Trust can claim Gift Aid on donations at no extra cost to the donor, making this a very effective way of fundraising. Once the donor has provided their contact details, the Trust can keep in touch with updates on the work that's being done across the Railway.

The Charitable Trust would like to say a big thank you to all the TTIs for their invaluable help in getting the donations envelopes out on the trains. The scheme started towards the end of June, and the early results are very encouraging.

CALLING ALL WALKERS!

Please come and join the SVR Junior Club's Sponsored Walk on Thursday 14th July. We'll meet for registration at Bewdley at 17.30, then catch the 18.19 to Kidderminster. When the line is clear we'll walk along the track, back to Bewdley.

There's a £5 per person charge, and we'd love you to ask friends and family for sponsorship to raise more funds for our chosen charity this year, the Children's Air Ambulance.

You're welcome to join us at Kidderminster for the walk, but remember you'll need to arrange transport back at the end of the evening.

There will be a buffet to greet you on your return to Bewdley, and you may like to join us for the buffet, even if you didn't manage the walk. The buffet cost £5 per head.

The Children's Air Ambulance takes very poorly children from one hospital to another, in a quarter of the time a conventional Ambulance would take. They only have one helicopter at the moment but would like to purchase another. The helicopter is fully equipped as an Intensive Care Unit and you can imagine they're not cheap to buy.

Once more the P-Way have offered their support for the walk. We could not attempt it without this, so on behalf of the Junior Club I would like to say a very big thank you.

For a sponsorship form, please contact me on 01905 779975.

Patricia Heap

Severn Valley Railway Company Limited - Forty-eighth Annual General Meeting

A number of members have commented on errors in the Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2015. Unfortunately, an earlier incorrect draft of the accounts was used in error by the printers and was published.

As a result, the Directors have taken legal advice on the validity of the Annual General Meeting proceedings, and have decided that the Annual General Meeting should be postponed. The correct accounts are being sent out by post.

Please note that the Annual General Meeting will now be held on Saturday 20th August 2016 at 7.30pm in Kidderminster Railway Museum.

The Directors regret the need for this change and request the understanding of members.

D Mellor, SVR (G) Company Secretary

CAMPAIGN TO ATTRACT NEW SUMMER VISITORS



The Railway is about to launch its Family Summer Saver offer, which will run throughout the school holidays, from 23rd July till 4th September. For just £39, two adults/seniors and up to four children can travel for a whole day during this period. It's a great deal and offers a substantial saving on the usual fare of £55.50.

The idea behind the promotion is to grow our summer holiday passenger numbers and increase the secondary spend across the Railway. We hope that the keen pricing will bring in new first-time visitors, and thereby generate long-term growth in passenger numbers. Look out for the brand new advertisements, which feature three generations of a family enjoying the SVR. They'll be appearing in newspapers, magazines, on buses and on poster sites.

VOLUNTEERS' FOOD DISCOUNT

Following the recent price rises to the catering menu, a number of working members have raised concerns that even with their 35% volunteer discount, eating at the SVR has become more expensive.

The Accountant and the Heritage Support Manager are considering the discount against costs, and will come forward with a proposal for the Board when it meets later this month.



SVR TURNS TO HORSEPOWER!



The SVR Charitable Trust's race day at Worcester racecourse last month proved a winner for the Railway, raising almost £22,000 for vital projects, including the Heritage Skills Training Academy. The racecourse generously donated £3 per ticket sold, and there was a VIP lunch at the course for more than 200 of Worcestershire's most prominent business people.

Guests at the lunch heard how some of the money raised will support the Academy and its nine apprentices. The chairman of the race day's organising committee, Phil Dutton of Handelsbanken, Worcester, said: "We're proud to support the Severn Valley Railway because not only is it the most marvellous heritage attraction, but it also makes a significant contribution to our regional economy."

Nineteen-year old George Brogan, in his second year of training at the HSTA, commented: "The training we get at the SVR is second-to-none. As well as our basic engineering studies at college, we're being exposed to the traditional skills needed on a heritage railway, such as boiler making, and locomotive and carriage restoration. I'm grateful that local businesses are supporting the Academy."

THANK YOU FOR A GREAT NIGHT OUT!

On behalf of all who attended from Bewdley Station and its various departments, a big thank you to Holdings, Guarantee and Staffing Committee for an excellent Volunteer ThankYou evening at Highley. It is not often that the whole railway can get together and enjoy a social event. Thanks also go to the volunteers who played their part in running the staff trains to get us all there.

KING AND CASTLE UPDATE



Following the recent resignations of a number of staff members at the Kidderminster station pub, we have been intensively recruiting and have now filled most of the vacant posts. Some of the new staff have already started, others will join us in the coming weeks.

We've identified a number of areas we can develop in the King and Castle to improve the offer to our patrons. These include products, pricing, trading times, environment and service. Please be assured of our commitment to work on all areas identified, whilst also continuing to listen to comments from our customers, volunteers and staff.

I would like to encourage you all to visit the King and Castle bar which has great potential. There have been many changes just recently, and I hope you will support the new King and Castle staff in doing their very best for the bar and its patrons.

Please send any queries to kingandcastle@svrlive.com.

Andrew Burton, Heritage Support Manager

WANT TO SCARE THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS OUT OF OUR VISITORS?



Every October something mysterious happens at Arley: coffins begin arriving on trains, Sydney the Spider appears out of nowhere, and once the sun sets, the cackles of witches echo along the Severn Valley. Over the last few years, our Ghost Trains have grown in popularity, and every service has been a sell-out. As an event, the Ghost Trains bring in essential additional revenue for the Railway during the last quarter of the year.

Key to the operation is the transformation of Arley station into a scary destination populated with horrible witches and gruesome ghouls. This is where you come in! We need a large number of volunteers over the three evenings of the event, to dress up and be a part of the spooky entertainment at Arley (scaring your colleagues is optional!) So, if you want to experience something a little different and take part in a sell-out event, let us know. Job descriptions (believe it or not) are available, and full training will be given. So, if you are any age up to 250 (or older with medical certificate) and are available on 27th, 28th or 29th October, please email Lewis Maddox, Events Co-ordinator at lewis.maddox@svrlive.com or call 01562 757910.

NEWS FROM MPD, BRIDGNORTH

813 Assembly work has continued and a successful in frames insurance hydraulic test was done last month, and a steam test is also booked. Coupling rods will be the main delay for entry into traffic; finishing these off is complex because of their design.

1450 Came back from Didcot and has seen a few days' use on the SVR.

1501 Available for traffic following routine washout, and has seen use on smaller trains.

2047 Meeting held with Timsons of Kettering about the production of two new cylinders blocks and type of pattern equipment used. The pattern design is now coming to a close with production of patterns due in the next four to six weeks.

2857 A broken tender spring has affected service trains. Loco has received a routine boiler washout and is available for traffic.

4085 Dunrobin Bogie and main frame welding has been undertaken by a coded welder.

4566 Available for traffic and has seen use on some of the smaller trains.

4930 Hagley Hall Work on the tender chassis has been sporadic due to staff working on running repairs to the fleet. The tender brake shaft is finish machined. Volunteers continue to prepare the cylinder block for removal.

7714 Work continues on assembly of the chassis, and the steam brake cylinder is now overhauled. The rear drag box replacement continues as staff availability permits.

7802 Bradley Manor Available for traffic following a routine washout.

7812 Erlestoke Manor Suffered a tender broken spring prior to going away on hire to GWR. Now returned and available for traffic.

34027 Taw Valley Available for traffic and used on air brake training sessions along with charter trains.

34053 Sir Keith Park Available for traffic.

42968 Volunteers continue to prep for overhaul, with work focusing on stripping the cab for assessment.

43106 Loco has received a routine washout but has also suffered a broken front cylinder cover by incorrect fitting.

75069 Work has slowed on this project whilst staff focus on 7714, 813 and running repairs.

GUVs 1st GUV TKA94157 is now cosmetically restored, and work is starting on the second.

Graham Hill building Refurbishment work continues focussing on the mess room area.

REVIEW OF DISABILITY POLICY

During a recent review of the Railway's Disability Policy, the Staffing Committee considered the position of volunteers who have Asperger's Syndrome.

Following a long discussion, the Committee recommended that when an existing volunteer expresses an interest in safety critical work in another department, a reference will be obtained from the most recent head of department.

The wording of the Disability Policy does not preclude new volunteers who have Asperger's Syndrome, other than those who would require a parent or support worker to help them access volunteering. The policy states that all volunteers must be responsible for their own safety and this will be upheld.

IN MEMORIAM

RICHARD POWER

It is with regret that we inform you of the passing of Richard Power. He was a long-serving supporter of the Railway, and he spent many years on the board as a Director. Our thoughts are with Richard's family at this very sad time.

DAVE DAWSON

It is with deep sadness that we recently announced the death of Dave Dawson. Dave collapsed and died whilst working in the Carriage Shed at Kidderminster on Tuesday 14th June. He had been a C&W volunteer for three years, before becoming a full-time member of the Department in September 2013, taking responsibility for carriage maintenance and working alongside Gary Parsons and volunteer John Goodenough. Our sympathy goes to Dave's partner Carole at this sad time. He will be sadly missed by all his colleagues.

SLEEPING AND MESS FACILITIES AT HAMPTON LOADE

A problem with Hampton Loade's volunteer mess and sleeping accommodation has led to it being withdrawn from use. The station house is not yet fit for use, and the Accommodation Steering Group has recommended that Riding Van No.55 is moved to Hampton Loade as a temporary measure. This will create four bunks and mess facilities. No.55 will however be needed for use at Kidderminster during December, when mess facilities will be available in the station house.

FLYING SCOTSMAN PLANS IN PROGRESS



(Photo:Tom Robson)

General Manager Nick Ralls is due to meet with Events Officer Lewis Maddox and the Events Committee to review both the Flying Scotsman SVR Charitable Trust day (on 21st September), and the events plan for Pacific Power (between 22nd and 26th September) and to finalise the details before sharing with the Board. A desktop exercise will take place early in July to anticipate potential problems and make sure contingency plans are in place.

BEWDLEY'S PLAN FOR FLYING SCOTSMAN'S VISIT

Staff at Bewdley Station have been delighted to receive offers from volunteers in other departments to give some extra help during the visit of Flying Scotsman and Tornado between 21st and 26th September for the Pacific Power event. Assistant Stationmaster Dai Phillips said: "We know that we're going to need at least 55 people on each of the six days in order to operate safely and cope with the extra visitor numbers, and we'd love to hear from anyone who would be willing to come and lend a hand."

In last month's Express Points, Dai drew readers' attention to the impact that the Pacific Power event will inevitably have in and around the station, and he made this appeal to volunteers: "Please bear in mind that you're likely to experience disruption to your normal working pattern. Viewing areas will be designated and roped off, in both the down yard and on Platform 1, and you're likely to see crowds of photographers and enthusiasts from first light until late evening." There will also be heavy demand for parking at the Station, and there will be no additional parking in the down yard during Scotsman's visit.

INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE

Jonathan Symonds contacted Worcestershire Water Management in respect of the reinstatement of the flow control dam in Eymore Woods. They're content that the proposal constitutes a straightforward replacement and a submission to that effect will now be undertaken. Once approvals are in place, this and other associated works in the same area will be carried out.

Work on Arley stonework is due to start as soon as possible after the 1940s event. Stone is on order and new correct style chimney pot has been funded from C&H committee funds.

Stonework at Bewdley Station is also now making progress after the mason suffered a long period of ill health.

The station end track connections of the new diesel shed were completed in time for the successful opening event. The area outside the depot was tidied and laid with chippings to improve the appearance.

Jonathan Symonds has produced a structural report for Bridgnorth signal box after concerns were raised about the bulge in the platform side walls. In essence the box is structurally sound, but requires a modest amount of remedial work to sort out the problems. The box needs repainting and a general tidy up, but in the longer term the SVR must consider whether to extend the existing box or build a replacement to allow for future operational requirements. These might include the reinstatement of George's Siding amongst others. This will be discussed at a future C&H meeting.

A serious water leak was detected next to the signal box at Kidderminster, in a pipe that feeds the carriage watering hoses. After a temporary fix was carried out, it was evident that there is serious corrosion of the steel and copper pipe work, which has been underground for more than 30 years. A more permanent solution will be undertaken once we stop midweek services in October/November.

A 15mph temporary speed restriction had to be introduced for approximately one week around the county boundary marker, between Arley & Highley. This was due to the detection of two bad twist faults during routine checks. The affected area has been tamped and is now back at line speed, but there is an indication that we will have to monitor the area more closely due to suspected ground movement.

The SVR Charitable Trust has submitted an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funds to assist with the restoration of Falling Sands Viaduct. The stage one pass/fail decision is due on 6th September.

RECIPROCAL TRAVEL ON OTHER RAILWAYS

Thinking of using your free travel this year? Here's a list of Railways in the Reciprocal Travel Scheme..

Bluebell Railway	Llangollen Railway
Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway (SRPS)	Mid Hants Railway
Bodmin and Wenford Railway	Mid Norfolk Railway
Dean Forest Railway	North Norfolk Railway
East Lancs Railway	North Yorkshire Moors Railway
Embsay and Bolton Abbey Railway	Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway
Gloucester & Warwickshire Steam Railway	Seaton Tramway
Great Central Railway	South Devon Railway
Isle of Wight Steam Railway	Spa Valley Railway
Keighley & Worth Valley Railway	Strathspey Railway
Kent & East Sussex Railway	Swanage Railway
Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway	Talyllyn Railway
Leighton Buzzard Railway	

On 'Normal' operating days' timetables all the railways signed up for the scheme should permit free 3rd class (2nd/standard class on some lines) on production of an SVR working member's staff pass. Some railways, like the SVR, accept the pass and don't issue a ticket whilst others issue a complementary ticket. On Gala days and certain other 'Special Events' days when there are special timetables in operation, they all should provide a reduced rate fare in line with what we do, but in practice it varies from similar arrangements to the SVR, to free, to no concessions at all.

It is safest to assume that such restrictions apply at Galas and either phone in advance or enquire at the Booking Office when you arrive.

CARRIAGE & WAGON UPDATE

Work is progressing well on 52255, and the roof is ready for its new canvas. Man power from Bewdley being used to speed up work, along with volunteers from LNER carriage group.

Man power, sickness and recruitment issues have slowed down work on the Gresley 24506 brake,, but the recruitment of a new member of staff will allow things to get moving.

Maintenance has been carried out on 12 of 15 Rudd ballast wagons.

RETAIL NEWS



New clothing ranges are being picked and ordered in time for September, and the SVR Children's colouring book is about to go into production.

Don't forget to visit the SVR gift shops at Kidderminster and Bridgnorth when you are looking for presents!

ON THE MENU FOR THE CATERING DEPARTMENT ...

Negotiations with suppliers and recipe work are now complete, and all sites have finished drawing up their shopping lists. There'll be changes to the range of hot meals, coffee, cakes, ice-cream and cold drinks. These changes will allow us to focus on meal-by-meal, product-by-product profit margins.

We've chosen Feast UK as the new coffee supplier, and they'll be supplying a coffee machine for each bar, and updating the machines in the cafes in due course. They're a local business, and will supply us with our own branded coffee, and most importantly a wider range of caffeinated and decaffeinated drinks.



In the near future, we're hoping to launch a range of Severn Valley Railway Scotch eggs, pork pies and pasties to complement our pick-up-and-go sandwiches. These will be sourced from a Worcester-based pie maker. Bridgnorth will continue to stock their famous pork pies.

We introduced a trial specialist pie menu at Kidderminster for the 1940s event, which went down very well. The full range will soon be available.

And finally, Nicky Vale and Kieron Fowler will take over responsibility this month for Bewdley café.

BACK TO THE 1940s



Photographs from the recent 1940s event were taken (from left to right) by Adam Bull, Alex Dziegel and Grace & Scott Wheeler

Our next edition will be available on Sunday 7th August 2016

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