



PRESS INFORMATION

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Severn Valley Railway spends £250k on winter track renewals

THE SEVERN Valley Railway is to spend a quarter of a million pounds on track and drainage renewal and maintenance, in a major 'winter works' programme which gets under way on Tuesday (January 3rd).

The last of the SVR's 'Festive Season' trains on Monday (January 2nd), marks the start of a six-week shutdown, to allow more than a third of a mile of track to and through the 480-yard long Bewdley Tunnel to be renewed, the trackbed reballasted, signal cabling replaced, new drainage installed, and both tunnel portals re-pointed.

Contractors will cut new drainage channels in the bedrock, and will have to employ 'forced ventilation' to allow workmen to breath in an atmosphere that would otherwise be polluted by fumes from plant and machinery. The railway aims to have the main areas of work sufficiently complete to allow the resumption of trains during the schools half-term holiday, from February 11th – 26th.

During the same period last year, the Kidderminster-to-Bridgnorth steam heritage line spent around £400,000 on major track and drainage renewal works at Arley and on Sandbourne (Bewdley South) Viaduct. This winter's work programme bringing the total spent on infrastructure renewals over the last three and a half years, to a cool £1.5 million.

Since Easter 2008, when the railway reopened following the disastrous flooding of June 2007, major infrastructure works have also included the relaying of track and structural repairs to Worcester Road Viaduct, Kidderminster, the construction of new gable ends, doors and cladding at Bridgnorth loco works and the installation of a wheeldrop, construction of a new footbridge at Highley station, the renewal of half a mile of track between Country Park Halt and Miner's Halt near Highley, and the reconstruction of a sunken embankment and track renewal at Hampton Loade.

Says SVR Infrastructure Manager Phil Sowden: "Engines and trains are the glamorous side of what we do, but if you haven't got a railway to run on, you're going nowhere. We take the whole issue of infrastructure renewals and maintenance very seriously."

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