



PRESS INFORMATION

Release date: **Friday October 28th 2011**

Early bookings surge for Severn Valley 'Santa' trains

A SURGE of early bookings for its Santa steam trains this week has put a smile on the face of the Severn Valley Railway.

With still two months to go to Christmas, the Kidderminster – Bridgnorth heritage line has sold almost half of its 30,000 Santa train seats already, and reports SVR Visitor Services Manager David Mee: "Internet bookings are coming in by the minute, and the phones are going a bit mad."

"The country may be going through tough times just now, but it seems people just aren't prepared to compromise on their traditional Christmas visit to the SVR. We've rarely seen such a surge in early bookings."

The SVR has scheduled to run more than 90 'Santa Special' trains from Kidderminster to Santa's Grotto at Arley during Saturdays and Sundays in December (December 3rd – 24th), and an additional six 'Santa Herald' steam trains between Kidderminster and Highley on December 21st, 22nd and 23rd - but many trains are already full.

Both adults and children pay a £10.50 fare, which includes a present from Santa for all children aged between 1 and 15 years. The railway's offer of a £1 discount on Santa trains during the 'normally quiet' first weekend in December (December 3rd & 4th) has seen ticket sales outstripping those of the normally more popular later weekends.

But it's been a 'good news week' all round for the railway, which has not only sold out all three of its Halloween 'Ghost Trains' (October 22nd, 28th & 29th), but also learned that passenger figures which fell below budget during August, recovered brilliantly during September to put the railway well ahead of its targets again.

Says David Mee: "We went into August with passenger figures running around 5,000 ahead of target – but it was a strange month, and we came out of it some 5,000 down. I'm delighted to say that visitors numbers during September were really strong though – and now we've recovered all the lost ground. We're currently running about 5,000 ahead of budget again."

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