
News Release

20/07/2010

FGW brings steam back to the picturesque Looe Valley Line to celebrate double anniversary

Steam will return to the Looe Valley railway line for the first time in nearly 50 years to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the opening of the line to passengers, and the 175th anniversary of the Great Western Railway.

First Great Western, working with Vintage Trains, will host the Great Western-designed pannier tank locomotive no. 9466 and a classic 1960s Class 37 diesel locomotive on Sundays 19 and 26 September. The two types of locomotive will take it in turns to haul four services a day between Liskeard and Looe. In the morning the Class 37 will pull a connecting train from Plymouth to Liskeard, calling at Saltash en-route, with the steam-hauled train making the journey back in the evening over Brunel's historic Royal Albert Bridge.

FGW spokesman, Dan Panes, said: "The Looe Valley Line, meandering back and forth across the East Looe River as it makes its way from Liskeard towards the coast, is one of the most picturesque railway lines in the UK. Now, for the first time in nearly half a century people will be able to take it all in by steam train - I can't think of a better way to do it. In the past 25 years steam trains have revisited every other railway line in Devon and Cornwall apart from this one. "It's a great way to celebrate these two landmark anniversaries."

As it celebrates its 150th year, the Looe Valley Line is thriving under FGW, with over 85,000 passenger journeys per annum, with passenger numbers up by more than 17.4 per cent since last year.

Looe Valley branch shuttle train tickets are £25, including free rover travel on FGW services between Penzance and Newton Abbot, with the exception of the Night Riviera sleeper service. Passengers wanting to book tickets on all the special trains should call Vintage Trains on: 0121-708-4960 and look on their website for more details
www.vintagetrains.co.uk/vt2010_looe_trains.htm

Ends

News Release

20/07/2010

Notes to editors:

For further information contact the First Great Western press office on 0845 410 4444

First Great Western provides high speed, commuter, regional and branch line train services, carrying more than 70 million passengers every year across the Greater Western rail franchise area, which includes South Wales, the Westcountry, the Cotswolds, and large parts of Southern England.

First Great Western is part of FirstGroup plc, the country's largest train operator, the UK's biggest bus operator and the second largest provider of yellow school bus services in the United States. First has the clear vision to 'Transform Travel' and become the number one public transport provider.