

## **Rail riders Christmas Lunch**

**13<sup>th</sup> December.**

### **Severn Valley Railway**

Our rail riders group planned and booked a Christmas lunch on the Severn Valley Railway (SVR). We could choose from 3 days, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. The Monday of course was our U3A Christmas luncheon. The Wednesday was most suitable so that is the day we opted for. We had no idea what a fortunate stroke of luck this turned out to be.

Our little band of eight intrepid travellers waited in expectation for the day to arrive. We looked forward to the trip. Plans were made as well as contingencies. However even the contingencies we made were in doubt due to the severe winter weather over the previous weekend.

According to their website SVR had cancelled all services on the Sunday and the Tuesday. Group leader David was in contact throughout Tuesday, half in hope and half in trepidation. SVR informed us that they were planning for the Wednesday trip to go ahead with customer safety at the forefront of their considerations. Nothing negative was heard at close of business so David contacted all the group members to confirm travel arrangements on Wednesday morning.

Following an early morning start (6am just in case...) The group finally got together in Penybont and sent off in a two car convoy to Kidderminster in deepest darkest England. The roads were good and quiet with good time being made to the railway station there. The scenery in the snowy landscape beautiful

The car park at Kidderminster provided the trickiest element of the journey as it was very icy.



Once inside the concourse we got hot beverages and checked in with the trip organisers. There were many people there for various events and the atmosphere was enhanced by the decorations, carol singers, “other entertainers” as well as lots of quiet and well behaved school children! We had photos taken on Santa’s sleigh before embarking our train.



The train was double-headed. A steam engine on the rear end and a diesel engine on the front. The diesel pulled for the outward trip with the steam engine pulling us for the return.





There were 10 carriages including a restaurant car. The school children from the station were on board for a Santa special trip and they filled all but 1 of the carriages which was taken by our group. Our carriage was a nice old fashioned one made up of compartments that held 8 people and a sliding door so you could shut out any unwelcome noise and retain any heat. The trip took 30 minutes and we ended up in Highley at the engine shed where the meal would be served. When we disembarked we waited to move off to the engine shed and as the train pulled away from the station with the children still on board there was much waving and smiling from all parties. We had time to look round some of their exhibits, including Gordon the blue engine. No, not the Gordon of Thomas the Tank Engine fame but a large blue engine named after General Gordon of Kartoum. It did look very similar to Gordon from the Thomas books though! There was a Royal Mail Carriage and King George V1 royal saloon carriage. There were a lot of other interesting exhibits and memorabilia well worth a visit on its own





Lunch was served at 12 noon.:

**To start**

**6 of us had Roast Turkey, Pigs-in-Blankets, Stuffing, Cranberry Sauce & Vegetables  
and 2 had Cod Loin wrapped in Smoked Bacon & Vegetable**

**To follow**

**3 of us had Truffle Torte with a gold shimmering Profiterole**

**3 had Baked Winter Cheesecake**

**and 2 had Christmas Pudding with Custard**

**It was all topped off with Tea or Coffee with a Mince Pie and a chocolate.**



It was agreed by all to be excellent in all respects, choice, quality, quantity and service.

The table was decorated with lots of trimmings and we all had individual crackers to pull and a small box with some party items in such as party poppers.

At 13.50 hrs we were asked to return to the station to board the train for the journey back to Kidderminster.

We arrived back in Llandrindod at about 5.15pm and I think it safe to say that the trip was an unqualified success with everyone thoroughly enjoying the whole experience.

Plans are afoot for the next trip, probably in the summer months and maybe in conjunction with the Charabanc group.

David Horne