

A DESTINATION AT EVERY STATION!

2017 Timetable & Guide

20th Anniversary 1997 - 2017



www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk 01892537715

WELCOME TO THE SPA VALLEY RAILWAY!



JOURNEY BACK IN TIME ON ONE OF BRITAIN'S UNIQUE HERITAGE RAILWAYS!

The Spa Valley Railway originally opened by the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway between Tunbridge Wells West and Eridge in 1866, its main purpose to provide an additional through route for passengers and goods to the South Coast of England from Central London and Kent.

In December 1996 the line was re-opened for 3/4 of a mile as a heritage railway, with an extension to Groombridge opening in August 1997 and Eridge in 2011. Today we are the biggest tourist attraction in Royal Tunbridge Wells and regularly convey passengers to all of the local attractions.

HIGH WEALD COUNTRYSIDE & THE ASHDOWN FOREST

The Spa Valley line runs through an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty known as the High Weald. The area covers 560sq miles and extends across Kent, East & West Sussex & Surrey, it is the fourth largest Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England & Wales.



The area is characterised by a medieval landscape of vast rolling hills, extensive woodland, sandstone outcrops, scattered farms and ancient routeways.

A major part, often viewed as the Jewel in the Crown of the High Weald is the Ashdown Forest. It is the largest area of open access land in the south-east. Popularly known in children's story books as the home of Winne the Pooh, the Spa Valley Railway's Groombridge Station takes you close to the edge of the famous forest.

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Since 1606 visitors have been coming to Royal Tunbridge Wells to experience the Chalybeate Spring. Its chance discovery by Lord North, who was returning to London after a three month stay in the county, led to the growth of Royal Tunbridge Wells and also the famous Pantiles.

The news of Lord North's discovery soon spread around and in 1629 the first royal visitor to the town was Queen Henrietta Maria, wife of King Charles I, who stayed in 'The Wells' for six weeks.

In 1909 King Edward VII officially recognised the popularity of the town with its many royal visitors – which included his mother, Queen Victoria – and granted the town its "Royal" prefix.

Today the town is still full of elegance and its original charm and the Spa Valley Railway takes you right to its Western edge, just a few minutes walk from The Pantiles.



2017 Operating Dates

Our heritage trains operate on all the dates highlighted in colour below. Simply pick the date you wish to travel then refer to the relevant colour on our timetable.



No colour = no public service however the line may be available for private hire, driver experience or dining trains.



Whilst we make every effort to operate with a steam locomotive where one is a reasons we may occasionally need to use a heritage 1960s diesel I The Spa Valley Railway reserves the right to make such cha

2017 Timetables

Our heritage trains operate with steam & heritage 1960s diesels. Please check before travelling if you wish to travel on a specific type of train.

Green – Standard Steam (S) & Heritage Diesel (D) Timetable						
	Loco:	S (D)	D	S	D	S*
Tunbridge Wells West	dep	10:30	11:55	13:20	14:45	16:10
High Rocks	dep	10:37	12:02	13:27	14:52	16:17
Groombridge	dep	10:46	12:11	13:36	15:01	16:26
Eridge	arr	11:00	12:20	13:45	15:10	16:35
	Loco:	D	s	D	s	D (S)*
Eridge	dep	11:10	12:30	14:00	15:20	16:45
Groombridge	dep	11:26	12:46	14:16	15:36	17:01
High Rocks	dep	11:33	12:53	14:23	15:43	17:08
Tunbridge Wells West	arr	11:40	13:00	14:30	15:50	17:15
* = Operates April to October ONLY.						

				2017/2		
Purple – Heritage Diesel Multiple Unit Timetable						
Tunbridge Wells West	dep	10:30	11:55	13:20	14:45	16:10*
High Rocks	dep	10:37	12:02	13:27	14:52	16:17
Groombridge	dep	10:46	12:11	13:36	15:01	16:26
Eridge	arr	11:00	12:20	13:45	15:10	16:35
Eridge	dep	11:10	12:30	14:00	15:20	16:45*
Groombridge	dep	11:26	12:46	14:16	15:36	17:01
High Rocks	dep	11:33	12:53	14:23	15:43	17:08
Tunbridge Wells West	arr	11:40	13:00	14:30	15:50	17:15
* = Operates April to October ONLY.						

Yellow – Mid Week Timetable							
Tunbridge Wells West	dep	11:00	13:00	15:00			
High Rocks	dep	11:07	13:07	15:07			
Groombridge	arr	11:15	13:15	15:15			
Groombridge	dep	11:45	13:45	15:45			
High Rocks	dep	11:52	13:52	15:52			
Tunbridge Wells West	arr	12:00	14:00	16:00			

Orange = Special Events - see website for timetables.

Red = Santa Specials - see website to book.

Blue = Day out with Thomas - see website to book.





imetabled and also to operate our trains as they are described, for operational ocomotives, other carriages, an emergency timetable or otherwise.

Inges for whatever reason without prior notice being given.

Diesel Galas

11th & 12th March, 3rd to 6th August & 20th to 22nd October

Join us for one of our diesel extravaganza's! This is your chance to get up close and personal with our powerful heritage diesels, some unique to the area.





Steam Festival

1st & 2nd July

Visit Eridge Station to see a gathering of historic traction engines, steam rollers, vintage vehicles & miniature railway.

Complemented by steam hauled trains and other activities, this is the ideal event for enthusiasts and families alike!

CAMRA Real Ale & Cider Festival

20th, 21st & 22nd October

A fan of your real ales or ciders? Well with over 125 ales and 30 ciders we know how to put on a beer festival!
Supported by West Kent CAMRA and now in its 7th year it is an event for any fan of ale, cider, Belgian beer & key keg ales!



2017 Special Events

FEBRUARY

- Sat 4th & Sun 5th Season opening Kids for a Quid!
- Sat 11th See Chase & Marshall from PAW Patrol & Family Fun!
- Sun 12th, Thurs 16th to Sun 19th Half term, Kids for a Quid MARCH
- Sat 11th & Sun 12th Spring Diesel Weekend
- Sat 8th See Peppa Pig & Family Fun!
- Fri 14th to Mon 17th Easter Specials
- Sat 22nd & Sun 23rd Spring Steam Weekend
- Sat 29th & Sun 30th Bank Holiday Kids for a Quid MAY
- Mon Ist Bank Holiday Kids for a Quid
- Sat 13th, Sun 14th, Sat 20th, Sun 21st A Day Out with Thomas JUNE
- Sat 17th See Postman Pat® & Family Fun!
- Sat 1st & Sun 2nd 2nd Annual Summer Steam Festival
- Thurs 3rd to Sun 6th 15th Annual Summer Diesel Gala
- Sat 12th & Sun 13th Teddy Bears Weekend
- Sat 26th to Mon 28th Spa Valley's 20th Birthday!
 SEPTEMBER
- Sat 9th See Paddington™ & Family Fun!
- Sat 30th A Day Out with Thomas

OCTOBER

- 1st, 7th & 8th A Day Out with Thomas
- Fri 20th to Sun 22nd 7th CAMRA Real Ale & Cider Festival
- Fri 20th to Sun 22nd Autumn Diesel Gala (with Steam on the Sunday!)
- Sat 28th & Sun 29th See Chase & Marshall from PAW Patrol & Family Fun!

DECEMBER

Sat 2nd, Sun 3rd, Sat 9th, Sun 10th, Sat 16th, Sun 17th, Thurs 21st to Sun 24th Dec – Santa Specials





A DESTINATION A

A FUN PACKED DAY OUT WITH STEAM, HERITAGE D

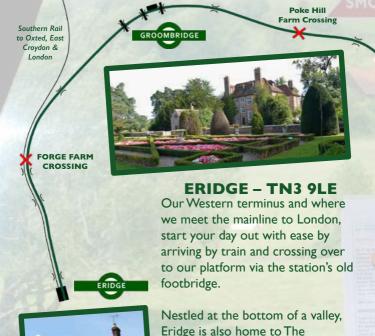
GROOMBRIDGE - TN3 9RD

Our principal intermediate station, alight here to visit Groombridge Place Gardens & Enchanted Forest and also the delightful village divided between Kent & Sussex.

Known as one of the sunniest spots on the railway and also the crossing point for trains, you can savour the past at our splendid country station.

What to see in Groombridge:

- Groombridge Place & Enchanted Forest
- The Junction Inn
- The Crown Inn
- St Thomas' Church of 1884
- Walks to Harrison's Rocks
- Join the Forest Way to the historic villages of Withyham and Hartfield (Winne the Pools Country)



All attractions near Eridge vary from just a minute to twenty minutes walk away.

Huntstman Pub, the quaint hamlet of Eridge, the Bowles Outdoor Centre and also a vast network of walks to Harrison's Rocks, the Ashdown Forest and the High Weald.

TEVERY STATION!

DIESEL, EXPLORATION, EXCITEMENT & ENJOYMENT!

HIGH ROCKS - TN3 9JJ

A unique station in a beautiful location, one stop you must make on your journey!

High Rocks Halt is set in the gardens of the High Rocks Inn. This is an ideal place to sit and watch the trains go by whilst enjoying a drink in the landscaped gardens.

Dating back millions of years, acres of breath-taking sandstone rocks have been linked with eleven bridges

You can also enjoy the High Rocks Inn and function complex, plus access to the High Weald countryside and woodland footpaths.



TUNBRIDGE WELLS - TN2 5QY

Tunbridge Wells is the headquarters & Eastern terminus of the Spa Valley Railway. The 1886-built engine shed is a unique survivor from the age of Steam, still restoring locomotives to the present day! Make sure you visit our shop, buffet & museum.

What to see in Tunbridge Wells:

- The Pantiles
- The Chalybeate Spring
- Famous High Street
- · Dunorlan Park
- Wellington Rocks
- The Common
- The Old Opera House
- Calverley Grounds

Dining on the Sp

Evening Dining, Sunday Luncheons, Afternoon Tea, Fish 8 something for all tastes whilst travelling on our heritage 19

High Weald Belle Dining & Luncheon trains

The High Weald Belle, proudly brought to you by the Spa Valley Railway and The Complete Lunch, is our popular dining train that operates on selected Saturday evenings & Sunday lunchtimes throughout the year.

Travelling on the High Weald Belle, so named after the glorious countryside our railway passes through, you will be able to experience a traditional pastime of dining on a moving train hauled by one of our steam and heritage diesel locomotives. You will receive an enjoyable and unforgettable dining experience as you travel on the beautiful Spa Valley line. The High Weald Belle is the perfect place to enjoy a celebratory meal with friends or an intimate dining experience for two.

Sample Menu

Starter
Homemade "Chefs special"
Chicken & Pork Pâté
Vegetarian Option
Mushroom Pâté
Both served with Fresh Salad

Leaves, Malted Baguette

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Main

Roast Pork, Stuffing,

Apple Sauce

Vegetarian Option

Aubergine Stack & Stuffing

Both served with Roasted Potatoes, Seasonal Vegetables, Gravy

<u>Dessert</u> Lemon & Almond Tart



Prices for the High Weald Belle start at just £39.95 per person!





## a Valley Railway

Chip Suppers & Lunches and Murder Mysteries, there is 60s coaches through the glorious High Weald countryside!

#### Afternoon Tea in the High Weald

The Spa Valley Railway is delighted to offer a truly British favourite, Afternoon Tea, but we do ours on board one of our heritage 1960s carriages!

Treat your friends and family or even take your loved ones out for a special occasion, this is how to travel in style!

Our Afternoon Tea service operates on selected Thursdays, Saturdays & Sundays throughout the year.
All depart and return to Tunbridge Wells West.

#### **Afternoon Tea Menu**

Three finger sandwiches: Smoked Salmon with Cracked Black Pepper & Lemon

Free Range Egg Mayonnaise with Rocket

Baked Ham & Wholegrain Mustard



# Afternoon Tea Cakes Chocolate & Raspberry Slice Lemon Meringue Cheesecake Fruit & Cream filled Tartlet

Scone with Jam & Clotted Cream

Mini Shortbread Biscuit

Prices for Afternoon Tea start at just £31.95 per person!



# Fish & Chip Specials & Real Ale Trains

Enjoy a traditional British meal of fish & chips on board our heritage train whilst travelling through the glorious High Weald countryside. We offer both evening supper and lunch time options throughout the year.

On Saturday evenings they are combined with our popular 'Ales on Rails' real ale train where you can sample the delights of local breweries all on board our heritage train!

Book early to avoid disappointment!

#### Fish & Chip Lunch

Join the train from 12:45 at Tunbridge Wells West and find your seats. At 13:00 the train will set off for Groombridge, whilst on your journey you will enjoy a freshly prepared Fish & Chip lunch. You will return to Tunbridge Wells West by approximately 14:00 after completing one round trip.

Prices for the Fish & Chip Lunch are just £18 per adult & £13 per child! Prices for the Fish & Chip Supper are just £20 per adult & £15 per child!

#### Fish & Chip Supper

Join the train from 18:45 at Tunbridge Wells West and find your seats. At 19:00 the train will set off for Groombridge. Whilst on your journey you will enjoy a freshly prepared fish & chip supper followed by an ice cream dessert. You will return to Tunbridge Wells West by approximately 21:00 after completing two round trips.





#### 'Ales on Rails'

Our 'Ales on Rails' evenings combine the atmosphere of heritage railways with people's love for real ale & cider. With prices starting from just £3 per pint there's plenty of opportunity to try a few during your journey along the line!

#### Local breweries include:

Old Dairy Harvey's of Lewes Kent Westerham High Weald Brewery Pig & Porter Black Cat Tonbridge

#### **2017 Dining Train Dates:**

High Weald Belle
Saturday Evening Dining:
29th April
20th May
17th June
29th July
12th August
2nd September
14th October

16th December

High Weald Belle
Sunday Luncheon:
12th February
5th & 26th March
23rd April
21st May
25th June
23rd July
20th August
24th September
15th October
17th December

#### **Afternoon Tea:**

|           | 71,00111   |              |           |
|-----------|------------|--------------|-----------|
| Thursday: | Saturday:  | Saturday:    | Sunday:   |
| 8th June  | I I th Feb | 26th Aug     | 18th June |
| 22nd June | 25th Mar   | 23rd Sept    | 9th July  |
| 17th Aug  | 29th April | 14th Oct     | 30th July |
| 24th Aug  | 27th May   | 2nd, 9th Dec | 13th Aug  |
|           | 24th June  | Fri 22nd Dec |           |

#### Fish & Chip Supper & Fish & Chip Lunch Ales on Rails Thursday: Thursday: Saturday: Saturday: 16th Feb 11th Mar 10th Aug Fri 4th Aug 24th Aug 15th Apr 1st June 5th Aug 10th June 15th June 7th Sept 26th Aug 29th June 26th Oct 1st July 28th Oct

#### **Murder Mystery Evenings:**

Come along to try your hand at solving a murder, it is up to you to find out "who done it!"

The evening starts at Tunbridge Wells West Station with a briefing, then we transfer to our train. Clues and more evidence is given throughout the evening whilst you enjoy a fish & chip supper followed by ice cream dessert.

All will be revealed back at Tunbridge Wells West!

Prices from just £36 per person!

2017 Murder Mystery Dates (all Saturdays)
4th Mar, 8th Apr, 13th May, 3rd Jun, 15th Jul,
19th Aug, 16th Sept & 2nd Dec

## Railway Experiences

Live the dream and drive a real life steam or heritage diesel locomotive! Take control and feel the power by being a signalman for the day!

#### Steam Driver

Prices start from just £250 per person and you will get to drive one of our steam locomotives over either half or the full Spa Valley line.

Live that childhood dream and get your hands on a steam locomotive more powerful than you could ever imagine!

Blow the whistle, open the regulator and set off into the High Weald!





This is where you can feel power at your fingertips with some of our diesels having 1550hp engines!

We even offer full days from just £500 where it is just you driving for four return trips!

#### **Diesel Driver**

Prices start from just £200 per person and you will get to drive one of our heritage diesel locomotives or diesel multiple units over either half or the full Spa Valley line.



#### Signalman

Grab the catch, lean back and pull that lever, you are in control of one of our heritage trains!

Spend the day at Groombridge under the watchful eye of one of our own Signalman, a new experience launched for 2017!

# Our wonderful volunteers!

Our railway is run by a team of dedicated volunteers with ages ranging from 14 to 80. Why not become part of our fantastic railway & join us today?

Over 30 years ago the railway from Tunbridge Wells to Eridge closed.

Since then dedicated volunteers have worked around the clock to restore services along the line.

For 20 years we have been operating trains through the glorious High Weald countryside, all undertaken by our ever growing family of volunteers.

We are proud of every single person who has volunteered their time to make our railway what it is today and who continue to build on the successes of previous years.

They may be driving the train, clipping your ticket or fixing the track.

Without these hard working individuals we would simply not exist.





# Locomotives you may see!



#### RSH No.62 'UGLY'

A powerful saddle tank locomotive, 'UGLY', built in 1960 and spent its life hauling steel trains at Corby Steel Works.

#### **Vulcan Austerity No.72**

Another strong saddle tank locomotive, constructed in 1945 and spent its life hauling heavy coal trains at South Hetton Colliery.



# A

#### Class 10 D3489 'Colonel Tomline'

A powerful shunting engine, built in 1958 and spent its life hauling freight trains at Felixstowe Docks.



## Class 33 33063 'R.J.Mitchell'

The mighty 1550hp locomotive, built in 1962 and spent its life operating around southern England.





#### Class 31 31289 'Phoenix'

The strong 1470hp locomotive, built in 1961 and spent its life hauling a variety of trains all over the country.

# Our award winning bar car 'Kate'

Our wonderfully restored bar car 'Kate' is open on most green and yellow timetabled days. Serving teas, coffees, soft drinks and alcoholic beverages travelling in 'Kate' is certainly the ideal way to watch the countryside go by.

Converted in 1999 from a different type of carriage, everything you see today is the work of our volunteers.

'Kate' is available for private hire on operating days, with a seating capacity of up to 30 people. Prices start from just £300 to hire the whole carriage, including bar for up to two return trips.



### **Wedding Receptions**

Are you looking for that unique and outstanding venue to hold your wedding reception? Well how about doing it on a steam hauled train on our railway!

We can offer you up to 142 seats for the wedding breakfast, with our well stocked bar car 'Kate' available for your use. Prices for private hire vary dependent on our operating day.

Getting married at High Rocks? Well why not travel there on our heritage train! It is just £100 for a private compartment or 1/4 carriage for up to 8 people!

# Celebrating 20 through the glor 1997 to

Before the closure...

Built by the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway in 1866 the line from Tunbridge Wells Central to Eridge was constructed as a through route enabling the joining of the Tonbridge to Hastings and Oxted to Lewes lines.

The line started at Tunbridge Wells Central (just a 10 minute walk from our station) with the first stop being Tunbridge Wells West. Once upon a time this station was a huge complex with its own steam shed, goods shed, five platforms and vast yard. Today this is buried under the car park; however you can still see the Engine Shed performing the role it was originally built to do!



The double track line left
Tunbridge Wells and
descended into the High
Weald with a minor halt at
High Rocks followed by the
three platforms and goods
yard of Groombridge station.

Once a large junction station with branch lines off to Ashurst, Forest Row & East Grinstead it is now our passing point for trains. The stub of branch line to East Grinstead can still be seen as you head towards Eridge.

Onwards down the line, still with a double track formation trains passed Birchden Junction and continued onto Eridge. This was another major junction station in its heyday with four platforms and trains to all over the South East.

#### FAREWELL 31 SQUADRON

However on Saturday 6th July 1985 this ended... Or so people thought...



# years of trains ious High Weald! o 2017

Along comes the Spa Valley Railway!



A group of dedicated volunteers started our railway off just a year after it closed with the intention of restoring train services between Tunbridge Wells West and Eridge.

After many years battling and restore the railway the line re-opened to Cold Bath Bridge, 3/4 a mile away from Tunbridge Wells West on Saturday 21st December 1996.

Services continued in 1997 to Cold Bath Bridge up until August 23rd when the line was re-opened to Groombridge.



Further expansion of the line took place and by March 2011 we had reached our aim of operating services over the line from Tunbridge Wells West to Eridge.

2017 marks our 20th birthday and we certainly have some events in store including our big '20th Birthday Bash' taking place over the 26th, 27th & 28th August Bank Holiday weekend!



## HOW TO FIND



'Southern' to Eridge

Spa Valley Trains share Eridge Station with footbridge connection to/from National Rail Services.

Southern operate regular through trains to Eridge from London Bridge, East Croydon, Oxted, Crowborough, Uckfield plus intermediate stations.

Through tickets offering a discount are available from all Southern stations. If you need to help staff find the right ticket just quote K569 for Tunbridge Wells West, K570 for Groombridge or K571 for High Rocks.

#### 'Southeastern' to Tunbridge Wells

Then either a short bus ride or a pleasant 10 minute walk down the hill along the High Street and Pantiles. Numerous local bus routes stop adjacent to Sainsbury's, just a couple of minutes walk from our station.

#### By road:

Approximately 35 miles from central London, 18 miles from lunction 5 of the M25 via the A21, then either the A26 or A264 to Tunbridge Wells Town Centre.

Follow the brown tourist signs once you are in the town centre.

Tunbridge Wells West station is adjacent to the Sainsbury's superstore just off the A26 Eridge Road. There are pay and display car parks nearby at Union House and Linden Close and a coach park in Linden Park Road. Sat Nav TN2 5QY. Please note that Sainsbury's car park is for their customers only. Numerous local bus routes stop adjacent to Sainsbury's.

High Rocks halt is situated in the grounds of High Rocks Inn. Railway customers may use the free car park at High Rocks Inn. Sat Nav TN3 9JJ.

Eridge station is located off the A26 on the Crowborough/Eastbourne side of Tunbridge Wells - follow the signs to the main line station. Station car park currently £2.70 all day (£2 Sunday). Sat Nav TN3 9LE. Limited road side parking also available. Brighton & Hove bus routes 28 & 29 and Arriva routes 228 & 229 stop on the A26 close to Eridge Station.

There is no public car park at Groombridge Station.

Photography credits: David Staines, Charlie Ralph, Jon Nye, Paul Rodwell & Stephen Craven.