



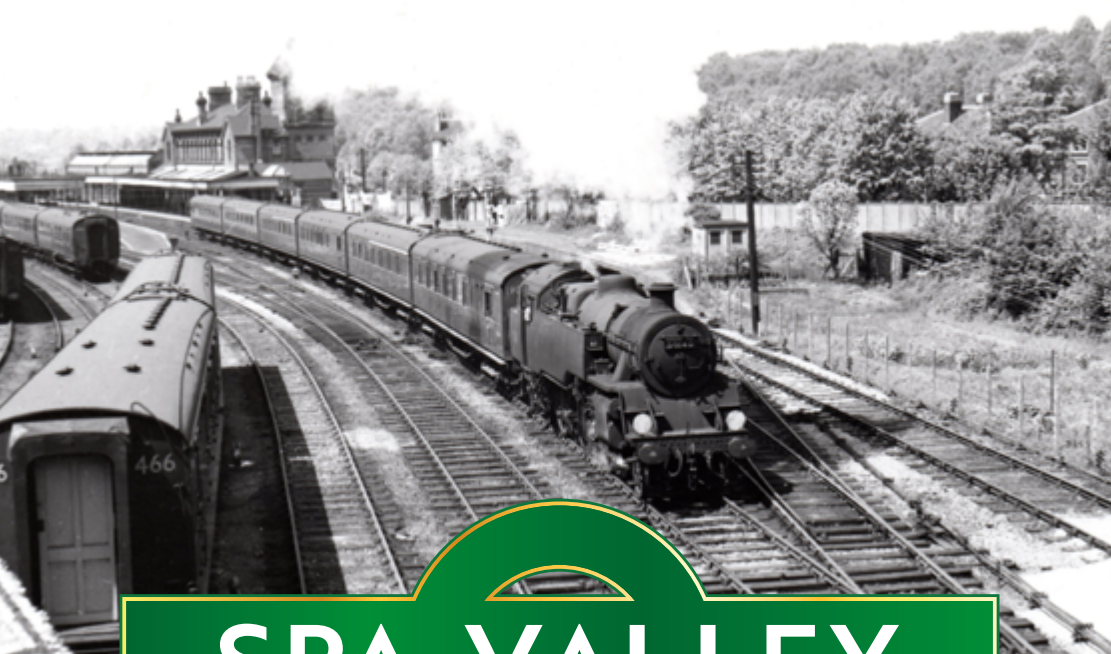
VOLUNTEERING & MEMBERSHIP

Tunbridge Wells & Eridge Railway Preservation Society



*Join us today and get involved to keep our
trains running for the next 25yrs and beyond!*

www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SPA VALLEY RAILWAY

EST. 1985

BEFORE THE CLOSURE...

Built by the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway in 1866, the line from Tunbridge Wells Central to Eridge was built to join the Hastings and Oxted lines together.

The line started at Tunbridge Wells Central, passing through Grove Tunnel 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 (complete with banana store!), 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 and East Grinstead, it is now our passing place for trains. The remains of the 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, including Lewes & Eastbourne.

However, on Saturday 6th July 1985 this ended – or so people thought...

ALONG COMES THE SPA VALLEY RAILWAY!



A group of dedicated volunteers started our railway just a year after it closed with the intention of restoring train services between Tunbridge Wells West and Eridge. After many years battling and restoring the railway, the line re-opened to Cold Bath Bridge, $\frac{3}{4}$ mile 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, extending the line to a total of $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Further expansion of the line took place with the re-opening to Birchden Junction in June 2005. This extra mile of line was regularly used during special events running up the hill from the junction.

When the extension to Birchden Junction opened, attention turned to the next project, extending the railway to Eridge to achieve the Society's main ambition.

The extension to Eridge was one of the biggest challenges to date for the Spa Valley Railway, the first railway to ever run parallel to the national rail infrastructure.

Finally, after thousands of hours of hard work, on Friday 25th March 2011 our trains returned to Eridge once more.

The Spa Valley Railway reached a milestone 25th anniversary over August bank holiday 2022 and saw GB Railfreight's Class 73/1 73141 named 'Spa Valley Railway 25 Year Anniversary' a locomotive which can be seen regularly operating around Tonbridge.

2024 saw the railway carry over 85,000 visitors, the highest number to date and with plenty of events and days out for you to enjoy in 2025 we'd love for you to be part of our history, keep us growing and support our railway for many years to come!



History

The Tunbridge Wells to Eridge railway was once part of an extensive network of lines in Kent and East Sussex.

Tunbridge Wells originally had two stations. The first, at Mount Pleasant, was built by the South Eastern Railway in 1846. It serves trains to London and Hastings.

Tunbridge Wells West was built by a rival company, the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway in 1866, initially serving London via East Grinstead. The railway was expanded to include the Uckfield line to Brighton in 1868, the connection to Oxted and Croydon in 1878, and from Eridge to Eastbourne via Chichester in 1880.

For many years the line was busy, with over 70 daily trains in the late 1950s. Increasing car ownership led to many line closures in the 1960s, and this included the lines to East Grinstead and Eastbourne, and a severing of the Oxted to Brighton line at Uckfield. The Tunbridge Wells to Eridge line itself closed on 6th July 1985.

Revival

A preservation society was set up with the aim of restoring the Tunbridge Wells to Eridge line. After years of hard work, the Society acquired the line in March 1996, and opened to the public in December of the same year.

Initially, we are running for 1/2 mile out of Tunbridge Wells, but later this year, trains will run to the pleasant village of Greenbridge, where Greenbridge Place Gardens can be visited. Our services will be steam hauled.

We shall re-open the halt at High Rocks, a local beauty spot, and aim to eventually extend the service to Eridge.

WHERE TO FIND US

By car: Tunbridge Wells West is situated next to the Sainsbury's superstore in Nevill Terrace off the A26 Eridge Road out of Tunbridge Wells to Cuckoo Road. There are car parks available in nearby Major Yorks Road, Union House and Linden Close.

By train: Connect South Eastern service to Tunbridge Wells, then either a pleasant 15 minute walk down the High Street and along the Pastures or:

By bus: Catch one of the many local buses which stop at Sainsbury's.

INTERESTED IN KNOWING MORE ABOUT US?

The Spa Valley Railway has an exciting future as a new arrival to the preserved steam railway scene. With its headquarters in the historic 1895 Tunbridge Wells engine shed, and many interesting places to see along the route, the railway will become an important tourist attraction in the South East.

If you would like to know more about us, please write or phone, at the following address: Spa Valley Railway, West Station, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 8HL. Telephone 01892 537715

Spa Valley Railway

Timetable 1997

Enjoy a pleasant ride through the countryside of Kent and East Sussex on one of Britain's newest preserved steam railways!

Photo: Richard Stone

Trains started running to Groombridge in August 1997, the leaflet from that year can be seen on the left.

The letter announcing our first public operations in December 1996 can be seen below.

FAREWELL 31 SQUADRON



Tunbridge Wells & Eridge Railway Preservation Society

West Station
Tunbridge Wells
Kent TN4 8HL
Tel: (01892) 537715

OPEN AT LAST

We are delighted to be able to tell you that we have now received the Railway Inspector's permission to open the railway.

We shall be operating on the following days, the first train being at 11.00a.m. and the last train at 3.30p.m.

Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd. December
Friday 27th, Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th.
Tuesday 31st December
Wednesday 1st January
Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th January.

Fares: £1.50 Adults £1.00 Children

On Sunday 22nd. Santa will be on board with presents for the younger children.



VOLUNTEERING – WE NEED YOU!

The Spa Valley Railway is operated entirely by volunteers and we always need more to ensure the ongoing survival and operation of our railway – but why choose us?

We're an organisation with volunteers from all walks of life – no matter who you are we'd be delighted to hear from you.

The social side of our railway has seen many of our volunteers make friends for life, create relationships that have blossomed, learned new skills and you can be part of this too so why not join our railway?

There are plenty of roles to choose from, such as footplate where you learn the art of becoming an engine driver or join the team in the shed ensuring our steam and diesel locomotives plus our carriages are available for traffic throughout the year.

You could join our front of house team selling tickets, working in an important catering outlet or serving on board one of our popular dining experiences.

Our lineside needs maintaining too, the track needs inspection and heavy maintenance but it doesn't just end there.



VOLUNTEERING – WE NEED YOU!



The signals you see at Groombridge were installed by volunteers, the cup of tea you purchased on board the train was made and served to you by a volunteer.



Have you seen the freshly cut grass and flowers blooming at our stations in the Summer? Our volunteers not only make that happen but they've built or restored these stations too!



Whether you come from a railway background or not, there is something for everyone at the Spa Valley Railway.



Maintaining the lineside, opening the stations, heavy engineering, running our dining train experiences or helping with building or civil engineering projects to name but a few – the opportunities are endless and we'd love to hear from you!



Drop us an email now on volunteering@spavalleyrailway.co.uk or come along to one of our find out more days where you'll be given a guided tour around our railway showing you everything that is possible.



Details and dates of these can be found on our website.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Please fill in the relevant details and hand in at any Ticket Office, post your application to the address shown below or email a scanned copy to membership@spavalleyrailway.co.uk and complete a BACS transfer with your name as the reference. I wish to apply for membership of the Tunbridge Wells and Eridge Railway Preservation Society. I agree that my details may be stored electronically for the Society's and Railway's internal use only. Our Privacy Policy is online.

I enclose an ANNUAL/LIFE subscription of:

Subscription: £

Donation: £

Total: £

Please make cheques payable to T.W.&.E.R.P.S

Gift Aid?

Yes:

No:

Title & Name:

Address:

Post Code:

Mobile number:

Email:

BACS DETAILS FOR MEMBERSHIP PAYMENT:

Tunbridge Wells Eridge Railway

Account N°: 83920536 Sort Code: 55-70-13

You must use your full name as your reference on the transfer!

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP RATES (VALID FROM 1ST JAN 2025 TO 1ST MAY 2025)

Annual		Life	
Family (2 Adults + 2 Children)	£35	Adult or Child	£460
Adult	£23	Joint Adult (2 persons)	£650
Student (16-18)	£14	Senior (60+)	£255
Child (2-15)	£7	Joint Senior (60+ 2 persons)	£390
Senior (60+)	£13	Rates may be altered after printing of this leaflet. We reserve the right to make such changes to membership rates without prior re-publication of this leaflet.	
Joint Adult (2 persons)	£33		
Joint Senior (60+ 2 persons)	£23		