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**The South Devon Railway has an award winning season
and welcomes some unusual recent visitors too!**

Awards – 1

27 October 2014

The scenic South Devon Railway (SDR) is in the running to be crowned with two more prestigious local tourism and business awards next month – this is on top of the five award accolades which it has already received in 2014, see homepage at: www.southdevonrailway.co.uk

With seven awards now possible in just one season, staff, volunteers and supporters of the seven-mile, steam operated heritage railway are hoping it will be a clean sweep and thereby set a new record year for the charity which also carried its two millionth passenger in June.

The SDR is a short-listed finalist in both the Visit Devon Tourism Awards for the large visitor attraction category and also in the Western Morning News' Business Awards best tourism and hospitality category, see: www.devontourismawards.org.uk/page/32/2014-finalists--commended.htm and <http://www.westernmorningnews.co.uk/judges-votes-year-s-WMN-Business-Awards/story-23149745-detail/story.html>

The railway's first award in 2014 came in the form of a **Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence** in June, followed quickly by a **Bronze medal** for the railway's Refreshment Rooms from '**Taste of the West**' in July.

Next, in September, came an **RHS & Britain in Bloom 'It's your Neighbourhood' Level 4** award which described the extensive landscaped gardens at Buckfastleigh as '**Thriving**' – the first time the SDR had entered the competition. See: southwestinbloom@aol.com More follows

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And then, the SDR won not one, but two more top medal awards in the Herald Express (English Riviera & South Devon) Tourism & Hospitality awards with a Silver for the railway in the best visitor attraction category, plus a Bronze for the 'Taste of South Devon café/tearoom category during October, see: <http://www.torquayheraldexpress.co.uk/LIVE-BLOG-Herald-Express-Tourism-Awards-2014/story-23074897-detail/story.html>

SDR Railway Manager Chris Williams comments: **“Winning so many awards in just one year is a very creditable achievement by our whole team, especially as it’s the first time we have entered most of the competitions.**

“Winning these awards reflects the hard work, dedication and enthusiasm of all volunteers and staff throughout the year, many of whom do far more than is expected of them in helping to run the railway and it’s constituent businesses.”

And 2014 has also brought some big changes at the SDR with the introduction of e-ticketing for website purchases for selected events, plus the installation of Wi-Fi in the Refreshment Rooms and a new state-of-the-art 'bean-to-cup' coffee machine so that the SDR provides a top quality service in the café.

There have been some unusual visitors to the railway of late too! The Ashburton-based Barn Owl Trust did a sponsored dog 'walkies' via the SDR's trains to raise funds for the charity on 11 October, see: <https://www.facebook.com/BarnOwlTrust>

And the 25th anniversary of the Land Rover Discovery car also involved the SDR on 12 October too as Buckfastleigh station featured in the official launch in 1989. See: <http://www.discoverybirthdayparty.co.uk/>

More follows

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The SDR is now gearing up for Half Term week and its Halloween event on **Friday 31 October** which is selling out fast and, over the weekend of **Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 November**, the SDR will run its special bargain 'Half Price' event which traditionally marks the end of the SDR's main season of running steam trains.

On both days, passengers will be able to tuck into a cut-price steam feast which will see nine trains running each day over the pretty seven-mile line from Buckfastleigh to Totnes that will appeal to families and enthusiasts alike. And with the continuing economic problems, the timing of the regular event is ideal for cash-conscious families as all fares will be at half-price

The SDR is also getting ready to run its ever popular Santa by Steam trains which operate most weekends in December and during the last week before Christmas.

Early birds can book now by [going online](#) for Halloween and Santa trains, or filling in and returning a completed [booking form](#). Further details can be seen at the SDR website at: <http://www.southdevonrailway.co.uk/santa-by-steam> The Expressway model railway and gift shop is already stocking up with Xmas presents for children of all ages, and is open for business every day.

With ample car parking at Buckfastleigh on the A38 Devon Expressway, the South Devon Railway is just 25 minutes from Plymouth, Exeter and Torbay. Further information and news about the South Devon Railway can be seen at: www.southdevonrailway.co.uk

NOTES TO NEWS/PICTURE EDITOR

For further information, please contact Railway Manager Chris Williams (01364) 644370 or Dick Wood as shown below. Sadly, the author's own 23-year-old Land Rover Discovery finally succumbed to 'tin worm' the weekend before the anniversary event and was unable to attend, but it had done a very creditable 222,000 miles in that time! A picture of it in front of Buckfastleigh Station is attached. Ends

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