

# Dukedog Moves to the Severn Valley

The Severn Valley Railway (SVR) and the Vale of Rheidol Railway are delighted to announce an exciting two-year locomotive exchange that will bring two iconic steam engines to fresh audiences in new locations.

From Spring 2026, the SVR's beloved GWR 7819 *Hinton Manor*, currently on display in the SVR's Engine House, will travel to the Vale of Rheidol Railway in Aberystwyth for static display. In return, GWR 'Dukedog' 9017 *Earl of Berkeley* will be welcomed to the SVR, where it will go on display and be celebrated by visitors and enthusiasts alike.

This landmark swap reflects a shared commitment to broadening public access to heritage railway artefacts and will give visitors in the Midlands and mid-Wales the chance to see locomotives they might otherwise never encounter up close.

7819 Hinton Manor has been a popular static exhibit at the SVR's Engine House since March 2019, where its footplate has been accessible to visitors keen to learn how a steam locomotive worked in practice. Built in February 1939, Hinton Manor was the last of the first series of Manor class engines and carried out regular service on the Great Western Railway and later British Railways before withdrawal from the main line in 1965. During its working life, it was regularly selected to haul prestigious trains including the Cambrian Coast Express from Shrewsbury. It worked special services to Aberystwyth in the 1960s. Today it remains one of nine 'Manor' class survivors, and its presence in The Engine House has proved a major draw for visitors.

9017 Earl of Berkeley is a member of the GWR 3200 class commonly known as 'Dukedog' locomotives, built by combining the frames of the Bulldog class with the boiler and cab of the Duke class. As the only surviving member of its class, Earl of Berkeley is a machine of particular interest to enthusiasts and historians alike, embodying the ingenuity of Great Western Railway engineering.

During its long preservation career at the Bluebell Railway, Earl of Berkeley gained admirers from

across the UK. The locomotive also has historical resonance in Wales, having worked extensively on the Cambrian network including Aberystwyth and Pwllheli before its withdrawal in 1960, making its return to the heart of the former GWR network at the SVR especially fitting.

This is not the first visit of 9017 to the SVR; it appeared at the Autumn Steam Gala in 2008, when it double-headed with 3440 *City of Truro*, giving the unique sight of the two surviving GWR 4-4-0s together.

The swap not only enriches both railways' heritage displays but also opens up fresh opportunities for visitors, from families to dedicated steam followers, to enjoy and learn more about Britain's rich railway history.

Judith Meredith, the chair of the Severn Valley Railway Charitable Trust which owns Hinton Manor said:

“We are thrilled to announce this unique locomotive exchange with our friends at the Vale of Rheidol Railway. *Hinton Manor* has been a much-loved part of the Engine House collection and has attracted a wide range of visitors, from local families to steam enthusiasts. In turn, we're delighted to welcome *Earl of Berkeley* to the SVR. The historically significant 'Dukedog' perfectly complements our own GWR heritage.

“We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Vale of Rheidol Railway and to the Dukedog's owners, the Bluebell Railway, whose support and cooperation have made this swap possible. This partnership brings these remarkable locomotives to wider audiences and strengthens the bonds between heritage railways across the UK.”

Llyr ap Iolo, CEO and chief engineer at the Vale of Rheidol Railway added:

“We are extremely grateful to the Bluebell Railway for the loan of the 'Dukedog', a locomotive with strong historical links to

Aberystwyth and the former Cambrian lines. It has been a privilege to display the engine at the Vale of Rheidol and to give visitors the opportunity to reconnect with an important chapter of local railway history.

We're also very thankful to the Severn Valley Railway Charitable Trust for agreeing to the loan of Hinton Manor. The Manor class worked many of the prestigious Cambrian Coast Express services during the 1960s, making Hinton Manor a regular visitor to Aberystwyth in BR days. The locomotive last visited the town on a special charter in 1991, so its return more than three decades later is particularly significant."

Neil Glaskin, Operations Director of the Bluebell Railway, said:

“ The Bluebell Railway is grateful to the team at the Vale of Rheidol Railway for looking after the Dukedog for the past two years. We are excited to be able to work with the Severn Valley Railway to allow a new audience to see this unique locomotive."

Both locomotives will be on static display at their respective host railways for a two-year period from Spring 2026 to Spring 2028. Details about exhibition areas, opening times and associated activities will be published by each railway in due course.

*[For the history of the Dukedog locomotives, see [The Bluebell Times Issue 18](#) – Ed]*



*No. 9017 'Earl of Berkeley' ready for its relaunch into service, 1 November 2003. The nameplates, which were never carried by No. 9017 while in original service, have generally been carried during the preservation era; in this view they are covered in a sheet prior to the official renaming ceremony.  
Photo: Peter Edwards*