Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust

PRESS STATEMENT

S&D Class 7F No. 53808

The SDRT is delighted to announce that the 'jewel in the crown' of the Trust's collection has arrived safely at the Mid-Hants. Railway following a two-day journey by road transport from Minehead to Alresford, Hampshire. It will now begin its long-term hire to the MHR until its boiler certificate runs out later in 2022.

The heavy road transport included two trailers, one for the engine and another for the tender. Following loading of both at the Minehead works yard, the two lorries began their journey with the engine following the route of the A39 to Bridgwater and then up the M5 to join the M4 near Bristol. The consist stayed overnight at a service area on the night of 26th August. The tender, being a smaller load, also took the A39 to Bridgwater but followed the A303 for its journey to Hampshire. Not helped by the closure of the A303 due to an accident near Ilminster, the trailer stayed overnight north of Salisbury and re-started its journey at 6am on Thursday morning the 27th August.

Both engine and tender arrived at Alresford early on the 27th August catching everyone out who thought it would be late morning or early afternoon! The engine and tender were offloaded by 10.30 and coupled up for a brief appearance in the platform at Alresford before being pushed up to Ropley, inbetween service trains, by the MHR's Class 20 diesel No. 8059.

We would like to thank the volunteers and staff at the WSR works at Minehead for their speedy return of 53808 for steam testing before the deadline for transport. We all look forward to a happy relationship with the Mid-Hants. Railway where 53808 should be seen in action shortly. It is due to star alongside LMS Jubilee No. 45596 Bahamas at the 'Pines Express' gala in mid-October.

Directors and Trustees of the Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust
28th August 2020

Clockwise from top left; 53808 loading at Minehead, having arrived at Alresford and in the yard at Ropley.

[Photos by Brian Kennedy]