

## WHY PAY MORE?

If you are planning to visit a heritage railway this summer, be aware some have through ticketing from the national network that can save you money. For example, a return for the full length of the Severn Valley Railway [which is actually a Day Rover and includes entry to the excellent Engine House at Highley] is £17, whereas a ticket from your local station via Kidderminster has an 'add on' of only £12. Proportionately, it's even better for children, with the SVR fare of £11 replaced by an add on of only £6.

Similar arrangements are available if you are visiting the South Devon Railway at Totnes [£12, but the add on is £9.20], Bodmin and Wenford Railway [£12/£9], Keighley and Worth Valley [£15/£10], North York Moors Railway [£18/£16], Spa Valley Railway [£10/£9] and the Bure Valley Railway in Norfolk [£12.50/£9].

The Ecclesbourne Valley Railway has a ticket from Derby which works the other way round. It is £12, the cost of a Day Rover, with the East Midlands Trains add on being free.

In some cases, the heritage line has family tickets or a discount for pre booking and for over 60s that erode the differential, but all through ticket arrangements give railcard discounts for the portion of the journey on the national network. The exceptions are the Bodmin and Wenford Railway and the Keighley and Worth Valley, for which the railcard discount applies to the add on too – a really good bargain!

Finally, Tesco Clubcard vouchers can be used to visit the West Somerset Railway, Foxfield Railway, Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway, Isle of Wight Steam Railway, Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway plus Didcot Railway Centre and Quainton Road. Tesco vouchers cannot be used on special days or alongside other discounts but I was surprised at the Watercress Line this Spring to be allowed to present 2 for 1 vouchers [available at local tourist offices] and then use Tesco vouchers.

*Keith Flinders*

## FRANCHISES TO RUN FOR LONGER

The Department for Transport is extending most existing franchises. Virgin will now run West Coast until April 2017; London Midland is until June 2017. First is to run Great Western until July 2016 and Cross Country gets the longest extension of 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> years until November 2019. Keys could be handed back earlier, however, if the DfT is not satisfied and the government's own team, Directly Operated Railways could take over. Chiltern is unaffected, running until December 2021.