

# SOUTHERN

LOCOMOTIVES LIMITED

## 34053 *Sir Keith Park* Recommissioning 31st August 2013

Southern Locomotives Ltd, in association with the Severn Valley Railway, welcomes you to the recommissioning of No. 34053 *Sir Keith Park*. It is an opportunity to celebrate the restoration of a superb steam loco, to remember the man after whom it was named and his role in the Battle of Britain, and to enjoy a day out on the Severn Valley Railway - one of Britain's finest heritage lines.



### Order of events

#### 11.15 Ceremony begins

Welcome to SVR – Nick Ralls, General Manager

Southern Locomotives Ltd – Geoff Thompson

On behalf of the RAF – Squadron Leader Jim Beirne

On behalf of the Park family – Terence Prior-Stevens

The unveiling will be performed by Dr. The Right Honourable Sir Lockwood Smith, New Zealand High Commissioner.

The Guard of Honour will be mounted by 156 (Kidderminster) Squadron ATC

#### 11.35 Ceremony ends

Photo opportunities, please board the special train by 11.55 latest.

#### 12.00 Train Departs

Lunch (first and second courses) will be served to those with assigned seats in coaches 9653, 3109, and 9627. There will be a buffet car in the non-dining section of the train.

#### 13.13 Arrival at Bridgnorth

On arrival the RAF Association will Parade Standards. We have around one hour to enjoy the station and its environs. There is plenty of railway activity to be seen, and an excellent bar on platform 1. Our loco will run round the train on arrival. Stewards will guide you to suitable positions to take photos from the loco yard. Please exercise great care.

At approx 14.00, while we are at Bridgnorth station a flypast has been scheduled of a Spitfire and a Hurricane from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.

#### 14.20 Train departs.

Dessert and Coffee will be served to diners.

#### 15.23 Arrival at Kidderminster

Our train arrives at Kidderminster, and we wish you farewell. The loco will remain in the platform for about 40 minutes for more photos, etc.

### Menu

**Starter:** Tricolore of fresh Fruits with mixed berry Compote

**Main Course:** Chicken Breast fillet wrapped in streaky Bacon served with Chef's delicious Gravy  
*Prebooked Vegetarian Option:*  
*Brie & Cranberry Wellington*

**Dessert:** Strawberry Tartlet & Cream  
Coffee & Mint

### Guests

We would like to welcome the following special guests:

Wing Commander Dick Summers, Squadron Leader Tony Pickering, and Flying Officer Ken Wilkinson, veterans who – as teenagers – flew in the Battle of Britain.

Dr. The Right Honourable Sir Lockwood Smith, New Zealand High Commissioner and Lady Alexandra Smith.

Members of the Park family, including Terence Prior-Stevens and Laurette Cummins.

Squadron Leader Jim Beirne. Royal Air Force and Mrs Sue Beirne.

Wing Commander Nick Olney, Air Advisor, New Zealand Defence Staff.

Oliver Bulleid and family (Oliver is a grandson of OVS Bulleid, the designer of Sir Keith Park and a President of the Bulleid Society)

Sean Day-Lewis, Vice President of the Bulleid Society, and author of Bulleid – Last Giant of Steam.

John Fry and Roger Cruse of the Bulleid Society

Air Vice-Marshal Pat O'Reilly of the RAF Association.

Ian Silvester, without whose support the locomotives would not have been restored.

We hope that you will introduce yourselves to all of our guests and will find lots to talk about.

[www.southern-locomotives.co.uk](http://www.southern-locomotives.co.uk)

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### The Restoration of 34053 *Sir Keith Park*

*Sir Keith Park* entered service on the Southern Railway on 21st January 1947 carrying the number 21C153. It was named on 19th September 1947 at Brighton station by Air Chief-Marshal Park himself.



The loco was renumbered 34053 by British Railways, and worked main line services until October 1965 by which time it had run 825,317 miles. Like so many other locos it was sent for scrap, but by chance it went to Dai Woodham's yard in Barry, South Wales, where it sat gently rusting for the next 18 years.

It was purchased for preservation in 1979 though it was not until 1984 that it arrived at Hull Dairycoates depot for initial work to start. It subsequently moved to Crewe, on to Thingley Junction, and then Williton on the West Somerset Railway, as a source of spares for *Braunton*. However at that point it was purchased by Southern Locomotives Ltd (SLL) and moved initially to their Sellindge site in Kent in January 2001.



With the aid of a generous sponsor SLL was able to begin full restoration. The loco moved to Herston Works, and after five years of full time work it was completed in May

2012. Most of SLL's locos are used on the Swanage Railway, however as they were already using two of our fleet of Bulleids (*Eddystone* and *Manston*) it moved to the Severn Valley Railway and entered service in August 2012.

The loco had sat in the fresh air for 40 years since its withdrawal, and virtually every component needed to be repaired or remade, not least a complete new tender and very extensive boiler repairs. Even though a significant proportion of the work was done by volunteers, the total cost was £773,000.

Southern Locomotives Ltd is a not for profit company which focuses on the restoration of locomotives built or used by the Southern Railway and the Southern Region of BR. We were formed by the amalgamation of a number of loco groups around 20 years ago.

In particular we have focused on the rescue and restoration of Bulleid Pacifics, having so far restored five, the latest being *Sir Keith Park*. Our current project is a major overhaul for 34072 *257 Squadron*, which was restored in the 1980's and ran in preservation until 2002.



SLL earns income from the use of its locos on heritage lines, but the reality is that this barely pays for essential 10 year overhauls, and never repays the cost of a restoration from scrap yard condition.

### We need your help to keep these locos running

You can become a shareholder in SLL by filling out the attached share application. While you should not expect a financial return, you do get an annual opportunity to drive and fire one of our locos and the pleasure of seeing them in use.

We are also asking Sponsors to support the cost of new components for *257 Squadron*. Many options are available, from a Boiler Tube at £65 to re-tyring the driving wheels for £5,000. The Sponsorship Form is attached.

For more information: [www.southern-locomotives.co.uk](http://www.southern-locomotives.co.uk) or call Simon Troy on 01474 833263

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### Sir Keith Park

In his memoirs Sir Winston Churchill wrote of his visit to RAF Uxbridge control centre on 15th September 1940.

**Churchill, after a long silence: 'There appear to be many (German) aircraft coming in'.**

**Park: 'There'll be someone there to meet them'.**

In 1940 Air Vice-Marshal Keith Park commanded 11 Group of RAF Fighter Command, whose squadrons were based in south-east England, and faced the impending invasion by Germany. To invade Britain, Germany first had to gain air superiority, and attacks on channel convoys and air bases in the south-east marked the opening stages of what became known as the Battle of Britain.

Victory in that battle, or more precisely avoidance of defeat, made invasion in 1940 impossible, and kept Britain in the war. Hitler switched his attention to Russia, and the entry of the USA into the war in 1941 led to the eventual allied victory.

Undoubtedly Park's strategic understanding, tactical skills and personal leadership were crucial to the outcome of 1940, and it is no exaggeration to say that had he not been commanding 11 Group, the history of the western world would be a very different story.

Keith Park was born in Thames, New Zealand in 1892, and grew up as a confident and practical boy, though he was academically undistinguished. He served with the ANZAC's in the Gallipoli campaign. He transferred to the British Army, and in 1916 to the Royal Flying Corps. He flew a Bristol Fighter in dogfights over northern France, gaining a first hand understanding of aerial combat which served him well in the future.



Park's career grew with the Royal Air Force and by 1931 he was station commander at RAF Northolt. From 1936 he worked with Lord Dowding, preparing air defence strategy and systems. It was this strategy, and the advent of radar, which made it possible for Britain to resist enemy bombing raids; it had been popularly believed in the 1930's that such defence was impossible. Park's ability to execute the British strategy during the crucial summer of 1940 changed the direction and eventual outcome of WW2.

At the time this was not recognised, indeed Park was moved sideways, and only returned to operational



command when moved to Malta in 1942. Once again his strategic and personal skills turned the tide, and opened the door to the Allied invasion of Italy in 1943.

Air Marshal Park retired from the RAF in 1946. On 19th September 1947 he named our locomotive at Brighton station, not long before he departed for New Zealand. There he lived, rarely in the news, until his death in 1975.

Today we are joined by two members of his family, great nephew Terence Prior-Stevens and great niece Laurette Cummins. We are also joined by three airmen who flew with 11 Group in 1940. David Whiting, Lord Dowding's step-son is also here.

During the long restoration of the loco we have been conscious of the need to commemorate Sir Keith Park, and the debt which Britain owes him. We hope that 34053 *Sir Keith Park* will bring his name to many others through its service on the SVR.



Brighton station 19th September 1947. Three locos were named. Fighter Pilot by Group Captain Douglas Bader, Tangmere by Wing Commander W G Clouston, and Sir Keith Park by Air Chief Marshal Park.