‘Grandfather of modern trains’ to be restored

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As the first train to be powered by petrol electric engine, the York built 1903 ‘autocar’ is the forerunner of today’s modern trains. The four-year volunteer-led project, to be run by the NER 1903 Electric Autocar Trust, will see the train and accompanying coach restored and brought to life for use on heritage railways in the Craven area, North Yorkshire and the North East. When complete, the train will carry passengers again for the first time in over 80 years.

The works will start shortly at Embsay, near Skipton, and will see the body restored, and a new engine, generator, controls and brakes fitted. There will be lots of exciting opportunities for volunteers to get involved, in particular for people with electrical, pipe fitting, welding, painting and woodworking skills keen to experience working in the heritage sector. The train, when finished, will be fully accessible to all, and equipped with the latest audio visual techniques will act as a ‘mobile classroom’ for schools and community groups so they can learn all about the development of rail transport from steam travel, to present day.

Fiona Spiers, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund for Yorkshire and the Humber, said: "This project to restore the predecessor to modern rail transport is fascinating. Not only will it preserve a precious relic from our industrial past, it will also provide many opportunities to get involved and develop skills as part of the restoration, which is great news for people in the area."

Stephen Middleton, Harrogate coach restorer and NER 1903 Electric Autocar Trust Chairman, originally bought the autocar body from a landowner who had used it as a holiday home since 1930. He said: "We are delighted that the HLF has recognised the importance of this train and our restoration and educational plans. This, with smaller grants from the Ken Hoole Trust and PRISM (The Fund for the **PR**eservation of **I**ndustrial and **S**cientific **M**aterial) has given us the boost we need to complete the project within an ambitious timetable."

Notes to editors

NER 1903 Electric Autocar Trust website.

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 30,000 projects, allocating £4.5billion across the UK, including £351million in Yorkshire and the Humber alone. To date, HLF has made 78 awards in Craven amounting to just over £3million.

Further information

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