Full steam ahead for the Ffestiniog & Welsh



Ffestiniog Railway. Credit: Christ Parry.

North Wales' largest tourist attraction has secured a £3.1million National Lottery Heritage Fund grant.

The funding will be used to tell the story of the railways and restore its buildings at Boston Lodge. Boston Lodge Works is in the Guinness Book of Records as 'the oldest railway engineering workshop in continuous operation'.

The investment will boost the railways' plans to attract up to 250,000 visitors a year and provide work, training and volunteering opportunities for the community of Porthmadog.



A Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways train at a station. Credit: Chris Parry

UNESCO World Heritage Site

Built between 1833 and 1836, the Ffestiniog Railway carried slate from Blaenau Ffestiniog's slate mines to the seaport in Porthmadog and shipped across the world.

The railway carried its last load in 1946 and in 1954 volunteers started bringing it and the Boston Lodge Works back to life.

The Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways became part of the UNESCO Slate Heritage of North West Wales World Heritage Site in July 2021.

Sharing stories with future generations

The project will see the railway's many stories being captured and shared by staff and volunteers, along with digital interpretation. Tours of Boston Lodge will give people the chance to see behind the scenes and better understand the railway and its history.

Practical skills and knowledge will be passed on through training, work placements, outreach and traineeships.

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>
> *Andrew White, Director of The National Lottery Heritage Fund in Wales*

A truly world-class, high quality attraction

Andrew White, Director of The National Lottery Heritage Fund in Wales, said: “Thanks to National Lottery players, this £3.1m investment will allow the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways – a truly world-class, high quality attraction – to provide work and training opportunities for the local community and boost the economy of North West Wales by bringing an additional 50,000 visitors to the area every year.

“This project, which centres on the Boston Lodge Works, is a great example of how heritage can help us understand who we are and where we come from and how the communities we are part of have been shaped by the past by bringing history to life.”



The Boston Lodge Works engine shed in 1887

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A Transport for Wales train



CGI visualisation of restored Newport Transporter Bridge



Vital volunteers preserve and share railway heritage