Grantee Q&A: setting out your project vision and



Tours of Boston Lodge help visitors understand the site's heritage. Photo: Chris Parry.

We asked Ffestiniog Railway Company's General Manager Paul Lewin and Project Manager Edwina Bell about how they delivered the restoration of Boston Lodge, the world's oldest continuously operating railway engineering works.

About the project

Steam trains have been restored at Boston Lodge for nearly 200 years. It's a hub of heritage skills at the heart of the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railway, which runs through Eryri National Park (Snowdonia), a UNESCO World Heritage landscape. Our investment supported Paul, Edwina and the team to bring Boston Lodge to life for visitors and engage nearly 600 volunteers.

What did you find most challenging about your application and how did you overcome these challenges?

Paul: Explaining our vision for the project was complex. We decided that the best way to explain the project would be to produce a short advocacy video. This brought a focus to our communications and was a helpful means of supporting our application. Throughout the process, it's vital to have a clear vision and work out how to communicate it quickly and

effectively.

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General Manager Paul Lewin and Project Manager Edwina Bell pictured third and second from the right at celebrations for Boston Lodge's reopening in May 2025. Photo: Chris Parry.

What would you recommend future applicants spend more time on when developing their application?

Edwina: It's important to understand the relationship between your activity plan and the capital works. It is what you are going to do **with** the buildings, not what you do **to** them, that should drive the project.

What one piece of advice would you give to someone applying for funding for the first time?

Edwina: Start with a smaller project if you can. Send a project enquiry and talk to your local Heritage Fund team as you develop your idea.

What one thing do you know now that you wish you'd known before you began?

Paul: T are critical

Boston Lodge is the engineering works of the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland railways. Photo: Chris Parry.

When delivering your project, what surprised you?

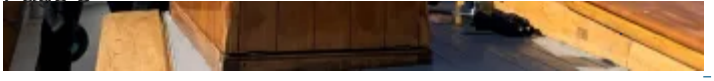
Edwina: I was amazed at the appetite for work experience at the railway from schools and colleges, as well as adults returning to work. We blew our participation targets out of the water. This did require additional time from colleagues to staff and supervise but the results made it incredibly worthwhile.

Following this project, what are you most looking forward to in the railway's future?

Paul: Permanently operating in a more sustainable way. This includes more volunteers, better trained staff, expectations of better facilities, being more environmentally friendly, worrying less about crumbling infrastructure and – most importantly – knowing our story is being heard by so many more people.

This is part of a series of Q&As with successful grantees – helping to demystify the project application and delivery process and share experience across the sector.



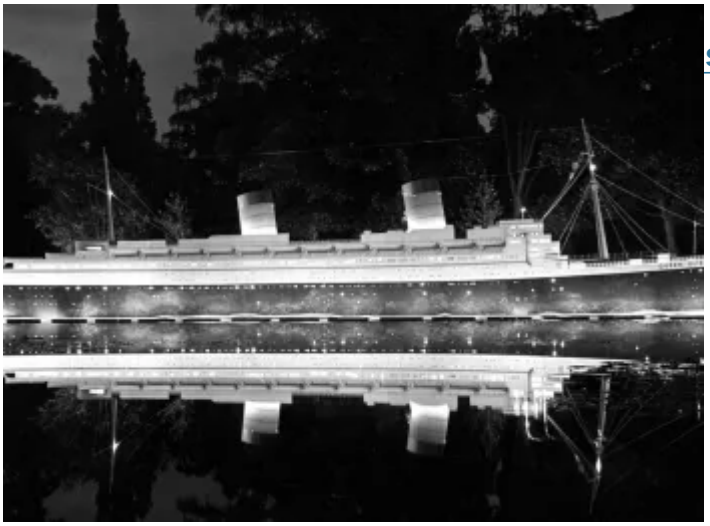


Blyth Tall Ship has created inspiring volunteer opportunities in the north east. Photo: Colin McLean Photography.



g, learning and adapting

Recording a podcast episode with SWI members Maz Thorn, Janette McKirdy and Sandra MacArthur. Photo: Scottish Women's Institutes.



stage of your heritage project

The original illuminations captured the imaginations of local people and visitors from around the UK. Photo: Whittle Productions.

Grantee Q&A: illuminating Leamington's festival of light