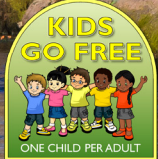


FFESTINIOG & WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAYS



STEAM • SCENERY • SNOWDONIA •

Did you know..?

The Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways, at nearly forty miles in length, are the longest heritage railway in the UK...

The Ffestiniog Railway has used steam engines for 150 years and four of their first locomotives still exist on the railway...

The Ffestiniog Railway runs along a mile-long sea wall known as 'The Cob' - and crosses Cei Mawr, at 62 feet in height the largest free-standing dry stone wall in Europe...

The oak woodlands in the Vale of Ffestiniog are classed as temperate rainforest and a site of special scientific interest...

The Ffestiniog Railway is the only UK railway with a spiral loop, where the track crosses over itself to gain height...



Skilled craftsmen in our own workshops restore - and build from new - the engines and carriages for our trains...

National Trust members voted the Aberglaslyn Pass 'the most scenic view in Britain' - you can see why from trains on the Welsh Highland Railway...

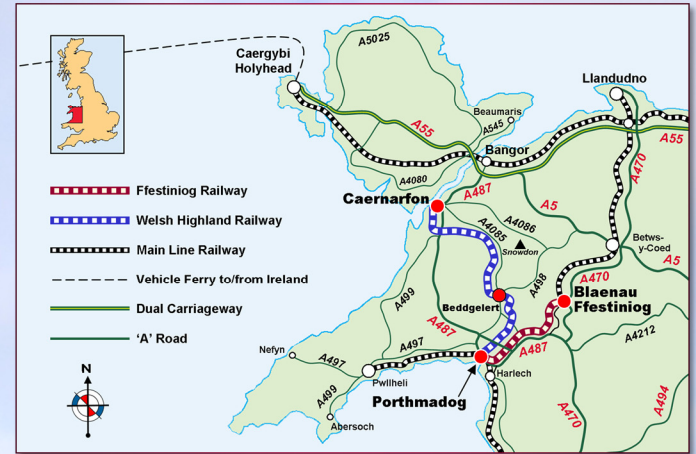
Snowdon is the highest mountain in England and Wales - so Hafod Eryri at its summit is literally the top café in Britain...

Welsh Highland Railway trains climb and descend more than 1200 feet from sea level during the course of their journey...

Over 1000 volunteers give up their free time and holidays to work on our railways and run our trains...

We are grateful for support from private donations, the Millennium Commission, Welsh European Funding Office, Ffestiniog Railway Society, Welsh Highland Railway Society and especially the hundreds of volunteers who contribute their time and expertise to restore and operate the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways.

DIRECTIONS TO THE F&WHR



'SAT-NAV' INFORMATION		
CAERNARFON	Station on St Helens Road, Caernarfon	LL55 2YD
PORTHMADOG	Station, Drop-off Point & Disabled Parking Main Town 'Pay & Display' Car Park	LL49 9NF LL49 9PG
BLAENAU FFFESTINIOG	Central 'Pay & Display' Car Park	LL41 3ES

BY ROAD

The A55 Expressway across the north coast of Wales gives easy access to the area from the M6. Other major routes to Snowdonia include the M54/A5 from the Midlands and the A470 running from Cardiff in South Wales to Llandudno on the north coast of Wales.

BY TRAIN

From the North: Use trains on the Chester - Holyhead mainline. Change at Llandudno Junction for a train along the Conwy Valley line to the joint Ffestiniog Railway station in Blaenau Ffestiniog, or use the regular bus service from Bangor station to reach the Welsh Highland Railway at Caernarfon.

From the Midlands: Use trains, via Shrewsbury and Machynlleth, for the Cambrian Coast line to reach the Ffestiniog Railway at Minffordd and Porthmadog (15 minutes walk).

BY BUS

A network of long-distance coach and local bus services operate throughout the area. Once here, the 'Sherpa' bus services provide 'car free' access to the heart of the Snowdonia National Park.

Further information on bus, rail and coach services can be found at www.traveline-cymru.info or by phone on **0871 200 22 33**



FFESTINIOG & WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAYS
 Harbour Station, Porthmadog, Gwynedd, LL49 9NF
01766 516024
enquiries@ffwhr.com www.festrail.co.uk

Ride the Dragons of Snowdonia..!

You can hear the whistles of the engines and see their plumes of steam from miles away. Close up they look and sound a bit like ferocious dragons - whilst from a distance they seem like a giant's train set, lost in the enormous landscapes. Look down from the mountains and you can see a 40 mile track winding its way through the heart of the National Park from Caernarfon Castle over the foothills of Snowdon to reach Porthmadog, then back up into the mountains to Blaenau Ffestiniog.

Snowdonia was once rich in minerals - such as slate and copper ore - which were hewn from the mountains by our ancestors and carried by narrow gauge trains for use in markets around the world...

The Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways now form the longest heritage line in Britain - its comfortable, hand-crafted carriages providing the perfect way for you to leave your car behind and explore the many aspects of Snowdonia at your leisure.



Ffestiniog Railway

The two-foot gauge Ffestiniog Railway opened in 1836 - carrying slate from the mountains to the sea by gravity, with horses pulling empty wagons back up. The line was converted to steam power in 1863 and runs a fleet of engines full of character including the famous Double Fairlies - which look the same from both ends!

The line runs from Porthmadog to Blaenau Ffestiniog and the journey begins by crossing the Cob, a mile-long embankment which holds back the sea, then past the entrance to Portmeirion, the Italianate village famous as the location for filming *The Prisoner*.

After Minffordd, the determined sounds of the powerful engines reflect the effort of pulling carriages high into the mountains through ancient oak woodlands and Coed y Bleiddiau (*The Wood of the Wolves*) where - allegedly - the last wolf in Wales was shot.

The track loops over itself at Dduallt station, using the UK's only railway spiral - a simple but effective way of gaining extra height without increasing the gradient, and then between the twin reservoirs which make up Britain's first pumped storage hydro electric scheme.

Mountains of slate - evidence of the town's rich industrial heritage - surround you as the train arrives at Blaenau Ffestiniog station, which is shared with mainline trains that run on tracks that are twice as wide, along the Conwy Valley Line from Llandudno Junction.

Welsh Highland Railway

The Welsh Highland Railway runs from Caernarfon on Wales' north coast, through the very heart of Snowdonia, to the harbour town of Porthmadog on the west coast.

From the castle at Caernarfon the train winds round tight bends - through woods and alongside rivers racing down to the sea - along a route that is impassable for all but a narrow-gauge train.

By the time the train arrives at Rhyd Ddu (*The Black Ford*) the mountains are no longer distant aiming points but rising steeply on either side, reflected in the lake below. On the left is one of the main paths up Snowdon, on the right is the formidable Nantlle Ridge with razor edge walks along sheer cliffs.

The line reaches its highest point at Pitt's Head before descending dramatically round horseshoe bends through the forest to Beddgelert village - then enters the beautiful Aberglaslyn Pass, where trains steam high above the fast-flowing river, before tunnelling through the hillside to reach the pastoral flatlands of the ancient estuary beyond.

The line continues on past old sea cliffs and crosses the Glaslyn river again at Pont Croesor, where trains stop beside the Osprey Centre - surrounded by a magnificent panorama of the mountains of Snowdonia.

From here it's just a short run to Porthmadog, where trains steam proudly into Harbour Station beside the Ffestiniog Railway.



Caernarfon Castle...



Towns and Villages

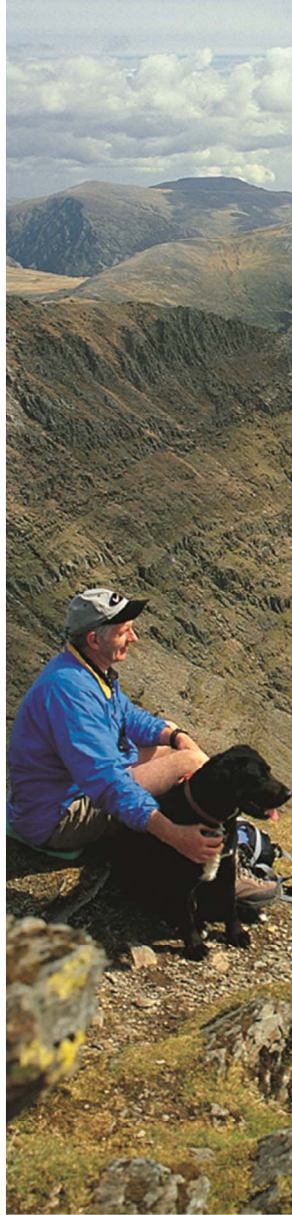
Blaenau Ffestiniog is a vibrant community unmistakably built on the slate industry, with its steep inclines on which wagons of slate were lowered from the quarries to the railway. The revamped town centre celebrates its rich traditions with slate sculptures and poetry trail along the High Street - and a variety of shops to explore.

Porthmadog is the port from where ships used to export the slate. These days the harbour is an attractive marina where you are more likely to see an otter teaching her cubs to catch crabs. Next to the harbour is the station with Spooner's Café/Bar & Grill where you can enjoy a meal or relax with a drink while watching trains go by, admiring the superb views over the estuary or the sun setting across the sea.

The walled town of **Caernarfon** with its narrow streets, colourful buildings and bistros is a great place to stroll around. The large medieval castle, in which Charles was invested as the Prince of Wales, dominates the scene, and from Queen's Gate there is a good view of the estuary and along the railway line towards the mountains of Snowdonia.

Beddgelert is the archetypal Snowdonian village - it also has a familiarity which, for a certain generation, might be due to the illustrator of *Rupert the Bear* books taking inspiration from when he lived here. In fact, much of Snowdonia is familiar, having been used as locations for films such as *First Knight*, *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness*, *Tomb Raider* and... *Carry on up the Khyber!*

On top of the world...



Out and About

Walking is an activity for all ages and abilities - you can take a gentle stroll around a lake, explore a village or wander along a beautiful beach; or try a guided walk from one of our stations and hear some local stories from a trained leader. For the more energetic - two of the main paths up Snowdon start next to stations on the Welsh Highland Railway. Hafod Eryri, the new café and visitor centre on Snowdon's summit, is well worth a visit.

Bikes can be taken on our trains - so bring yours along, or hire them from local shops, to enjoy the many cycle routes in and around the mountains. For the more adventurous, a day at the Coed y Brenin mountain bike centre is a memorable experience or try the challenging downhill courses and jump centre in Blaenau Ffestiniog.

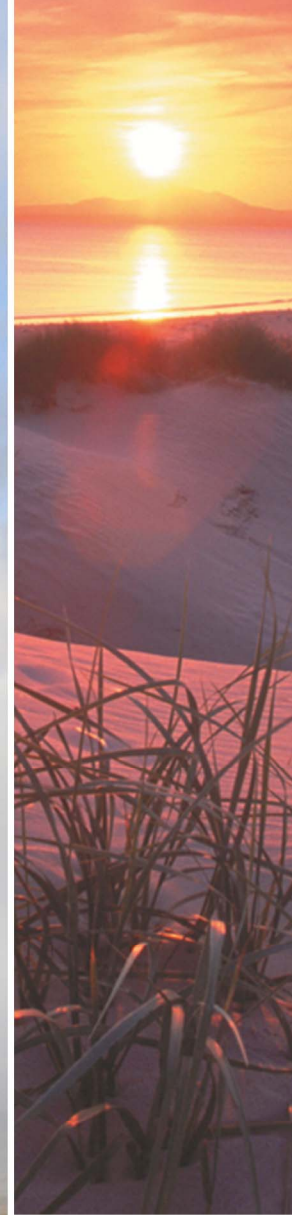
Sample the areas rich industrial heritage at the National Slate Museum in Llanberis or the Sygun Copper Mine outside Beddgelert.

Enjoy a 21st Century adrenaline rush at ZipWorld or Bounce Below - a truly exhilarating way to explore the old slate quarries and caverns.

Escape into the fantasy world of Portmeirion and enjoy the shops, restaurants, gardens and unique atmosphere of this Italianate-style village and film location just a short walk away from our railway.

Caernarfon Castle, now with wheelchair access, and the nearby castles at Harlech and Criccieth are a reminder of our medieval past - and, for people who like their history rather more ancient, there are masses of Roman and Bronze Age sites to be explored.

Harlech sand dunes...



Out and About

Not forgetting, of course, the many beautiful beaches and golf courses along the miles of coast line that are never far away

Throughout the year there are a host of special events, large and small - on the railways and in the surrounding area.

You can enjoy the delights of our Beer Festival, Jazz Trains, Food on the Move Trains - plus the Halloween and Santa Trains.

Looking for a spot of culture? See artists from all around the world at Llangollen's *International Musical Eisteddfod*. On a smaller scale, enjoy music at Abersoch's *Jazz Festival*. For the younger generation, *Festival No.6* is now a popular event at Portmeirion, featuring many well-known bands.

Heading for the shores? Sailors can drop anchor at *Conwy River Festival*, a unique eight-day festival of sail. Surfers enjoy water sports of the extreme variety - and live music - at *Wakestock*. It's all up in the air at *Llangollen Hot Air Balloon Festival*. Prefer something a bit more down to earth? Get your feet firmly on the ground and join one of the many walks featured in *Prestatyn Walking Festival*. Like to do things the old-fashioned way? Then pay a visit to Llandudno's *Victorian Extravaganza*...

These are just some of the things that will make your visit to North Wales memorable.

Find more information on activities, attractions and events at www.gonorthwales.co.uk

Portmeirion...



Where to stay?

It's possible to squeeze a ride on the trains into a day-trip, but there is so much to see and savour that it is best enjoyed as part of a longer visit to get the full benefit.

A visit to Snowdonia, where Welsh is the primary language and where rich culture and distinctive cuisine abound, has all the glamour and mystique of going abroad - but without the hassle.

The choice of accommodation is diverse - ranging from campsites where you can pitch your tent within a few yards of the railway line at Beddgelert to a 5-star hotel at Portmeirion, with characterful B&Bs and cottages in between.

More information available from www.gonorthwales.co.uk or www.visitsnowdonia.info or phone **08705 168 767**

Service with passion

Most of the railway staff you will meet are volunteers - people who love the trains and give their time to qualify as drivers, firemen and guards, to repair locos and build carriages, to maintain tracks and stations, and who provide a full service - complete with passion. The depth of their enthusiasm shows and endures much longer than a skin-deep 'have a nice day'.

All of our trains have a buffet car from which snacks, together with hot and cold drinks, are served to you at your seat by our friendly stewards. Local produce is used wherever possible, including bottled Snowdon water and award winning beers and beverages.

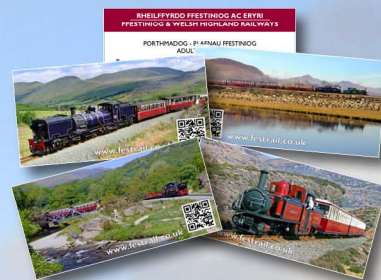
Aber Falls...



Travel options

There are many sections to the railways, offering a wide choice of starting points and journeys, so it is recommended you study the timetable or check with our main Booking Office which options will suit you best. Trains run every day of the week from late March until the end of October, and from Boxing Day to New Year's Day. A limited service is operated during the winter months.

Tickets can be bought online, at our main stations or on board trains - with 'Rover' tickets also available which allow you to ride on several days - and save money!



Ffestiniog Railway trains also link up with mainline services at two stations providing access to and from the scenic Cambrian Coast and Conwy Valley lines.

To some people riding in an open carriage, with the wind blowing in their faces, is the experience they are seeking - but for others, the cushioned seats and table service of a saloon carriage represent the best balance between comfort and enjoyment. For a taste of luxury you can upgrade to First Class - with the character and feel of something that would not be out of place on the Orient Express.

Glaslyn Osprey...



Special occasions

For a special occasion you can hire a whole carriage and invite friends to join you for the ride of a lifetime. Soaking up the ambience and enjoying the scenery through windows designed to maximise the view - a bit like looking through a wide angle lens, only better...

This leaflet is designed as an introduction to the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways - giving a 'taste' of North Wales, highlighting its variety and appeal as a holiday destination...

It is impossible to provide all the information you might need about our two railways within this leaflet, so please visit our website - www.festrail.co.uk - or phone our friendly Booking Office staff on **01766 516024** for further details.

Each railway has a timetable leaflet - available on request from our Booking Office, or you can pick one up at the many Tourist Information points throughout North Wales.

