



Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways, Gorsaf yr Harbwr / Harbour Station, Porthmadog, Gwynedd, LL49 9NF
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Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railway Facts

The Ffestiniog Railway Company operates the two foot (597mm) gauge Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways, which carry up to 400,000 passengers a year.

- The Ffestiniog Railway is recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records as the oldest operational railway company in the World, being founded by Act of Parliament in 1832. 2015 marks the 150th anniversary of the start of passenger services in 1865 and the introduction of luxury Pullman observation carriage number 150.
- In 1863, it became the first narrow gauge railway in the World to introduce steam engines - two of which are still in use today, with a third undergoing restoration - the oldest locos in the World still operating on their original railway and celebrated their 150th birthday in 2013. It is the only railway in the World to operate double-ended Fairlie steam locomotives.
- It runs the oldest railway works in the World, where new steam locomotives and carriages have been built in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries - *Merddin Emrys* was built in 1879 and is still in regular use today. In August 2010, the UK's newest steam loco, *Lyd* entered service.
- Since the 1950s, the Ffestiniog Railway has become a leader in railway preservation and is now one of the UK's top and North Wales' Number One tourist attraction. The line reopened to Blaenau Ffestiniog in 1982.
- Welsh Highland trains cross the Snowdonia National Park, past Snowdon and the village of Beddgelert and through the Aberglaslyn Pass - voted the most beautiful spot in the UK by members of the National Trust.
- The Welsh Highland operates the most powerful narrow gauge steam engines in the world - Beyer Garratt NG/G16s weighing over 60 tons. These are the only locos capable of hauling long trains on some of the longest and steepest gradients to be found on any railway in the UK.
- On April 20, 2011, the Welsh Highland was officially opened throughout from Caernarfon to Porthmadog. At 25 miles, the WHR is the longest heritage railway in the UK. Its connection with the Ffestiniog enables passengers to travel between Blaenau Ffestiniog and Caernarfon - almost 40 miles of narrow gauge steam.
- Rebuilding the 25 mile Welsh Highland Railway cost £28 million, most of the work being carried out by volunteers. £12.5m of the funding came from the Welsh Assembly Government, the EU and the Millennium Lottery fund, the remainder being raised through donations and fund raising schemes. In 2014, a £1.3 million rebuild of Porthmadog Harbour Station was completed to enhance customers' experience.
- In addition to employing 92 full-time staff, rising to over 150 during the peak season, independent research shows that the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways generate £25 million for the local economy each year - £250 for every man, woman and child in Gwynedd - and create a further 350 jobs in the area. Two supporting societies have 8,000 members and over 2,000 volunteers regularly work on the railways.
- For over three decades, between 70 and 80 young people have worked on the railways each year as part of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Pupils from local schools carry out work experience on the railways throughout the year and Boston Lodge Works trains young people through its apprenticeship scheme.

For further information or to arrange a visit, please contact Andrew Thomas on 01766 516072 or 07919 414871
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