

**Steam Trains & Railways in North Wales**

Just as Wales is dotted with castles, it seems also, that this land has more than her fair share of steam railways. A rich legacy of railways is maintained by armies of volunteers and enthusiasts with a passion for steam trains. There are no fewer than ten steam railways within an hour's drive from Penmaenuchaf Hall Hotel. From Fairbourne Railway at the mouth of the Mawddach to the Snowdon Mountain Railway further north and the famous Ffestiniog snaking out of Porthmadog into the hills.

Many of the railways can also be reached very easily by the Cambrian Line mainline service.

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Taking stock.  
Rolling hills and glassy waters of Bala Lake provide first class views.

**Bala Lake Railway**

The Bala Lake Railway is a narrow gauge railway which operates from a small village near Bala Lake called Llanuwchllyn. It has over four miles of track along the eastern shore of the lake and makes a scenic return journey between the village terminus and Bala.

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Location     | The Station<br>Llanuwchllyn<br>Gwynedd<br>LL23 7DD |
| Phone        | 01678 540666                                       |
| Length       | 4½ miles   |
| Gauge        | 2 feet   |
| Journey Time | one hour   |



**Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways**

The Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways combines two unique narrow gauge railways.

The Rheilffordd Ffestiniog Railway takes you on a 13½-mile journey from the harbour in Porthmadog to the slate-quarrying town of Blaenau Ffestiniog. The historic trains climb over 700 feet from sea level into the mountains through tranquil pastures and magnificent forests, past lakes and waterfalls, round horseshoe bends (even a complete spiral) clinging to the side of the mountain or tunnelling through it.

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Location               | Harbour Station<br>Porthmadog<br>Gwynedd<br>LL49 9NF |
| Phone                  | 01766 516000   |
| Ffestiniog Railway     |  |
| Length                 | 13½ miles  |
| Gauge                  | 1 foot 11½ inches                                    |
| Journey Time           | one hour   |
| Welsh Highland Railway |  |
| Length                 | 25 miles   |
| Gauge                  | 1 foot 11½ inches                                    |
| Journey Time           | about 2½ hours                                       |



Full steam ahead!  
One of the Ffestiniog railway engines making the incline

In 2010 the Welsh Highland Railway began operating a service between Caernarfon and Porthmadog Harbour Station. By extending the old line an extra three miles beyond Dinas Junction to Caernarfon, the re-opened narrow-gauge route now runs for an impressive twenty-five miles. The scenic and precipitous journey starts near the castle and climbs to 650 feet before descending via Beddgelert and the Aberglaslyn Pass *en route* to Porthmadog.

**Welsh Highland Heritage Railway**

At the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway visitors are taken on a short train ride before stopping at the engine sheds where there is the chance to climb into the cabs of the locomotives and see how things work. Run mainly by volunteers, the attraction gives an insight into the history of narrow gauge railways at Porthmadog and how they became famous around the world.

Evening and all day steam driver experiences are available.

|          |             |
|----------|-------------|
| Location | The Station |
|----------|-------------|



Visitors can try a miniature 7¼ inch version.

The railway starts on the coast at Tywyn, snakes through the foothills of Cader Idris to Dolgoch falls, clinging to the hillside it continues to the village of Abergynolwyn, before turning south for the short trip to Nant Gwernol. Tickets allow for passengers to break the journey and take a country walk, explore wooded paths, discover waterfalls or visit the attractions of Tywyn.

Tywyn Wharf station is home to the Narrow Gauge Railway Museum, telling the story of little railways across the Britain.

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
|           | Tremadog Road<br>Porthmadog<br>LL49 9DY |
| Phone     | 01766 513402                            |
| Length    | ¾ of a mile                             |
| Gauge     | 2 feet                                  |
| Tour Time | 1 hour                                  |

### Talyllyn Railway Company



Steam trains run daily Easter to October and selected days in the winter.

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Location     | Wharf Station<br>Tywyn<br>Gwynedd<br>LL36 9EY |
| Phone        | 01654 710472                                  |
| Length       | 7¼ miles                                      |
| Gauge        | 2 feet 3 inches                               |
| Journey Time | 2 hours (return)                              |



Engine Number 7, at Maespoeth Junction. Crew: Andrew Rawlins and Trefor Davies.

### Corris Railway

The narrow gauge Corris Railway is situated between Machynlleth and Dolgellau just off the A487 in the Dulas Valley. Passengers are taken for a steam train round trip along the re-opened section of the old line between Corris Station and Maespoeth Junction.

A museum run by the Corris Railway Company celebrates the history of the railway and is the hub of its continued revival. There is also a cafe and gift shop.

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Location     | Station Yard<br>Corris<br>Machynlleth<br>SY20 9SH |
| Phone        | 01654 761303                                      |
| Length       | 1 mile  |
| Gauge        | 2 feet 3 inches                                   |
| Journey Time | -- hour   |

### Fairbourne Steam Railway

This two mile railway runs from the village of Fairbourne to Penrhyn Point, where it loops round a sandy peninsula that stands at the mouth of the Mawddach Estuary.

The main Cambrian Line station is adjacent to the Fairbourne Railway terminus.

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Location     | Beach Road<br>Fairbourne<br>Gwynedd<br>LL38 2EX |
| Phone        | 01341 250362                                    |
| Length       | 2 miles   |
| Gauge        | 2¼ feet   |
| Journey Time | -- hour   |

### Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway

A narrow gauge railway with a line that is around 8½ miles long. It runs westwards from the town of Welshpool via Castle Caereinion to the village of Llanfair Caereinion.

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Location     | Llanfair Caereinion<br>Welshpool<br>Powys<br>SY21 0SF |
| Phone        | 01938 810441  |
| Length       | 8½ miles  |
| Gauge        | 2 feet 6 inches                                       |
| Journey Time | -- hour   |

### Llangollen Railway

Llangollen Railway is North Wales' premier standard gauge line and is conveniently located with access via the A5 and A483. The line runs approximately 7½ miles through the beautiful Dee Valley. We mainly operate a steam service with occasional diesel & heritage railcar services.

Our hospitality includes, disabled facilities, tea rooms and shops, on board catering by prior arrangement, picnic areas, spectacular views all the way along the line, country walks from the station.

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Location     | Abbey Road<br>Llangollen<br>Denbighshire<br>LL20 8SN |
| Phone        | 01978 860979   |
| Length       | 7½ miles   |
| Gauge        | 4 feet 8½ inches                                     |
| Journey Time | 1½ hours   |



80072 travelling through the picturesque Dee Valley towards Carrog on the Llangollen Railway. (Photo: David Wilcock)



### Snowdon Mountain Railway

Britain's highest rack and pinion railway was opened to tourists in 1896. The railway operates from Llanberis to the summit of mount Snowdon, the highest mountain in Wales standing at 3,560ft (1,085m).

At the summit a multi-million pound visitor centre was opened in 2006.

Weather permitting trains go to the summit every day from mid March to the end of October. As with any mountain ascent, the usual weather checks should be made beforehand.

A rack and pinion engine climbs up to the summit of Snowdon. The railway operates both steam and diesel engines.

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Location     | Snowdon Mountain<br>Railway<br>Llanberis<br>Gwynedd<br>LL55 4TY |
| Phone        | 0844 493 8120   |
| Length       | 4¾ miles  |
| Gauge        | 2 feet 7½ inches  |
| Journey Time | one hour to the<br>summit                                       |

### Vale of Rheidol Railway

The Vale of Rheidol Railway runs between Aberystwyth and Devil's Bridge in Ceredigion. The main terminus is at Aberystwyth which is shared with the standard gauge main line.

The narrow track gauge allows the railway to hug the contours of the hilly terrain with many sharp curves and steep gradients along the scenic route.

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| Location | Park Avenue<br>Aberystwyth<br>Ceredigion |
|----------|--|

|              |                   |
|--------------|-------------------|
|              | SY23 1PG          |
| Phone        | 01970 625819      |
| Length       | 11¾ miles         |
| Gauge        | 1 foot 11¾ inches |
| Journey Time | 1 hour            |

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Feature by Penmaenuchaf Hall Hotel