



# INTERPRETATION AND BOSTON LODGE PROJECT

## Interpretation Design RIBA 2

Mid-term Review 2nd December 2020



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# CONTENTS

The over arching aim of this NLHF Interpretation and Boston Lodge Works Project (the Project) is to:

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...share and involve people in the story of the railway. Storytelling will connect thousands of railway visitors with its history and the industry it served. It will help people understand the area's pioneering spirit and global impact and explain how the industry has shaped the landscape and community over 200 years. Through building restoration and first-hand experiences, people will have the chance to delve deeper into the railway's heritage. People will learn new skills and become immersed in the living, working world of the historic Boston Lodge Works in Porthmadog.

*"We can feel our history slipping through our fingers - we must act now to save that history."*

Paul Lewin

## PROJECT AIM



This is a list of changes that have been made through considered review, necessity and improved ideas relating to visitor experience. It is our opinion that these changes offer a more engaging visitor experience and represent a better value to the project and visitor.

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**Refocused digital spend** - less website development, as this aspect is handled in house and just needs re-ordering not new design. The digital spend will focus more on a travelling App, films and allowing visitors digital access into Boston Lodge restricted buildings

**Development of station identity** - We are interpreting more stations than proposed in round 1. It is important that the subtleties of the railway story comes out through the sense of interconnected stations. These have been carefully chosen to coincide with other attractions in order to reach wider audiences.

**Two mini hub sites at Beddgelert and Tan-y-Bwlch** - These two locations have facilities within walking distance of the station and attract large numbers of visitors that are not all linked to the railway. They offer an opportunity to engage non-railway and railway visitors as they use these locations to refuel.

# CHANGES SINCE ROUND 1



Clinging to the landscape, the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railway (F&WHR) represents a history that stretches back over 200 years. A history that encompasses our hunger for development and a determination to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

**This story is in danger of being lost.**

Even though steam locomotives still traverse the landscape, visitors are only leaving with a fraction of the story. Our task is to add deeper context to a visit to the F&WHR. We want to tell stories of daring land grabs from Mother Nature, horses pulling the slate industry to the fore and endless precision engineering achievements. Threaded throughout these attainments are the fragile stories of people and communities that are at most risk of decay. It is imperative that we retain these threads to the past and weave them into our interpretation for visitors to grasp the simple story of slate and rail but then the complexities of the lives of those embedded within the life of the railway.

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This document outlines an exciting and wide reaching plan for the interpretation of the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways, including the newly accessible Boston Lodge Works site. The thematic framework, stories and interpretive design ideas outlined here provide a meaningful and engaging platform on which to develop a world class visitor experience.

# CONTEXT & INTRODUCTION



This set of shared principles are echoed in the Activity Plan. They are designed to guide this project and ultimately provide positive outcomes and rich experience for staff, visitors and volunteers alike.

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**Support visitors to learn about the history and heritage of the railway and Boston Lodge Works**

accurate, relevant and audience appropriate storytelling, grounded in the Welsh language, culture and landscape

**Engage and inspire volunteers to ensure the story grows into the future**

showcases volunteer history, roles and stories

**Work in partnership with the local community to better engage and involve people with the railway and its heritage**

represent the local community voice and culture

**Inspire people to think about a career with the railway or Boston Lodge Works**

highlight roles, progression and science - technology - engineering - arts - maths (STEAM) relevant experience

**Support the resilience and sustainability of the organisation**

calls to action and promote sustainability stories

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES



The majority of people travelling with children ‘agreed’ they enjoyed learning through interactions with the heritage and the staff and volunteers

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Through surveys aimed at visitors, local communities, staff and volunteers as well as group and one to one consultation sessions we can evidence a real appetite for improved engagement strategies.

On average, 53% of visitors said they learnt something about the heritage of the railway. To improve this figure we intend to shine a light on the railway’s heritage and improve visitors opportunities to engage with this story by widening the types of engagement available.

We also want to deepen the engagement of those who are intrigued to find out more. 80% showed moderate (44%) or great (36%) interest in learning about Boston Lodge and F&WHR’s heritage and history.

Interpretation will be focusing in on the volunteers stories and it is expected that their amazing tales will impact on the 73% who showed little (25%) or no (48%) interest in volunteering.

Boston Lodge tours in Welsh will highlight the ground breaking work done on this site and help inform the 43% of locals who are not aware of the technological innovations linked to the F&WHR.

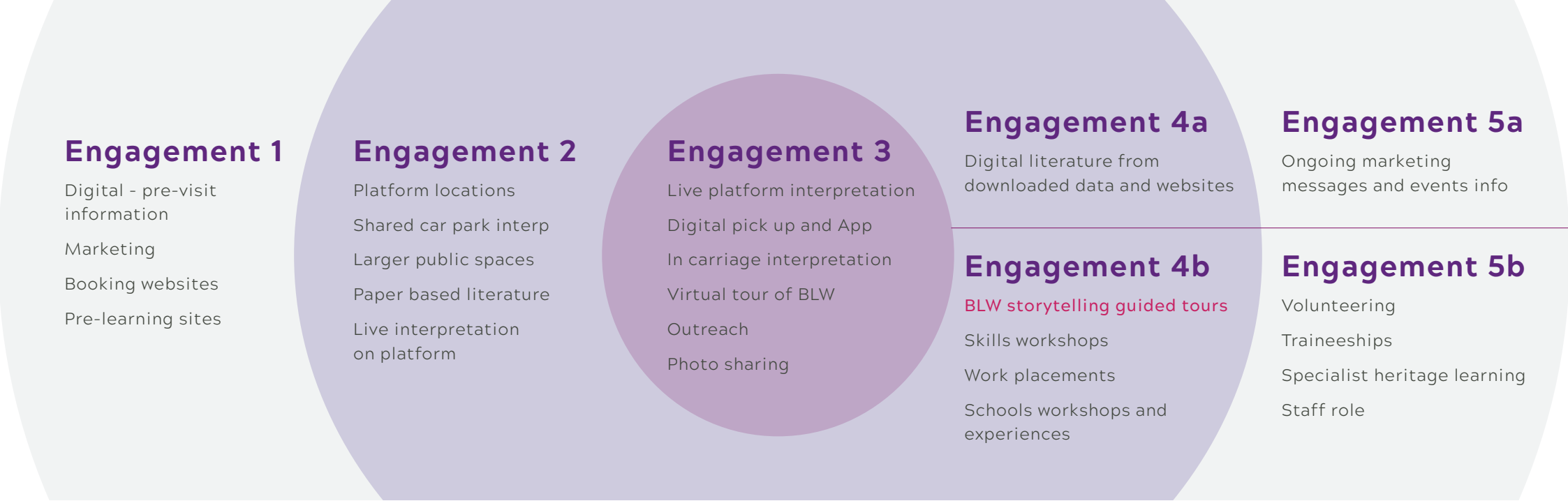
## CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT



# ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

This diagram represents the combined engagement strategy of interpretation elements and activities that will accompany potential visitors, actual visitors and repeat visitors. Outlines of activities mentioned here are detailed in the accompanying Activity Plan

The combination of interpretation ingress points will mean visitors may arrive with a greater knowledge of the heritage on offer and a clearer understanding of what they want to gain. Consequently the engagements will need to flex and adapt to varying visitors needs.





# ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Learn a little extra history at every touchpoint

## Engagement 1

Not yet engaged

These elements are to enhance the visitor experience before arrival and should make the visitor more at ease and better informed.

**Digital** - pre-visit information Light touch interpretation designed to generate enquiry.

**Marketing** - informing visitors of special events and temporary exhibitions.

**Booking websites** - a chance to plan a journey with helpful suggestions of what to do on wet days and sunny days, places to disembark for new and different experiences.

**Pre-learning sites** - encourage the keen to dig deeper through information complementary to the offer on site.



## Engagement 2

Passer-by, incidental

These elements are designed for passers-by using the landscape for sight seeing, walking, biking or due to an inquisitive nature.

**Platform locations** - interpretation telling the story of the railway and of different rolls of the workers.

**Shared car park interpretation** - combination of the railway's story and wider context of the landscape of the line.

**Larger public spaces** - longer dwell times mean an opportunity to tell the wider railway story. These are also spaces that can be utilised for temporary exhibitions.

**Paper based literature** - tourist information leaflets that focus on the people stories of the railway will attract visitors to engagement 3.

**Live interpretation on platforms** - opportunities for railway representatives to talk to visitors who congregate on platforms to see the trains.



## Engagement 3

Captive audience

This stage is layered to allow passengers to engage with the heritage in a low key way or dig deeper when their interest is piqued.

**Live platform interpretation** - volunteers and staff are better trained to deliver heritage content on the platform, keeping visitors engaged even before they embark.

**Digital pic - ups and App** - using personal devices visitors can access more interpretation through QR codes at key locations and a bespoke App providing layered information, as well as a more child friendly game play aspect.

**In carriage interpretation** - Carriage tables will be printed with a simple map of the line to help orientation. Volunteers and staff offer nuggets of information, keeping visitors engaged in all elements of the journey.

**Virtual tour of BLW** - This digital tour will give a brief insight into the historic and modern day goings on at BLW

**Outreach** - making sure audiences are aware that opportunities exist to engage in a deeper or more hands on way.

**Photo sharing** - experiences and photos shared on social media platforms will continue a positive visitor experience and promote this positive experience to friends and family.

# ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Learn a little extra history at every touchpoint

All visitors are expected to engage with the first three strategies but at stages four and five the engagement types split.

The majority of visitors will be content with their experience at this stage and will be happy to carry on with their holiday with fond memories of their time at the FWHR. The option to find out more using the App they downloaded or via occasional social media announcements will satisfy them until their next trip.

There is also a group who want more and at this point the engagements become deeper and more orientated towards those who want a hands on experience of life on the railway.



## Engagement 4a Takeaway

This visitor is content with the experience and leave with the opportunity to utilise digital information as they reflect on their trip.

**Digital content and literature** - Visitors can explore a little deeper. The downloaded App and the well structured website provide links to wider content.

## Engagement 4b Actively engaged

This transition stage from visitor to volunteer involves trying different activities and searching for a good fit. The activity plan details several opportunities to make this transition.

**BLW storytelling guided tours** - Engaging first person interpretation placing Boston Lodge in its historical setting and the visual spectacle of heritage skills in action.

**Skills workshops** - Opportunities to sign up to taster sessions in a wide range of heritage skills

**Work placements** - A range of placements will be available to young people looking for work

**Schools workshops and experiences** - for schools in Gwynedd to experience the railway and Boston Lodge both in school and on site

## Engagement 5a Touching base

Final engagement is light touch communication of future offers and activities to encourage a re-visit and word of mouth recommendations.

**Digital information** - capturing a digital address to promote future events will help visitors feel they are part of something exciting. Carefully management will create positive experience.

## Engagement 5b Embedded engagement

This final level is to be embedded within the organisation, looking for opportunities to be more deeply involved for a sustained period of time

**Volunteering** - By carefully matching volunteers to real roles, we can create genuinely satisfying and productive experiences for a wide variety of people.

**Traineeships** - Undertaking a paid traineeship enables people starting their career to gain valuable skills related to the management of a heritage railway and a visitor attraction.

**Staff** - Inspiring people to apply for a job at the railway and become part of running the railway.



# PROJECT OUTCOMES



# PROJECT OUTCOMES:

## A wider range of people will be involved in F&WHR heritage

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- Staff and volunteers will be utilised to better tell the railway story and their own to more people
- A broader engagement strategy will reach more visitors and local communities and deepen the understanding of the F&WHR's heritage
- Apprenticeships and in house training for volunteers will widen the teams knowledge of the stories surrounding the railway
- Local communities will be given a platform to share their stories linked to the railway and slate industry
- Taking the decision for the interpretation to tell the volunteers stories will inspire more people to become involved more deeply with the Railways

## Our heritage will be in better condition

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- An Interpretation Officer and trainee will baluster the ongoing task of collating the documentation and image library linked to the Railways' heritage
- Volunteer programmes to collect local community and volunteer community histories will be put in place before these stories are lost
- As the Boston Lodge Works are carefully restored their archeology and historic relevance will be recorded and become an ongoing part of the heritage story

## Better interpreted and explained

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- The new Interpretation Officer will coordinate training for staff and volunteers better equipping them to deliver heritage content through improved storytelling skills
- The project will add clear engaging interpretation widely across the F&WHR site. This will cover more of the story and engage more of the visitors and the incidental observer
- Layered interpretation will be available through a variety of digital platforms to enable visitors to dig deeper into the stories
- A group of volunteers will be trained by the Interpretive Officer to lead tours of Boston Lodge
- Virtual tours will be developed to enhance the on site interpretation. This will also give greater accessibility to the Boston Lodge site
- Content will be developed in Welsh and English, rather than translated, to ensure that the clarity of the stories is not lost

## People will have developed skills

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- Volunteers and staff will be better equipped to deliver interpretive stories to visitors
- Trainee Interpretation Officer will have gained quality experience and apprenticeship with appropriate qualification
- Interpretation volunteers will be better trained working with an Interpretation Officer

# PROJECT OUTCOMES:

## People will have learned about our heritage, leading to ideas and actions

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- Story strands related to volunteering roles delivered by real volunteers will best portray the benefits of volunteering and encourage active participation
- A wide range of activities linked to the interpretation of the Boston Lodge Works will enable visitors to progress from passive learners to active hands on learners

## People will have greater wellbeing

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- Training staff and volunteers to better understand the heritage of the railways will help them gain confidence in approaching visitors
- Training more volunteers through the Interpretation officer to deliver tours will ensure that this is an enjoyable experience



The interpretation strategy will:

- Better engage the large number of existing visitors to the F&WHR
- Provide greater relevance to the local communities, referencing deep family ties to this historic railway and the slate industry
- Provide a more attractive offer to missing or underdeveloped audiences highlighted during consultation.

The data below shows which specific audiences are missing or can be further developed through activity planning and an improved interpretive offer.

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There are specific targeted groups where activity planning and interpretive planning will focus. We have developed a scheme that is accessible to a wide audience and brings relatable content to as broad a visitor range as possible. Visitor groups we will engage are:

- Non-traditional railway visitors
- Visitors from centres of urban deprivation
- Local people with family connection to the railway
- Schools based in the F&WHR community
- Young people wanting to develop skills
- People at risk of social isolation
- Adults working or living in stressful environments

# AUDIENCES



As we have gone through consultation it has become clear that there are three strong narratives that need to inform the storytelling elements within this interpretation.

The first of these is the historical events that changed the landscape from a wild and lonely estuary into an industrial melee of slate and steam and in time into one of Wales' top visitor attractions.

The second narrative comes from the people of the railway. It is clear that visitors, the local community, staff and volunteers alike, want to hear the stories of those involved with the early railway.

The final narrative is the voice of volunteers and those involved in bringing the FWHR back from dereliction.

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We want visitors to leave talking about the man who blocked the estuary and the people who laid the cob. We want them to empathise with quarry workers on the quarryman's train and horses on trains. They should be thinking about the skill of a fireman or the art of splitting slate.

These are the stories we want to tell and we will use people to tell them. Purposeful encounters with knowledgeable staff and volunteers throughout the visit are complimented by the narrated histories that will introduce you to characters who will take this story and pepper it with personality.

# STORYTELLING



## Welsh leading

It is important that the story is told in the most engaging and fluid way possible for visitors. For this reason we will be using a copywriter who is able to write both in Welsh and English. We want to utilise the benefits of both languages and therefore not merely translate from one to the other, which often ends with awkward sentences and words that don't quite translate. We understand that this will mean we get slightly different content in each language but we would rather it was content true to the language it is written in rather than a close replication of another.

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## Tone of Voice

Content will be delivered with careful layering. Visitors will be drawn in with bold meaningful titles designed to grab attention and raise levels of curiosity. Opening paragraphs will deliver overview text in an easily accessible language at a reading level that will accommodate the widest cross section of visitors. As visitors read on texts will begin to deliver detail and a deeper story level.

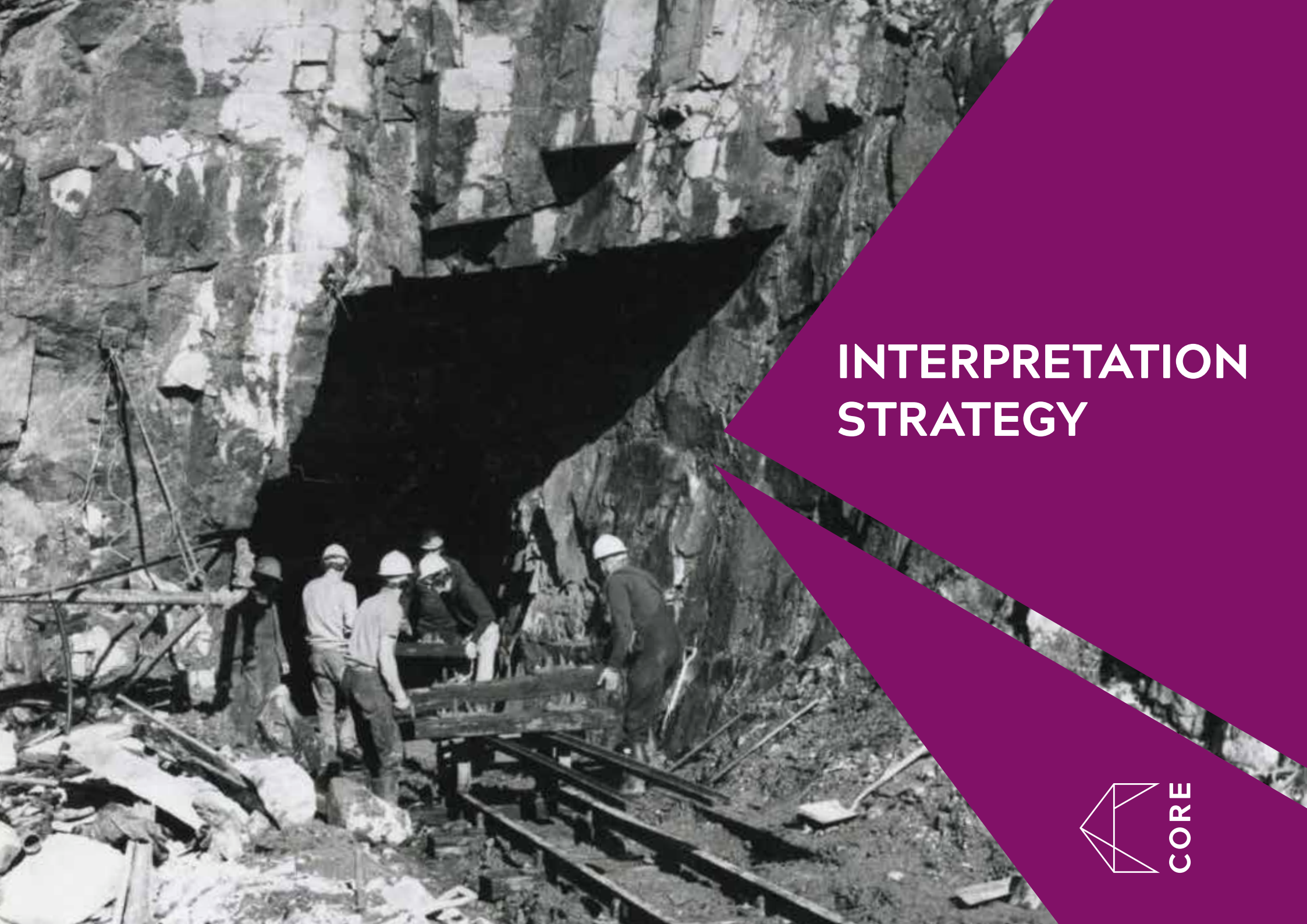
## Technical language

It is important that some technical language is incorporated into the content but this should always be backed up by an easy to understand definition or a visual interpretation of what it means in the form of a diagram, illustration or image.

# LANGAUGE







# INTERPRETATION STRATEGY



# ROUND 1 INTERPRETATION REVIEW

We have reviewed the Round 1 interpretation plan during the initial project orientation phase and continue to reference back to it as we receive more results from consultation.

The list below are the initial findings and the first wave of findings linked directly to wider consultation.

## Points to consider moving forward

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1. First IP has done a good job of collating all stories - we now need to look for the themes and adjust the weighting to ensure an engaging story for a wide range of audiences
2. Conscious effort to tie into the story told at the Maritime Museum and signpost to this as extra interpretive resource
3. Oral histories are costed for in the plan but the intent is not clear - Two crucial collections are needed here, Welsh community voices and Volunteer voices.
4. Digital carries a lot of weight in the first document - The pre and post visit experience is obviously enhanced through digital but we would pay special attention to how it is used during the visitor experience to ensure it enhances rather than detracts.
5. We need to develop the links between this project and the WHS Slate proposal
6. In depth tour to give access to the site and the heritage - our preliminary consultation suggests that the vast majority of visitors would want to come on a tour so careful audience consideration will be needed when developing this element of the interpretation
7. Site specific story development - the railway story is very strong overall but we need to see if we can develop stronger individual identities to more of the stations where we want to tell more bespoke stories linked to that specific area

# INITIAL SURVEY FINDINGS

These points reflect on analysis of data from the visitors survey, local community surveys and staff and volunteer surveys as well as consultation sessions with volunteer groups and individual phone calls.

*More content to be generated from consultation data as we finish analysis*

## Points to consider moving forward

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1. Guided tours need to be built on a skeleton of topics and related facts and then brought to life by an individual tour guides style of delivery and story telling
2. A key element of interpreting the Boston Lodge site is having access to the various buildings and actually witnessing the skills in action - 90% said they would like to see this
3. Tours should be available to all ages - 80% said they would want to tour BLW but 52% of the audience travelled with children of which around 70% were aged 1-12.
4. Approximately 80% of children travelling on the railway enjoyed finding out about the heritage - this shows a hunger to discover
5. Only 38% of visitors went with the intention of discovering the railway's heritage - opportunity to make this a more valid reason to visit
6. Oral histories need to be captured before it's too late, both in the Welsh community and the volunteer family

# INTERPRETATION OUTCOMES

This is a list of interpretation outcomes we would aim to achieve through a combination of written interpretation, interactive engagements and environmental influence.

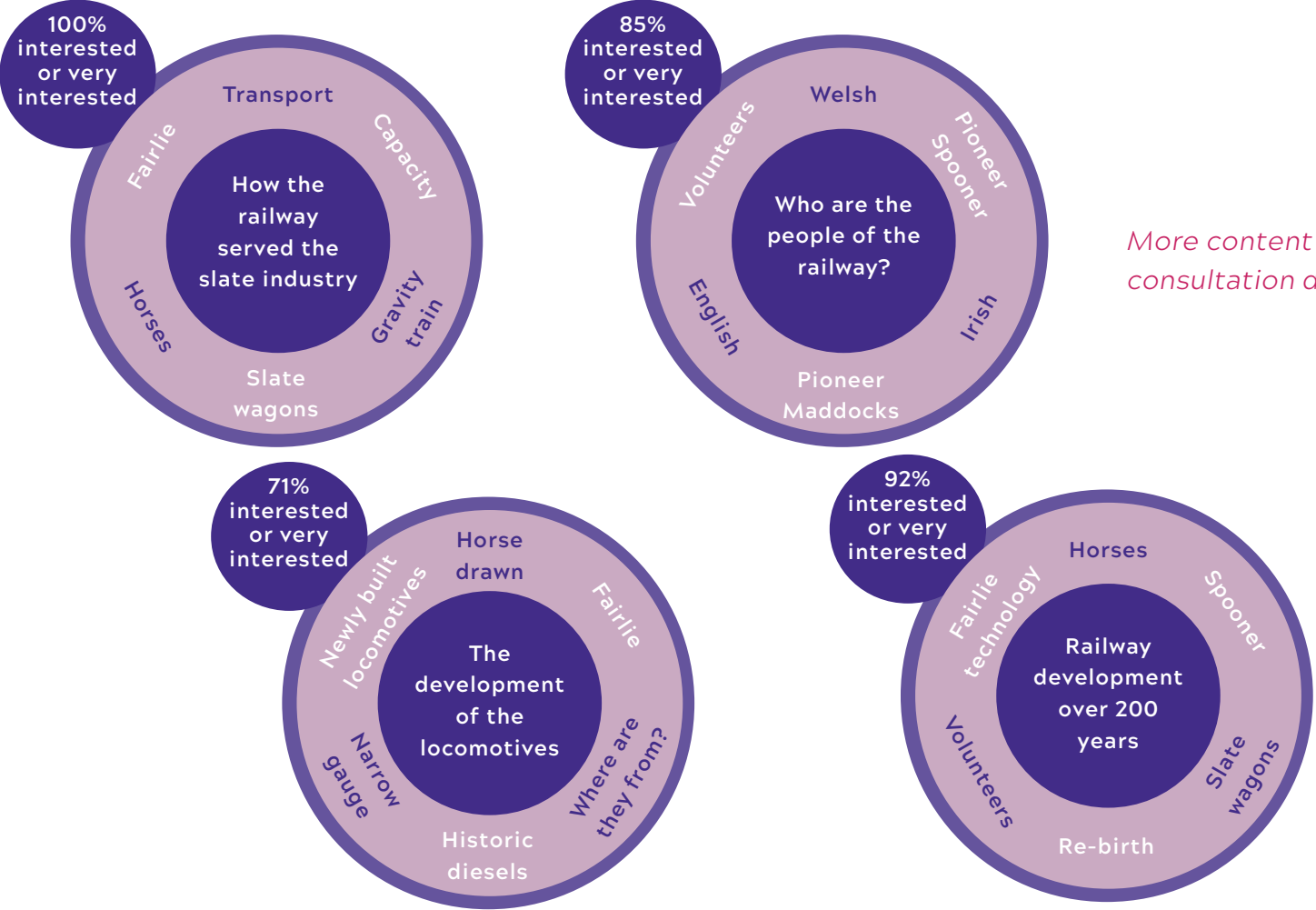
## Interpretation outcomes

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1. Understand the history of the railway from slate wagons pulled by horses to modern visitor attraction
2. Realise the intrinsic link to the historic slate industry
3. Understand the link between building the Cob and the Boston Lodge site
4. Provide visitors with site specific interpretation
5. Visitors to better understand the vast diversity of volunteer roles in running the F&WHR and opportunities for them to get involved
6. Hear the voices of the Welsh community and the volunteer family
7. To engage and surprise visitors

# WHAT DO VISITORS WANT TO KNOW

This diagram explores the questions visitors may have whilst visiting the F&WHR and the inevitable areas of explanation that will help generate a thematic structure.



*More content to be generated from consultation data as we finish analysis*

# THEMATIC STRUCTURE

The table below is an initial indicator of how the previous objectives will map against the stories within the themes.

- Stories common to both railways
- Stories specific to Ffestiniog Railway
- Stories specific to Welsh Highland Railway

Main Themes	Moving and improving			A working breathing railway		Stories of Slate, Sweat and Steam	
Sub Themes	Slate transport	Moving mountains	Ferrying passengers	A unique skill set	A self supporting network	Welsh heritage and family pride	Volunteer stories and memories
Sub theme descriptions	Stories of development driven by the need for more slate	Building and rebuilding railways. New track, new tunnels, new ideas. Same tasks new pioneers	At look at how the passenger service has changed.	What it took and still takes to run the F&WHR	A wide range of volunteers and a wide range of roles	Stories of the historic and present day links to local families	Stories from the 1950s to current day
<b>Stories</b>	<b>Maddocks the cob, the lodge and the harbour - 1808-11</b> How Maddocks created drained land and a harbour. The environmental cost	<b>Building the Cob 1808</b> Quarrying stone to build the Cob. Living in Boston Lodge Not right first time - fixing the Cob	<b>Quarrymen</b> Adjusting the timetable to provide a bespoke service	<b>Construction</b> The crews who built the line. Changing track to keep on track with the changes	<b>The wide range of skills</b> Look at all the skills needed to make this place work	<b>Historic slate links with local families</b> Recount the histories of families who had members working in the slate mines	<b>1954 Pioneers</b> The story of the restoration
	<b>Spooner Survey 1830</b> How do you survey valleys, hills and mountains to find a route	<b>Building a gravity railway</b> Methods used to cut this line into the hillsides and over the valleys	<b>Commuting in the 1870s</b> David Lloyd George used the train to his office in Blaenau Ffestiniog	<b>Running a horse drawn railway</b> Horse station, slate shipping yard and weighbridge	<b>Opportunity to get involved</b> Information about the ways into volunteering	<b>Welsh railway ties</b> Stories of those involved in the railway before its restoration and during the restoration	<b>How did you get involved?</b> Volunteer pen portraits to help visitors understand the passion and fulfilment the volunteers get
	<b>Horse drawn railway</b> The gravity train, horses and tramways	<b>Self sustaining</b> Boston Lodge Works builds, maintains and repairs	<b>Ffestiniog Toy Railway</b> A promotional tourism offer from 1939 of a road and rail tour 'Thro' Faeryland'	<b>Learning about steam</b> Firsts locos and setting up shop to deal with them	<b>Gangs and family</b> Look at relationships that have developed and how support networks are vital	<b>Farming and living with a railway</b> How have people altered their way of living now a train is once again running through the landscape	<b>Why do you do it?</b> Volunteer pen portraits to help visitors understand the passion and fulfilment the volunteers get
	<b>Steam capacity 1863</b> Steam engines introduced to keep up with the ever increasing slate production	<b>1954 - Restoration begins</b> What seem like insurmountable issues are tackled by irrepressible volunteers	<b>Public transport</b> The role of the railway as a transport link for everyday passengers	<b>Building steam locomotives in the modern era</b> Modern day engineers building modern day steam engines	<b>Geographical range</b> Simple story about how far people are willing to come to put in a shift	<b>Black Hand Gang</b> Volunteer track laying gang, friendly rivals of 'the rest of the world' gang	<b>What do you get out of volunteering?</b> Volunteer pen portraits to help visitors understand the passion and fulfilment the volunteers get
	<b>Fairlie engines increase capacity 1870</b> The world watches on as Fairlie and Spooner show off the double-bogie articulated locomotive	<b>Restoring the WHR</b> The journey of WHR from derelict to open again - the most modern heritage railway	<b>Tourists to Snowdon</b> WHR brings tourists to Snowdon to walk the Watkin Path - 1892	<b>Wooden carriage building and restoration</b> A skill that continues to this day		<b>Munitions factory</b> During WWI women run Boston Lodge Works as a munitions factory	<b>Would you like to get involved?</b> On gallery discussion to get people to voice out loud a desire to get involved
	<b>Closure of the railway due to decline in slate production</b> Railway closes 1946	<b>Locos returned, rebuilt and created</b> Stories of restocking the railway with locos and rolling stock rebuilt and brought in from South Africa	<b>Focus on the natural environment</b> Modern passengers encouraged to disembark and explore the surrounding environment	<b>Electrifying idea</b> 1900 - Portmadoc Beddgelert and South Snowdon Railway propose an electric line		<b>Welsh Highland Story</b> The reason for this railway and its struggles to balance the books	<b>Remembering our volunteers</b> Stories of the volunteer workforce who have passed on
		<b>Long road to Caernarfon</b> Many plans since 1885 to reach Caernarfon - finally achieved in 1997					
<b>Cross Cutting Theme</b>	<b>The rise and fall of the slate industry that served the world</b>						



# ENGAGEMENT & STORY MAPS



The story of the F&WHR's history, its restoration and the vibrant volunteer community it supports are the three main themes for our story tellers to begin to mould their tales.

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The following pages will expand on our five approaches to telling the story of the F&WHR. However across the project it is important to us that we stick to these storytelling principles which ever method the visitors encounter.

- Wherever possible narrative is better delivered in the first person by the staff and volunteers but there must be a consistency in the facts that everyone delivers
- Content, in whatever format, should be layered and delivered from the premise that visitors are starting this experience from knowing nothing
- Content should be widely accessible both physically and intellectually but it should not be devoid of technical information. This type of information should be used where it is appropriate and be well presented and scaffolded to aid understanding.

# STORYTELLING TOOLKIT





# STORYTELLING TOOLKIT



## Storytellers

In every corner of the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railway there are staff and volunteers that exude a passion for the roles they play within this railway company. These storytellers are the frontline when it comes to engaging the 250 000 visitors each year.

The project will work with staff and volunteers to equip them to better engage with visitors. Helping them understand the best ways to deliver their individual story gems as well as sharing a coherent historically accurate story of the Railways historic past.

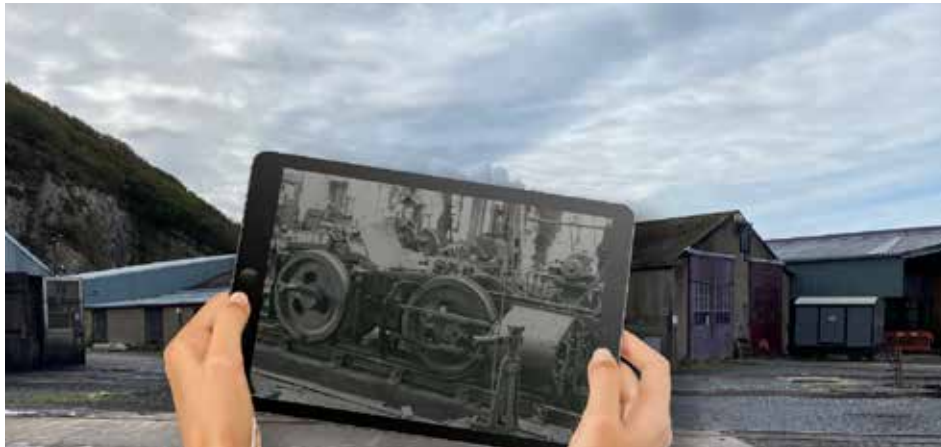
We will develop gifted storytellers to take on greater responsibilities as live on train interpreters and Boston Lodge tour guides, but everyone will have a voice to add to the visitor experience.

## Written word

Written content, across all media will be engaging to a wide range of visitors. It will carry central messages, telling visitors about the history of the railway, the people who worked here and the volunteer army that keep it going.

The content written will be layered; designed to engage through eye-catching headlines and immediately accessible opening paragraphs. The delivery of complex information will be carefully considered as this type of content may be better delivered through other methods.

# STORYTELLING TOOLKIT



*IMAGE OF VISITOR ENGAGED  
IN A HERITAGE HANDS ON  
ACTIVITY*

## Digital and AV

We will offer a wide range of digital engagement to the visitor. It is important to reach visitors before they arrive, content accessed at home needs to be inspiring and succinct.

Whilst on site, AV elements will offer discovery through curated information regarding locomotive and rolling stock, community oral histories, photo archives and oral histories of volunteers and staff.

We will use film to give a sense of place and time; showing gravity slate runs, quarry workers skating home, the life of a fireman or the discovery of the abandoned loco shed.

Visitors' hand held devices will be utilised to deliver extra content at specific locations, eye-spy trails for younger visitors and in carriage interpretation to enhance the journey.

## Experiential

Utilising the full range of senses is important to create robust memories and engaging experiences.

Throughout the experience we want visitors to fully engage with the interpretive engagements offered. Rich visual and audio engagements will be delivered at Boston Lodge and Caernarfon station. Visual stimulation of imagination and empathy will be triggered by figures and props on platforms telling their stories. Any opportunities to allow tactile contact with objects will be taken.

View points will be signposted and opportunities for sensory engagement will be suggested within text and by volunteers.

## Participatory

For lots of people, Information discovered rather than given, creates a richer and more rewarding experience. To provide this experience we will add opportunities for visitors to explore and discover.

This could be as simple as signposting a path to the Cei Mawr dry-stone embankment or a more complex treasure-trail app assisting discoveries on a longer walk.

Of course the Activity Plan will outline opportunities for visitors to commit to practical hands on experiences, but interactive elements showing engineering advancements, like the articulated bogie or how to find a level without laser tech will engage all visitors during their visit.

A broad digital package will be used to enhance the visitor experience where it is most impactful. The use of a bespoke App will allow visitors to take interpretation with them as they travel and a series of films will deliver factual and emotive content to help visitors realise the discoveries of the first volunteers and the variety of today's volunteers.

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Film will be used to promote the train journey experience. Modern footage will be interlaced with historic scenes to give visitors a sense of the story behind these journeys.

The story of volunteers will be told by volunteers. Giving a sense of what it means to them to volunteer and the diversity of roles available.

A finale film at Boston Lodge Works is designed to evoke an empathic response, taking the visitor through the journey of the early volunteers. From the discovery of a derelict engine shed to the rebuilding of an iconic Railway.

A visitor's online journey is mapped over the next 3 pages and includes the use of a bespoke App developed to enhance and accompany the in carriage and on platform experience.

# DIGITAL STRATEGY



# DIGITAL INTERPRETATION - PRE VISIT

## Planning a trip

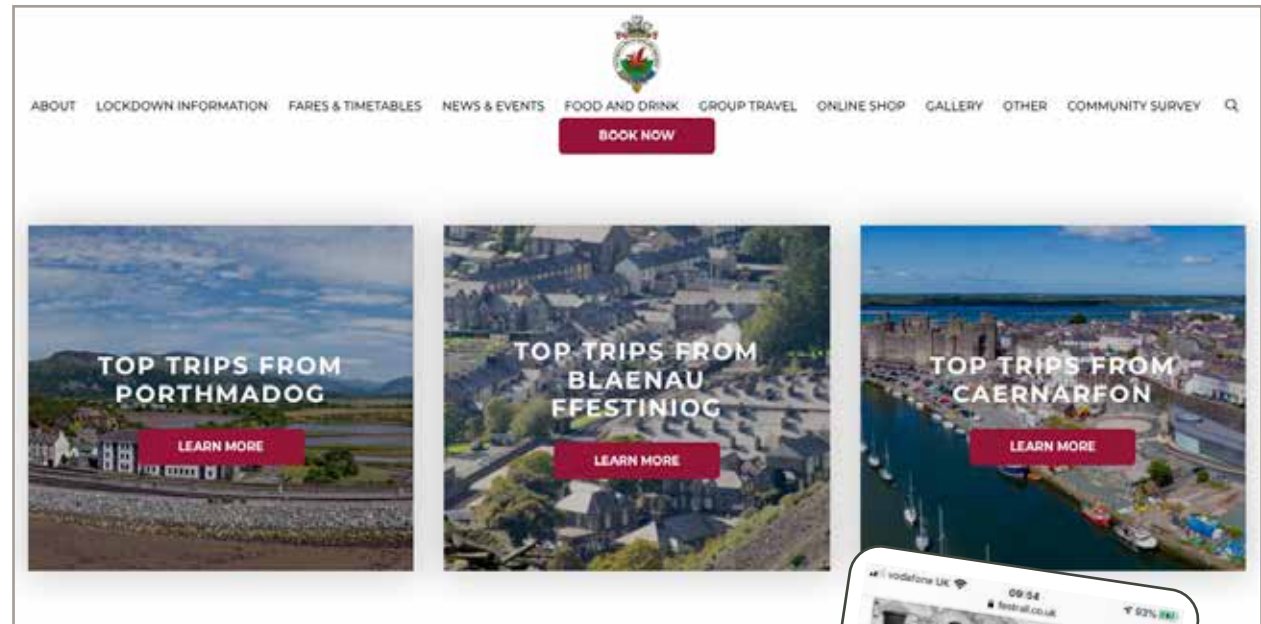
Setting the scene for a visitor is important. We want them to feel confident in the trip they are investing both time, money and even reputation in.

The best way to ensure a level of confidence with our visitors prior to a fantastic visit, is through digital engagement of which there is an abundance available to us. The best way for us to control this engagement is through the website.

The existing website does a great job of visually selling the scenic nature of the trip but does little by way of preparing the visitor for a heritage engagement. The areas we feel most need to be improved are:

**Other** - This section hides away some really important information, history, volunteering, Boston Lodge and publications which contain information about the area.

**Online shop** - This section seems disjointed and will discourage shoppers from buying online. Promotion of a pre-visit guide book might prove popular.



**Plan your visit** - This section has some really good information but seems to only appear when browsers are in the shop section. It is important that this is prominent.

**Confusing routes** - The website is packed with great imagery and informative information, however finding it can sometimes be difficult. We propose a restructure of the content into a more visitor friendly layout.



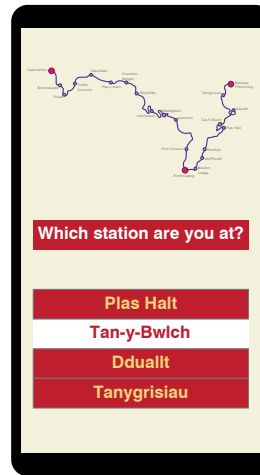
# DIGITAL INTERPRETATION - DURING VISIT

The digital proposal has been carefully designed to discourage users from being glued to their screens whilst travelling in a beautiful captivating landscape.

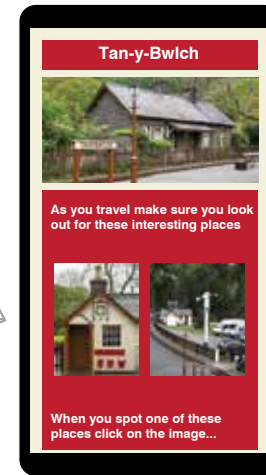
The App which would be downloaded pre-visit or at the Hub sites, is self-contained and does not need further data connections once loaded onto a phone or digital device.

The primary outcome of the App is to encourage discovery on the railway journey. Visitors will input the station they are at and the App will suggest a list of buildings, structures or features to look out for. As visitors find the treasures they click on them to reveal some choice interpretation that will be relevant to the exact spot they are stood in. This will engage all levels of visitor from competitive spotters to knowledge seekers.

An extra feature that will be relevant to visitors wherever they are on the railway is an 'eye spy' locomotive page. This will be pre-loaded with all the rolling stock on the railway. As they are spotted a record of what you have seen will begin to grow. This can be repeated as a nature based 'eye spy' if visitors disembark for a walk in the amazing surroundings or even a 'Roles on the Railway' section to promote the diversity of opportunities for volunteers..



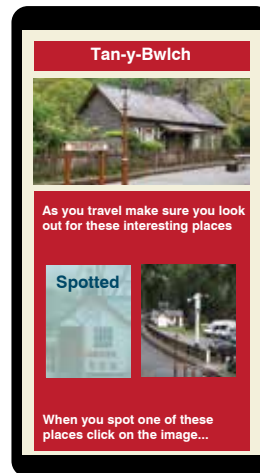
**Start up** - Input from the user will inform the App where you are on the line



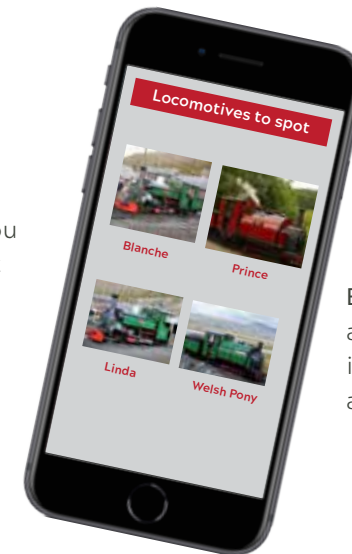
**Look up** - The App is designed to make users look away from their device and spot things they would normally not notice. When you spot something click on the image



**Learn** - Clicking on the image reveals information about what you spotted.



**Keep looking** - Clicking 'Spotted' records what you found and sends you out to look for the next hidden gem



**Eye-Spy** - This stand alone section carries info about all the locos and carriages on the line

# DIGITAL INTERPRETATION - POST VISIT

## A post visit narrative

Space on the website for visitors to celebrate their visit with others is a good way to stay engaged and get people talking and sharing with other potential visitor groups. Personal recommendations of journeys, food and walks that have all started on the railway are real to others looking in.

We would like to add a section to the website that allows visitor to post images and comments, ask questions and sign up for further information. This should be a two way interaction with the F&WHR sharing images and blogs from events and talking about upcoming attractions.

### Volunteering

The volunteering page does a good job of showing the volunteer team in a positive light. It should be improved to show the positive benefits of being a volunteer, the positive social benefits and the personal development and improved wellbeing and self esteem that are all positive outcomes of volunteering.

Roles and responsibilities should be actively advertised as people feel more inclined to respond to a quantifiable need than an open ended commitment.



### Promote volunteering

A film will be commissioned to promote the positive effects of volunteering by capturing some of the amazing achievements of the volunteer force and its history. This film would be used on the website to demonstrate the opportunities, positive outcomes and personal development that await future volunteers.

With the Volunteer Coordinator, the Project will be able to respond positively to potential volunteers, linking them with well matched opportunities.



The main Hub Sites are the three main ingress and egress points on the railways. At these points it is key to engage the visitor with the story of the two railways and start them on their historic journey.

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Each Hub will contain the over arching story of the railways. The tales of building a narrow gauge line clinging to the hills, historic transportation of slate, goods and people and the rebirth of the railways through an army of volunteers. Each hub will have an emphasis linked to its location but it will be obvious to visitors that these three locations share a common underlying story.

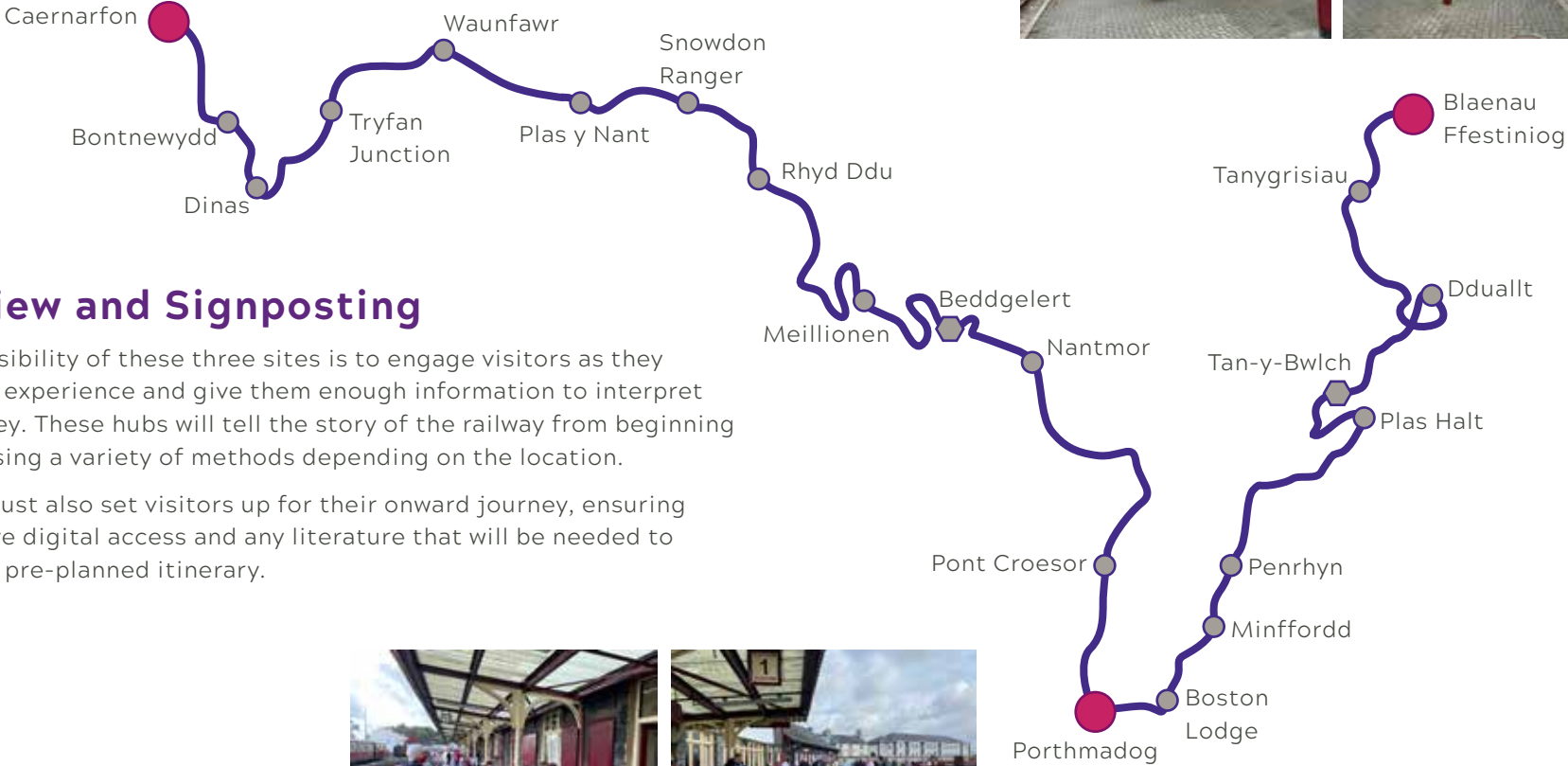
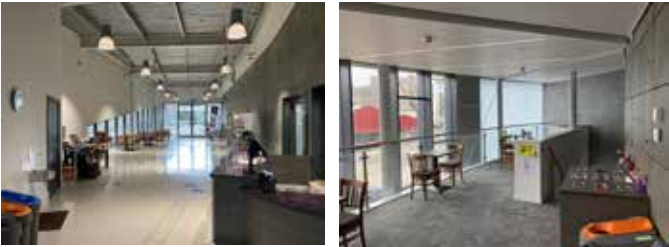
Whilst at the Hub Site, visitors will be encouraged to download the App to further enhance their journey. The Hubs will signpost both the Mini Hubs and other points of interest to be found at stations on the route. The App will act as a reminder of the important landmarks as visitors embark on their journey.



## MAIN HUBS



# STORY MAP - MAIN HUBS



## Overview and Signposting

The responsibility of these three sites is to engage visitors as they begin their experience and give them enough information to interpret their journey. These hubs will tell the story of the railway from beginning to today, using a variety of methods depending on the location.

The hubs must also set visitors up for their onward journey, ensuring visitors have digital access and any literature that will be needed to complete a pre-planned itinerary.





# STORY MAP - MAIN HUBS

## Hub site stories

Each of the three hub sites will tell the story of the railway's history from slate tramways to modern station buildings.

The role of the hubs is to engage visitors in the history of these lines, why are they here, who built them and what effect did they and do they still have? Information needs to be easily accessible and quickly digested. Delivered in bite sized chunks, the nuggets visitors pick up here will lay the foundation for the rest of their visit.

### Hubs will have

- Overview content with a slant to location
- Signposting to enable route planning
- Film content at Caernarfon
- Digital instruction - how to download use and engage with content
- Leaflet information for related attractions
- Information regarding WHS status



### Overview content for Caernarfon

- Slate transport**  
Horse drawn tramway  
Closure of the railway due to decline in slate production
- Moving mountains**  
Restoring the WHR  
Long road to Caernarfon
- A supportive web**  
Gangs and family  
Opportunity to get involved
- Welsh heritage and family pride**  
Black Hand Gang  
Welsh Highland Story



### Overview content for Porthmadog

- Slate transport**  
Maddocks, the Cob, Boston lodge and the harbour  
Spooner Survey 1830  
Horse drawn gravity railway
- Moving mountains**  
Building the Cob 1808  
1954 - Restoration begins
- Ferrying passengers**  
Commuting in the 1870s  
Public transport - in the middle of town
- Welsh heritage and family pride**  
Welsh railway ties



### Overview content for Blaenau Ffestiniog

- Slate transport**  
Spooner Survey 1830  
Horse drawn gravity railway  
Fairlie engines increase capacity 1870
- Moving mountains**  
Building a gravity railway  
Self sustaining
- Ferrying passengers**  
Quarrymen
- Welsh heritage and family pride**  
Historic slate links with local families

# MINI HUBS

The Mini Hubs, one at Beddgelert and the other at Tan-y-Bwlch, serve to reinforce the over arching story told at the main hubs. These sites were chosen due to their increased footfall which will enable engagement from non-travelling passengers as well as reinforcing the heritage story to those travelling from one of the Main Hub Sites.

The interpretation at these sites, in conjunction with the App, will encourage visitors to explore the landscape around the stations. It is important that visitors get a real sense of the challenges faced when building the railway but also to look at how the narrow gauge has restricted the impact the railway has on the local ecology.

Silhouetted figures on these stations will showcase the historic roles on the railway. Visitors will be able to scan these figures to find out more about their role and how it is mirrored in today's volunteer force.



Tan-y-Bwlch station



Beddgelert station

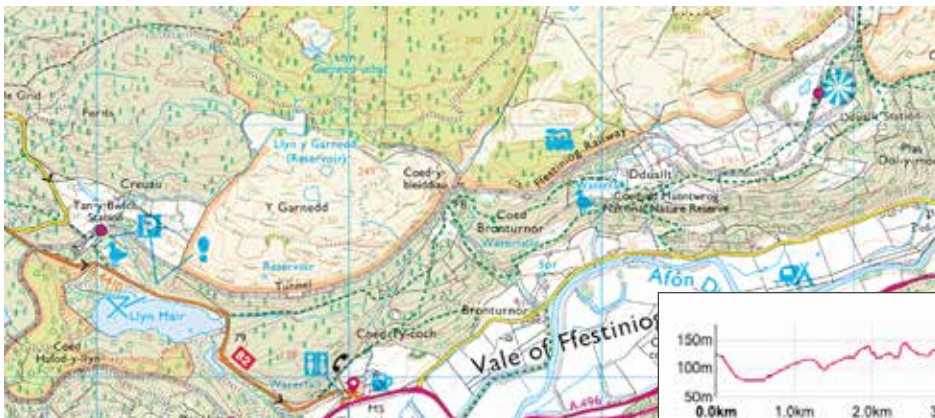
# STORY MAP - MINI HUB SITES

## Small and punchy

These two sites offer more than just a place to stretch your legs. Because of the facilities on offer here and the substantial footfall these two sites will carry a more in-depth story of the railway and its past, alongside individual stories linked to the sites.



As visitors explore the environment surrounding the railways they will begin to see how the use of a narrow gauge is both necessary to navigate the difficult terrain but also means the railways make minimum impact on the natural ecology.



Trail from Tan-Y-Bwlch to Dduallt - 1 hour



# STORY MAP - MINI HUB SITES

## Stories for individual sites

These two stations offer access to refreshments as well as the village of Beddgelert and walks from Tan-y-Bwlch. This combination means greater footfall and longer dwell times at the stations.

It is important that we utilise this opportunity to properly introduce passengers and would be passengers to the railway. For this reason we would add overview panels of the railway at both sites alongside content that is relevant to the individual stations.

One of the important storytelling methods is to let the people working on the railways speak. So for each of the stations there are selected known characters or job roles that will be interpreted directly from the person represented. We want visitors to see the parallels of historic roles and those still in evidence today.

**People include**

Bessie Jones - station mistress at Tan-y-Bwlch.  
Miriam Roberts - station mistress at Beddgelert



**Content for Beddgelert**

**Overview text including**  
Welsh Highland Railway story  
See the gradient climb -  
s-bends and loops

Site specific stories

**Moving mountains**  
Restoring the WHR

**Welsh heritage and family pride**  
Welsh railway ties



**Content for Tan-y-Bwlch**

**Overview text including**  
Horse drawn gravity railway  
Fairlie engines increase capacity 1870  
1954 - Restoration begins

Site specific stories

**Ferrying passengers**  
Focus on the natural environment

**Welsh heritage and family pride**  
Farming and living with a railway  
Woodland and the Oakley estate

The stations stories will be discrete to the stations they are located and will carry links to the wider story, signposting potential visitors to the Main and Mini Hub sites to gain a greater understanding.

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These sites are chosen due to the potential footfall from other activities as highlighted on the map on the next page. Adding in these individual stories to station sites gives an opportunity to add specific flavours by telling niche stories that would be edited out of the Hub sites. The stories will be chosen to arouse interest and encourage further discovery.



WHR Rail Ale Trail



Dduallt spiral

# STATION STORIES

# STORY MAP - STATION STORIES

## Footfall and story points

These sites are highlighted because they either have secondary footfall from events, campsites, ingress for walkers or bird watching sites or they are sites of importance within the story.



# STORY MAP - STATION STORIES



Dinas

Site specific stories

**Slate transport**

Horse drawn tramway - slate to Caernarfon

**Construction**

Changing track to keep on track with the changes

**Ferrying passengers**

Public transport



Waunfawr

Site specific stories

**Ferrying Passengers**

Tourists to Snowdon

**Moving mountains**

WHR gateway to the mountains, running with the river and the road



Rhyd Ddu

Site specific stories

**Slate transport**

Research still to be done

**Moving mountains**

Restoring the WHR



Pont Croesor

Site specific stories

**Slate transport**

Research still to be done

**Moving mountains**

Restoring the WHR



Minffordd

Site specific stories

**A unique skill set**

Running a horse drawn railway - focus on horse station at Cae Ednyfed or Minffordd Yard shipping slate



Dduallt

Site specific stories

**Moving mountains**

1954 - Restoration begins - focus on the deviation

**Moving mountains**

Building a gravity train Quarrymen Car Gwyllt to the main line

A tour of Boston Lodge Works is not a static view of a set of historic buildings, more a glimpse into the past through the work of a highly skilled workforce, still utilising practices seen when the buildings were new. This is a living, breathing, historical and contemporary experience.

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Tours will be developed and tailored for a the mainstream visitor, specialist visitor groups and Welsh speaking groups, mainstream or specialist. Through the activities set out in the Activity Plan, volunteers will be given the opportunity to train to be tour guides. Special emphasis will be placed on the art of storytelling.

As the tour content is developed through consultation with the Interpretation supervisor, the Interpretation Trainee and the volunteer guides, we will ensure that a factually accurate framework is developed with room for Guides to add their own personal slant linked to their volunteering history.



# BOSTON LODGE WORKS TOUR





The architectural restoration of the site has enabled better access to buildings that were in disrepair and the renewal of the Wagon Store which had gone all together. The improvements to the site mean that it is possible to better tell the story of Boston Lodge Works.

Visitors will better understand the horse drawn waggons when they can see the Smithy and the renewed Waggon shed. Being able to utilise the Old Engine Shed to house an exhibition in the same space where legend has it this derelict railway was rediscovered, adds a real sense of atmosphere to the event.

As visitors are guided through the site they will get a real sense of the history from both the buildings and the guides storytelling skills. We intend to add to this atmosphere through the use of props, strategically placed around the site. This could include a pair of metal workers tongs or the bare boiler of a disassembled engine.

There purpose will be carefully choreographed to add depth and flavour to the stories and messages we want to deliver. Having something that can be explored and handled will add to the depth of experience for the visitors

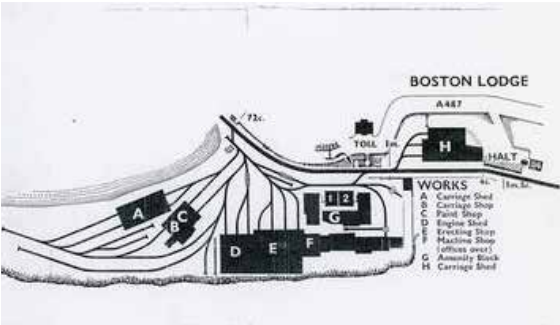


As visitors make their way down into the site they will first enter the newly built Waggon Shed for an orientation session. Whilst they don their hi-vis and hard hat, visitors will notice a map of the site showing historic images of the buildings, but more importantly the people who worked here. We want visitors to feel the sense of the continued work flow from the sites earliest history to the modern day.

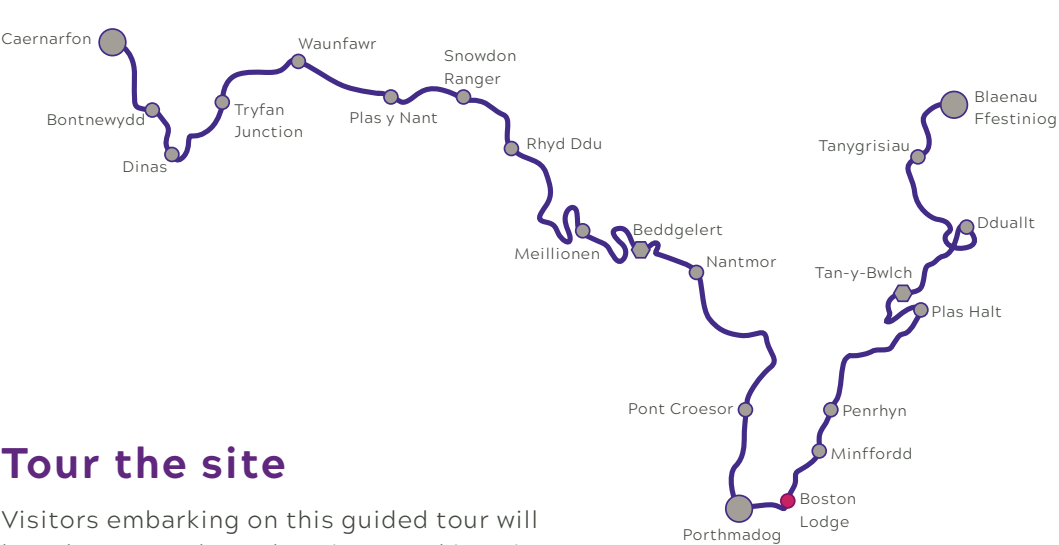
As they are guided through the site, tour guides will point out the props and show images and footage that reveal the inner goings on of buildings in the past and today.

Having had opportunities to roam through the New engine Shed and listen to a description of the day in the life of a skilled trades person the group will make their way to the Old Engine Shed. As the doors are eased open and people peer in, they will feel something of the discovery felt by those who first rediscovered the gems in here.

As visitors make their way though the front of the shed they will come out into an exhibition space where the star attraction will be a film designed to evoke the excitement, struggle and elation of this railways rebirth.



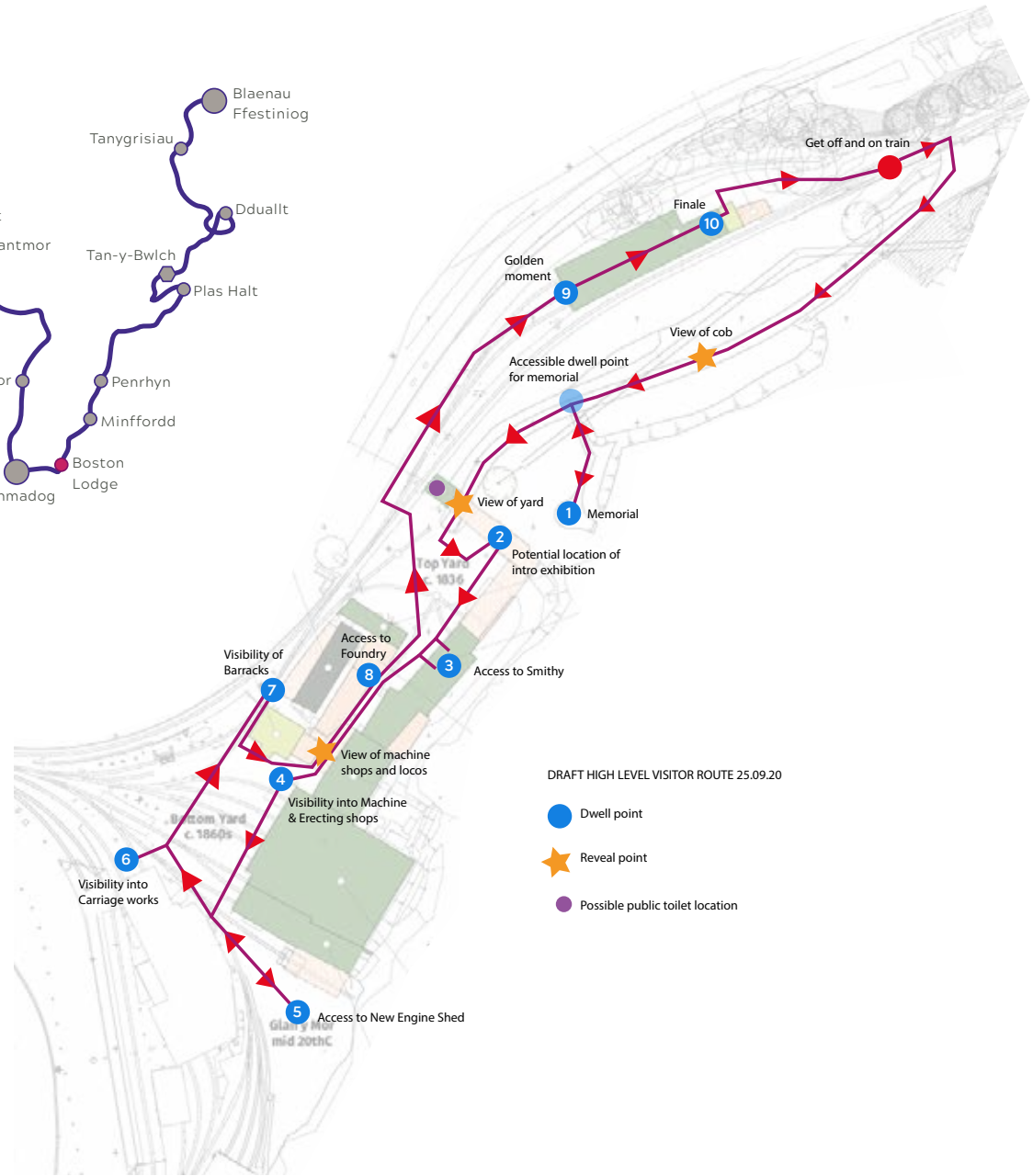
# STORY MAP - BOSTON LODGE



## Tour the site

Visitors embarking on this guided tour will be taken around a truly unique working site. They will understand the reason that Boston Lodge is here and its part in the building of the Cob. They will then go on to see that from its beginnings as a source of stone it has gone on to be the birth place of locomotives, carriages and all that was and is still needed to keep the railway moving.

The site will offer visitors a glimpse into the real workings of the railway in the carriage works, erecting shed and machine shops as well as exhibitions that assist greater understanding into the life of Boston Lodge and the exhilaration of its re-discovery in 1954.



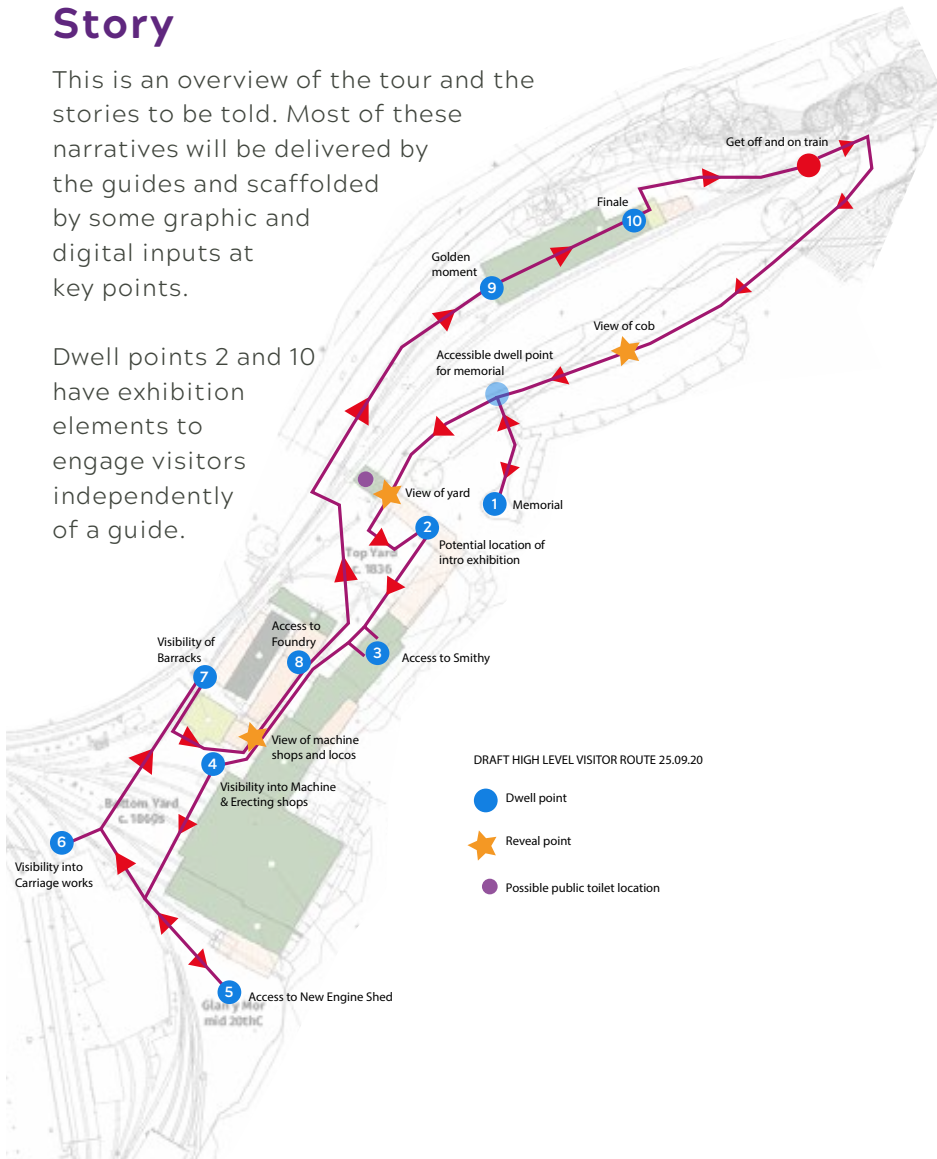
- DRAFT HIGH LEVEL VISITOR ROUTE 25.09.20
- Dwell point
  - ★ Reveal point
  - Possible public toilet location

# STORY MAP - BOSTON LODGE

## Story

This is an overview of the tour and the stories to be told. Most of these narratives will be delivered by the guides and scaffolded by some graphic and digital inputs at key points.

Dwell points 2 and 10 have exhibition elements to engage visitors independently of a guide.



### 1 - Memorial

Stories

#### Slate transport

Maddocks the cob, the lodge and the harbour

#### Construction

Building the Cob 1808

#### Volunteer stories and memories

Remembering our volunteers



### 2 - Wagon repair shop

Stories

#### Slate transport

Horse drawn railway - slate to Porthmadog

#### Moving mountains

Self sustaining - Boston Lodge Works builds, maintains and repairs

#### Volunteer stories and memories

Why do you do it?  
How did you get involved?



### 3 - Smithy & Iron foundry

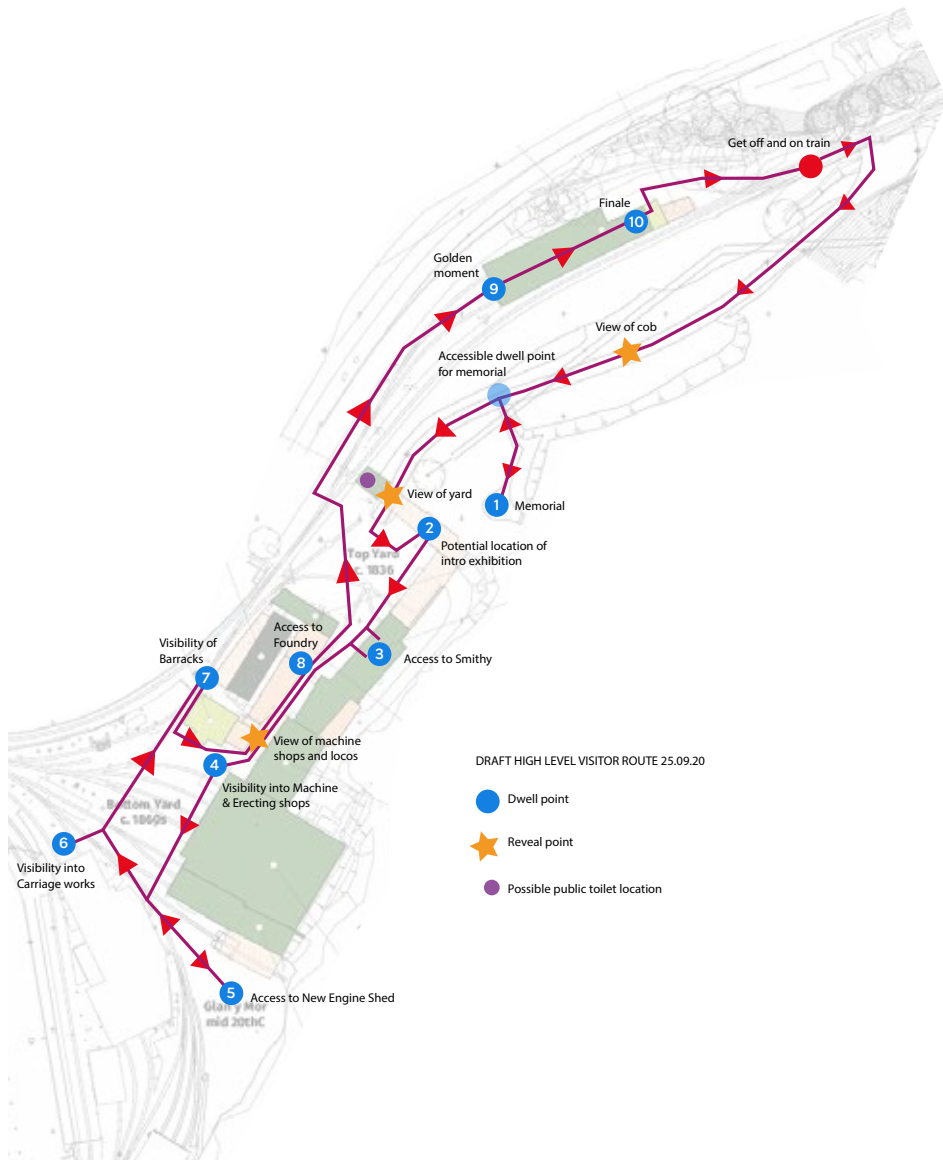
Stories

**A unique set of skills**  
Running a horse drawn railway

#### A self supporting network

The wide range of skills

# STORY MAP - BOSTON LODGE



## 4 - Machine and erecting shop

Stories

**A unique set of skills**  
Learning about steam  
Building steam locomotives in the modern era

**A self supporting network**  
Look at all the skills needed to make this place work

**Slate transport**  
Fairlie engines increase capacity 1870



## 5 - New engine shed

Stories

**A unique set of skills**  
Learning about steam  
Building steam locomotives in the modern era

**Volunteer stories and memories**  
Why do you do it?  
How did you get involved?



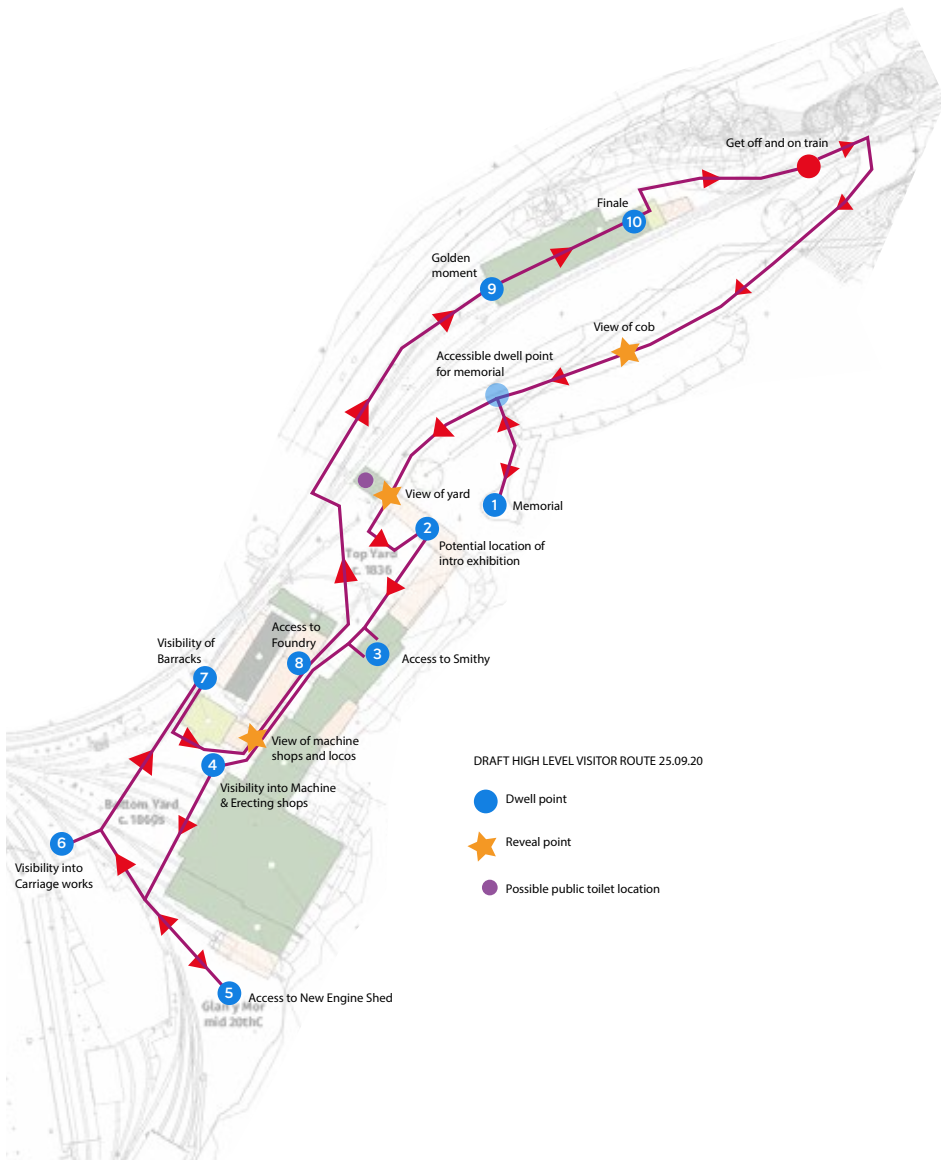
## 6 - Carriage works

Stories

**A unique set of skills**  
Wooden carriage building and restoration

**A self supporting network**  
The wide range of skills

# STORY MAP - BOSTON LODGE



## 7 - Barracks

### Stories

**Moving mountains**  
Building the Cob 1808  
1954 - Restoration begins - tackled by irrepressible volunteers

### A self supporting network

Look at all the skills needed to make this place work

### Welsh heritage and family pride

Munitions factory  
During WWI, women run Boston Lodge Works as a munitions factory



## 8 - Foundry

### Stories

**A unique set of skills**  
Learning about steam  
Building steam locomotives in the modern era

### Moving mountains

Self sustaining Boston Lodge Works builds, maintains and repairs



## 9 - Old engine shed

### Stories

**Moving mountains**  
1954 - Restoration begins. What seem like insurmountable issues are tackled by irrepressible volunteers

### Volunteer stories and memories

1954 Pioneers  
The story of the restoration

# STORY MAP - BOSTON LODGE



## 10 - Old engine shed exhibition space

### Stories

#### Slate transport

Maddocks the cob, the lodge and the harbour - 1808-11  
 Spooner Survey 1830  
 Steam capacity 1863

#### Moving mountains

Building a gravity railway  
 1954 - Restoration begins  
 Locos returned, rebuilt and created

#### A self supporting network

The wide range of skills  
 Opportunity to get involved

#### Welsh heritage and family pride

Stories of the historic and present day links to local families

#### Volunteer stories and memories



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