

For release: 2 January 2019

## Farewell Wales and welcome to Cumbria!

Today **Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways** says 'farewell' to a brand-new narrow gauge Observation carriage that has been commissioned and built for the Lake District's much loved **Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway** in the Lake District.

[INSERT PHOTO of NEW OBSERVATION CARRIAGE LEAVING / ARRIVING TBC]

The luxury carriage which will offer panoramic views through its large glass windows, has been built to a similar design as Ffestiniog Railway's Pullman Observation carriage launched in May 2018 but it is dramatically different in size. This is because the the Welsh railway operates full scale engines and Ravenglass operates small 'narrow gauge' engines, which is why it's known affectionately as 'La'al Ratty' in Cumbrian dialect.

The delivery of this new luxury Observation carriage is a keystone part of the rolling stock replacement project for Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway. The engineering team is working closely with team at Ffestiniog to redesign the closed carriages to increase the levels of comfort for passengers. An important part of the relationship between the two railways is the exchange of specialist knowledge, which helps to keep heritage engineering skills alive.

**Martin Cookman, Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway Operations Manager**, says *"Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways are leaders in the field of steam train engineering which is why we are so chuffed to be working with them on this project. When the observation carriage arrives, we are going to use it to decide the size of the new rolling stock replacements. It is far taller, longer and wider than any of our current carriages and will need to complete hundreds of hours safety track testing before the first passengers can get on board."*

**Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways General Manager Paul Lewin** says, *"We are pleased to have been part of the team that has designed and built the first of a fleet of carriages that will transform the customer experience of the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway. Boston Lodge Works is one of the world's oldest railway workshops and has a track record of innovation and quality engineering. This carriage will offer modern day visitors the chance to experience the comfort of the golden age of travel."*

Once the Observation carriage has completed its full safety testing there will be an official launch ceremony and event to mark the occasion later in the year, date to be announced. Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway reopens to the public for the February school half-term Saturday 1- Sunday 24 February 2019, then runs weekend services until returning to full timetable on Saturday 16 March with a host of exciting themed events across the year including PJ Masks train, the Big Birthday Gala, Magical Station Gardens and Young Engineer's Day Out. <https://ravenglass-railway.co.uk>

[END]

Editors notes:

**To arrange a press trip please contact:** Sorcha Hunter PR & Content Executive Cumbria Tourism | [shunter@cumbriatourism.org](mailto:shunter@cumbriatourism.org) | 01539 825019

**Editors notes**

**Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway** is a family-owned business operating a heritage, narrow gauge steam railway on the Western Coast of the Lake District. The railway is surrounded by stunning views and walks and is based in Ravenglass, the only coastal village in the Lake District National Park. The business's awards include a Silver Green Tourism award, Coach Tourism's 2015 Heritage Railway award, Cumbria Tourism's 2015 Large Visitor Attraction of the Year award among many others.