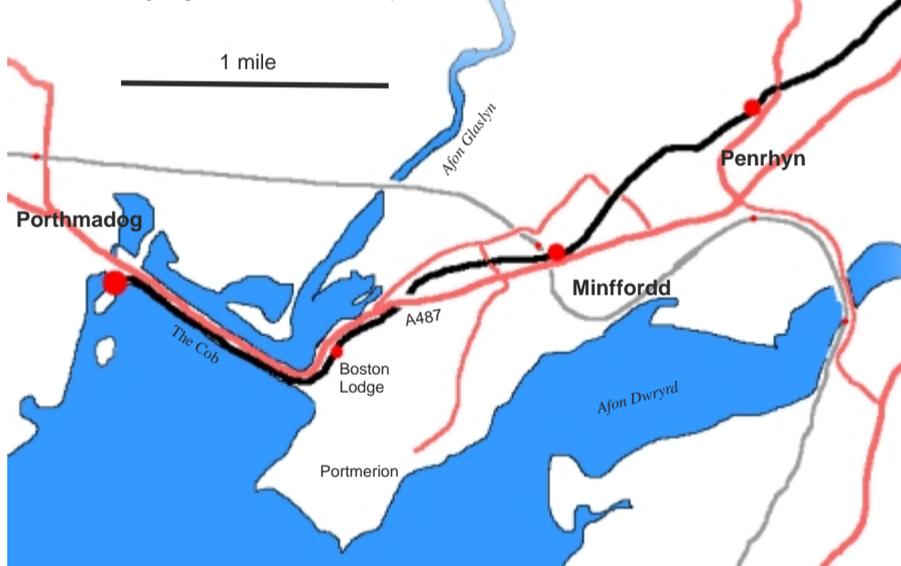


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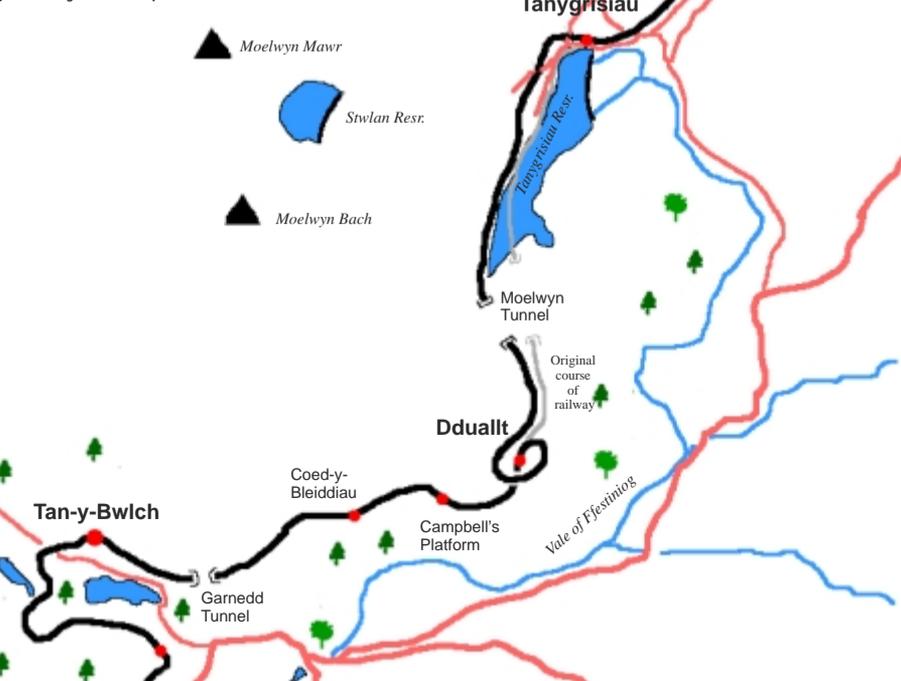


## A ride on the Ffestiniog Railway

Here the fireman refills the locomotive's water tanks while we wait for the train from Blaenau Ffestiniog to arrive. The down train eventually arrives hauled by another Double Fairlie, 'Earl of Merioneth' which has the diesel 'Criccieth Castle' coupled inside. The Fairlie was having a 'running in turn' after some maintenance work. Our driver exchanges the token with the driver of the down train and with all our passengers back on board and all the doors locked we depart. Still passing through woodland and climbing on a gradient of 1 in 86 we first reach Garnedd Tunnel. The clearances between the train and the tunnel sides are very tight and there is a speed restriction here.



The approach to Blaenau Ffestiniog station which is adjacent to the standard gauge Conway Valley line from Llandudno Jc. is on the steepest gradient on the line, 1 in 66. Having surmounted this short but steep gradient the train comes to a stand in the terminus and the journey is completed.



## The Ffestiniog Railway - Porthmadog to Blaenau Ffestiniog

Our 13½ mile journey to Blaenau Ffestiniog starts at Porthmadog Harbour station where the Double Fairlie 0-4-4-OT 'David Lloyd George' built by the Ffestiniog Railway in 1992 at Boston Lodge is ready to depart with a train of 10 bogie coaches.

The first part of the journey is across the Cob on an almost level gradient. Once off the Cob the line swings round a 90° curve passing Boston Lodge where the railway's workshops are situated and the train pauses briefly at Boston Lodge Halt.

Beyond this point the line rises on a gradient of 1 in 86 passing under the busy A487 and over an ungated crossing before arriving at Minffordd station. Here the fireman has to exchange the token for the section of line from Porthmadog for the one which will allow the train to proceed to Tan-y-Bwlch. Departing from Minffordd, now on a gradient of 1 in 82, the train passes over Gwyndy Bank before arriving at Penrhyn.

Soon after departing we cross over the Penrhyn - Llanfrothan road on a gated level crossing.

Further on is Rhiw Goch where there is a signal box and passing loop, not in use today and we pass through without stopping.

The line soon enters woodland which is almost continuous to beyond Tan-y-Bwlch.

The next station is Plas Halt. This is a request stop and not required on this occasion.

After Plas Halt the gradient eases to 1 in 120 as the line winds round horseshoe curves before arriving at Tan-y-Bwlch station.



The train next passes the request halts at Coed-y-Bleiddiau and Campbell's Platform before reaching Dduallt station, also a request stop. After travelling non-stop through the station the train passes around the spiral which allows the line to gain height and reach the route of the deviation which had to be built when the original course of the railway was flooded by the hydro electric scheme at Tanygrisiau.

A little further along is the second tunnel on the line, Moelwyn Tunnel. Once through the tunnel the line passes above the Tanygrisiau Reservoir and soon after passing behind the hydro electric power station reaches the only section of falling gradient that an up train encounters.

Two ungated road crossings with their warning sounders are passed before the train reaches Tanygrisiau station. This too is a request stop and is not required today. Back on a rising gradient the train continues on the last 1½ miles of the journey to reach Blaenau Ffestiniog negotiating yet another ungated crossing at Glan-y-Pwll.

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## A ride on the Ffestiniog Railway

A complete recording of a ride on the Ffestiniog Railway from Porthmadog to Blaenau Ffestiniog with Double Fairlie 0-4-4-OT 'David Lloyd George' heard from the first coach.

Recorded on 21st May 2003



A stereo digital recording digitally edited and mastered

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