

Sunday 18 June

RAILWAY 76

Ffestiniog Railway

“Mountain Spirit” train

Porthmadog Harbour 1045

Blaenau Ffestiniog 1155 1235

Porthmadog Harbour 1345

Nice view from our cottage in the morning.



The Ffestiniog Railway want everyone to pre-book, but we drove across on the off-chance. It was 1022 when we arrived, but there was time to get a ticket (free for me, £39.60 for Julie (just a 10% discount)). The ramp was very steep, especially as we used Esme, but they had plenty of space and a removable seat. There was a train in the Caernarfon platform, but the timetable seems to bear no sense as to what seemed to be happening - basically, there are very few trains. Our train, hauled by “David Lloyd-George”, was not particularly full, and we set off not long after time. Across the Cob, past Boston Lodge, Minfordd, and you soon realise how narrow, narrow-gauge is. It is a lovely line as it winds through the trees, and the views are stunning. There must have been a lot of money in transporting slate. We had several long pauses at various stations, and never seemed to pass anything going down. We were told that they were having problems with coal - there is no decent Welsh steam coal, so it was foreign-stuff, and bags were being added at one point. We didn't arrive at Blaenau until after we should have left - still, time for loo, sandwich and tea.

Going down was a problem as well. We left Blaenau at about 1300 - delayed by arrivals from a coach party who all seemed to need the loo -











and then got to Tanygrisiau and stopped. Various rumours flowed, mainly about the gravity train which had jumped the tracks at Ddault. Let's just say that, having come to a halt about 1315, it was 1510 before we moved. Bertie the bus had come to take his coach passengers away, and the rest of us had waited - we did get a text saying we would get a refund (Julie wonders if why will un-stamp my card?). I went and had a closer look at the engine, wonderful articulated boiler on the Fairlie type. The staff looked after us, regular offers of water - fine, if you don't need the loo. Lots of men in orange at Ddault, and it was downhill from there! It was 1629 when we finally arrived at Portmadog. Spooner's was shut, but the shop and loo were still open, and I got soaked getting Esme back into the car. A long day, but it was comfy and we are on holiday! Back to the cottage, sleep, salmon en crouete, and a diary to write up.









