



PRESS RELEASE

12th November 2020



Heritage Railway and Tramway Working Together

In these times of social distancing and keeping apart, it is great to celebrate coming together.

The National Tramway Museum at Crich and The Festiniog and Welsh Highland Railway have come together to work on the restoration of Blackpool 298 tramcar, with funding from the Blackpool Railcoach and financial support from the Tramcar Sponsorship Organisation.

The tramcar had been withdrawn from service in 1972 requiring a full body overhaul, but as Blackpool was rebuilding cars for One Man (person) Operation at the time it was considered surplus to requirements, and in 1976 it was sold to Keith Terry and the Blackpool Railcoach Fund for restoration and display at Crich.

A lot of ground work on the body had been undertaken by the team, before the tramcar arrived at Crich in 2006, where it was established that a new underframe would be needed.

Despite the best attempts of Covid -19 to delay the project, tenders have been acquired from several likely suppliers to construct the underframe.

The Festiniog and Welsh Highland Railway has been selected as the preferred supplier.

Peter Whiteley, Project Leader at Crich said:

“One of the main reasons we chose The Festiniog and Welsh Highland Railway to help with this restoration is that the underframe has a lot of rivets in it, and specialist skills are required for both riveted and welded fabrications.

“In addition, the drawing and steel sections are imperial, and we needed a company which could convert the sections to metric, without loss of structural integrity, but still meet the requirements of fitting an imperial dimensioned wooden body frame to it.

“It also ‘felt right’ awarding the work to a fellow heritage operator in these difficult times with Covid-19”.

Paul Lewin, Director and General Manager at The Festiniog and Welsh Highland Railway, said:

“We are delighted to work with the National Tramway Museum on this project and to be associated with another heritage organisation. During the current pandemic, it provides a great opportunity to keep our skilled team fully occupied in the coming months. It is always a pleasure to work with the highly committed team at Crich.”

The return of the tramcar to Crich is planned for early in the new year. The National Tramway Museum looks forward to a fruitful relationship with the Festiniog and Welsh Highland Railway.

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