

Tourism & Leisure Award

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First

Great Little Trains of Wales and the Community Rail Partnerships in Wales and the Borders for 'Wales on Rails Tourism Project'

Concept and aims

'Wales on Rails' (WOR) is a sustainable pan-Wales tourism project, led by Great Little Trains of Wales (GLTW), the consortium of Welsh narrow gauge heritage railways, in collaboration with all the community rail partnerships across Wales and the Borders.

The project was designed to provide a resource for tourist travellers to explore Wales by public transport, offering a series of maps, itineraries, and information cards, all explaining the heritage and social and cultural landscape of Wales to enrich the visitor experience.

What happened

Working with a web developer, the project team created a brand and set of visual materials offering an extensive resource and scenic experience to inspire travellers. The community rail partnerships acted as expert tourist guides, expanding links with their communities by identifying local tourist attractions and popular things to do within easy access of stations on their lines and local bus routes.

A transport consultant was engaged to produce a review of leisure ticketing, and to help inform the information cards, the team held an industry briefing webinar with tourism partners attended by more than 40 businesses.

The project was launched to wide media coverage in Cardiff by Vaughan Gething MS, the Minister for the Economy, and Tim Dunn, British railway historian and TV presenter, in March 2022. A photographic competition, 'A Golden Photo of Wales', was held to coincide with the launch, receiving more than 150 entries. Five winners received a pair of GLTW Gold Cards, and have been sharing their travel adventures on social media.



Results

Since the launch, the project has featured on Transport for Wales's 'Just the Ticket' podcast, and the team have promoted sustainable tourism to travellers at Birmingham New Street and Manchester Piccadilly Stations during Community Rail Week 2022, and to visitors to the Visit Wales stand at the Wales Rural Network Event in Builth Wells.

The cards are described as the "jewel in the crown" of the WOR [website](#), with over a thousand available to choose from, giving freedom and choice to travellers. It also features maps including all rail, GLTW, and connecting bus routes. As of June 2022, the website had received 34,000 Google page views, and the project's social media reach was more than 208,000 users.

The team state they have seen great face-to-face engagement with the project at exhibitions, and alongside commitments to expand the website and social media content, they are developing a calendar of events to take WOR 'on tour' in 2023.