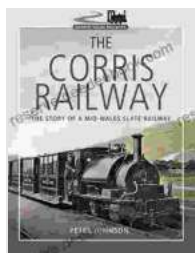


# The Mid Wales Slate Railway: A Narrow Gauge Marvel from a Bygone Era

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Nestled amidst the breathtaking mountains and valleys of Mid Wales, the Mid Wales Slate Railway stands as a testament to the ingenuity and industrial heritage of the region. This narrow gauge railway, stretching for over 10 miles, once played a pivotal role in transporting the renowned Welsh slate from quarries to markets far and wide. Today, it serves as a captivating tourist attraction, offering a glimpse into the rich history and engineering marvels of a bygone era.



## The Corris Railway: The Story of a Mid-Wales Slate Railway (Narrow Gauge Railways) by Peter Johnson

★★★★☆ 4.9 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 106295 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 203 pages
Lending	: Enabled



### Historical Background:

The Mid Wales Slate Railway was born out of the thriving slate industry that flourished in Mid Wales during the 19th century. As demand for the region's

exceptional slate soared, quarry owners sought ways to efficiently transport their products. In 1863, the decision was made to construct a narrow gauge railway to connect the quarries of Corris and Aberllefenni with the larger standard gauge Cambrian Railway at Machynlleth.

Construction began in 1864, and the line was officially opened in 1867. The railway consisted of 10.25 miles of track, with a gauge of just 2 feet 3 inches. This narrow gauge allowed for tighter curves and steeper gradients, making it possible to navigate the rugged terrain of the Welsh countryside.

### **The Landscape's Influence:**

The Mid Wales Slate Railway's route through the Welsh uplands presented a formidable challenge for its engineers. The rugged terrain, dotted with steep hills and narrow valleys, demanded innovative solutions. To tackle the gradients, the line incorporated multiple inclines, the most notable being the Dduallt Incline, which ascended 1 in 12.6 over a distance of 1,250 yards.

The railway also traversed numerous bridges and viaducts, some of which remain as impressive feats of Victorian engineering. The most iconic structure is the Aberllefenni Viaduct, a 600-foot-long wrought iron viaduct that spans the Afon Arthog River.

### **The Golden Age of Slate:**

During the latter half of the 19th century, the Mid Wales Slate Railway reached its zenith. The quarries of Corris and Aberllefenni produced vast quantities of high-quality slate, which was sought after for roofing, flooring, and other construction purposes. The railway played a crucial role in

transporting this valuable resource to markets throughout the United Kingdom and overseas.

### **Decline and Closure:**

The early 20th century marked a decline in the slate industry, as alternative roofing materials gained popularity. The Mid Wales Slate Railway began to struggle financially, and its operations were gradually reduced. In 1949, the railway was finally closed to regular passenger and freight services.

### **Preservation and Revival:**

In the years following its closure, the Mid Wales Slate Railway faced an uncertain future. However, a group of dedicated enthusiasts recognized the historical and cultural importance of the line. In 1977, they formed the Mid Wales Railway Society and embarked on a mission to restore and preserve the railway for future generations.

Over the following decades, the society worked tirelessly to rebuild the infrastructure, acquire locomotives and rolling stock, and establish the railway as a popular tourist attraction. Today, the Mid Wales Slate Railway is a thriving heritage railway, offering visitors a unique opportunity to experience the sights and sounds of a bygone era.

### **The Railway Today:**

The Mid Wales Slate Railway has become a beloved tourist destination, attracting visitors from far and wide. Passengers can embark on a scenic journey through the picturesque Welsh countryside, passing through tunnels, over viaducts, and along the breathtaking shores of Llyn Celyn.

The railway operates a fleet of historic steam and diesel locomotives, including the oldest operational steam locomotive in Wales, known as "Talylyn." Passengers can choose from a variety of carriages, ranging from comfortable first-class coaches to open-air observation cars.

In addition to its regular services, the Mid Wales Slate Railway hosts special events throughout the year, such as themed train rides, steam galas, and vintage car rallies. The railway also offers group bookings and corporate events, providing a truly unique setting for any occasion.

### **Educational Value:**

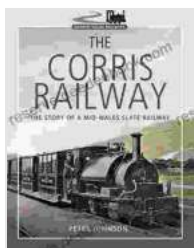
The Mid Wales Slate Railway is not only a tourist attraction but also an invaluable educational resource. By preserving and operating the railway, the society ensures that future generations can learn about the industrial heritage of Mid Wales and appreciate the challenges faced by the railway engineers of the Victorian era.

School groups and community organizations are encouraged to visit the railway to explore its historical significance, discuss its engineering marvels, and witness the power of steam locomotion firsthand.

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The Mid Wales Slate Railway is a remarkable testament to the ingenuity and determination of the people who built it. From its humble beginnings as an industrial lifeline to its present-day status as a cherished tourist attraction, the railway has played a significant role in the history of Mid Wales.

Today, the railway serves as a living museum, showcasing the engineering wonders of the past while providing visitors with a unforgettable experience. As the wheels of the steam locomotives roll through the Welsh countryside, they echo the stories of the slate workers, quarry owners, and railway engineers who shaped the destiny of this remarkable line.



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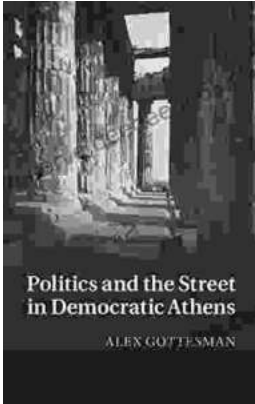
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