

Last surviving Welsh-built steam locomotive to undergo boiler lift and inspection at Gwili Railway

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The Gwili Vintage Carriage Group has reached the first fundraising milestone to enable the overhaul and eventual return to steam of Taff Vale Railway Locomotive No.28 - the last surviving Welsh-built standard gauge steam locomotive.

The locomotive is based at the Gwili Railway near Carmarthen and despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the first £32,000 has been raised towards the engine's overhaul. Donations have come from members of the public as well as a grant for £18,250 from the Association for Industrial Archaeology.

The funding will enable the first sections of the engine's bottom end (frames and motion) to receive essential repair work and will also enable the boiler to be lifted and inspected.

The condition of the boiler will determine the remaining cost and timescale for the project, but the overall cost is expected to reach £160,000. The boiler inspection and the first phase of work is due to be complete by Spring 2022.

Following the overhaul, the engine will operate passenger services at the Gwili Railway. It is hoped that the engine will eventually haul a rake of surviving Taff Vale Railway vintage carriages which are being restored separately.

Steam locomotive, Taff Vale Railway, 0-6-2T No. 28, was built in 1897 at Taff Vale Railway Works, Cardiff and withdrawn in 1927. The engine is owned by the National Railway Museum and is part of the Science Museum Group's collection. It has previously run in preservation but has not steamed in over thirty years.

David Murray, the Gwili Railway's Project Manager for the overhaul, said: "I would like to thank everyone who has generously contributed to the project so far. Reaching this first target is an important milestone and will enable us to inspect the boiler and give us a much better idea of how much work will be needed to complete the overhaul."

Members of the public wishing to contribute to bringing Taff Vale Railway No.28 back into steam should visit: www.taffvalerailway28.co.uk/Fundraising/.

Photo credit: Scott Artus