

As electric vehicles continue to grow in popularity, a favourite Cornish tourist attraction has embraced the same technology to help improve their carbon footprint.



Lappa Valley, St Newlyn East near Newquay features three railways which are enjoyed by over 100,000 passengers every year.

Victoria, the main locomotive on the smallest 7¼ inch gauge railway has been converted from diesel to battery power, meaning it now boasts an increased efficiency as well as quiet operation giving visitors the opportunity to savour the sounds of their idyllic surroundings.

Throughout the winter it underwent the three month conversion at The Lynch Motor Company in Honiton, moving from a Kippor Diesel generator powering two electric motors to a battery exclusive system.

Ben Harding, Operations Manager said the efficiencies are quite impressive: “For each single charge of the batteries, Victoria will now do two days of summer running with a five coach train. This could be up-to 400 laps of the Lakeside Railway.

“To put it into perspective, our old APT and HST powercars would have needed refuelling twice on each one of those days, and that’s around 30 litres of petrol.

“Victoria is now a lot more efficient for our operation, and will take a lot more passengers each time around our beautiful Lakeside Railway.”

Ben continued: “It was quite a challenge to ensure the equipment that would be used would be up to the job. Finding a battery electric locomotive in such a small gauge capable of doing what we require of one is nearly impossible, so to make it happen we had to work closely with The Lynch Motor Company to develop a package that would do the job.

“We’re really pleased with Victoria’s performance so far, and the feedback we’ve had from passengers regarding the quieter ride has been excellent.”

Victoria is one of 13 locomotives at Lappa Valley, and will play a part in the attraction's 50th birthday celebrations over the weekend of the 14th – 16th June. In the meantime, Lappa Valley is open every day with unlimited rides on three railways based in the surroundings of the former East Wheal Rose Mine.

Photos and Videos:

- Photo: Ben Harding stood next to Victoria, with the new batteries shown in the engine compartment
- Video (for embedding): <https://youtu.be/72y8-SkdE7w>

More information:

- Victoria was built in 2009 by Martyn Redfearn & Brian Biggs. It arrived at Lappa Valley and entered service in 2020.
- Lappa Valley is Cornwall's Secret World of Play and Trains, awarded gold in the Cornwall Tourism Awards and Silver in the South West Tourism Excellence Awards for two years running.
- Based near St Newlyn East, the attraction is built in the former mine workings of East Wheal Rose Mine, with the main line and Newlyn Downs lines following the former Newquay to Chacewater Branchline.

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