

One of Britain's finest tourist attractions is calling on the public's generosity to help it recreate another piece of history.

It will follow the same design as that of 1847, when York-based architect GT Andrews created a structure that became known as the 'Euston truss.' It was a notable feature at that time as it was based on a design used by Robert Stephenson in the original London & Birmingham Euston terminus.

To recreate the past, the new roof will span both platforms at the station and will require 8,700 tiles to cover the 264 square metres of roof space. But they won't be just any old tiles. Slate tiles in Heather Blue are to be used, and will be sourced from the Penryhn Quarry in Wales where the originals came from. Known as a 'Broad Countess,' each tile measures 500mm x 300mm.

Members of the public are being invited to sponsor a roof tile at £5 each, to help raise the roof at Pickering station.

The railway has set itself a target of raising £50,000 towards the cost of the roof restoration project. For posterity, each sponsor will have their name inscribed on the back of the tile before it forms part of the roof. And they'll get a certificate.

A leaflet providing more information about the project and how to get involved is available at each of the stations along the North Yorkshire Moors Railway.

Alternatively, a website has been set up to make it easy to donate online. This is www.trainofthought.co.uk

Putting the roof back on is the third project to take place at the station in recent months. Already a new two-storey Learning Centre has been built on Platform 2, together with a new interactive visitor centre. These were opened earlier this year. This third project is the finale to a £multi-million 'Train of Thought' regeneration programme.

Bryan Draper, one of the volunteers at the Railway who have masterminded the scheme, says the continuing support from the public is vital. "We really do need the public to get behind our appeal. So many visitors comment on how wonderful it is that such a railway has been preserved in all its glory.

"For us to remain a major attraction, we need as much help as we can get. The restoration of the roof allows us to return the station to its former glory, giving much better protection to the fabric of the buildings, while creating new opportunities for community involvement in displays, exhibitions, arts and crafts."

The new roof is expected to be completed by the end of March 2011. Hopes are high that the public will respond as generously as they did to the 'Bridge 30' appeal, which raised £700,000 towards the cost of replacing a 145-year-old structure between Goathland and Grosmont.