

Railway To Help Visitors 'Potter Off' And Walk Back To Happiness This Summer

Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway is kicking off a fabulous summer of events over the Whitsun Bank Holiday weekend and starting this by celebrating Beatrix Potter's 150th birthday in style, with a Beatrix Potter themed walk.

On Saturday May 28, and then again on June 25 and July 21, families can enjoy a tranquil walk along the beautiful River Esk with a National Trust Ranger, discovering more about the famous author and her association with the National Trust.

Starting and finishing at Dalegarth Station, the 3-hour walk along country paths will take visitors to Penny Hill, a working farm and the only one Potter owned in Eskdale. The trip includes a stop for lunch and visitors are encouraged to bring a picnic to enjoy in the farm garden.

The walk starts at 12.00 noon and covers a distance of 3.4 miles (5.5km) in total and walkers need to be prepared for some muddy, rough countryside paths in wet weather. Booking is essential and numbers are strictly limited, so email martin.clayton@nationaltrust.org.uk or call 019467 23463, to book your place.

The news of this series of Eskdale walks comes after the opening of a wonderful new exhibition interpreting and celebrating the author's work in the valley, and on show in the downstairs area of the Fellbites Eatery at Dalegarth Station. Three walls are dedicated to the story of Beatrix Potter and her relationship with the Eskdale Valley and the panels communicate the story of rural Eskdale and its wildlife.

Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway's two stations, at Ravenglass and Dalegarth, are also both part of a trail detailed in a new National Trust leaflet, which signposts visitors and local residents to 18 different places and landmarks associated with the children's author, located right across Cumbria.

On July 28, Peter Rabbit will be a special guest at a Beatrix Potter 150th anniversary tea party being held at Dalegarth Station in honour of Beatrix Potter. As well as photo opportunities with Peter Rabbit, who will be out and about and mingling with visitors at regular intervals, there will be activities on offer from the National Trust, who are showcasing their 50 Things To Do Before You're 11 and $\frac{3}{4}$.

Children's artist Mark Bardsley will also be at Dalegarth and delicious tea and cakes will be on sale as part of the anniversary celebration. There will be a small charge for activities, but normal train ticket prices will apply.

The walks are part of a wider set of events in the coming weeks at the railway. Starting on June 1, a Mills, Huts and Tarns of Eskdale will begin in conjunction with the National Trust. Walkers, guided by National Trust Rangers, can enjoy a scenic 2-hour, mid-level walk to and from Dalegarth and will walk up to the 'stone circles' on Eskdale Fell and via the Corn Mill in Boot village. This same walk will be available on July 1. This is a free event, departing Dalegarth Station at 11.30am. Those travelling there by train from Ravenglass, will pay the standard rail fare.

A day later, on June 2, families can enjoy a ride to Eskdale Green station, drawn by a 'Ratty' steam

engine, and then walk back to the sea over Muncaster Fell, guided by a Lake District National Park ranger. Places for this event, which starts at 10.15am at Ravenglass Station must be booked in advance by calling 0845 272 0004 and tickets cost £5 per adult (children free). The train fare to Eskdale Green also applies. This event will be repeated on August 4 and September 1.

The Railway's family favourite and loveable mascot, La'al Ratty, will also be on his travels, attending the Paint the Town Red events at Workington Festival on June 4 where he will be handing out free kids passes for a trip on the railway this summer.

Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway's marketing manager, Rachel Bell, says: "We will be playing a full part as one of the locations detailed on the National Trust's Beatrix Potter trail and hope to be able to provide new insights into her life, through our exhibition.

"Our Beatrix Potter events are just part of some great outdoor walks that we have planned during the summer. Families just need to be prepared for all types of weather and make sure they have waterproofs, sun tan cream, hats and walking shoes at the ready! All should be a lot of fun and open up new vistas and experiences to all who enjoy them."

Further information about all events and trips on the railway can be found at www.ravenglass-railway.co.uk

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