

Press release: 13/09/2018



Small train with a big heart La'al Ratty brings festive joy to over 40,000 children

Since the Santa Express first took to the tracks in 1984, over 40,000 children and their accompanying adults have experienced the festive wonder and excitement created by the dedicated team at Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway, in the Lake District.



This year sees the miniature heritage railway transformed once again into a winter wonderland, with the Santa Express transporting passengers to visit Santa's Grotto at Dalegarth, delicious Christmas lunches at the Turntable Café and **for the first time, a Christmas Market** at Ravenglass Station with stalls from local artisan food producers, craftspeople and more.

Peter Brendling General Manger at Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway says, "The festive season is always a delightful time to be at the railway. It's heart warming to think that some of the children who were aboard the first Santa Express, may well now be returning with their own children, or perhaps even, grandchildren to share this special experience and create lasting memories together."

Fun for children and adults alike, passengers will be transported through 14 miles of spectacular winter wonderland scenery whilst keeping an eye out for Santa and his sleigh, before getting ready to meet him as he passes through every carriage during the journey.

There will be plenty to keep the children happy and they will each receive a Christmas gift as well as the chance to go inside **Santa's winter grotto** at Dalegarth. Meanwhile, adults will get some relief from Christmas preparation chaos on this relaxing journey, complete with mulled wine and mince pies. Santa and his Elf will also give every adult an extra special Christmas Card '**Buy One, Get One Free Railway voucher**' to visit again with family and friends in 2019. **A tasty Christmas lunch** can be enjoyed at the Turntable café with a traditional menu with all the trimmings and vegetarian options available too.

Everyone will enjoy stunning views through ancient woodlands and the fells of the Eskdale Valley in the Lake District. There may even be a glimpse of England's highest mountains, the Scafell Range bathed in the crisp winter sunshine. We'll be keeping our fingers crossed for a sprinkling of snow to add that extra wonderful sparkle.

Get into the spirit of the season with a little gift shopping for a loved one, or for decorations to bring a little sparkle to your home at **Ravenglass Christmas Market** which will be open from 10am - 4pm on every weekend from 24 November to 23 December.

Santa Express journeys will run three times a day (10am, 12.50pm and 3.40pm) from Ravenglass, on the following weekends:

Sat 24 & Sun 25 Nov, Sat 1 & Sun 2, Sat 8 & Sun 9, Sat 15 & Sun 16, Sat 22 & Sun 23 Dec 2018.

You can also climb aboard the Santa Express as part of a group, with the option to add a delicious homemade meal or festive afternoon tea to make the day that little bit more special. Visit www.ravenglass-railway.co.uk/groups-functions/festive/ for more details.

The Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway is open all through the Christmas period, except for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day when the trains will be given a well-deserved rest.

[ENDS]

Notes to Editors:

For more info or to arrange a press trip please contact: Sorcha Hunter PR & Content Executive Cumbria Tourism | shunter@cumbriatourism.org | 01539 822222

Photos are:

1. Santa Express at Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway with Santa on board.
2. Children greeting Santa at Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway as he arrives on the Santa Express pulled by 'Rudolph'

Ticket prices for the Santa Express

Adult £21.50

Child (aged 1 - 11) £21.50

Child (aged 12 - 15) £13.95

Child (under 1 year) – Free

Santa Express and Lunch

Lunchtime slots are specific for the train passengers are booked onto. Lunch is served in the Turntable Cafe at Ravenglass Station. £13.00 adult lunch, £7.00 child lunch. See the website for full timetable details.

Booking & information: www.ravenglass-railway.co.uk or call **01229 717171**

The Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway is one of the oldest and longest narrow gauge railways in England, known affectionately as La'al Ratty meaning "little railway" in old Cumbrian dialect. The heritage steam engines transport passengers from Ravenglass, the only coastal village in the UNESCO World Heritage Site Lake District National Park, to Dalegarth for Boot some 210ft above sea level. The business's awards include a Silver Green Tourism award 2018, Coach Tourism's 2015 Heritage Railway award, Cumbria Tourism's 2015 Large Visitor Attraction of the Year award among many others.