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## 60th Anniversary Gala: Two-day celebration at Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway announced

A special two-day gala is being planned for one of the UK's best-loved heritage railway lines, to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway Preservation Society.

Tickets have just gone on sale for the COVID-safe event, which will take place at Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway on **Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 July**.

Entitled '*It's Still A Lot Of Fun*', it will feature a range of nine steam and diesel locomotives owned by both the Preservation Society and the railway itself. That includes the beautifully restored 125-year old *Katie* and *River Irt*, which is the oldest working 15-inch gauge locomotive in the world.

Also featuring will be the *River Mite*, which is one of the milestone achievements of the last 60 years and has recently returned to use following an extensive overhaul funded by its owners at the Preservation Society.



They will be joined by static displays of *Little Giant* and the well-known *Synolda*, which is an identical sister to the first 15-inch gauge locomotive *Sans Pareil* to run on Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway more than 100 years ago. At the same time, two full-size traction engines are expected to be in steam at Ravenglass.

Passengers will have the chance to buy tickets for three round-trips of the scenic route between Ravenglass and Dalegarth – effectively reserving a seat which is theirs to keep for the whole day. All of the available engines will then haul the train at some point during the day.

Meanwhile, the free to enter Ravenglass Railway Museum will be a focal point for a planned model railway display. It's also a chance to see the Preservation Society's special exhibition marking '*The Society at 60*', which tells the fascinating story of the ongoing support it has given to this iconic Lake District railway line.

Stuart Ross is General Manager (Visitor Experience) at Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway. He says, "*The railway has captured the hearts of so many people over the years and this is a chance for families, railway enthusiasts and local history buffs alike not only to see these fantastic locomotives, but to relive the heyday of steam travel for themselves.*"

*"After more than a year of lockdowns and disruptions to everyone's lives, there's no better time to escape the everyday to experience panoramic views of the Cumbrian coastline and dramatic mountain scenery on one of these magnificent locomotives. Normally at a gala weekend enthusiasts plan which trains to ride to ensure they travel behind certain engines. At this gala the enthusiast will have a seat for the day and the engines will come to them. Very relaxing indeed!"*

Di Chase from Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway Preservation Society adds, "*Sixty years ago, the future of the railway was very uncertain, but the intervening decades have provided a much more secure future so there is a lot to celebrate.*"

*"In 1960, the railway was sold at auction for £12,000 to the fledgling Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway Preservation Society, which contributed £5,000 raised from the general public; the balance was provided by stockbroker Colin Gilbert, who had a keen interest in railways, with additional support from Sir Wavell – later Lord – Wakefield. The following year, both the Railway Company and the Preservation Society became companies limited by guarantee, and the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway was born.*"

*“This is a great opportunity to celebrate the work done by so many over the past sixty years to help preserve and maintain this wonderful railway, and will be very exciting after the restrictions of the past 15 months!”*

Passengers can [book tickets online](#) for the 60th Anniversary Gala now.

Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway has had the official stamp of approval for its wide range of COVID-safe measures, including VisitEngland’s ‘We’re Good to Go’ accreditation and the World Travel and Tourism Council’s ‘Safe Travels’ endorsement. That includes everything from enhanced cleaning regimes to special training for staff to ensure social distancing measures are being followed at all times.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

Hi-res images attached:

- River Mite (Credit Mark Fielding)
- Whillan Beck & River Mite (Credit David Mart)

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