

Press release: 13/05/2019



A taste of the Western Lakes for Indian Travel Agents



ExploreGB Indian Travel Agents enjoy a trip on La'al Ratty. Photo RER

Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway today hosted a group of 12 international travel agents from India as part of the annual ExploreGB travel and tourism event.

Accompanied by Shuja Mehdi from VisitBritain India and Blue Badge Guide Sue Wardle, the group were enjoying a packed itinerary showcasing the highlights of the Lake District accentuated by the glorious spring sunshine. Arriving by coach at Ravenglass the group were welcomed by Lisa Braithwaite from the Railway where they boarded La'al Ratty pulled

by steam locomotive River Esk to travel up the line to Dalegarth Station. Then on foot, the group walked the short distance to take a look at the village of Boot and the outside of Eskdale Mill, which is due to open to the public following a restoration work later in the year. Back at Dalegarth Station the group had a coffee or sampled local ice cream, boarding the train for the return journey to Ravenglass where there was time for a selfie on the foot plate with the driver, before travelling into central Lakes to experience the new Windermere Jetty Museum of Boats, Steam and Stories, then departing Cumbria for Liverpool. Last Monday another ExploreGB group of Indian tourism representatives visited Muncaster Castle in Ravenglass as part of their itinerary.

A major occasion in the industry calendar ExploreGB is VisitBritain's flagship event providing British & Irish tourism suppliers and destinations with an invaluable opportunity to meet and do business with over 200 hosted international travel buyers from more than 30 countries. As part of the event tailored familiarisation trips are arranged to enable travel agents to experience the best types of accommodation, food and attractions that will appeal to their target customer market.

India is one of Britain's most important growth markets for inbound tourism. In 2017 there were 561,573 inbound visits from India to the UK, an increase of 35% on the previous year. This continues a long-term trend which has seen visits from India increase by over 55% since 2005, with spending levels almost doubling. Inbound tourism will continue to be the fastest growing tourism sector – with spend by international visitors forecast to grow by over 6% in the year and the value of inbound tourism forecast to grow from over £21bn in 2013 to £57bn by 2025.

Lisa Braithwaite Marketing Manager, Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway says, *'It was a fantastic opportunity to showcase the Railway and the Western Lake District, to make personal connections with international travel agents and to enhance our understanding of the Indian tourism market. We are committed to welcoming international visitors and we're confident that working in partnership with VisitBritain and Cumbria Tourism our efforts will continue our success and drive our appeal to the growing Indian markets in the coming years.'*



Enjoying the foot plate experience with River Esk train driver at Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway. Photo RER

[ENDS]

Press contact: Sorcha Hunter PR & Content Executive | shunter@cumbriatourism.org | 07398 255654

- Press trips
- Interviews

Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway is a family-owned business operating a heritage, narrow gauge steam railway on the Western Coast of the Lake District. The railway is surrounded by stunning views and walks and is based in Ravenglass, the only coastal village in the Lake District National Park. The business's awards include a British Coach Tourism Award 2019, Transport Trust Red Wheel Plaque, Silver Green Tourism award, Coach Tourism's 2015 Heritage Railway award, Cumbria Tourism's 2015 Large Visitor Attraction of the Year award among many others. The summer of 2019 will see the launch of brand new luxury carriage. www.ravenglass-railway.co.uk