



Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway Consumer Press Pack 2016

'Take A Liking Choo The Lakes'

Beatrix Potter[™]
150
years



For immediate release

January 29, 2015

Lake District Steam Railway's Events Programme Unlocks Both Heritage And Landscape

Lake District steam railway, Ravenglass and Eskdale, is enticing families, couples and railway enthusiasts alike in 2016 with an appealing events programme that offers fun, focus, flora and fauna.

The R&ER's 2016 calendar features more than **21 dates in the diary** that demonstrate the coming of age of the Railway as a diverse visitor attraction that can cater for a range of interests and passengers. All events can unlock the heritage and landscape of the Western Lake District's heritage and landscape in one way or another and the programme runs from February to December, providing lots of opportunities to sample more than one.

2016 will see five brand new events taking place at the narrow gauge railway. The first of these will help celebrate the 150th year of Beatrix Potter's™ birth and is a **Beatrix Potter™ Walk with the National Trust**, which runs on Saturday May 28 and then again on Saturday June 25 and Thursday July 21. On these dates, those who pre-book this experience will be able to go to Dalegarth station under their own steam, or that of a heritage loco travelling from Ravenglass, and then take a free walk that is guided by a knowledgeable National Trust Ranger.

This Beatrix Potter™themed midday walk will see the group heading to the Penny Hill working farm – the only farm the children's author owned in Eskdale. As they walk alongside the River Esk, a river that gave one of R&ER's heritage locos its name, they will learn more about Miss Potter and her association with the National Trust. The experience will last around three hours, including a stop in the farm's garden that will allow participants to tuck into the packed lunch they should bring with them. They should also wear sturdy footwear that can cope with some muddy stretches, if the weather has been wet.

The second new event runs on June 1 and July 1 and offers the opportunity to **Explore the Mills, Huts & Circles of Eskdale with the National Trust**. Here, a Ranger will help those booking this experience to explore the landscape and discover some of the historically important sites that make Eskdale special. It will incorporate a scenic, mid-level walk from Dalegarth station, in the shadow of England's highest mountains, up to the stone circles that sit 900 feet above altitude on Eskdale Fell. The walk will pass the Eskdale Corn Mill at Boot village – one of the oldest working corn mills in England - and there will be a visual treasure hunt for children to enjoy along the route. The walk takes approximately two hours and requires participants to wear suitable footwear and clothing. The departure time from Dalegarth will be 11.30am and no charge will apply, unless those taking part travel up from Ravenglass by train, which will mean paying the standard fare.

The third new event is a special **Beatrix Potter™ Anniversary Tea Party with Peter Rabbit™**. This takes place on July 28 and is another event being held to celebrate Beatrix Potter's 150th birthday, which would have been on this day. Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway will be hosting a Beatrix Potter interpretation exhibition at Dalegarth and making sure Peter Rabbit™ is present at its very special tea party. More details about this event will be released soon.

The fourth delight for those who like to add something extra-special to their enjoyment of a seven-mile steam or diesel journey with the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway is a **Young Engineer's Day Out**, which will run on both July 9 and 10. This full-day experience will encompass a return trip on the narrow gauge railway, as well as the opportunity to go behind the scenes to discover how an engine works. This insight will be a real thrill, as it will be provided by the author of Peter's Railway who will be the guide, sign books and take participants to visit the old signal box. Tickets will be available from March 2015, with prices to be confirmed. Visit www.ravenglass-railway.co.uk or call 01229 717171 to buy.

Last, but by no means least of the brand new events, is the **Peppa Pig™ Weekend** on October 1 and 2. Peppa Pig™ will make her first visit to Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway on those dates and reserved seats on Peppa Pig™ trains are on offer at a price of £16 for an adult, £8 for children aged 3-15 and free-of-charge to under 3s. For this, ticket holders can not only have the thrill of a return train journey on the seven-mile line, but also meet Peppa Pig™ in person and have their photo taken, and enjoy entertainment laid on in the Peppa Pig™ marquee. The ticket price also includes a Peppa Pig™ gift for children.

Other events at the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway in 2016 will be (in chronological order):

- **Fish & chip Suppers**, running on the evenings of February 19, March 18, April 15, May 13, September 16 and October 14. These will see passengers depart on a 6pm diesel service from Ravenglass station and enjoy the 40-minute journey to Dalegarth before tucking into a delicious fish and chip meal. They will then make the return journey back to Ravenglass. Tickets cost £10.50 and can be booked by calling 019467 23192.
- **Teddies Go Free #teddyfest** (March 25 to April 15). This will be the Eastertime family activity at Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway that will see all children travelling free, on a ride-all-day basis, if they travel with their teddy bear and are accompanied by a full fare-paying adult. Families should keep an eye out for teddy trail clues, as great prizes can be won throughout the Easter promotion. The Bay Radio Roadshow will be at the Railway on Saturday March 26, with popular mascot, Bay Bear, dropping in to see his old pal, La'al Ratty – the R&ER's wolverine mascot.
- **The Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway Family Fun Weekend** will take place from April 30 to May 2 and will be an action-packed event full of family fun and activities. Heritage engines, Synolda will be on display and running mini trips up the line throughout the weekend, whilst Saturday will see the Bay Radio Roadshow providing entertainment. More visiting guests will be announced closer to the date and there will be guided family walks to enjoy, which will start and end at an R&ER station.
- **Photography Days** on May 17 and September 6 will no doubt book quickly once railway and photography enthusiasts realise that they will not only be able to go trackside, where few men and women have been before, to capture engines through the lens, but also go behind the scenes and tour workshops and other railway buildings. The day starts at 8.30am at Ravenglass Station with a cup of tea at the Turntable Café and the collection of a packed lunch, which can then be eaten during the experience. Participants will then head off on foot on the seven-mile journey to Dalegarth Station, stopping to take photos en route, whilst gaining valuable insights into the railway and its operation.

After arriving at Dalegarth and taking photos there, the keen snappers and trainspotters will board a train back to Ravenglass. This amazing experience costs £45, including the guided photography walk, single train journey, a welcome tea or coffee and the packed lunch of sandwich, crisps, piece of fruit and bottle of water. All participants need to do is wear suitable clothing and footwear, be capable of a seven-mile walk and find some means of not forgetting to take their camera along! Booking is already open online at www.ravenglass-railway.co.uk

- **A RSPB Activity Weekend**, on June 11 and 12, will see RSPB experts heading to Dalegarth station to help children with exciting activities such as making a butterfly bar or nature mask. Families can discover more about the vital conservation work that they do and provide them with a donation, if they wish, as all RSPB activities will be on offer on a free-of-charge basis.
- **Steam to the Hills with a Lake District National Park Ranger** experiences will be available on August 4 and September 1. Those taking part will be able to take the 10.40am steam train to Eskdale Green and then walk back to the sea over imposing Muncaster Fell, under the Ranger's guidance. The train fare applies to the journey and there is then a £5 charge for adults for the guided walk (children can walk for free). The guided walk needs to be booked by calling 0845 272 0004 or by heading to www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/events
- **Ghost Trains at Halloween** will run on October 28 and 29 and the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway is promising to deliver more fiendish tricks than ever before. Families travelling on the special Ghost Train from Dalegarth station should keep their eyes peeled for the foe who could be lurking in the shadows. A ticket costing £16 for an adult and £8 for a child (aged 3-15) is for all-day travel, plus a reserved seat on the 6pm Ghost Train from Dalegarth Hollow. It also gives children a chance to meet Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway mascot, La'al Ratty and collect a spooky sweet goody bag on their return to Ravenglass. Additionally, there will be facepainting and spooky arts and crafts at Dalegarth, as well as the GADS theatre. Booking will be open soon, online at www.ravenglass-railway.co.uk
- The last event of the year will be the **Santa Express** experience on November 26 and 27 and December 3, 4, 10, 11, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22. A magical journey awaits those who believe in Father Christmas and who can't wait for the thrill of exploring his grotto at Dalegarth station. Early booking of this event is advised, if families wish to guarantee their preferred dates of travel and time of travel.

Additionally, Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway will be attending the **Paint the Town Red Whitehaven Festival** on June 4, handing out kids passes for a trip on the railway during summer 2016.

There are also opportunities for steam rail enthusiasts (and first-timers) to enjoy a **Statesman Rail Excursion around the Cumbrian Coast**, with the option of adding on a trip on the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway. These Lakeland Coast Statesman excursions can be booked via Statesman Rail and will run on June 4, 11, 18 and 25 and July 2 and 30. Contact 0345 310 2458 or visit www.statesmanrail.com to book and see the wide number of stations, from across the country, at which passengers can board and disembark.

Those not able to travel to these events can still take advantage of the normal scheduled services that operate from February to December, with different timetables applying to different time periods. This enables them to enjoy a 14-mile return journey (40 minutes each way) that is the longest steam train journey available in the Lake District and which is often thought to be one of the most beautiful and scenic in the whole country. Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway is the longest-established heritage railway in Cumbria and celebrated the 100th anniversary of its 15-inch line in 2015. It is also home to the Ravenglass Museum, which celebrates railway, mining and local history, and which will re-open in the summer, after stage two of a renaissance programme that has been funded by the National Lottery

Heritage Fund. Entrance to the museum will be free and visitors will discover a mine of information, lots of displays of historical significance, artefacts, and some splendid locos.

The route of the journey runs through an area of rich bio-diversity and changing geographical features, taking passengers on a journey from the Lake District's only coastal village (Ravenglass), across coastal marsh, past imposing fells and through the hidden valley of Miterdale, before running alongside the River Esk and reaching Dalegarth (near Boot), in the shadow of England's highest mountains.

With excellent cafes, serving home made food, snacks and cakes, at both ends of the line and fabulous gift shops, picnic areas and playgrounds and things to do around both stations too, R&ER provides a great visitor experience. Whether you also visit a Roman bathhouse, or head to the stunning 60-foot high Stanley Ghyll waterfall, a day out will certainly prove why the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway is Cumbria through and choo.

Those seeking access for wheelchair users will also find new access policies for 2016, thanks to specialist access training undertaken by the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway team. This includes the introduction of a site map, to make movement around the stations easier. There is accessible seating both on grass and beside picnic tables, a wide accessible pathway from the car park to the booking office, moveable seating in café and tearoom and a wheelchair for customer use. Wheelchair adapted coaches can be booked in advance and guide dogs are welcome in all areas. There are also disabled parking spaces available.

A one-way fare between Ravenglass and Dalegarth costs £8 for an adult and £4 for a child aged 5-15, whilst a return is £13.50 for an adult, £6.75 for a child and £38 for a family (2+2). ENDS

Press calls: Jane Hunt, Catapult PR, 01253 891114 – jane@catapultpr.co.uk

The 'Ratty' Urges Visitors To Explore Its Environs Whilst Lowering Their Footprint

Having demonstrated how a heritage steam railway, with its reliance on coal and traditional ways of doing things, can achieve a Green Tourism Silver accreditation, the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway is making it its mission to go all out to encourage more people to travel sustainably on their travels and days out in 2016.

The R&ER, located just a stone's throw from Britain's Favourite View and deepest lake, Wastwater, and right on the footstep of a Site of Special Interest, at the landlocked 'harbour' where the Rivers Irt, Mite and Esk merge, has long supported environmental charities and integrated green practices into every aspect of its operation. It is now building on this, with new initiatives to help encourage visitors to reduce their carbon footprint – a challenge for a visitor attraction located outside the Central Lakes.

In 2016, those travelling by electric car will find a **free-to-use charge point** at Dalegarth station, whilst electric bike charge points can be found at both Ravenglass and Dalegarth stations and other facilities can be found by using the West Cumbria Electric Bicycle Network. The car park charge is £3 for a day, to encourage visitors to park up and explore the area by train, on foot, or by bicycle. There is also a bike rack at Ravenglass and bicycles can be booked on to the train for those taking full and single journeys between Ravenglass and Dalegarth, or vice versa. This costs £3.50 for carriage for a single journey and 4-5 bikes can be carried on each service, but bikes must be pre-booked on to the train by calling 01229 717171.

Once you're on the bike, you can follow three specially designed **cycle route cards** available at both Dalegarth and Ravenglass's gift shops. These routes start and end at Dalegarth, making them easy and useful to use as a starting point for exploration.

Additionally, there is the **Eskdale TRail** – a fully way-marked route, stretching 8.5 miles (14km) between Dalegarth and Ravenglass. Cyclists can explore Eskdale on roads that are quieter and fairly easy to ride, with just one difficult section where it may be necessary to get off and push. Booking the bike on to the train at Ravenglass, travelling to Dalegarth and then cycling back down to the coast can make a really great day out.

To encourage visitors to explore on two feet, Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway has a **'pay once and ride all day' fare** costing £13.50 for adults and £6.75 for children aged 5-15 (under 5s go free). A family ticket is £38 and purchasing this ticket allows a family to have a half-price cruise on an Ullswater 'Steamer' – these heritage vessels being operated by R&ER's sister attraction.

Another ticket option that promotes green travel is the **Ratty Rover Pass**, which gives the holder five days travel for the price of three and which costs £40 for an adult, £20 for a child aged 5-15 and £110 for a family. The days can be used in one burst, or across a year. Walkers tickets, which allow travel between intermediate stops, are also available at a lower cost than that of the full fare.

There are wonderful walks to be taken from both Ravenglass and Dalegarth, as well as the seven request stops in between. To make this easier, passengers can purchase a delightful little booklet called **'Walks From Ratty'**, which contains ten walks created and lovingly illustrated by the acclaimed walker, Wainwright, who was a big fan of the R&ER. All walks start and end at one of the Ratty's stations and enable purchasers to explore places such as Muncaster Fell, Blea Tarn, Dalegarth Force and Hardknott Roman Fort. Each booklet costs £3.49 and information is available at www.ravenglass-railway.co.uk

A **'Steam and Ramble'** booklet explains how to walk between both ends of the line, whilst taking in every station en route and perhaps diverting to places such as Eskdale Green, to experience the beauty of Eskdale's villages. With suggestions of how to follow a Beer and Bangers route as well, there are lots of tips available for those looking for ways to travel slowly and in a green fashion.

Those wishing to enjoy a historic walk can follow a 14-mile route from Boot village to Wasdale Head, which is the route of the old coffin walk.

Gentle strolls to the **Roman bathhouse at Ravenglass** – one of the most completely preserved buildings in Roman Britain - and the Eskdale Corn Mill and 14th century church near Dalegarth, can also be made by those who might not possess walking boots, but who appreciate that walking is good exercise as well as good for the environment. Those wishing to walk with their four-legged friend can also book their dog on board a train at a cost of £1.50 and, although dogs are not allowed in the cafes, will find doggy bowls at both stations.

Those who like to stroll to good pubs will find **three real ale options** near Dalegarth, including the Woolpack Inn, which is renowned for its great food.

The R&ER also encourages passengers to walk with the purpose of **wildlife spotting**, pointing out that the area contains the habitats of species such as red squirrel, buzzards, greylag geese, curlew, shelduck, oystercatchers, and ringed plovers. It plays its part in red squirrel conservation by selling Save Our Squirrels products in its shops, which help raise money for conservation programmes. Visitors just need to look out for the SOS stickers on products that help one of Britain's most adorable and endangered species.

Those wishing to enjoy a **Green Day Out** can travel by Northern Rail to reach Ravenglass. Many trains within Northern Rail's scheduled services, as detailed in the **Northern Rail timetable** can transport those living across the northwest, northeast and Yorkshire to Ravenglass. The Northern Rail station is located on the Cumbrian Coast Line between Carlisle and Barrow and just a short walk from the narrow gauge line operated by R&ER. This makes it very easy-to-use for those living in key holiday destinations such as Lancaster and Morecambe, Grange-over-Sands and Windermere, as well as those a little further away in locations such as Preston and Blackpool. More information is at www.northernrail.org or by calling 08457 48 49 50.

Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway's marketing manager, Rachel Bell, says: "We make every effort to demonstrate our green credentials and extend our practices by encouraging visitors to travel and day trip in as sustainable manner as possible. This can really enrich an experience, as it encourages discovery and provides families, couples and individuals with the opportunity to see, hear and sense more during their day out in our natural environment. Word is definitely getting round and we are seeing more and more people in walking boots, or with cycles, each year."

To find out more about the walking, cycling and exploration opportunities available from Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway's stations, visit www.ravenglass-railway.co.uk Fares for 2016 have been held at 2015 prices, so it really is a great value day out. ENDS

Press calls: Jane Hunt, Catapult PR, 01253 891114 – jane@catapultpr.co.uk

a) The ten Walks From Ratty are:

1. Muncaster Fell – starting at Ravenglass and ending at Irton Road. Distance 5 miles. Time required 3 hours.
2. Irton Fell – starting and finishing at Irton Road. Distance 4.5 miles. Time required 3 hours.
3. Miterdale – starting and finishing at Irton Road. Distance 5.5 miles. Time required 3 hours.

4. Blea Tarn – starting at Beckfoot Halt and finishing at Dalegarth. Distance 3 miles. Time required 3 hours.
5. Burnmoor Tarn – starting and finishing at Dalegarth. Distance 6 miles. Time required 4 hours.
6. Eel Tarn – starting and finishing at Dalegarth. Distance 3.5 miles. Time required 3 hours.
7. Dalegarth Force – starting and finishing at Dalegarth. Distance 2 miles. Time required 1.5 hours.
8. Riverside Walk – starting and finishing at Dalegarth. Distance 2 3/4 miles. Time required 1.5 hours.
9. Hardknott Roman Fort – starting and finishing at Dalegarth. Distance 7 miles there and back. Time required 3.5 hours.
10. Harter Fell – starting and finishing at Dalegarth. Distance 7.5 miles. Time required 5 hours.

b) Other green practices employed by the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway have been:

- the installation of low-energy lighting throughout its operation
- a comprehensive recycling plan, focused on everything from ink cartridges to metal waste and plastics
- adherence to a local food purchasing policy
- fitting low-flush cisterns in toilets
- including rigid foam insulation in a rebuilt workshop that uses timber from only a local and sustainable source and which used water-based stain products
- fitting Ecotrax sleepers that last over 30 years and are recyclable and more eco-friendly than hardwood timber alternatives.

Sixteen For 2016 – Fast Facts About Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway

- 1.** Locomotive River Irt is the oldest working 15" gauge locomotive in the world (built in 1894) while Northern Rock (1976) is the most powerful.
- 2.** The seven-mile line has a challenging, but exciting, 1:55 gradient for our locos to tackle, plus twists and turns and rises and falls.
- 3.** The journey is the longest narrow gauge railway trip in the Lake District – 40 minutes each way, starting in a coastal nature reserve and ending close to England's tallest mountains.
- 4.** Our Ravenglass Museum received a Heritage Lottery Fund investment of £488,700 in 2015 and is being restored and extended in 2016, with re-opening to take place in summer 2016.
- 5.** Our visitor centre at Dalegarth was opened in April 2007 by music producer and railway enthusiast, Pete Waterman. Our children's playground there was opened in 2009 by HRH Princess Alexandra.
- 6.** The powerhouses behind our cafés are two great cooks with different culinary loves. Our Fellbites café at Dalegarth is renowned for seasonal specials prepared by Kath Graham, whilst our Turntable Café at Ravenglass is the place to head for home baked pies, cakes and pastries made by Janet Dickinson.
- 7.** Just outside Ravenglass there is a signal box featuring the first radio station of its kind in the country.
- 8.** Between 1915-28, Ravenglass and Eskdale was promoted as 'The Smallest Public Railway in the World'.
- 9.** The Railway has started to install Ecotrax sleepers that last a minimum of thirty years and which can be recycled again after use. These are more expensive than hardwood alternatives, but also more eco-friendly. They will not rust, splinter, crumble or rot and are used by only a few heritage lines, such as the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways.
- 10.** Ravenglass and the Eskdale valley are steeped in Roman history. You can explore the Roman bathhouse at Ravenglass (Glannaventa) while visiting us. The fort here was the most southerly part of the Hadrian's Wall defences.
- 11.** Our bench seats at Ravenglass have squirrel ends – the distinctive design of the old Furness Railway, while the awning on platform one features the cast iron columns from Whitehaven Bransty station.
- 12.** 1.4 miles out of Ravenglass, you will reach Mill Wood, with its 1:42 gradient. It is here that early passengers would have to get out and push the train!
- 13.** At Miteside Halt, an upturned boat has offered shelter to walkers for more than a century.
- 14.** The station called 'The Green' was originally named 'King of Prussia', after a local hostelry of that name. In the middle of World War 1, the pub re-named itself the George 1V and the station was rechristened 'Eskdale Green'.
- 15.** Gilberts Cutting was created in 1964 following the removal of 3000 tons of earth and rock, to save the trains from the strain of tackling the curves of the Hollinghead Bend.
- 16.** If you wish to truly base your holiday around the Railway, you can book its unique and nostalgic accommodation – First World War Pullman coaches, based right beside the platform at Ravenglass. There are two fabulous, atmospheric Pullman coaches (Elmira and Maid of Kent) available with all mod cons and a cooked breakfast just steps away in the Turntable Café.

January 2016

Ravenglass Railway Museum Secures Heritage Lottery Fund investment

The Museum at the Lake District's oldest heritage railway, managed by the Eskdale (Cumbria) Trust, has received a confirmed grant of £488,700 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for its Renovation, Extension and Volunteer and Events programme. The project aims to restore and extend the existing museum at Ravenglass station, so that it can make a significant contribution to tourism, education and the community in the Western Lake District.

The project involves building a new exhibition area, more than doubling the existing space in which to display the Railway's vintage rolling stock, and will create exciting new interactive and accessible displays of Ravenglass and Eskdale documents and artefacts. It will also allow for digitisation of historic photographs within the collection and enable the Museum to tell more fully the story of the unique interaction between the Railway and the Eskdale Valley, focusing particularly on its historic connections to iron ore mining and quarrying.

Larger, significant items will now have a permanent and secure home that enables them to be put on display for the public's enjoyment. These include two original 15" gauge steam engines dating from 1912-15 (Synolda and Katie), a 19th century coach from the 3ft gauge era, and granite tubs and other pieces of 20th century rolling stock.

The project will also create diverse learning opportunities for local schools, families and the Railway's various communities, making the history of the Railway relevant to a larger and more diverse audience. Significant links to the history and geography curriculum will be of particular relevance to primary schools.

New volunteer opportunities will also become possible in restoration work and through interpretation roles within the extended museum, which has, to date, been a self-guided experience. A new museum website will tell the story of Eskdale Valley online and help attract extra visitors to the Western Lake District. The support of the HLF will enable the Eskdale (Cumbria) Trust, which runs the Museum, to preserve the Railway's legacy and remain rooted in the local Western Lake District community, as the narrow gauge line has been for the last 100 years.

Peter Hensman from the Eskdale (Cumbria) Trust said: "This is magnificent support from the Heritage Lottery Fund. We shall now be able, with additional assistance from the Preservation Society, to complete our development project, preserving the heritage of the much-loved railway and opening up new opportunities for visitors, volunteers and the local community."

Explaining the importance of the HLF support, Sarah Hilton said, "The museum extension will provide new insights into the rich history of the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway, and its interaction with the lives of those living in the local area since its arrival in the Western Lake District. Its fascinating collections will now become more engaging and accessible, whilst new learning opportunities will enable the museum to attract a diverse range of visitors. HLF are pleased to support this worthwhile project thanks to money raised by National Lottery players."

ENDS

Notes to editors

The Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway Museum will be closed until summer 2016, to enable all of the improvements and engine shed extension to be completed. Latest news can be found on a new museum website at <http://www.ravenglassrailwaymuseum.co.uk> Stage one of the museum's redevelopment was completed in 2015 thanks to funding from FLAG and Copeland Community Fund.

Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway is a much-loved heritage railway tourism attraction marking 100 years of its 15-inch narrow gauge line in 2015. It operates a seven-mile line, running between the Lake District coast at Ravenglass and the Dalegarth (for Boot) station, located in the shadow of England's highest mountains. This idyllic line, often said to offer England's most beautiful heritage railway journey, was re-gauged in 1915, from 3 feet to 15 inches.

The original 3-foot gauge line was the earliest public narrow gauge railway in England, built from 1873 and typical of such works in difficult terrain, hugging the mountainside with side cuttings, sharp bends and severe gradients. Ravenglass and Eskdale's two surviving buildings from that time – the Ravenglass loco shed and Irton Road Station, are little altered from their first construction.

The decision to re-gauge the line was taken by acclaimed miniature railway engineer, WJ Bassett-Lowke. He and his friend, R Proctor-Mitchell, representing Narrow Gauge Railways Ltd, acquired the line in 1915 – in the midst of World War 1 - and used it as a base for testing their model locomotives in fairly harsh operating conditions. By 1916, the re-gauged line ran as far as Irton Road, before being extended to cover the full length of the line by the end of 1917.

This is just part of the rich history of Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway, which stretches back to 1873. The Museum (located in the Ravenglass station car park) first opened in 1978 under the auspices of the Eskdale (Cumbria) Trust, a separate charity. Grants from FLAG and the Copeland Community Fund, earlier in 2015, enabled a programme of renovation, conservation and sustainable development to begin. This can now be complemented thanks to the new HLF grant.

About the Heritage Lottery Fund

Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about – from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections, to rare wildlife. www.hlf.org.uk @heritage lottery

For further information, images and interviews, please contact:

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Pullman-Factor Marketing To Push Britain's Most Unique Self-Catering Holiday In 2016

Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway is focusing on what it calls Pullman-factor marketing in 2016, as it encourages visitors who are opting for a 2016 staycation to do something completely different and book a stay in a First World War Pullman coach that offers perhaps the most unique self-catering holiday available in Britain in the year ahead.

The narrow gauge railway, which offers a glorious seven-mile steam rail journey in heritage coaches running between Ravenglass on the Cumbrian coast and Dalegarth, in the shadow of England's tallest mountains, believes itself to be in the enviable position of having the only Pullman camping coaches in England available for holidaymakers - Elmira and Maid of Kent.

These carriages offer the vintage feel that is just perfect for those who wish to drink in nostalgia, travel back in time and be as close as humanly possible to heritage locos whilst on their break. Both are situated on the Ravenglass station complex, which has another great advantage for self-caterers, as home made food, cooked breakfasts and tasty cakes and desserts are just a few steps away in the Turntable Café.

Elmira turns 103 in 2016 and her walls speak of times when she transported wounded soldiers rescued from the trenches. She became a First Class Pullman in 1921, working the Southern Line, mainly in Kent. This lifestyle ended in 1960, when she became part of the British Rail Camping Coach scheme and was situated at Seascale. She arrived at her home in Ravenglass in 1968.

Maid of Kent was also an ambulance car for those wounded in the trenches and also worked the Southern Line when the First World War ended.

Both heroic coaches have been fitted out to evoke the spirit of Edwardian times, with inlaid wood panelling and other quirks. However, they also have all the mod cons you expect on holiday, including colour TV, night storage heater and electric fire. Both sleep six, in three separate bedrooms, one having twin beds and the other two full-size bunk beds. There is a washbasin with cold water in the bedrooms and a bathroom with electric shower and toilet. The kitchen is equipped with cooker, microwave, fridge, pans and crockery/cutlery.

Each coach costs between £350 and £530 per week and can be hired by booking online at www.ravenglass-railway.co.uk by those responding to the R&ER's Pullman-factor marketing.

Those preferring a self-catering cottage option can hire the cute and atmospheric Hilton Cottage, situated at the end of Platform 1 at Ravenglass Station, where the occupants can watch the trains go by in a slightly more conventional type of accommodation. The cottage has a double bedroom and a twin, a shower room with toilet, a living/dining area with TV and stereo and a kitchen. There is also radiator heating. Hire of Hilton Cottage in 2016 costs between £350 and £530 per week, depending on time of year. The cottage can be booked online at www.ravenglass-railway.co.uk

Whichever option you choose, looking at a value-for-money deal such as the Ratty Rover Pass would serve you well. This would give you five days travel on the railway for the price of three, enabling you to make the most of your perfect track-side location. If you take the walking boots with you, you should also consider making at least some of the 10 'Walks From Ratty' – walks especially devised and illustrated by acclaimed walker, Wainwright, for the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway, known locally as 'The Ratty'. Each begins and ends at one of the steam railway's stations, making the booklet a perfect passport to the natural wonders of the Eskdale Valley. ENDS

Press calls: Jane Hunt, Catapult PR, 01253 891114 – jane@catapultpr.co.uk

Steam Railway Provides The Perfect Celebration For Those Saying 'I Choo'

Brides looking for a very different type of wedding reception should get up a head of steam for the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway – the little narrow gauge delight in the Lake District that is often said to offer the most spectacular and scenic journey by steam to be found anywhere in the country.

For those who love trains, jumping aboard with R&ER's wedding experience is an absolute must, but the railway, which has been delighting passengers for over a century, also finds that it appeals to brides and grooms wishing to do something completely different, vintage and totally atmospheric and memorable.

Bridal parties can arrive at either Ravenglass station, on the Lake District coast and close to a Roman bathhouse, or Dalegarth near Boot, in the shadow of the Scafell mountain range. There, they can board a privately chartered train that will carry a bespoke header board carrying the name of the happy couple and truly deliver all the romance that is associated with the age of steam. Guests will then enjoy a seven-mile journey, across glistening coastal plain, past imposing fells, through hidden, lush green valleys and alongside a clear Lakes river, before happily chugging into Dalegarth station.

There, after photos with the loco, on the footplate and on the platform, (with the backdrop of England's tallest mountains adding to the impact of the wedding album shots at Dalegarth), the party can move into the station visitor centre and into their function room. The Turntable function room at Ravenglass can hold up to 50 guests, whilst the Eskdale Room at Dalegarth accommodates up to 60.

The wedding menu options cater for all preferences, whether the bride and groom want an entry level or upmarket finger buffet, a hot buffet, or a hot buffet and dessert. All options feature fresh and local produce, home cooking, contemporary dishes and foreign infusions, and the true taste of the Lake District.

A sparkling drinks reception can be included, or the party can supply its own alcohol and pay a corkage rate of £10 per bottle.

Smaller parties of up to 16 people (and a minimum of ten) need not be disappointed, as they can hire the lovely Eskdale Belle carriage, rather than the whole train. This will create a more intimate wedding experience, before the party arrives at Ravenglass or Dalegarth and enjoys a lovely reception.

The cost of hiring a whole steam train for a day is £500 for a day and £600 for an evening, whilst a diesel train is slightly cheaper at £400 and £500 respectively. The Eskdale Belle can be hired for a minimum charge of £100 per day.

Get on track with your wedding planning and consider the unique experience and landscape that Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway can deliver. Call 01229 717171 to discuss your big day, pulled by a little and adorable loco.

ENDS

Press calls: Jane Hunt, Catapult PR, 01253 891114 – jane@catapultpr.co.uk

Notes to Editors

The same private charter and Eskdale Belle hire options are available to corporate event organisers wishing to have an away day, a product launch or a very different day of corporate entertainment.

Children's parties can also be arranged, as Ravensglass and Eskdale Railway has a 'La'al Ratty Coach' tailored to the needs of kids and decorated on the outside with pictures of characters from the Railway's popular book. This can house a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 16 and costs £180 to hire for up to six children and £275 for 6-12 children and the price includes a drink of squash, coffee or tea on arrival and a trip from Ravensglass to Dalegarth, where a buffet lunch is served in the Eskdale Room, before the train returns. All children receive a Ratty Kids Club membership card, giving them quarterly newsletters full of things to do, jokes and news, as well as discounts at certain times of the year. All children also receive a soft toy.

Those simply wishing to hire a function room and choose a menu for their childrens' party can do so, with a choice of menus available at a cost of £10. Parents can bring their own decorations, cake and entertainment, if they wish, or ask R&ER to organise. This party experience can include a return scheduled train journey (40 minutes each way), either before or after the party. It also includes use of the station playground areas. A minimum of 12 children are required for this option.

Gift Experiences That Might Just Suit Choo And Your Loved Ones In 2016

Heritage steam railway, the Ravenglass and Eskdale, which provides an atmospheric and scenic 14-mile journey from the Lake District coast to the foot of England's tallest mountains, has two wonderful gift options available for those wishing to delight a friend or family member.

The first is a **Cream Tea and Steam** experience, which gives two people the thrill of the 14-mile journey, as well as a delicious cream tea, comprising sandwiches and home baked scones, butter, jam and cream. Using local produce, this tasty treat will please gift recipients of any age and costs just £52 for two, inclusive of the train journey, which lasts 40 minutes each way and transports passengers from a coastal plain, to a hidden valley and on to the hills. The gift experience comes in the form of a voucher that can be used at any time before the end of 2016 and which can be bought online at www.ravenglass-railway.co.uk. The recipient just needs to give 48-hours notice of their intention to use their gift voucher and tell the railway at which café they would prefer to enjoy their cream tea – either the Turntable Café at Ravenglass or the Fellbites Café at Dalegarth. This can be done by calling 01229 717171. If the gift purchaser wishes, they can add a mini bottle of Prosecco to the cream tea experience at a cost of just £8.

Eskdale Belle Experience for 2 or 4 people

This gift experience from Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway enables between two to four people to be entertained like royalty in the steam railway's finest coach. This beautifully crafted coach, with comfortable seating and a wood-panelled interior, is the perfect transportation for someone who deserves to be treated to the best. The lucky gift recipients can travel either inside the coach, or out on the veranda seating at either end of the coach. The coach is accessible for wheelchair users, depending on the size of the wheelchair and there is level access from the platform. The gift experience day starts with the serving of a breakfast roll and tea or coffee at the Turntable Café at Ravenglass station and then proceeds with the guests being shown to their private coach, where they can enjoy a bottle of Cava during their journey to Dalegarth station. There, they enjoy lunch and a glass of wine, before returning to Ravenglass. A souvenir guide is also presented. This experience costs £180 for 2 people or £235 for 4. Call 01229 717171 to book.

Those wishing to find out more about wedding and private charters, children's party options and hire of function rooms at Ravenglass and Dalegarth stations can visit www.ravenglass-railway.co.uk for more information.

ENDS

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Engines To Take A Liking Choo – Introducing The Stars Of Our Show

River Irt (0-8-2) Length 24ft Built 1894 – the mid-green steam locomotive with a black and yellow lining - is *the oldest working 15" gauge locomotive in the world* and was originally called 'Muriel' when built by Sir Arthur Heywood at Duffield Bank, Derbyshire. It originally worked at the Eaton Hall Railway and saw service at a munitions factory in Gretna before arriving at Ravenglass in 1917. 'Muriel' was renamed after being rebuilt in 1927, becoming River Irt - the mainstay of passenger operations. A taller chimney was added in the 1970s, to help River Irt look more attractive. This engine is named after the river that flows from Wastwater in Wasdale, down to the sea at Ravenglass, at the confluence of the rivers Irt, Esk and Mite.

River Esk (2-8-2) Length 24ft Built 1923 – the black steam locomotive – was designed by Henry Greenly and built in 1923 by Davey Paxman of Colchester. It became the inspiration for dozens of narrow gauge locomotives subsequently built in Britain and Germany between the wars, as *it was the first 2-8-2 locomotive in Britain*. It is named after one of the rivers flowing through the Eskdale valley, through which it travels. This locomotive originally worked like a Trojan, hauling heavy stone from Beckfoot Quarry to Murthwaite for crushing, as well as carrying passengers. Its valve gear was replaced in 1928 and a new tender fitted in 1970. For many years, this locomotive was painted green, but it currently bears the Blackberry black livery with red, off-white and black lining, of the London & North Western Railway,

River Mite (2-8-2) Length 24ft Built 1966 – the red steam locomotive – bears the Indian Red livery of the old Furness Railway and is lined in black and vermillion. It made history and headlines when hauled from York to Ravenglass by traction engine in December 1966. It came into commission in May 1967 and its arrival made it possible to run a longer and more intensive summer service. Built by Clarksons of York in 1966, it is owned by the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway Preservation Society, who raised funds for its construction, and has a similar appearance to River Esk, whose old steam tender was used during the build. The river Mite, from which the loco takes its name, runs virtually parallel to the Railway for over three miles. The current River Mite is the second loco of that name at Ravenglass. The first was built in 1928 out of parts taken from three of the miniature engines in service after the Ravenglass and Eskdale line was re-gauged to 15". This original loco found it difficult to tackle the steep gradients of the Ravenglass to Dalegarth line and was withdrawn from service in 1937 and scrapped. River Mite has been an ambassador for RER, visiting events as far away as Dresden.

Northern Rock (2-6-2) Length 24ft Built 1976 – the Muscat green/yellow steam locomotive with a red, dark green and white lining – bears the Highland Railway colours and is one of the most powerful 15" gauge locomotives in the world. It was built at Ravenglass and was named after the main sponsor, whose support made the construction possible. It was designed by the Railway's then Chief Engineer, Ian Smith, who used all of the most successful design aspects of River Irt, River Esk and the Kentish Romney Hythe & Dymchurch loco, Northern Chief. Northern Rock came into service in March 1976 and has proved such a successful locomotive that two other locomotives have been commissioned to the same design for a tourist park in Japan.

Synolda – the loco in the Royal blue livery of Narrow Gauge Railways Ltd – celebrated its 100th birthday in 2012, having been built for the Sand Hutton Railway in 1912, by Bassett-Lowke, as an identical loco to those that first worked the re-gauged 15" line, in particular its sister loco, Sans Pareil. The loco was rescued from a derelict state from Belle Vue Zoo in 1978 and restored to full working order by employees of BNFL. This loco is too lightly built for everyday use, so is mainly viewed in the Ravenglass and Eskdale Museum at Ravenglass Station.

Bonnie Dundee – Bonnie Dundee is in the bronze green livery of the North British Railway. She was built in 1900 by Kerr Stuart, with her original owners being the Dundee Gasworks. Ian Fraser bought the engine in 1960 and donated it to Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway in 1976. She was then rebuilt and emerged as a 0-4-2T engine in 1982, with side tanks from Ella. She was used on lighter journeys and in winter, before being given a new boiler and tender in 1996. The name Bonnie Dundee derives from a Sir Walter Scott poem and song about John Graham of Claverhouse.

Quarryman – the now 'retired' internal combustion loco in the Fordson green livery – was built in 1926 and ended service in 1975. It has been fully restored and can be seen by visitors to the Railway.

Perkins – the internal combustion loco in the yellow and black livery – features in the books written by Rev W Awdry's son Christopher and is known as Frank in the 'Jock the New Engine' series. Perkins was originally powered by a Fordson tractor engine, but was re-built in 1930. It was later officially given the name Perkins and given a more powerful engine and twin disc transmission in 1989. Perkins is a permanent way train hauler and shunter capable of working at low speeds for essential maintenance work.

Shelagh of Eskdale – the internal combustion loco in the two-tone green livery – is named after an Irish princess who married a Viking and settled in the Lake District in the Tenth Century. This locomotive was created from the parts of a petrol-driven loco, which was scrapped in 1930. The scrapped loco had been created from the frame and wheels of a steam loco named Ella, who was sister to Muriel, which in turn became the current River Irt. Shelagh of Eskdale has visited several lines and has even hauled HM Queen Elizabeth at a festival in Liverpool.

Lady Wakefield – the internal combustion loco in Brunswick Green – first saw service in 1980, having been constructed to the specification of then Chief Engineer, Ian Smith. She was named after the wife of the Chairman of the Ravenglass and Eskdale Company Ltd, Lord Wakefield, the father and grandfather of the current directors.

Douglas Ferreira – the internal combustion loco in the Indian Red of the Furness Railway – was named after the longest-serving general manager of the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway. Douglas Ferreira served the Railway from 1961-1994 and this loco was commissioned in his honour in September 2005. Owned by the Ravenglass and Eskdale Preservation Society, this powerful loco is the crème de le crème of the internal combustion fleet and has twin cabs. It is in daily service on the line.

14 Miles Of Heritage, Wildlife, Highs And Lows - The Ravenglass and Eskdale Steam Experience That You Could Take A Liking Choo

Ravenglass

This is the starting point for your Ravenglass and Eskdale steam day out and the only coastal village in the Lake District National Park. Ravenglass was once a bustling port, of great importance in Roman times, which is why you can find the remains of a Roman bathhouse dating back to the latter years of the 1st Century AD just a short stroll from the station. The fort here was called Glannaventa and was linked by road, through Eskdale, to the fort at Hardknott and that at Ambleside. It was the most southerly point in the Hadrian's Wall defensive system and, although partially destroyed when the mainline rail track was laid, still has retaining walls to a remarkable height and interpretation boards which explain the layout of this Roman fort.

If you can tear yourself away from the peaceful shore, where trading schooners once signified the importance of a pearl mussel and salmon trade, you may spend a little time at Ravenglass Station before boarding the train, viewing the locos in the museum and perhaps getting a refreshment or home made meal in the Turntable Café on platform one. There is also a gift shop and, if you have time, you can look for some unique features, such as the distinctive squirrel ends on the bench seats of the old Furness Railway, the awning on platform one that features the cast iron columns from Whitehaven Bransty Station and the Victorian awning, which covers the remaining lines, which came from Millom.

Just outside Ravenglass is a signal box that features the first radio system of its kind in this country.

Barrow Marsh

Heading out of Ravenglass, which is flanked by two nature reserves, you will begin to cross Barrow Marsh, where wildlife includes greylag geese, curlew, oystercatcher, mallard, shelduck and primroses in early Spring. The bushy trees growing beside the line are Whitebeam, which has Saxon origins, as 'beam' was the Saxon word for tree. These trees are decorated with white flowers in spring, which turn to reddish-brown berries by Autumn. Common reed – Britain's tallest native grass - can be seen growing by the line.

Muncaster Mill Halt (1.2 miles from Ravenglass)

This was the first terminus of the 15" gauged railway and has been a request stop since 1876. This is a site at which, until recently there was a working watermill. A mill serving the Muncaster Estate has stood since at least 1455 and, although this is now a private residence, the water wheel is still visible here. Watch out here for herons, dippers, wagtails and the flash of a kingfisher diving from a low perch. A sessile oak can be seen in the field to the left of the Railway and its stance clearly shows the direction of the prevailing wind!

Mill Wood (1.4 miles from Ravenglass)

This is an area in which to spot endangered red squirrels and their feeding boxes in the trees, as the engine driver uses all their skill to climb a difficult section of track where the train climbs a millrace and a 1:42 gradient as the wood is approached. Dampness underneath the trees makes the track slippery, but these days passengers are spared the chore that their ancestors endured of pushing the train at this point – something they actually looked forward to!

Miteside Halt (1.6 miles from Ravenglass)

Passengers can look out for an upturned boat, which has provided shelter for walkers for more than a century. For two miles from this point, the train will climb almost continuously as it runs along the side of Muncaster Fell.

Muncaster Fell

At this point, the track is 757 feet higher than at the estuary at Ravenglass, but this imposing fell, almost a mountain in stature, has a steep and rocky flank that makes it seem much higher. The fell side supports heather, bilberry, gorse, bracken, woodland copse and forest, providing a blanket of rich colour. This area is home to roe deer – only two-feet in height and half the size of the other indigenous deer, the red deer. You may also see buzzards circling in the skies above, picking them out by virtue of their 20-22 inch wingspan or their characteristic mewing call. Look out for them perching on lower vantage points too, particularly between Rock Point and Irton Road.

Miteside Loop (1.7 miles from Ravenglass)

This part of the journey is absolutely magical in winter and at other times you can enjoy the sight of silver birch scrub to the left and both polytrichum and sphagnum moss in the wetter areas. The loop has only existed since 1976, this development coinciding with that of the radio signalling system. Each driver must now report to the Ravenglass control box before driving the train away from the loop. It is at this point that fully laden trains might encounter Santa's sleigh on December Santa Specials.

Murthwaite Crushing Plant and Granite Quarry (2.5 miles from Ravenglass)

This was once a place of great industrial activity, but nowadays passengers just see the remains of the plant at which granite from Beckfoot was crushed and ground. Look out for the sessile oak woodland, rich in ferns, mosses and lichens.

You will shortly pass the ruins of Murthwaite Farm and will approach Murthwaite Halt around a sharp corner. This now has a name-board and a cleared platform.

Rock Point (3.3 miles from Ravenglass)

This is one of the most dramatic points in the journey, reached after the train has been through Horsefalls Wood. The River Mite, last seen at Miteside, reappears down a steep drop of nearly 60 feet. If the trees are bare of leaves, you may be able to see Scafell from here. The woodland here is composed of oak, beech and ash. The train now ascends a 1:4 gradient to Walk Mill summit. This is named after an old fulling mill at which wool was cleansed. The course of the River Mite is outlined by the whitewashed Bower House Inn, signalling that the train is approaching the outskirts of Eskdale Green village.

On the open fellside to the right, passengers can see heather, bilberry and wood rush. The kronking call of the raven might be heard and peregrine falcon could also be spotted. Prepare to view Scafell just as the train passes the ruins of Black Bridge. On a clear day, England's tallest mountain should be standing majestically, glorying in its 3,162' position above sea level.

Irton Road Station (4.2 miles from Ravenglass)

A small pink granite station building has existed at Irton Road, at the western end of Eskdale Green village, since 1876 and is the only original building on the line. This is the main crossing point on the line and is also the start of two of the unique 'Walks From Ratty'. Many passengers with time to relax and explore enjoy a walk around the village of Eskdale Green. Walking through the village actually leads them to the next station along the line.

After leaving Irton Road, the view is dominated by the imposing Harter Fell (2160 feet above sea level), deemed beautiful by Wainwright, who revelled in its bracken, heather, grey turrets and ramparts of rock rising into a pyramid shape, as a true peak. The line drops about 20 feet at this point, as passengers journey into the valley of the River Esk. Wet meadows and wood greet the eye to the right and here grows canary grass, common rush and bog myrtle.

The Green - for Eskdale Green Village (4.8 miles from Ravenglass)

This station was originally called the 'King of Prussia' after a pub of that name. When this hostelry changed its name to the George IV – a patriotic move in the middle of World War One, the station was re-christened as Eskdale Green and later, The Green. Eskdale was much appreciated by the poet, William Wordsworth, who grew up in West Cumbria. Walker, Wainwright also described it as one of the loveliest of Lakeland valleys. After the train has travelled under a road bridge, there is a 1:43 gradient to climb called Hollin How Bank. The line is less slippery here than at Mill Wood and approaching the next bridge should present little problem. To the left you will now see bracken-clad hills and farmland below.

Here, you will doubtless encounter Lakeland's famous little sheep – the Herdwick. The lambs of this breed are dark and younger sheep brown, while older sheep are grey with lovely white faces. Herdwick wool is much in demand and Herdwick meat is a taste experience all of its own, the lamb having a unique flavour thanks to the Herdwick's diet of mosses, lichen and berries.

Fisherground Loop and Halt (5.4 miles from Ravenglass)

Here, your train will wind up and around Fisherground Corner, preparing for a steep climb into Fisherground Loop – the third and final passing place on the line. Fisherground Halt is a rustic structure near to a campsite and a typical Lakeland farm – Spout House Farm – can be seen at this point.

Gilberts Cutting (5.9 miles from Ravenglass)

This cutting was opened in 1964, after 3,000 tons of earth and rock was removed, to prevent the locos having to undergo the strain of tackling the curves in the Hollinghead Bend. The Beckfoot Quarry, last worked in 1953, can be seen on the left and colourful yellow gorse and pink granite rock will be filling your vision.

Beckfoot Halt (6.5 miles from Ravenglass)

This stop is mainly used by fell walkers, those heading to Blea Tarn and users of the Walks From Ratty booklet! The impact of the Ice Age glaciers can be seen in the rocky mounds and jagged edges here. The flora comprises of oak, birch, rowan and holly trees.

From this point, the climb is stiff and takes passengers through oak woodland (Beckfoot Wood) where, through the trees, you can glimpse the tumbling Whillan Beck, making its watery way down from Burnmoor Tarn en route to joining the River Esk. You will see a row of pebble-dashed cottages that were originally miners' dwellings. As the line levels out and curves around, you will see Dalegarth Station.

Dalegarth (7 miles from Ravenglass)

Dalegarth Station marks the end of the line and its idyllic setting, amid England's highest mountains, with Scafell to the east and Harter Fell to the south, reminds the passenger of the outstanding beauty of their Lake District location. The current station was built in 2005 as Dalegarth for Boot – the local village. It is well worth visiting Eskdale Mill, the Lake District's oldest working Water Corn Mill, which has been documented since 1578, but which may well have existed at least since 1294.

Six of Wainwright's 'Walks From Ratty' start and finish at Dalegarth, including a six-mile ramble to Burnmoor Tarn and back, a 3.5-mile walk to Eel Tarn and a 7-mile (3.5 hours) walk to the remains of Hardknott Fort. It is also possible to visit the lovely Dalegarth Force, originally named Stanley Gill Force. This is a lesser-known waterfall in the Lake District, but one of the most spectacular and the walk is only about a mile from Dalegarth.

The station itself has an excellent children's playground, opened by HRH Princess Alexandra, a picnic area, the Fellbites Eatery, which serves delicious hot and cold snacks, meals and daily specials, and the very well stocked and high quality Scafell gift shop. There is a private function room for hire, in which events are held throughout the year. Mad Ratty Tea Parties for children can also be booked and a choice of menu is available. There is also an option of chartering either a train or a special carriage for special occasions and celebrations. This private charter thrill can also be given to children celebrating their birthday.

The shop sells the 'Walks From Ratty' booklet, plus 'Steam and Ramble' – a fully illustrated walk calling at every station on the way back to Ravenglass, for those who fancy making the most of their walking boots. Those preferring to cycle can buy a number of cycle route cards at Dalegarth, which will take them on a circular route from the station. Passengers who pre-book a cycle on to the train can also opt to ride the Eskdale TRail, which will lead them back to Ravenglass on their own two wheels.

All timetable and ticket information can be found at www.ravenglass-railway.co.uk and further enquiries can be made by calling 01229 717171.