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**‘Steam Gala’ Weekend hailed as huge success**

The Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway pulled out all the stops to ensure the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway’s recent ‘Steam Gala’ Weekend was a roaring success, including an unexpected appearance by visiting locomotive ‘Northern Chief’.

A picture containing railroad, outdoor, sky, train

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A group of trains with steam coming out of them

Description automatically generated with low confidenceA person working on a train

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A train on the tracks

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To mark the centenary of historic steam locomotiveRiver Esk, a three-day weekend of celebrations took place at the iconic Lake District railway over the May Day Bank Holiday Weekend. With visitor numbers around 20% up on the same time last year, people marvelled at a spectacular display of resident steam and diesel engines, including *River Esk* and *Katie*.

Meanwhile, 96 year old ‘Samson’from the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway had been scheduled as the main guest loco. A last-minute technical issue meant a decision was taken not to run the locomotive on passenger services, but to avoid disappointment, ‘Northern Chief’ was sent as a surprise addition to the event and delighted passengers travelling the iconic route.

This gave the very rare opportunity for three RH&DR steam locomotives to be at a different railway at the same time. (As well as Samson, and Northern Chief, Typhoon is currently on display in the Ravenglass Railway Museum).

Stuart Ross, General Manager (Visitor Experience) at the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway, says: *“Gala weekends really are an opportunity for us the showcase the best of what the railway has to offer. Better still they are an opportunity for unusual things to happen too. Being able to travel behind our Museum locomotive “Katie” or through our workshops on a smaller miniature railway are good examples of this.*

*“Importantly these events have a tremendous feed good factor. Despite the relatively indifferent weather the smiles on both passengers, volunteers and staff faces make these events vert worthwhile.*

*“Our colleagues at New Romney really did pull out all the stops to send Northern Chief to Ravenglass at a moment’s notice, so it’s a massive thank you to them for enabling this to happen. It added tremendously to the atmosphere of the day and gave our visitors an extra special experience!”*

For further information on the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway, visit: [**www.ravenglass-railway.co.uk**](http://www.ravenglass-railway.co.uk).

ENDS

**Notes to Editors:**

Images attached - Please credit Charlotte Graham.

[**Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway**](https://ravenglass-railway.co.uk/) is a family-owned business operating one of the oldest and longest narrow-gauge railways in England, on the Western Coast of the Lake District. Affectionately known as La’al Ratty, the railway is surrounded by stunning views and walks and is based in Ravenglass, the only coastal village in the Lake District National Park.

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