



VisitBritain CEO visits Ullswater & the new visitor facilities at Aira Force

On Wednesday (20th May) Ullswater Steamers, the National Trust and a range of other partners were pleased to welcome Sally Balcombe, the Chief Executive of Visit Britain to Ullswater in the Lake District.

Sally heard about the extensive work that has been undertaken at both Aira Green and Aira Force to enhance the visitor offer for both the domestic and international visitor markets.

Both 'Steamers' and the National Trust have been actively collaborating to maximise the potential of this location, which has been a visitor attraction since Wordsworth's day - Glencoyne Bay is famously the place that inspired his now legendary poem 'Daffodils'.

To maximise the opportunities provided by this rich heritage the partners have worked together to provide an additional stopping point on the Ullswater shore, which once complete will be the first new stopping point for more than 50 years. Alongside this a range of other significant enhancement work has been undertaken, including a new boardwalk and footpath linking Aira Green to Aira Force, footpaths around Aira Force itself, improved visitor information points, a refurbished tearoom and extensive footpath enhancement linking Aira Force with Glenridding.

Once final structural testing has been completed the new Aira Green jetty will be open to visitors from the 6th June, who will then be able to sail from Glenridding to the new stop and experience all that Aira has to offer.

Sally Balcombe, Chief Executive of Visit Britain, said: *"Enjoying the beautiful landscape is one of the key drivers for holiday choice for international visitors second only to offering good value for money. Spending time with a range of tourism businesses learning about the development of new visitors services and infrastructure around Ullswater, has been most illuminating. The work undertaken so far to improve visitor connectivity and facilities clearly demonstrates there is a real desire to innovate and meet the demands of both the international visitor market. What I have seen today demonstrates what can be achieved when partners work*

together to achieve a common goal and I would actively encourage more of this type of cooperation to broaden the visitor offer and appeal of a destination.”

Jeremy Barlow, General Manager, National Trust Central & East Lakes, said: *“It has been a pleasure showing Sally around the new facilities at Aira Force, including the enhanced visitor offer including the tearoom, visitor information point and improved footpath around the falls themselves. In addition we welcome the new footpath to which links Aira to Glenridding and we are looking forward to the opening of the Aira Green jetty in the coming weeks, which will greatly enhance the connectivity around Ullswater for domestic and international visitors.”*

David Little, Chief Executive of Lake District Estates, Ullswater Steamers, said: *“We are extremely pleased to have had the opportunity to welcome Sally Balcombe to Ullswater and to show her the significant developments both ourselves and the National Trust have made to improve visitor facilities, access and overall connectivity at both Aira Force and Aira Green. During her visit Sally also spent time talking to a range of partners offering an invaluable insight to the work undertaken by Visit Britain and how the partners could maximise the opportunities presented to target specific international markets. We all learnt a great deal and we are extremely grateful Sally took time from her busy schedule to join us.”*

Notes to Editors:

Ullswater Steamers is a family-owned business that has been operating in the tranquil Ullswater Valley since 1859. Today, the company provides a sustainable and environmentally friendly way of linking some of the most iconic walking routes and views in the Lake District National Park.

Aira Force was developed in the 18th century by the Duke of Norfolk as a picturesque pleasure ground for visitors to the family’s hunting lodge at Lyulph’s Tower. The National Trust has cared for Aira Force since 1906 when it acquired the land from the Howard family.

The **National Trust** is Europe’s largest conservation charity and we believe in the importance of nature, beauty and history in people’s lives. We care for 20% of the Lake District National Park, including England’s highest mountain, Scafell Pike, its deepest lake, Wastwater, its precious wildlife, 90 tenanted farms, and the cultural heritage within a dozen historic buildings. We support 300 jobs in Cumbria and the Lake District and each year we work with local volunteers, who help us look after one of England’s most inspirational landscapes. The Trust is dependent on the support of its members and the visitors we welcome to our special places each year: every penny we raise in Cumbria is invested in caring for this special place, for ever, for everyone.