



## Enterprising Lake District visitor attraction celebrates 160<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

**Boldly going where no steamer has gone before, this July marks 160 years since Enterprise launched on Ullswater, a lake in the heart of the English Lake District UNESCO World Heritage Site.**



*Ullswater 'Steamers' Raven M.Y turns 130 this July with a Victorian themed celebration.  
Photo by Jeff Ashton.*

In a double celebration, award-winning environmentally accredited Ullswater 'Steamers' celebrates the **160th Anniversary** of the **Ullswater Transit & Navigation Company** and the **130th Birthday of M.Y Raven** (who replaced the first 'Steamer', Enterprise) with a **Victorian themed weekend** (13-14 July) and spectacular **Evening Flotilla** on the lake (16 July). A once in a lifetime experience for passengers this will be the first time in the company's history, that all five heritage boats assemble on the lake together.

Throughout the anniversary weekend there will be Victorian inspired entertainments at Glenridding Pier including a coconut shy, candy floss and hoopla. The celebrations will culminate on the 16 July with the flotilla where **M.Y Raven, M.Y Lady of the Lake, M.V Lady Dorothy, M.V Lady Wakefield and M.V Western Belle** will amass at the widest point on the lake, providing a rare photo opportunity.

Each boat will have a different role in the evening's proceedings with invited guests and Lake District Estates staff aboard the birthday boat; Raven. Members of the public will have the chance to take part in this occasion aboard Lady Wakefield as part of the **Fish & Chip Supper Cruise** or **Gin Cruise** on Western Belle. The cruise on Lady of the Lake has been gifted to **Patterdale Mountain Rescue** to help support their annual fundraising programme,

whilst staff members of **National Trust Aira Force** have been invited to sail on Lady Dorothy.

The public cruises depart from Pooley Bridge Pier at 7pm, pre-booking is essential, you can find out more on the events pages. [www.ullswater-steamers.co.uk/events/](http://www.ullswater-steamers.co.uk/events/)

**Mark Horton Manager Ullswater Steamers** says, *'We have never before had all five boats on the water together, it will be a truly magnificent sight and experience for our passengers and a wonderful way to celebrate Raven's 130<sup>th</sup> birthday on that very day. It's fascinating to think about how the early Victorian tourists would have experienced Ullswater and the changes between then and now. To ensure future generations can enjoy the landscape we are always looking for ways to protect and conserve the environment around us. Our sustainability initiatives include modifying our fleet of boats to make them more efficient, achieving carbon neutral status for our office operations at the 'Steamers', removing single use plastic where possible and supporting visitor giving with the new contactless payment point from Lake District Foundation.'*

## History

Originally used to transport provisions, **Royal Mail**, slate from nearby mines and lead from the Greenside mine in Glenridding, it was the Victorian domestic tourism boom in the late 1800s, that fuelled the 'Steamers' growth in popularity with passengers.

**Enterprise** was a paddle steamer and the first boat of the Ullswater Steam Navigation Company, which later became Ullswater 'Steamers'. It was beset with problems with the paddles being choked by weeds, not much is known of its demise but the boat was later replaced by M.Y Raven. Tour operator Thomas Cook was also vocal in his support for a new boat to provide extra reliability for the groups of tourists he was bringing to the Lake District via the railway at Penrith as so Raven was commissioned.



*Archive photos of M.Y Raven during Kaiser Wilhelm visit and M.Y Raven at Glenridding c. 1900*

Launched on the 16<sup>th</sup> July 1889 **M.Y Raven** was named after Ravencragg, the home of company director **W H Parkin**. One of his young relatives **Winifred Parkin**, aged 6, broke the bottle of champagne across Raven's bows. The superstition was that the younger the person that names a vessel, the longer it will live. Raven is now 130 years old and was constructed by **Joseph Seath & Company** of Rutherglen near Glasgow then transported to Pooley bridge to be assembled. Designed to carry 400 passengers originally, the motor yacht (M.Y) has undergone various repairs and modernisations and now has a diesel Cummings Engine.

Running boat services daily for 160 years Ullswater 'Steamers' has a wealth of stories to tell, connecting some of the most famous and iconic walking routes in the National Park, with connections between Glenridding, Howtown, Pooley Bridge Piers and between Glenridding and National Trust Aira Force Pier. With views of Daffodils on the west shore in Spring and the imposing Helvellyn Mountain range at the South-Western end, the valley has long been

the place of inspiration for famous artists and poets William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Thomas de Quincey and Turner. Today the company is one of the largest heritage fleets in the world with five boats in service and a gold standard ethos of sustainability and conservation at the heart of operations.

### **Fast facts:**

- Ullswater is the **second largest lake in the UNESCO World Heritage Site** the Lake District. It is around 7.5 miles (12 km) long and 0.5 miles (0.8 km) wide with a maximum depth of approximately 205ft (62m).
- **M.Y Raven has been around the world approximately 23.5 times** since it launched, travelling **585,500 miles** and spending around **58,550 hours** on the water, and carrying over **9 million passengers**.
- Built of Iron in the Clyde in **1889 M.Y Raven was the 270<sup>th</sup> boat** constructed by **Joseph Seath & Company**. It was transported in sections by rail to Penrith, then by road to Pooley Bridge to be assembled on the shore of Ullswater at Eller Beck.
- **Thomas Cook** brought charabancs (horse drawn and later motorised pleasure buses) of passengers from Penrith train station to Pooley Bridge to take a cruise in the 1800's
- Famous passengers on the fleet include; **Kaiser Wilhelm II, Prince of Wales, Prince Harry Duke of Sussex and Princess Alexandra, actors Tom Cruise and Peter Postlethwaite, and presenters David Dimbleby, Tony Robinson, Kate Humble and politician Tony Blair.**
- Award-winning environmentally accredited Ullswater 'Steamers' currently operates one of the **largest heritage fleets in the world**, holding Green Tourism Business Scheme Gold accreditation and Gold Green at Heart for best environmental practice.
- There are **80+ daily scheduled sailings** on the lake at the height of the summer season.
- The area is home to some of the **UK's rarest species of wildlife** including Red Deer, Red Squirrel, Holly Blue Butterfly, Common Blue Damselfly, Peregrine Falcon, Raven, Red-breasted Merganser, Cormorant, Osprey and many more.
- **William Wordsworth** was inspired to write the poem "Daffodils" after seeing daffodils growing on the shores of Ullswater.

[ENDS]

### **Notes for editors:**

**Press contact:** Sorcha Hunter PR Executive [shunter@cumbriatourism.org](mailto:shunter@cumbriatourism.org) | 07398 255654

- Photo opportunity at 8pm on Saturday 16 July – onboard or on the shore
- Interviews available with Peter Hensman Director of Lake District Estates, Mark Horton Manager of Ullswater 'Steamers' – in advance and on the day
- Download high resolution press [IMAGES HERE](#)

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### **Events listings:**

**Event: Victorian 160th Anniversary Weekend**

**Date:** 13 and 14 July 2019

**Time:** various

**Description:** Step back in time to celebrate Ullswater Navigation & Transit Company's 160th birthday. Cruises will run throughout the day.

**Tickets:** Adult start at £14.50, Child (5-15) £8.70. Under 5s free

**Booking:** [www.ullswater-steamers.co.uk/timetable-fares/](http://www.ullswater-steamers.co.uk/timetable-fares/)

### **Event: Celebratory Evening Flotilla - Fish & Chip Supper**

**Date:** 16 July 2019

**Times:** : 7:00pm - 9:00pm

**Description:** A very special fish and chip supper cruise as part of the 160<sup>th</sup> evening flotilla. Hop onboard a two-hour evening cruise with musical entertainment from Pete Lashley. Ticket includes the cruise, fish & chip supper (vegetarian & gluten free options available) and live entertainment. Dogs not permitted. Please note this is part of the celebratory evening flotilla so there will be photography onboard. Departs from Pooley Bridge Pier.

**Tickets:** £20 per person

**Booking:** <https://www.ullswater-steamers.co.uk/events/event.php?id=165>

### **Event: Celebratory Evening Flotilla - Gin Cruise**

**Date:** 16 July 2019

**Time:** 7:00pm - 9:00pm

**Description:** Join us on board as we have a special gin tasting of The Lakes Distillery Gins to celebrate our 160th Anniversary. There will also be entertainment onboard to complete the atmosphere. Dogs not permitted. Please note this is part of the celebratory evening flotilla so there will be photography onboard. Departs from Pooley Bridge Pier

**Tickets:** £20.00 per person

**Booking:** <https://www.ullswater-steamers.co.uk/events/event.php?id=166>

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**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. Ullswater 'Steamers' has one of the largest heritage passenger vessel fleets in England, including the oldest working passenger vessel in the world, Lady of the Lake. In 2019 the 'Steamer's will celebrate the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their first steamer on the water. The business's awards include Green at Heart Award, British Coach Tourism Award 2019 Heritage Railway, Gold for the 2018, Gold at CREA's 2015, 2014 GTBS Visit England award and winner of Cumbria Tourism's 2011 Sustainable Tourism award and 2016 Large Visitor Attraction of the Year award among many others. For more information about group offers and packages visit <https://www.ullswater-steamers.co.uk/groups/>