

Pushing the boat out for visitors

One of Cumbria's most instantly recognisable visitor attractions says it's great to see people starting to feel more confident about rediscovering everything the county has to offer.

Ullswater Steamers has one of the largest heritage passenger vessel fleets in England and staff have been welcoming people back onto the water for pre-booked journeys on their historic boats over the past few weeks.

Skipper Peter Martin says the feedback from passengers has been very positive: *"Everyone is telling us that they're thrilled to be out of their houses! Ullswater has a long-standing reputation as one of the more tranquil lakes, away from major population centres, so it's perfect for social distancing.*

"Just being outdoors on the boats and out in nature is lifting people's spirits and helping them to feel more upbeat about the future. Our vessels represent the wonders of Victorian engineering, so they really do have an enduring appeal as a unique feel-good experience.

"And of course, they give access to some great walking trails, not least the 20 mile Ullswater Way around the lake, which can be walked in any direction and from any starting point. With waterfalls and red squirrel trails, there are plenty of special views to look out for too.



"Restarting scheduled boat services has been great for us as staff too and I feel I'm in a tremendously lucky and unique position. During lockdown, our maintenance team used the time to give all of our vessels a new coat of paint and some extra TLC. They've also made some adaptations where needed, such as new partitions on Lady Wakefield to ensure there is full social distancing.

“That mild anxiety I think we all felt a couple of weeks ago has given way to an immense sense of relief – and pride – that we’ve been able to adapt and get these new measures in place, to ensure passengers can feel comfortable and confident about being back on the water again.

Peter says a range of steps have been taken by Ullswater Steamers to ensure all services are COVID-safe. He adds: *“It’s important that customers can focus on enjoying their trip and the measures we’ve introduced are helping them do just that.*

“For instance, we have removed seats from each vessel and they are currently running at just 30% capacity to ensure there is lots of space and full social distancing. All seating is also fully allocated to individuals and pre-bookable online in advance.

“We have an enhanced cleaning regime in place and staff are being meticulous about cleaning whenever people get on and off the boats. There are hand sanitisation stations on board for all our passengers and we are taking great care about queuing control around the piers and the boats themselves, to ensure there’s never any danger of overcrowding.

“Of course, masks must be worn onboard, but people have soon got used to this and it doesn’t detract from the overall experience at all!”

Passengers can check the full timetable and book now for dates up to 21 June 2021 at: www.ullswater-steamers.co.uk

A video of all the safety measures on board can be seen [here](#).