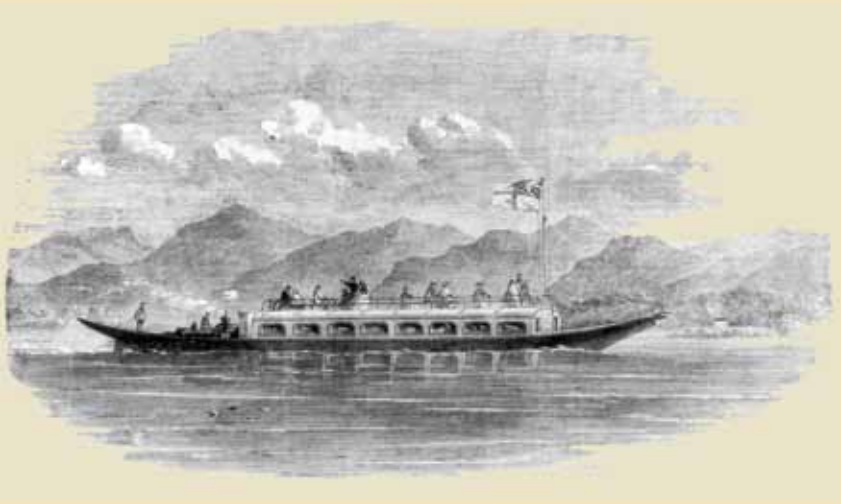


Re-creation of a Furness Railway Middle Circular Tour

in the spirit of Alfred Aslett,
General Manager of the Furness Railway, 1896 to 1918



To commemorate the 150th anniversary of the
Inauguration of the Steam Yacht Gondola on
Coniston Water

Saturday, 19th June 2010



**CUMBRIAN
RAILWAYS
ASSOCIATION**

The County's Railway History Group

The Furness Railway Tour No. 4: Middle Circular Tour

Welcome to this re-creation of a Furness Railway Circular tour as promoted by the company during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. We are doing this today to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the entry into service of the Steam Yacht *Gondola* on Coniston Water.

Assembling the various elements of this tour has taken a considerable amount of work and strong commitment from a number of individuals. In particular may we extend our thanks and appreciation to the following –

Alan Postlethwaite

- for the idea and overall co-ordination

The late Steven Machell

- for making initial arrangements with the Ribble Vehicle Preservation Trust

Alan Johnstone

- for designing and printing the booking forms

David Webb

- for producing the replica Tour No 4 souvenir tickets

The Ribble Vehicle Preservation Trust

- for making their vehicles available, and to Ray Bignell (Chairman) and David Burgess, our drivers today

Peter Robinson

- for preparing the text of this guide

Mike Peascod

- for layout design

The National Trust

- Jo Houghton (Administrator, NT Enterprises Ltd, Grasmere) and John Eaton (Manager of *Gondola*) and his crew.

Karen Maher (Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway)

- for facilitating the parking at Haverthwaite and our travel by rail and steamer to Ambleside

David Coxon (Operations Manager, Lake District National Park Authority)

- for reserving coach parking at Coniston

Holywath

- the family of the late Major John Hext for permission to visit his railway, and to Geoff Holme for taking a day's leave to guide us.

Richard Craig and Graham Broadman

- for the musical accompaniment to our cruise.

The Rawdon Smith Trust

- for permission to land at Lake Bank Pier.

Photographs and images in this brochure are all from the Cumbrian Railways Association Photo Library. See more of our collection at <http://cra.photos.gb.net>

We hope you enjoy your day.

Itinerary and Timings

Haverthwaite station	x	depart (train)	10-40
Lakeside station		arrive	10-58
	x	depart (steamer)	11-20
Ambleside Pier Head		arrive	12-50
		depart (bus)	13-00
Coniston town centre		arrive	13-30
Coniston Pier	x	depart (Gondola)	18-00
out and back via Lake Bank Pier		arrive	19-30
Coniston Pier		depart (bus)	19-45
Haverthwaite station		arrive	20-30

All timings are approximate except for departures from Haverthwaite station, Lakeside station and Coniston Pier Head (marked "x" above). Please be prompt at these locations as departures cannot be delayed.

If you arrived at Haverthwaite on the Stagecoach X35 bus there are services towards Grange and Kendal departing at 20-57 and 22-19 and towards Ulverston and Barrow at 21-08, 22-28 and 23-48. To quench your thirst while waiting, the Anglers Arms is only about 100 yards away and offers a wide range of real beers – and good food.

DOWN WINDERMERE LAKE.				UP WINDERMERE LAKE.				
		a.m.	p.m.			a.m.	p.m.	
Ambleside dep.		8 30	12 25	Carnforth dep.		7A 0	8A10	
Bowness "		9 0	12 55	Grange "		7A25	8 31	
Lake Side (Steamer) arr.		9 40	1 35	Barrow "		7A 5	8 45	
Side (Train) dep.		9 50	1 45	Furness Abbey .. "		7A15	8 55	
Greenodd (Train) ... arr.		10 5	2 0	Ulverston "		8A 0	9 20	
Carnforth dep.		10 0	1 28	Lake Side (Steamer) .. "		8A25	9 55	
Grange "		10 22	1 50	Bowness "		9 15	10 35	
Barrow "		9 55	1 45	Ambleside (Steamer) arr.		9 45	11 5	
Furness Abbey .. "		10 3	1 55	side (Coach) dep.		9 50	11 10	
Ulverston "		10 28	2 20	(Coach) arr.		11 20	12 40	
Greenodd (Coach) .. "		11 0	2 45	Coniston (Gondola) dep.		11 35	12 55	
Lake (Coach) arr.		12 0	3 45	(Gondola) arr.		12 10	1 30	
Bank (Gondola) dep.		12 15	2 55	4 50	Lake Bank (Coach) dep.		12 45	5 15
Coniston (Coach) arr.		12 50	3 30	5 25	Greenodd (Coach) arr.		1 45	6 15
ton (Coach) dep.		2 15	3 35	5 30	Ulverston (Train) ... "		2 10	6 55
Ambleside (Coach) .. "		3 45	5 5	7 0	Furness Abbey "		2 35	7 20
Side (Steamer) dep.		4 15	5 10	7A15	Barrow "		2 45	7 30
Bowness arr.		4 40	5 35	7A40	Grange "		2 37	8 32
Lake Side (Steamer) .. "		5 25	6 20	8A25	Carnforth "		3 5	9 0
Ulverston "		6 10	6 55	9A 0	Greenodd (Train) ... dep.		2 29	6 29
Furness Abbey "		6 32	7 20	9A40	Lake (Train) arr.		2 45	6 45
Barrow "		6 40	7 30	9A50	Side (Steamer) dep.		2 55	6 55
Grange "		6 37	8A13	9A37	Bowness arr.		3 30	7A30
Carnforth "		7 0	—	9A52	Ambleside "		4 5	8A 5

A—Till September 12th only.

FARES—For the Round, including Steam Yacht, Train, Char-a-Banc, and Gondola, from any Station on the Circle—

1st Class, 7s. 3d.; 3rd Class, 5s. 9d.

Carnforth... ..	1st.	3d.	Ulverston	1st.	3d.
Arnside	9/6	6/9	Furness Abbey	8/-	6/-
Grange and Kents Bank ...	8/9	6/6	Barrow	9/6	6/6
Cark	8/3	6/3			

Passengers holding Outer Circular Tour Tickets can use them for this Tour on payment of Coach Fare to the Driver of the Char-a-Banc between Greenodd and Lake Bank.
Lunches will be supplied at the "Lake Bank Hotel" at 2s. per head to Passengers by this Tour.

Timetable from the July - September 1903 edition of the Circular Tours brochure

The Furness Railway Circular Tours

THE LAKE DISTRICT as a tourist destination offered great opportunities to the Furness Railway. By the 1840s William Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes* had well popularised the attractions of the area to the leisured and better-off cognoscenti but for most the difficulty and expense of travel to the Lake District was beyond them. From their very opening, however, the railways promoted day trips from the major cities of the north to places like Windermere and Keswick but the real development of facilities for staying visitors had to await the growth in leisure time, particularly of bank holidays and paid holidays in the last two decades of the 19th century.

The Furness Railway was well into the tourist market long before then – the very launch of Gondola in 1860, its acquisition of the Windermere United Steam Yacht Company in 1866 and promotion of the branch to Lakeside at the same time, made that clear. By the 1880s the Company was already offering a range of Lake District tours, but it was the appointment of Alfred Aslett as General Manager in 1896 which brought a major change in emphasis. His awareness of the opportunities available to the company to develop the tourist traffic to help replace the declining revenues from freight traffic, drawing on his previous experience as

General Manager of the Cambrian Railways, was to take the Furness Railway much more seriously into the tourist market.

Central to this was a great increase in publicity, and in particular for a much wider range of tours, the railway company working in conjunction with local coach and charabanc operators. By 1903 a range of 20 tours was being offered, reaching out to most parts of the Lake District, with many using the Furness Railway's own steamers on Windermere and Coniston Water – and some connecting with the company's new steamship service across Morecambe Bay from Fleetwood to Barrow to tap the day-trip market from Blackpool. New vessels were also provided on the lakes with the building of *Swift* in 1900 to enhance the Windermere fleet and *Lady of the Lake* in 1908 on Coniston Water, both now unfortunately broken up.

The Circular Tours continued to be offered after the Great War but on a reduced scale, there now being no steamers on the Morecambe Bay run. With the grouping of railways from 1923 a different approach to publicising the Lake District followed, facing the rapidly growing competition from road transport with both longer distance and local day trips by coach, if not yet by car. The "Golden Age" of tourism by rail was over.

Tour No. 4: Middle Circular Tour

- The Route

Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway

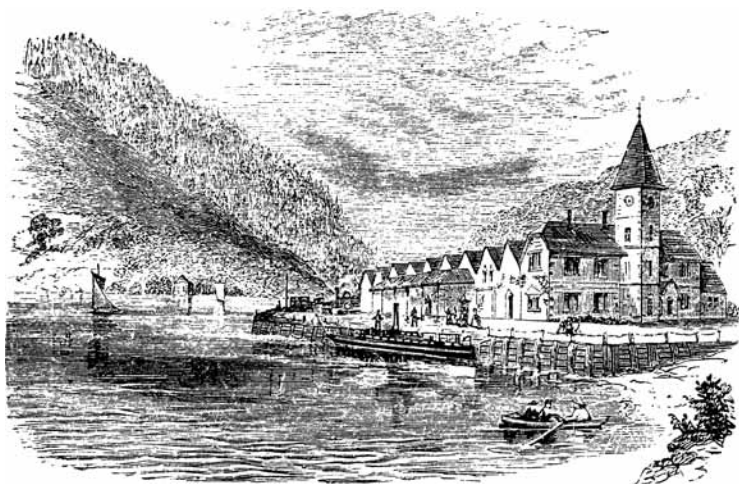
We start our tour today at Haverthwaite station on the Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway – a heritage steam railway which has operated since 5th May 1973. It was originally part of the Lakeside Branch of the Furness Railway, opened from Plumpton Junction to Windermere Lakeside on 1st June 1869. The line was intended not only to serve the tourist trade; industrial traffic was also important from gunpowder works at Black Beck, near Bouth, and at Low Wood, just over the River Leven from Haverthwaite (both with their own tramway connections), the small ancient ironworks and a bleach works, both at Backbarrow. The latterly summer-only passenger service was withdrawn from 6th September 1965 with final closure and cessation of goods traffic from 24th April 1967.

Haverthwaite is now the southern terminus and operating centre of the 4½ mile long Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway, the line southwards having been long abandoned. The station buildings are of a standard Furness Railway design from the late 1860s, the same design surviving also at Bootle and Drigg on the Cumbrian coast. Similar goods

sheds, now used here as a loco workshop, can still be found all over the former Furness system. The station footbridge, however, is of a North Eastern Railway design, having been rendered redundant on the East Coast Main line in Northumberland when the route was electrified in the late 1980s.

Leaving Haverthwaite we enter a short tunnel, then, immediately on our right, pass the site of sidings which served the one-time Backbarrow ironworks, the old blast-furnace of which survives. Beyond and below can be seen the River Leven, the outlet from Windermere, which roars over rapids as we approach Backbarrow. The mill-like block of the Whitewater Hotel was formerly the famous “dolly-blue” bleach factory (closed 1981), and was seriously affected by last November’s floods. The modern housing is a time-share village, and above it, the new building of the recently opened Lakeland Motor Museum, relocated from Holker Hall. We soon reach Newby Bridge halt, where beyond to the right can be seen the bridge over the River Leven and then a row of former Furness Railway staff cottages.

Entering Lakeside we pass the slipway used for the launch and repair of the lake



steamers, then the signal box. The station is a shadow of its former self which at one time had a clocktower, overall roof, first-floor restaurant and extensive station facilities but only a small part of the original buildings survive. Adjacent now is the modern Lakes Aquarium.

Windermere

Our vessel on the lake will be either *Swan* or *Teal* (see page 7). As we sail northwards the lake widens and after about four miles on a promontory to the right can be seen Storrs Hall Hotel, rebuilt about 1810 as a residence for Ulverston-born slave trader, John Bolton. At one time a pier station for steamers, it was a scene of great drama at dusk on 7th September 1901. Just off the pier a collision between two steamers resulted in the sinking of an earlier *Swan*, fortunately without casualties, and the vessel was soon raised to give many more years service on the lake.

The eastern shore and its backing woodlands are dotted with fine large houses, several being from top architects of the Arts & Crafts movement of the late 19th to early 20th century. Prominent among these is Broad Leys, home of the Windermere Motor Boat Racing Club, designed by Charles Voysey and characterised by its three semi-circular bays looking out over the lake. It is the only Voysey house in the world which you can stay in. Higher up is Blackwell,

by Hugh Baillie Scott, built for Manchester brewer, Sir Edward Holt; now owned by the Lakeland Arts Trust it is open as an art gallery.

Another mile or so until we cross the route of the Windermere Ferry, and on approaching Bowness Bay, we pass Belle Isle to our left with its famous 18th century circular Belle Isle House, built for, and still occupied by the Curwen family; it was named after Isabella Curwen of Workington. The busy Bay is overlooked by the Belsfield Hotel, at one time the home of Henry Schneider, ironmaster, who first developed the Barrow iron and steel industry from the 1860s.

Leaving Bowness Bay a vista of the central Lake District fells opens up ahead of us. We soon pass the Windermere Steamboat Museum, now home to Schneider's personal steamer *Esperance* and former Furness Railway *Raven* which once operated cargo services on the lake.

This northern stretch of the lake was once the location for attempts on the world water speed record. It was here on 13th June 1930 that Sir Henry Segrave broke the record in his boat *Miss England II* with a speed of almost 99 mph. On the third run, however, the boat capsized off Belle Grange Pier (on the west side of the lake) drowning Segrave's mechanic and leaving him with serious injuries from which he later died. At the time Segrave also held the world land speed record at 231.5 mph.



The last operational Sunderland flying boat lands on Windermere c.1992

A mile or so on from the museum, also to the east, the caravan site at White Cross Bay was a wartime site for the construction of Short Sunderland flying boats which were so vital to the protection of trans-Atlantic convoys from submarine attack. Brockhole, the National Park Visitor Centre follows closely, its fine gardens the work of Thomas Mawson, then comes Langdale Chase, a Jacobethan-style house now a hotel, built in 1891 for George Howarth, a Manchester industrialist, and also with gardens by Mawson. Lowwood Hotel was the site of another former steamer station, while opposite, to the west, will be seen the turrets of Wray Castle, built in 1840 for Dr Dawson, a Liverpool surgeon. Now owned by the National Trust, it was when staying here on a family holiday in 1882 that a 16-year old Beatrix Potter got her first impressions of the Lake District. Here it was that she first met the Rev. Hardwicke Rawnsley, then vicar of Wray, who was already campaigning for the creation of the National Trust to which Potter was eventually to bequeath her, by then extensive, Lake District land holdings.

As we near Ambleside Pier the mountains appear to crowd round the head of the lake. Like Bowness, the pier station is an original Furness Railway structure and here our onward transport awaits.

Ambleside to Coniston

In Furness days one or more horse-drawn coaches, or open motor charabancs would be our transport to Coniston. Today we have two classic buses or coaches from the collection of the Ribble Vehicle Preservation Trust (see pages 7 & 8).

Leaving Ambleside Pierhead we turn round the head of Windermere passing the site of the

Roman fort *Galava*. We first head west to Skelwith Bridge, then south west towards Coniston.

The romantic Lakeland landscape was once a busy industrial area with quarries and mineral mining, coppice woodlands supplying charcoal for local iron and gunpowder works and wood for turning in many local bobbin mills which supplied the Lancashire cotton industry. Coniston first grew on the basis of copper mining, high on the flanks of Coniston Old Man, and this, and slate, was the purpose of building the branch line from Broughton-in-Furness. These were also the reason the branch terminated high up the hillside above the village, rather than on the lakeshore which would have been so much more convenient for the tourist traffic. The branch opened on 18th June 1859 and was to serve the Coniston community for just short of 100 years, passenger traffic being withdrawn from 6th October 1958, with total closure on 30th April 1962.



Whilst shown on Kirkstone Pass (not on today's itinerary), the coaches used were typical of the tours before the introduction of the motor bus.

Coniston and Coniston Water

FR Tour No. 4, however, did not head for the railway, but to the lake pier from where we will later sail down to southern end of the lake and back. First, however, is an opportunity for a leisurely exploration of the village, the main attraction being the Ruskin Museum, emblazoned outside with the former station name board. Inside is much about local industries, John Ruskin (the great Victorian artist, critic and philosopher), and Bluebird, the famous speedboat in which Donald Campbell lost his life on Coniston Water on 4th January 1967 when making an attempt on the world water speed record. Just up the Coppermines Road from the Museum is Holywath, home of the late John Hext where his 7¼ inch gauge railway will hopefully, depending of the availability of volunteers, be in operation. Failing this, even a walking tour of the line will enable inspection of a fine collection of signalling equipment, including items of Furness Railway origin from Coniston station. You may also wish to sample Coniston's award-winning "Bluebird"

beers at the Black Bull Hotel in the centre of the village.

Later in the afternoon will see us down at the pier. Embarking on *Gondola* (see page 8) we enter a world where time seems to have stood still. As we depart from the pier, accompanied by only the gentlest chuff from the steam engine, high on far side of the lake we can see Brantwood, Ruskin's home from 1871 until his death in 1900, now owned by the Brantwood Trust and open to visitors. As we pass down the lake, look also for Wild Cat Island of Swallows & Amazons fame.

Near the foot of Coniston Water we will call briefly at Lake Bank pier where we can see a delightful Furness Railway-built pavilion (though we may not be able disembark the whole party) before we return north to the main pier to rejoin our buses for return to Haverthwaite – and complete our circular tour.

The RVPT vehicles will then return to their base at Freckleton, near Preston. To find more about the Trust, its activities and vehicles, go to www.rvpt.org.



Our Transport for the Day

Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway

At the time of writing services on the line were being operated by Fairburn-designed Class 4MT 2-6-4 tank No. 42073. Construction of this last variant of an LMS standard type was continued by British Railways and 42073 was built at Brighton works in 1950. For some years it worked in the North Eastern Region based at Gateshead and was at Low Moor MPD when withdrawn from service in September 1967. The carriages used on the L&HR are from the British Railways Mark 1 series construction of which commenced in the early 1950s.

Windermere

The *Teal* and *Swan* were both built for the LMS, designed to carry 800 passengers, and launched in 1936 and 1938 respectively, replacing Furness Railway vessels with the same names. Constructed at Barrow by Vickers Armstrong they were dismantled, transported by rail in sections, then re-assembled on the slipway at Lakeside. Both have a Gross Registered Tonnage of about 250 tons. In British Rail days they came under the Sealink division which was privatised in 1984, passing to the ownership of Sea Containers. The steamers were locally managed by The Windermere Iron Steamboat Company but this was sold in May 1993 to the Bowness Bay Boating Company with all the lake vessels now carrying the house flag of Windermere Lake Cruises. We are also likely to see the remaining Furness Railway-built vessel, the *Tern*, built by Forrest of Wyvenhoe in 1891.

Ambleside to Coniston and Coniston to Haverthwaite

Our vehicles today come from the collection of the Ribble Vehicle Preservation Trust. Ribble Motor Services, based in Preston, took over a number of small local operators in South Lakeland from the 1920s. It continued to provide services based on depots in Ambleside, Kendal, Grange and Ulverston until 1989 when Ribble was sold to Stagecoach with services now operating under the Stagecoach North West trade name. Vehicles used are likely to be two of the following three.

UTF732M Ribble Fleet No 1052.

A Leyland Leopard PSU3B/4R with a Dominant-type 49 seats coach body by Duple, built in 1974 – a standard Ribble type for express work during the 1970s. At first allocated to Kendal it moved to Ulverston in 1979, being liveried in National Bus Co poppy red and white, then transferred with Ribble's Cumbrian services to Cumberland Motor Services in 1989. In 1992 it was sold to a local private operator, then on to a Welsh Scout group. It was acquired by the RVPT in 2001 and a full restoration was completed last year.



PCK618 Ribble Fleet No 1036. An older Leyland Leopard L2T having a Harrington Cavalier body with only 32 reclining seats and air suspension. First registered on 29 May 1961 it spent most of its life with Ribble based at Aintree before being sold in February 1972. Working for a while round Redditch it came back to home territory in 1974 being operated on workers' services by Jacksons of Chorley and was sold on again for preservation in 1988. After a long restoration it passed its MOT on 4th June 2009.

FCK884 Ribble Fleet No 452.

A Leyland Tiger Cub with a Saunders-Roe body, built in 1954 with 44 seats. This vehicle spent almost all its career with Ribble based at Kendal working local bus services throughout South Lakeland until it was sold in 1967 to Lockety's of West Auckland. Purchased by the Trust in 1979 and subsequently extensively restored, it has been used on previous excursions for the CRA. Under repair at the time of writing, it was looking less likely that this delightful vehicle will be available on the day.

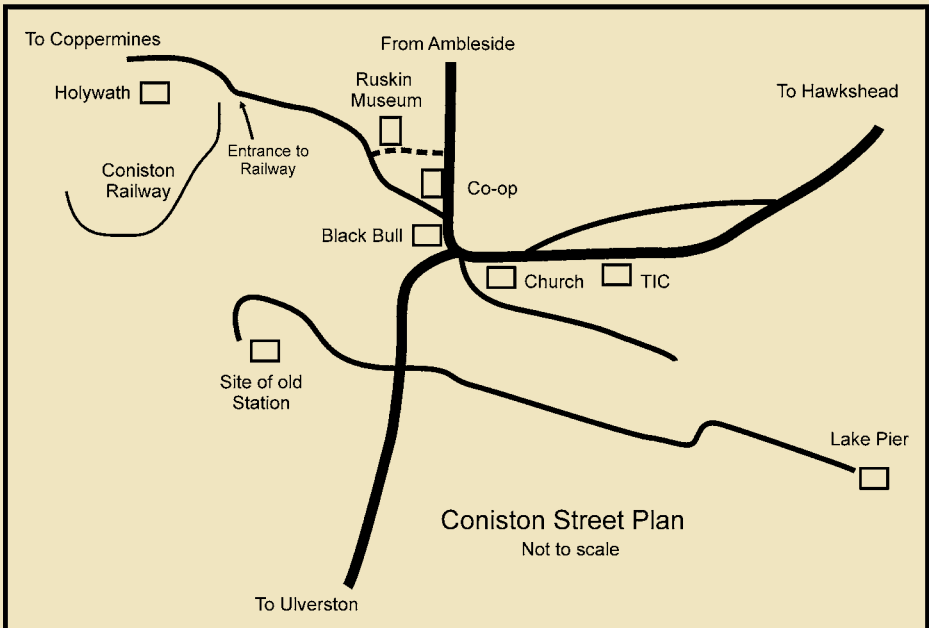
Coniston Water

Built by Jones, Quiggin & Co. of Liverpool, *Gondola* was transported to Coniston in sections which were assembled for launching on 1st December 1859, coming into service the following year. 84 feet long, she weighed 42 tons, was registered to carry 200 passengers and cost £1,500. From 1871 to 1921 she was commanded by Captain Felix Hamill whose model of *Gondola* can be seen in the Ruskin Museum. By 1906 she was carrying well over 20,000 passengers a year. First proposed for retirement in 1909, she carried on sailing, with a short wartime break, until a further outbreak of war in 1939. After the war her engineless hull was sold for use as a houseboat but during the winter of 1963-4 she sank. However she was eventually refloated to be rescued by the National Trust. After complete rebuilding at Vickers' shipyard in Barrow she was relaunched to be commissioned back into public service on 24th June 1980. Her sumptuous interior gives passengers a real taste of Victorian luxury and splendour – and it is the 150 years since her first coming into service that we are celebrating today.





**Alfred Aslett (1847 - 1928), General
Manager of the Furness Railway,
1895 - 1918**



TOUR No. 4.

MIDDLE CIRCULAR TOUR

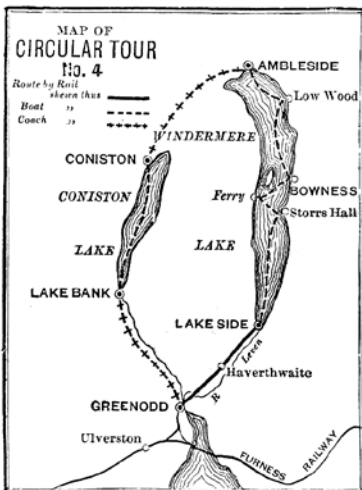


Green Bros.,]

VIEW OF WINDERMERE TAKEN FROM LOW WOOD.

[Photo., Grassmere.

BY
 STEAM YACHT, TRAIN,
 TAYLOR'S AND
 WARD AND WILKIN'S
 CHAR-A-BANC & GONDOLA
 EMBRACING
WINDERMERE
LAKE,
THE
CRAKE VALLEY,
 AND
CONISTON LAKE.



CHEAP

THROUGH

TICKETS,

Available for day of issue
 or following day, with
 break of journey at any
 Station on the Circle.

For more information about the Association
 visit www.cumbrianrailwaysassociation.org.uk or write to

**The Membership Secretary, 95 Harrington Road,
 Workington CA14 2UE**

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 CRA Field Trips, 17 Railway Terrace, Lindal-in-Furness LA12 0LQ
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