

Full Steam Ahead for Historic Steamship on Loch Katrine - Nature's Wonderland

Tuesday 31 March, 2026

The 126-year-old Steamship Sir Walter Scott has returned to service for the season on Loch Katrine following a major annual winter overhaul, sailing daily until late October alongside MV Lady of the Lake or MV Rob Roy 111.

The much-loved steamer, named after Scotland's, most celebrated literary figure, offers visitors the chance to experience classic steamship cruises in the heart of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park and the Great Trossachs Forest National Nature Reserve.

Until work is completed next week on the storm damaged pier at Stronachlachar, there will be daily circular Steamship cruises. When the pier is reopened this will give passengers the option to enjoy a full return cruise or combine their sailing with a cycle or walk on the scenic road that winds its way along the shoreline of Loch Katrine. For cyclists of all abilities, this is widely regarded as one of Scotland's finest outdoor experiences, with a peaceful, traffic-free route set against a stunning landscape rich in natural beauty and cultural history.

Originally built on the River Clyde in 1899, Steamship Sir Walter Scott has a remarkable story. After construction, she was transported in sections by barge along the River Leven and up Loch Lomond, before being hauled the final five miles overland by horses to reach Loch Katrine, where she was re-assembled and launched in 1900.

Visitors can explore this unique history further at a dedicated multi-sensory exhibition at Trossachs Pier, where the story of steamships on Loch Katrine and the loch's role as the main source of Glasgow's water supply is brought to life.

Scenic Beauty & Romance

Above the pier and overlooking the loch is the award-winning scenic tower and viewpoint that inspired Sir Walter Scott to write *The Lady of the Lake*, his internationally celebrated poem published in 1810. The work tells the story of Ellen Douglas, who lived in exile on a Loch Katrine island, and her encounters with a disguised King James V, blending romance, clan conflict and Highland landscapes into a narrative that captured the magic of this special place.

Scott's vivid descriptions of the dramatic Trossachs landscapes and romantic stories helped establish Loch Katrine as a must-visit destination, earning it recognition as the *Birthplace of Scottish Tourism* and today, visitors can experience this same view from the scenic tower and lookouts above Trossachs Pier. Now in its second full year, the tower has already welcomed more than 50,000 people, bringing many new visitors to the popular Trossachs attraction.

James Fraser, CEO and Lead Trustee of the Steamship Sir Walter Scott Trust, said:

"It is remarkable that the historic Steamship has been offering visitors the opportunity to enjoy scenic cruises on Loch Katrine since 1900 and is still powered by the original engine built in 1899. The Steamship is being lovingly preserved under the umbrella of a charitable trust with dedicated trustees and skilled staff for the benefit of the nation and public enjoyment."

It's strong connection with the public and the pure waters of the loch, which are the main source of Glasgow's water supply, has allowed her to endure, and we hope that this will be another busy season following a bumper 2025 when the steamship celebrated a milestone 125th anniversary. Her accessibility enables everyone, including those with restricted mobility to enjoy these classic cruises, and we are always delighted to see the joy she brings to visitors from home and abroad."

Loch Katrine offers up to 10 cruises of varying duration from 45 minutes to 2 hours each day, with an option of a Freedom Ticket to enable visitors to stay and explore the lochside for longer. At Trossachs Pier there are 10 eco lodges, cycle hire, a gift shop and the scenic tower. There are cafés and motorhome and campervan hook-up pitches at both Trossachs and Stronachlachar Piers.

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