

# TRIP OUT

**January 2026**

As we enter January, it's time to look forward to the 2026 season. New regulations mean that some older boats can no longer carry passengers and face future use as houseboats, though it's still not clear which boats can be altered to meet new stability rules.

As older boats are withdrawn, there are few new vessels so the number of passenger boats will continue to decline. One exception is the ROYAL DAFFODIL, the first new Mersey ferry for over 60 years. The SCILLONIAN IV will not be ready for this season so this is expected to be the final season for the SCILLONIAN III after serving the islands for 50 summers.

Geoffrey Hamer

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Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY is planned to visit the South West, Bristol Channel and North Wales between 22 May and 22 June, then the South Coast and Thames between 3 September and 11 October.

## NORTH EAST and YORKSHIRE

Nexus Work is starting on a replacement North Shields landing stage being built at the Fish Quay. The cost is £23.9 million and completion is due in 2027.

P Richardson, Bridlington The YORKSHIRE BELLE has gone to Grimsby for her annual refit.

## THAMES

Thames Clippers (Uber Boat) A further catamaran has been built by Wight Shipyard, but the LIGHTNING CLIPPER will only carry DHL parcels between Dartford and London.

Capital Pleasure Boats The GOLDEN SUNRISE has been "retired", another victim of new regulations. She was built in 1956 as the ferry SHIPDOCK XIX, taking workers to a shipyard in Amsterdam, and arrived in London in 1990 as the MIYUKI MARU. She was renamed GOLDEN SUNRISE after being bought by her current owners in 2010.

Thames Party Boats The HURLINGHAM (1915) and VISCOUNT (1908) are both laid up and seem unlikely to sail again as passenger boats.

Bygone Boating, Benson The regular ferry has ceased as the footpath over Benson Weir reopens this year, but the owners may run at weekends this summer.

Salter's Steamers The Oxford-Abingdon service will, as in recent years, run for a short season: on Mondays to Thursdays from 20 July to 27 August. There will be 40-minute cruises from Oxford and Marlow as usual.

## SOUTH COAST

Red Funnel Ferries The RED OSPREY arrived in Falmouth for dry docking on 29 December.

Coastal Cruises Poole Cruises to Swanage run as usual from 1 April to 31 October.

Coastline Cruises, Weymouth Both the ENCHANTRESS and MY GIRL are due to run this summer with trips from Weymouth and Portland starting in April.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Islands Unlimited The Jersey-Guernsey service will run from 20 March to 31 October.

Manche Iles Express The GRANVILLE will run from 9 April to 27 September. Trips to Alderney are on seven dates.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Plymouth Boat Trips Repairs to the Admiral's Hard slipway are expected to continue till February so the ferry to Cremyll will run from Royal William Yard.

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co The SCILLONIAN III will run from 16 March to 8 November (correcting the July newsheet). Sunday sailings are from 5 July to 13 September.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Lundy Company The OLDENBURG went from Bideford to Sharpness on 21 November for her winter refit.

WEST WALES

Thousand Islands Expeditions, St David's The old lifeboat slipway at St Justinians was closed last year and only RIBs were able to operate, but a new mobile gangway will be in place this season to allow the GOWER RANGER to run trips to Ramsey Island.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Norbury Wharf will not be running the SHROPSHIRE STAR in 2026. She had run there since 2013 after running from Wolverhampton as the STAFFORD.

NORTH WEST

Bridgewater Cruises, Worsley The FRANCIS EGERTON is being replaced by the L S LOWRY which is being renamed COUNTESS OF BRIDGEWATER. She was originally the LADY OF CAMELOT at Stratford-upon-Avon then on the Basingstoke Canal.

City centre Cruises, Manchester After the sale of the L S LOWRY, only the EMMELINE PANKHURST will run this year.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The BEN-MY-CHREE was at Birkenhead from 12 to 19 December for attention by Cammell Laird. She sailed from Douglas to Fishguard on 6 January and will be chartered by Stena Line to run between Fishguard and Rosslare until 3 May.

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# TRIP OUT

**February 2026**

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## NORTH EAST and YORKSHIRE

Berwick Boat Trips The season starts on 28 March and trips are then daily until the autumn.

A & T Douglas, Seahouses Trips to Holy Island are on most dates from 27 April to 24 October at times that vary with tides.

W Shiel, Seahouses, has a similar programme of trips to Holy Island, starting on 5 April.

Nexus The North Shields landing was damaged by storm Chandra on 27 January and the service has been suspended until at least March.

P Richardson, Bridlington The YORKSHIRE BELLE left Grimsby on 16 January to return to Bridlington after her winter refit.

## THAMES

Jetstream Tours Trips between Queenborough and Southend are advertised to start on 10 April, and Rochester trips and cruises to the Red Sand Towers begin on 11 April. Cruises from Queenborough round the Isle of Sheppey are offered on a few dates, starting on 19 April.

Thames River Sightseeing The summer timetable with sailings from Westminster to Greenwich every half hour will run from 30 March to 1 November.

Thames Luxury Charters The DIXIE QUEEN was in Lowestoft for refit from 6 January to 4 February.

French Brothers Short trips from Windsor are daily from 14 February to 1 November. Two-hour cruises and Runnymede-Windsor sailings start on 28 March, and Maidenhead-Windsor runs from 26 May. The LUCY FISHER offers 45-min trips from Runnymede from 28 March. Steamboat trips between Runnymede and Windsor are on 17 May, 14 June and 20 September. One-hour steamboat trips from Windsor are on most Saturdays in June and August, and most Sundays in July.

Kennet & Avon Canal Trust The JUBILEE will be in Reading for the Water Fest on 27 June; on the 28th she takes passengers from Reading to Burghfield.

## SOUTH COAST

Rye Harbour Sea Safari & Boat Trips The RONNOCH MOR has been sold to Brownes Thames Estuary Boat Trips of Leigh on Sea, but will be limited to 12 passengers.

Wightlink There will be more sailings on the Lymington-Yarmouth route this summer, with all three ships running at 40-minute intervals on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays in the peak season. The ST CLARE was in Falmouth from 20 January to 1 February for dry docking.

Red Funnel Ferries The RED OSPREY arrived back in Southampton on 8 January after dry docking in Falmouth.

Hythe and Southampton Ferry Company The new owners of Red Funnel, Njord Partners, announced on 4 February that they wanted to sell the Hythe ferry to a new owner. The service last ran in August 2024.

Buckler's Hard River trips in Blue Funnel's OLIVER B run from 28 March to 31 October.

Coastal Vibes, Weymouth There are cruises on 14 February for Valentine's Day and on 14 and 15 March for Mother's Day. Regular trips from 27 March include breakfast, brunch, afternoon tea, fish and chips, live music, bingo, etc.

#### CHANNEL ISLANDS

Isle of Sark Shipping Co The CORSAIRE DE SERCQ has gone to Le Légué in France for refit.

#### WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth Special trips include Brixham Pirate Festival on 2 and 4 May, all-day geology cruises on 9 May and 18 September, Riviera Air Show on 30 and 31 May, Dartmouth Regatta on 29 August and cruises to Countess Wear on 16 May, 12 August and 10 September.

Dartmouth Steam Railway & River Boat Co Totnes sailings are from 31 March to 29 October, with two trips a day on up to six days a week.

Plymouth Boat Trips This season's cruises include Calstock on 31 dates, the river Yealm on 27 dates, and 18 "coastal explorer" cruises. The PLYMOUTH VENTURER, on her way to her new owners Cruise Loch Ness, reached Buckie in Scotland on 13 January after sheltering on the Tyne for nearly seven weeks.

#### NORTH WEST

Conwy Boat Trips The GOLDEN MARIANNA has been offering short river trips in recent weekends.

Mersey Ferries The new Woodside landing stage was moved into place on 19 December.

Daniel Adamson Preservation Society Public cruises are scheduled for 18 dates. She sails from the river Weaver to Liverpool on 3 June, returning on 4 July. All other trips are on the Weaver from Anderton and Sutton Weaver, and on the Manchester Ship Canal to Ellesmere Port.

Westmorland & Furness Council The Windermere ferry will be suspended for two weeks from 23 February for maintenance.

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# TRIP OUT

**March 2026**

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Waverley Excursions The WAVERLEY sailed to Greenock on 16 February to begin her refit.

Bookings are now open for sailings in Scotland on 8-19 May, Cornwall and south Devon on 22-25 May, the Bristol Channel and west Wales, starting from Padstow on 26 May and finishing in Fishguard on 17 June, then in north Wales and the Mersey on 19-22 June. Trips from Mevagissey on 24 May and from Padstow are advertised as the first this century.

## NORTH EAST and YORKSHIRE

Nexus The ferry will remain suspended in March while the North Shields landing is being repaired.

P & S Richardson, Bridlington, hope to start the YORKSHIRE BELLE's season on 28 March. Sailings from 2 May to 27 September can be booked online. The RSPB has 3-hour bird-watching cruises on 31 dates.

## THAMES

Kentish Lady River Cruises, Maidstone Trips between Maidstone and Allington begin on 29 March.

Thames River Boats The PRINCESS FREDA will start running from Richmond on 2 April with sailings to Hampton Court via Hammerton's Ferry and (new this year) Kingston. The CONNAUGHT will be the only boat from Westminster, beginning sailings to Kew, Richmond and Hampton Court on 15 April.

French Brothers With the river in flood, the start of public trips is delayed till at least 28 March.

Thames Steamers The ALASKA will, as usual, offer short public trips from Bourne End on the Bank Holiday weekends of 23-25 May and 29-31 August.

## SOUTH COAST

Chichester Harbour Charters will start a new ferry service at Easter between Hayling Island and East Head near West Wittering. The service will run on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Gosport Ferry Summer cruises in the SPIRIT OF PORTSMOUTH are on 13 dates and include six day trips to Lymington.

The owners announced on 2 March that the company had been sold for £11.62 million to Thames Clippers. Gosport Ferry had been owned by Falklands Islands company since 2004 and was profitable.

Wightlink The ST CLARE struck the Portsmouth terminal on 17 February, causing damage. The ST FAITH ran a limited service to Fishbourne from the Portsmouth International Port until a normal service resumed the next day. The VICTORIA OF WIGHT and WIGHT SUN arrived in Falmouth on 20 February and entered a dry dock together.

Solent Cruises A new cruise this year is from Cowes to the Needles lasting 2½ hours, to be offered on Tuesday and Sunday mornings from 5 April to 1 November.

Quay2Quay, Yarmouth The KRAKEN's current timetable, until 29 March, has five return trips to Lymington every day.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Brittany Ferries The CONDOR LIBERATION, laid up in Le Havre since last March, was sold and renamed OVERVIEW then resold to Spanish operator Baleària. She will be renamed PEPITA CASTELLVÍ.

Isle of Sark Shipping Co The CORSAIRE DE SERCQ returned from France on 25 February and was back in service to Sark on 4 March.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Kingsbridge Salcombe Ferry Co plan to start on 20 April.

Mount Batten Ferry, Plymouth, was suspended from 23 February so that a larger temporary pontoon could be installed at Mount Batten. The service will resume this month and the PLYMOUTH BELLE will be able to run instead of the smaller boats used for the past two years.

Plymouth Boat Trips The LEGEND OF LOCH NESS has been renamed LEGEND OF PLYMOUTH.

Mevagissey Ferries will run from 1 May to 3 October.

Fal River Sailings from Falmouth to Malpas via Trelassick run from 3 April to 31 October with connecting buses to Truro.

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co The SCILLONIAN III made sailings on 23, 24 and 25 February to carry cargo while the GRY MARITHA was in dry dock; she also carried passengers as flights were cancelled by fog. She will make more cargo trips between 2 and 6 March.

Tresco Boat Services The FALDORE has been sold to a local couple in St Mary's, trading as Scilly Fishing and Boat Charters. They will offer cruises and angling trips for up to 12 passengers.

Jubilee Queen, Padstow Sailings are advertised from 4 April to 31 October.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Matthew of Bristol The Trust has started an appeal to raise £200 000 to secure the future of the ship.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Boston Belle River & Sea Trips 4½-hour cruises into the Wash to see seals are offered on 16 dates and the RSPB charters the BOSTON BELLE for similar trips on another ten dates.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries The ROYAL IRIS OF THE MERSEY will make her final trips this month with farewell celebrations on the 28th and 29th. The SNOWDROP will then run alone until the new ROYAL DAFFODIL is ready.

Ullswater 'Steamers' Pooley Bridge pier reopened on 4 March after repairs lasting four months.

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# TRIP OUT

**April 2026**

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## NORTH EAST and YORKSHIRE

Nexus The ferry will remain suspended until at least the middle of April.

Whitby Coastal Cruises The season started on 1 April. The SUMMER QUEEN had new engines before starting her season.

## EAST ANGLIA

Topsail Charters, Maldon The HYDROGEN has been chosen by National Historic Ships as one of this year's four "Flagships of the Year".

## THAMES

Thames River Boats Sailings are now advertised to start on 1 May. French Brothers began 40-minute trips from Windsor on 30 March after delays attributed to flooding and "overrunning maintenance". The 2-hour cruise to Bray starts on 19 April.

Thames Rivercruise, Reading The DEVON BELLE is returning to service after a refit lasting over seven years. She will offer cruises from Goring on some weekends, starting on 13 June.

## SOUTH COAST

Wightlink The VICTORIA OF WIGHT and WIGHT SUN left Falmouth on 9 March after dry docking. A vessel chartered from Solent Cruises will do extra Portsmouth-Ryde sailings on 18, 19 and 22 June for the Isle of Wight Festival.

Red Funnel Ferries The RED EAGLE went to Falmouth for refit, arriving on 16 March towed by the tug CAMPERDOWN. The start of the summer car ferry timetable was delayed to 2 April after the RED EAGLE had returned from Falmouth.

Solent Cruises The day trip from Cowes to Portsmouth runs daily from 28 March to 12 April and from 23 May to 6 September, and otherwise at weekends.

The Solent Steam Packet, Southampton The National Lottery Heritage Fund has awarded the charity £202 500 to develop plans to apply for a grant of £1.67 million.

Quay2Quay, Yarmouth Sailings now call at Lymington's Harbour Master's Pontoon 10 minutes after Lymington Town Quay.

Coastline Cruises, Weymouth, now trades as Coastline Heritage Cruises and is operated by Weymouth Maritime Heritage Community Interest Company, formed to keep the boats running. Cruises are advertised to start on 1 May.

## CHANNEL ISLANDS

DFDS The TARIFA JET returned to the St-Malo service on 27 March while the LEVANTE JET is in Dunkerque. The TARIFA JET hit the ramp in St Helier on 29 March and her sailings were cancelled; she went to Portland on 1 April for repairs. The STENA VINGA ran to St-Malo on 31 March and a round trip to Portsmouth was cancelled. The CÔTE D'ALBATRE ran from Portsmouth to Jersey from 3 to 6 April and the STENA VINGA ran to St-Malo. The LEVANTE JET returned from refit on 6 April and the STENA VINGA returned to the Portsmouth route while Poole sailings are cancelled until 13 April.

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WEST OF ENGLAND

Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth The PRIDE OF EXMOUTH visited Polruan in Cornwall in March for her annual refit.

J & M Rackley, Starcross The ferry to Exmouth started on 1 April using the MOLLY R.

Western Lady Ferry Service Torquay-Brixham sailings started on 1 April.

Mount Batten Ferry, Plymouth, resumed on 17 March, and the PLYMOUTH BELLE was back in service on 3 April.

Plymouth Boat Trips The Cremyll ferry now runs from the Royal William Yard instead of the old slipway at Admiral's Hard. The Saltash service runs until 30 September and now goes to the Royal William Yard and the Barbican. Passengers from the Barbican to Cremyll have to change boats at Royal William Yard.

J & F Pill (Falmouth Pleasure Cruises) have bought the JACOBITE QUEEN from Inverness. She came south via Holyhead and Milford Haven, arriving in Falmouth on 21 March. She was built in 1949 as the MID TYNE FERRY NO.3 and was later the TYNE QUEEN. She was completely rebuilt before running from Inverness in 1989. The PRINCESSA began river trips at Easter.

A Thomas, Penzance The MERMAID began regular trips before Easter, replacing the smaller MERMAID II. She offers wildlife cruises to Porthcurno at 0930 for 3 hours and to St Michael's Mount at 1300 for 2 hours.

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co The SCILLONIAN III made further cargo trips before her first passenger trip on 16 March. The SCILLONIAN IV was launched on 28 March.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

The government is to give North Somerset Council £19 million from the Growth Mission Fund to rebuild the Birnbeck Pier at Weston-super-Mare. It is doubtful whether the landing stage, last used by the BALMORAL in 1979, will be rebuilt.

Lundy Company The OLDENBURG returned to Bideford on 19 March after nearly four months at Sharpness. Her first trip of the season was on 31 March from Ilfracombe.

Bristol Packet The REDSHANK has been chosen by National Historic Ships as one of this year's four "Flagships of the Year". Avon Gorge cruises resume this year and are scheduled for 38 dates from 26 April to 2 November.

NORTH WEST

Mersey Ferries The ROYAL IRIS OF THE MERSEY completed her final passenger sailings on 29 March and was then laid up in Huskisson Dock in Liverpool. The Liverpool Bay and Manchester Ship Canal cruises are not advertised this year as the SNOWDROP will be running alone until the ROYAL DAFFODIL is completed.

National Trust (Enterprises), Coniston The GONDOLA has "mechanical issues" and the start of the season is delayed to 14 April.

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May 2026

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Waverley Excursions Timetables for the South coast sailings (from 3 to 22 September) and Thames (until 11 October) were published in April. A fuel surcharge of up to £4 has been added to adult fares because of a big increase in fuel costs. The WAVERLEY carried out trials from Greenock on 2 May then sailed to Glasgow ready to begin her season on 8 May.

## NORTH EAST and YORKSHIRE

Nexus The ferry resumed on 27 April after being closed for three months.

P & S Richardson, Bridlington The YORKSHIRE BELLE's season began on 2 May.

## EAST ANGLIA

Waveney River Tours, Oulton Broad The ENCHANTRESS is being advertised for sale for £34 000 after being laid up for around 15 years.

## THAMES

Thames River Boats The CONNAUGHT began running from Westminster to Chiswick, Kew, Richmond and Hampton Court on 1 May after alterations to comply with new regulations.

Bryan Ferry the ferry A new ferry has started above Temple Lock at Hurley, upstream from Marlow, replacing a broken footbridge. The electric boat BRYAN FERRY runs on Wednesdays and weekends.

## SOUTH COAST

Hythe and Southampton Ferry Company announced on 9 April that the company would go into liquidation after failing to find a viable way to resume the service which had been suspended since August 2024. The HYTHE SCENE has been advertised for sale.

Solent Cruises Since 4 May, the Portsmouth Harbour cruises are no longer included in admission to the Historic Dockyard. Solent Cruises now sells an annual pass for the harbour cruises for £60.

Isle of Wight Council The floating bridge is suspended for a refit from 5 to 19 May while a "Jenny" boat provides a passenger service.

The Solent Steam Packet, Southampton The SHIELDHALL was in Falmouth for dry docking from 13 to 25 April.

Quay2Quay, Yarmouth The KRAKEN was advertised to do a cruise to the Needles on 3 May.

Coastline Heritage Cruises, Weymouth The boats are now advertised to start running on 1 June.

## CHANNEL ISLANDS

DFDS The STENA VINGA was at Falmouth for refit from 16 to 23 April. The CÔTE D'ALBÂTRE covered the Portsmouth-Jersey service from 15 to 20 April and on 23/24 April. The TARIFA JET returned to service on 1 May after repairs at Portland. DFDS is to buy the STENA VINGA, currently on charter, and she will be registered in the UK and renamed to continue serving Jersey.

WEST OF ENGLAND

Western Lady Ferry Service Day trips from Torquay and Brixham to Dartmouth began on 8 April.

Dartmouth-Kingswear Floating Bridge Co The ferry and the Dart Marina have been taken over by Premier Marinas who already owned Noss on Dart Marina, the site of the former Philips' shipyard on the other side of the river.

Fal River plan monthly high-tide trips from Falmouth to Truro, with the first on 16 May.

Isles of Scilly Steamship Co There was a fault in the SCILLONIAN III's starboard engine on 9 April and she completed her trip on one engine. Sailings on 10 and 11 April were cancelled for repairs.

BRISTOL CHANNEL

Lundy Company The OLDENBURG's first Bideford to Ilfracombe coastal trip this season is on 22 May.

Kennet & Avon Canal Trust has taken over the 12-passenger electric boat SIR JOHN KNILL which has been running between Bath and Bathampton since 2017. Trips start on 23 May and will usually be on Thursdays and alternate weekends.

WEST WALES

SeaMôr, New Quay The CERISMAR TWO was replaced last July by the 55-passenger catamaran KITTIWAKE which was the SERENITY III at Seahouses until 2019, then KINTRA in Northern Ireland.

MIDLAND WATERWAYS

Sherborne Wharf, Birmingham, was put into liquidation in April after a rent demand of £134 000 from the Canal & River Trust. The passenger boats are to be sold.

NORTH WEST

Welsh Canal Holiday Craft, Llangollen The owners would like to pass the business on and the price is £695 000, including boats, horses, shop and tearoom.

Mersey Ferries The ROYAL DAFFODIL started trials on the river on 16 April.

National Trust (Enterprises), Coniston The GONDOLA began her season on 18 April.

IRISH SEA

Isle of Man Steam Packet Co The BEN-MY-CHREE will continue running between Fishguard and Rosslare on charter to Stena Line until 11 May.

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