

Port of Tyne celebrates 25 years of cruising and new cruise call record

Celebrating 25 years of cruising, the Port of Tyne marks a milestone with record-breaking growth in 2023, welcoming 710,000 passengers via cruise and ferry and contributing significantly to the North East's thriving economy. As the UK's first smart port, with cutting-edge facilities and a strong commitment to excellence, the Port is proud to remain a premier international gateway, attracting visitors from around the world to experience the best of North East England

This summer, Port of Tyne celebrates 25 years of cruising, a milestone that comes as demand for the International Passenger Terminal services continues to soar.

2023 saw a new record, welcoming 710,000 passengers via cruise and ferry calls, with 61 cruise calls carrying over 164,000 passengers – an increase of over 100% compared to 2022. These record-breaking results highlight the growing appeal of the North East to holidaymakers from abroad. Destination North East England reported an 80% increase in overseas visits in 2023, contributing £6.1 billion to the local economy, of which we're proud to be part of.



Matt Beeton, CEO at the Port of Tyne, commented: “From welcoming Cunard’s Royal Viking Sun on 30 August 1999 as our first cruise ship to Fred Olsen’s Balmoral on 29 August 2024, the day before it all started 25 years ago, our offerings have grown year-on-year, with a record number of cruise ship calls this year. We’ve upgraded our facilities over the years to ensure the region remains a top destination for cruise passengers. We are currently extending our 5G network, making us the first smart port in the UK, which will open up even more opportunities for passengers coming into the Tyne.”

Since the International Passenger Terminal opened in 1999, we have invested £5 million in transforming Northumbrian Quay into a purpose-built cruise berth. We’ve also enhanced our passenger lounge, check-in desks, and car parking facilities to serve our guests better. Over the years, we’ve had the honour of shepherding several iconic vessels into the Tyne, including the QE2 during her lap of honour around the UK in 2007 and again in 2008 during her farewell tour. In 2016, we proudly welcomed the Disney Magic cruise ship for the first time, on a day when we handled a record five passenger ships.”

North East Mayor Kim McGuinness commented: “The Port of Tyne is synonymous with the North East and welcomes passengers from all corners of the globe to experience the very best our region has to offer. It plays a crucial role and is vital to making our area the fantastic place we know it is—to live, work, invest, and visit. The North East has unrivalled access to the North Sea, and as Mayor, I’m determined to harness all the opportunities this presents, to attract more investment, create jobs, and strengthen our visitor economy—firmly placing the North East where it belongs: proudly on the world stage.”

Ian Thomas, Director of Visitor Economy at NewcastleGateshead Initiative and lead delivery partner for Destination North East England, added: “Anyone who is from here or has visited knows North East England is a fantastic place to visit, offering unrivalled landscapes, world-class cultural experiences, a proper canny welcome, and great value for money. We’re very fortunate to have the fantastic facilities at the Port of Tyne, which allow visitors to explore everything from our vibrant food and

drink scene to UNESCO World Heritage sites like Hadrian's Wall. The Port of Tyne remains one of the country's premier international gateways, and it's amazing that it's on our doorstep as we continue to work closely alongside Visit Britain to amplify the region's story to attract more visitors from abroad. The growth and further investment in our International Passenger Terminal will help us achieve our goal of doubling the value of the visitor economy over the next decade, supporting numerous jobs and contributing significantly to the regional economy."

A representative from Fred Olsen, the operator of Balmoral, which has sailed in and out of the Tyne for almost a decade, shared: "During our calls into the Port of Tyne, our strong relationship combined with their smooth-running operation allows us to deliver a consistently positive experience to everyone joining our ships, whether they be guests, crew, or contractors. We can't wait to continue working with the Port of Tyne for our future turnarounds throughout 2024 and beyond."