

# Lakes yacht Gondola switches from coal to wood power



**WOOD POWER:** One of the new wooden logs is about to be placed into *Gondola's* boiler

**DESPITE** a slate grey sky hanging over the Lake District yesterday morning there was a flash of green on Coniston Water.

Back on the lake for a new season, the National Trust's steam yacht *Gondola* might not look any different, but underneath it's a different story.

Owners the National Trust have decided to bring the craft right up to date and boost its green credentials by burning wood not coal.

*Gondola* is now operating on wood shavings from Ruthin in North Wales.

The shavings are packed together into small bricks known as blazer logs which can then be thrown straight into *Gondola's* furnace.

It is estimated the switch will slash the boat's emissions by around 95 per cent.

Crewman Dennis Whittaker said: "The *Gondola* went out on the lake for the first day of the season with the new green fuel.

"We actually had to do very little to the boat to make it work."

Mr Whittaker said some work was carried out to adapt the old coal bunkers into log storage while another small modification has

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been made to help maintain the steam pressure on windy days.

Another bonus is that the ash from the furnace can now be used as garden fertiliser, whereas the coal ash would have gone to landfill.

Mr Whittaker said: "Some of the guys have taken the ash home to use on their gardens, and we will also use it at Monk Coniston. It's better for the environment and it has cut down on transport costs.

"We are looking forward to the new season and a nice Easter. We're hoping to get stacks of people up here to come and enjoy our environment and of course the *Gondola*."

Gareth Thomas, National Trust environmental practices adviser added: "Climate change is the biggest challenge facing us all.

"By greening the historic *Gondola* the National Trust is demonstrating its commitment to reduce its own carbon footprint and showing how this can work by using a mixture of new and traditional technology."

The steam yacht *Gondola* will be running on Coniston Water every day until October 30. There are five sailings daily at 11am, 12pm, 2pm, 3pm and 4pm.

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