



Expedition vessel Gann - the last cruise ship in the Port (2017)

## UK's Port of Sunderland opening up to cruise ships

Newest Cruise Britain member, the North East Port of Sunderland, is exploring a future welcome for cruise ships.

'Moving into the cruise and passenger ship market will allow the Port to fully utilise existing infrastructure, bringing ships and their passengers to the city and the wider North East region,' said Matthew Hunt, port director, Port of Sunderland.

'Though there will be limitations to the size of cruise ships that can visit the city – the Port is looking at small to medium size ships and the expedition cruise market – it's an exciting chance to positively contribute to the city's tourism economy.'

'Cruise lines typically plan three years ahead, so joining Cruise Britain at this time helps to make our presence known across the industry and hopefully sets us up well for the future, when we see tourism return to pre-COVID levels.'

The Port of Sunderland's idea of expanding its reach to the cruise industry has been backed by Chair of the Port Board and Leader of Sunderland City Council, Councillor Graeme Miller.

So said Hunt, '[The] Port of Sunderland is an increasingly important asset to the city, and one that can positively contribute to the wider economic development of Sunderland in so many ways.'

'Though we're taking very early steps into this market, we hope to increase the frequency of cruise visits to the Port in the coming years and add an exciting new dimension to our offer.'

In 2017, spectators travelled from the locality of Stavanger to witness the Port's final hosting of a cruise ship – the vessel Gann.

The ship became the fifth passenger ship to enter Sunderland in 40 years and the first since the turn of the century.

'Our beaches stand up against any I have seen, our cultural assets are a huge draw, from the theatre to Washington Old Hall,' continued Hunt. 'We have some stunning places to visit, from Penshaw Monument to the National Glass Centre and from our regenerating city centre to the rolling hills of Herrington Park.'

'We have to start shouting about what we can offer and I am pleased the port is flying the flag for the city.'