



Downpatrick & County Down Railway Society

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Railway Celebrates Twenty Years with 1980s Weekend.

The 1980s are back at the Downpatrick & County Down Railway this weekend!

Northern Ireland's only full-size heritage railway is celebrating its 20th birthday this month, and is inviting its passengers to relive the days of permed hair and Rubik's Cubes with special 1980s fares this weekend.

Railway Chairman Michael Collins said, "The railway scheme in Downpatrick was officially formed on 2nd August 1985 and, starting with a piece of waste ground, has gradually recreated a missing piece of our industrial heritage to build something that's unique in the whole of Ireland".

He continues, "To thank the many hundreds of thousands of people who've travelled with us since we ran our first train – a diesel engine and goods wagon – over 200 yards of track in the 1980s, we're rolling back our prices for one weekend only as a special birthday treat."

"It's hard to believe that we're 20 years old," Mr. Collins says, "Most preserved heritage railway schemes in Ireland have never made it to their first birthday, although it is its own industry in Great Britain."

Fares for the weekend will be reduced from the current £4.50 adult return to Inch Abbey to the old price of £3.80 adults and £2.80 children. Guided tours of the workshops are available on request.

So, take a seat, grab a can of your favourite drink out of the railway's buffet carriage parked at the station, pretend it tastes like Quatro, and prepare your vocal chords to produce the words "God! I remember that!" as the station's PA system blares out 80s 'classics' and take a steam train trip down memory lane.

For further information, call the DCDR on 077 9080 2049 or log on to the website at www.downrail.co.uk

NOTES TO THE EDITOR

- ?? The DCDR was formed on the 2nd August 1985 as the Downpatrick & Ardglass Railway Company Ltd, the name being changed to Downpatrick Railway Museum in 1996 before the current name was adopted in 2005.
- ?? Passenger trains first ran two years later in December 1987 on a short length of track, approximately 200 yards long using a diesel shunter and a brake van.
- ?? A new station building, replacing the original that was demolished in 1973, was opened in 1990.
- ?? The DCDR is built on the terminus of the Belfast & County Down Railway in Downpatrick, and has rebuilt approximately 3 miles of railway track on the original trackbed. The BCDR lines ran to Newcastle, Newtownards, Ballynahinch, Bangor and Ardglass and were closed in January 1950 with the exception of the Bangor branch by the Ulster Transport Authority.
- ?? The DCDR is the only steam train operator in Ireland that has its own full-size tracks. Our colleagues in the RPSI run on the NIR mainline.
- ?? The DCDR is the only heritage railway in the UK and Ireland to possess a triangle of track.
- ?? The DCDR is run as a society, with members from the general public paying an annual subscription and democratically electing its board.