



Downpatrick & County Down Railway Society

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PRESS RELEASE

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Railway Celebrates Best Operating Year on Record

Figures released by the Downpatrick & County Down this week show that 2005 was the best year for the railway since 1990.

They show a massive increase in visitors travelling on the DCDR's trains, up by over 2,500 from the previous years total.

The total figure for all operations in 2005 is 7,793 - up from 5,255 in 2004 and 4,192 in 2003.

From the few records that survived the 2002 Boxing Day fire, this figure beats the previous record established in 1990 of 6,040 passengers.

Railway Chairman, Michael Collins, says he and the volunteers are 'delighted' with this increase.

He says, "This is a great reward for all our volunteers who have put so much work into creating Northern Ireland's only heritage railway from a green-field site".

Mr Collins says that this increase is down to the opening of the Inch Abbey extension.

"This gives people a much longer and more scenic journey than was previously the case, as well as destination that they can visit once they have arrived at the end of the line, whereas before the train was just stopping in the middle of a field in the middle of no-where".

Mr Collins also said that another remarkable trend is the growing number of people who choose to start their journey from Inch Abbey.

"In 2005, there were 238 who travelled into the town by train, which is remarkable for a railway that, for 20 years, has only had one station where you could board the train."

Another factor he cites is the recent change of the name. He said, "While it may not be apparent immediately why this should be so, the name 'Downpatrick & County Down Railway' does reflect our nature as a running heritage line rather than a static museum".

Issued by

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