

Your tour of Whitehead Railway Museum

home to the **Railway Preservation Society of Ireland**

Download an audio tour at www.steamtrainsireland.com, or use our QR code:



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If the fire alarm sounds, please make your way to the nearest exit or follow a member of staff as directed.

If you become separated from your group or require first aid, please ask a member of staff for assistance.

*As this is a working museum, please keep to the **green path** at all times.*

Welcome to Whitehead Railway Museum, home to the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland.

The Railway Preservation Society of Ireland was formed in 1964 to preserve Irish steam locomotives, carriages and rolling stock and to operate them on the Irish railway network for everyone to see, appreciate, enjoy and travel on. In 1966 we made our headquarters here at Whitehead Excursion Station.

1. Station Building

The exterior of our station building, built in 2013, is based on a traditional Victorian style by Ulster architect Charles Lanyon for Whiteabbey station, near Belfast. The interior houses our period-style Edwardian Tea Room where you can enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, or one of our delicious, freshly-made lunches.

To begin your tour, leave the Station Building by the door onto the platform and turn left towards the Signal Box.

2. Platform

The growing popularity of Whitehead as a tourist destination for day trippers led to the Belfast and Northern Counties Railway Company opening this separate Excursion Platform in 1907. Trains could use either side of the platform. As you move around the site you will see the original elements of this once bustling railway destination, including the water tower, the engine shed and the stables building.

3. Signal Box

This replica signal box, with its distinctive overhanging roof, is based on the design introduced by Berkeley Deane Wise after he joined the Belfast and Northern Counties Railway in 1888. Step inside the signal box to find out more about the hard-working signalmen and their vital role in the smooth and safe running of the railways.

*To continue your tour, head back along the platform, past the Station Building, down the ramp and along the **green path** to the Stables.*

4. Viewing Point

From the end of the platform you can see the original 1907 water tower and red-brick, two-road engine shed where steam locomotives are still prepared for their journey. Modern facilities added by the RPSI include (l-r) the Carriage Shed, the Dunleath Workshop and the three-road engine shed extension. You will be able to see inside later on your tour.

5. Stables

The Stables housed 5 horses and 3 jaunting cars, used to transport visitors to the seafront and the nearby Gobbins Cliff Path. They now house an introductory exhibition where you can learn more about the development of Whitehead in the golden age of steam.

*Please leave the Stables by the door from the gallery and follow the **green path** to the Loco Building.*

6. Turntable

Turntables were used to turn locomotives with tenders because they are designed primarily to operate 'chimney first'. At the end of its journey, the driver and fireman carefully position the locomotive on the turntable until it is 'balanced' on its huge central pivot. They can then turn the locomotive more easily for its return trip.

7. Loco Building

The locomotive buildings are the heart of Whitehead Railway Museum. Here you can get up close to the locomotives, learn how they work and discover why different types of locomotives were better suited for different types of work.

After taking a look at our locomotives, please make your way upstairs and turn right to view the locomotive sheds from above, and to see our cutaway model which shows the workings of a steam locomotive. A lift is available if required.

Then enter the workshop viewing gallery through the door at the top of the stairs.

Toilets are located in the Station Building and in the Stables.

8. Dunleath Workshop

In these workshops, named after the late Henry, Lord Dunleath, who was one of the Vice Presidents of the RPSI, we use a range of machinery and equipment to make and overhaul components for our locomotives, carriages, and wagons. From the viewing platform here you can watch our staff and volunteers undertake the same skilled repair and maintenance of engines that has been carried out in railway workshops for over 100 years.

9. Foundry

Our foundry produces many vital components such as brake blocks, blast pipes, fire bars, piston rings and other cast iron items required to keep steam locomotives and vintage carriages in use.

*For the final part of your tour, please make your way downstairs and follow the **green path** to the Carriage Shed. If you need to use the lift, please go back through the workshop gallery to the lift at the front of the building and then follow the **green path** along the outside of the workshops to the carriage Shed.*

10. Carriage Shed

We own the largest collection of preserved railway carriages and wagons in Ireland, around 90 vehicles in all. Visit our carriage sheds today to see carriages being repaired and rebuilt, ready to carry passengers once more, or climb aboard one of our historic vehicles to sample railway travel in the heyday of steam.

*Your visit to the Carriage Shed completes your tour of Whitehead Railway Museum. When you are ready, please make your way back long the **green path** to the platform and the Station Building where you can enjoy some refreshments in our traditional Edwardian Tea Room, or buy some souvenirs in our shop.*

Thank you for visiting Whitehead Railway Museum and we hope to see you again soon.