

WHITEHEAD RAILWAY MUSEUM



Pre-visit Accessibility Guide

**Made for
Memories**



**Mid & East
Antrim**
Borough Council

Our pre-visit guide has been developed through our participation in Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's Made for Memories: Enabling People Living With Dementia to Access Heritage pilot project in 2022. The project was supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Whitehead Railway Museum

Opening Hours:

Thursday, Friday and Saturday
10.00am - 4.30pm (last entry 2.30pm)

Book your visit through:

Visit Belfast

Belfast Welcome Centre

9 Donegall Square North

Belfast

Antrim

BT1 5GB

Tel: 02890 246609

Email: info@visitbelfast.com

You can also contact Whitehead Railway Museum by email.

Email: accounts@steamtrainsireland.com

Walk-ins are usually accommodated, provided the Museum has capacity. Guided and self-guided tours are usually available.

Group Visits

Group visits can be arranged in advance with the museum. These may include attendance at special sessions organised by the museum.

Wheelchair Access

There are two parking spaces for Blue Badge holders outside the Platform 3 cafe in the Station building. This is the main entrance to the museum.

Whitehead Railway Museum is a wheelchair accessible site but there are certain heritage carriages where the doorway and corridors are not wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair.

Wheelchair lifts are available at the Signal Box Gallery, the Carriage Gallery and the upper platform of the Locomotive Gallery. The Guinness Grain Van in the Carriage Gallery can be accessed via a ramp. The rest of the museum is at ground level. Wheelchair users should note that the platform is uneven in places.

The museum has two disabled toilets, one in Platform 3 Cafe and the second in The Stables Gallery.



Whitehead Railway Museum has been awarded a 5 star review by a wheelchair user on Euan's Guide. This website is a guide to disabled access at various visitor attractions in the UK. You can read the review [here](#).

PLAN YOUR VISIT



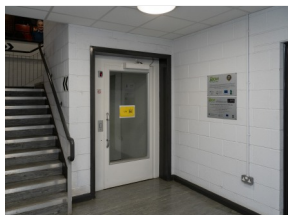
Disabled parking spaces are located at the entrance door to the Platform 3 Cafe.



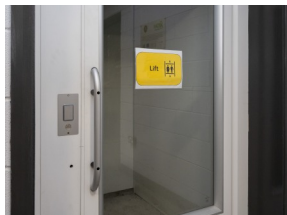
Disabled parking sign at the entrance door to the Platform 3 Cafe.



The Locomotive Gallery has a **viewing platform**. Wheelchair users can access this by means of a lift.



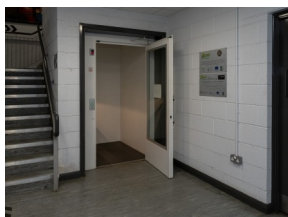
This is the wheelchair accessible lift for the Locomotive Viewing Gallery.



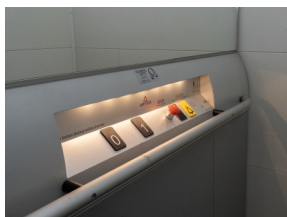
Dementia friendly signs are to be found at key locations in the museum. This one is on the door of the lift.



Push this button to open the lift door.



The door to the wheelchair lift opens automatically when the button is pushed.



Inside the lift, there is a control panel which is at wheelchair-user level.

WELCOME TO WHITEHEAD RAILWAY MUSEUM



This road brings you to the **Platform 3 Cafe**. This is the entrance point for visitors to Whitehead Railway Museum.

Visit Whitehead Railway Museum and take a trip down memory lane. At the museum you will enjoy learning all about railways and steam trains.

The museum is wheelchair fully accessible and comprises five fascinating galleries. These include the Signal Box, the Stables, the Locomotive Gallery, the Locomotive Workshops and a Carriage Gallery.

The museum also tells the story of how the expansion of the railway network in the 19th century transformed life throughout Ireland – and in Whitehead in particular. Most importantly of all, however, there is a café which is called Platform 3.

The museum is wrapped around the workshops of the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland. Here you can see professional staff and RPSI volunteers hard at work restoring historic engines and carriages. The museum boasts the largest collection of preserved railway locomotives and carriages in Ireland.

At the weekends during the summer the RPSI runs steam train rides up and down the siding at Whitehead Railway Museum. Steam trains usually operate on the main line from Belfast to Whitehead at holiday times such as Easter, Halloween and Christmas. Another big

attraction is the Society's summer programme of special mainline steam trains such as the Steam & Jazz excursion. Check the website at www.steamtrainsireland.com for details.

Please note that the heritage nature of the steam train means that it has not been possible to modify the carriage doors to accommodate wheelchairs. As a result, wheelchair users are unfortunately unable at present to participate in heritage train rides and mainline trips. However, it is still possible to enjoy the sight of the steam train chuffing up and down the siding.

As you move around the various museum galleries it will be necessary to venture outdoors as you progress from one gallery to the next. Check the weather forecast before you come, and make sure you are prepared if the weather is bad.

At Whitehead Railway Museum we appreciate that everyone is different. Some people may need additional assistance when they are visiting. We aim to accommodate most such needs. This guide will provide the information you require to plan your visit.

GETTING HERE

The address for Whitehead Railway Museum is:

Whitehead Railway Museum
Castlevew Road
Whitehead
Co. Antrim
BT38 9NA

You can get here by car, bus, or train.

Getting Here by Car

- Take the M2 from Belfast and merge on to the M5 towards Whiteabbey
- Follow the signs for A2 to Carrickfergus
- Continue past Carrickfergus Castle heading for Larne along the coast
- At Whitehead, turn right past the service station onto Cable Road
- Turn left on to Kings Road, continue straight and cross the bridge
- At the Chester Avenue junction, turn left, and immediately turn left again onto Castlevew Road.

There is parking next to the youth centre. The entrance to the museum is past the youth centre. The main entrance is the station building.

Disabled Parking for Blue Badge Holders

There are two disabled parking spaces immediately outside the station building. Turn left at the end of Castlevew, around the back of the youth centre building.

Group Arrangements

Groups who are attending an organised session in the Stables Gallery can use adjacent set-down point for easier access instead of the main entrance. This must be arranged in advance.

Getting Here by Train

The nearest railway station is Whitehead. It is on NIR's Belfast-Larne line and there are trains every 30 minutes from Belfast. Whitehead Railway Museum is a half mile walk from the railway station. Rail connections to and from Dublin are available at Lanyon Place Station.

Getting Here by Bus

Two bus routes will get you to Whitehead. They are:

- 163 Belfast - Greenisland - Whitehead
- 168 Belfast - Carrickfergus - Whitehead

The bus terminates at the railway station, half a mile from the museum.

GETTING HERE



The Whitehead turn-off on the A2 Carrickfergus to Larne Road



This sign at NIR Whitehead Station points you towards Whitehead Railway Museum.



There is a sign pointing to Whitehead Railway Museum at the bus stop next to the NIR Whitehead Station.



This sign is at the end of Castleview Road. It directs visitors to the car park and the Museum.



There is a large signboard pointing to Whitehead Railway Museum on Castleview Road.



Castleview Road is the road that leads to Whitehead Railway Museum.



This is the main visitor car park opposite the football field. You can see the recycling bins!



The sign is located in the visitor car park. To access the museum entrance, walk around the side of the Youth Centre on your left and head up to the Station Building.



Entrance road leading to station building which contains Platform 3 café which is the entrance point to Whitehead Railway Museum



This is the Station Building. This is the entrance to Whitehead Railway Museum. You can buy tickets at the café counter in the Station Building.

HERE TO HELP

Tickets for the museum can be pre-booked at Visit Belfast in the city centre. You can reserve a time slot. Whitehead Railway Museum can usually accommodate walk-ins but priority will always be given to visitors who book in advance.

When you arrive, volunteer guides will welcome you and start your tour.

Whitehead Railway Museum recognises the JAM card and has a sticker promoting the initiative in the café/entrance to the museum.

The guided museum tour usually takes between an hour and 90 minutes so you may wish to have a coffee in the café before you start. Many of our volunteer guides have undergone training in dementia friendly support, and are familiar with the needs of those with access difficulties. Seats are to be found here and there if you need a rest.

We have a downloadable audio guide which can be accessed by means of an app. The information in the audio guide is also provided in the self-guide leaflet.



Whitehead Railway Museum supports the 'Just A Minute' (JAM) scheme for people with a range of disabilities.



Guides will typically be wearing a distinctive uniform including a Volunteer lanyard.



Volunteers at Whitehead Railway Museum wear a lanyard that looks like this.



Our guides are accustomed to welcoming visitors who have mobility issues.

FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND WHITEHEAD RAILWAY MUSEUM

These pictures will help you find your way around Whitehead Railway Museum. We hope you enjoy your visit and come back soon. Don't forget to let us know at any time if you need help!



This is the entrance to Platform 3 Cafe. This is where you buy tickets for the museum.



Inside Platform 3 Cafe.



You can buy your tickets for the museum at the café counter.



This is the platform outside the Platform 3 Cafe. Your visit starts here.



The view looking towards the signal box from outside Platform 3 Cafe.



A lift provides access for wheelchair users to the signal box.



Inside the Signal Box Gallery you can pull the signal lever and see the signal at the end of the platform change. Don't forget to change it back again!



The signalman's desk in the signal box

FINDING YOUR WAY



A machine which was used to issue a unique metal tablet for use on single line sections of track - an important safety measure which helped to prevent collisions



These signs tell visitors what to do if there is an emergency.



This is the entrance to the Stables Gallery. Inside you will find exhibits about the social history of railways.



An interactive map inside the Stables Gallery.



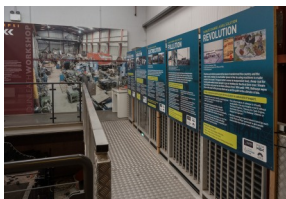
One of the historic steam engines on display inside the Locomotive Shed.



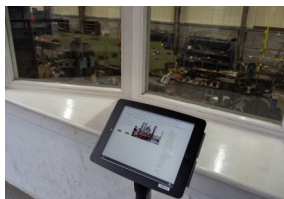
Push this button to operate the wheelchair accessible lift to the viewing gallery.



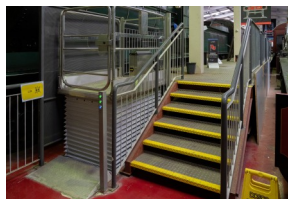
The exit door from the wheelchair lift on the viewing gallery level.



The viewing platform in the Workshop Gallery shows the work in progress on locomotives and carriages. The platform is wheelchair accessible.



The observation window affords visitors a bird's eye view of the locomotive workshops.



The wheelchair lift in the Carriage Gallery.



This wheelchair ramp leads into the award-winning Guinness Grain Van in the Carriage Gallery.



A fond farewell! This is the exit gate from the museum. It is outside the Platform 3 Cafe.

WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

If there is an emergency, alarm bells will sound. When this happens, you should look for exit signs or check your map. Then you should go to the assembly point in the car park.

If you have difficulties, please contact a guide.

If you are unlikely to hear an alarm, please let us know when you arrive.

We would also advise you to switch on Sound Recognition on your mobile phone (Android or iPhone). This will vibrate to alert you to most smoke or fire alarms.

Groups will always be accompanied by a guide. The guide will tell you what to do in the event of an emergency.

There is a defibrillator on site. It is publicly accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



These notices are to be found in the Signal Box Gallery and at strategic points elsewhere in the museum. They advise visitors how to react in the event of an emergency.



This is an exit door from the Stables Gallery. The signage is dementia friendly.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you or someone close to you is living with illness or disability, the organisations below may be able to offer support. This list is not comprehensive - there are many other groups, organisations and charities out there. We hope this provides a starting point.

Age NI

www.ageuk.org.uk/northern-ireland

Freephone: 0808 808 7575

Email: advice@ageni.org

Alzheimer's Society (Northern Ireland)

www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-us/alzheimers-society-northern-ireland

National Helpline: 0300 222 1122

Email: nir@alzheimers.org.uk

Autism NI

www.autismni.org

Telephone: 02890401729 (options offered)

Email: info@autismni.org

A Visual Guide is available for download.

Citizens Advice Bureau

Citizens Advice/Community Advice offices can offer support on a range of issues, including assistance with debt or applying for benefits.

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/northern-ireland/

This gives contact information for offices throughout Northern Ireland.

Defib Finder - find one where you are

www.defibfinder.uk

Disability Action

Disability Action has offices in Belfast, Derry/Londonderry, Dungannon, and Carrickfergus.

www.disabilityaction.org

Telephone: 028 9029 7880

Email: hq@disabilityaction.org

Dementia NI

www.dementiani.org

Telephone: 02896931555

Email: info@dementiani.org

Down's Syndrome Association NI

www.nicva.org/organisation/downs-syndrome-association-ni

Telephone: 02890 665 260

Email: info@downs-syndrome.org.uk

Hearing Link

Hearing Link provides advice and support to those living with hearing loss.

www.hearinglink.org

Telephone (voice or text): 01844 348111

Email: enquiries@hearinglink.org

Mencap

northernireland.mencap.org.uk

Telephone: 0808 808 1111

Email: helpline.ni@mencap.org.uk

RNID

(Royal National Institute for the Deaf, formerly Action on Hearing Loss)

rnid.org.uk/about-us/rnid-in-northern-ireland

rnid-in-northern-ireland

Telephone (voice or text): 07587130502

Email: contact@rnid.org.uk

RNIB

(Royal National Institute for the Blind)

www.rnib.org.uk/nations/northern-ireland

northern-ireland

Telephone: 0303 123 9999

Email: helpline@rnib.org.uk

MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE

We know that many people in Northern Ireland are now living with a 'hidden disability'. This can take many forms, including dementia, autism, hearing loss, mental health issues, ME/CFS, Long Covid, and IBD/Crohn's.



These people do not 'look' disabled and their needs can be overlooked.

Our volunteers know about schemes that raise awareness so that we can be more helpful. Schemes such as the JAM scheme or the sunflower lanyard allow people to indicate that they may need a little help or 'just a minute'. The Sunflower Lanyard is sometimes worn by people with hidden disabilities.

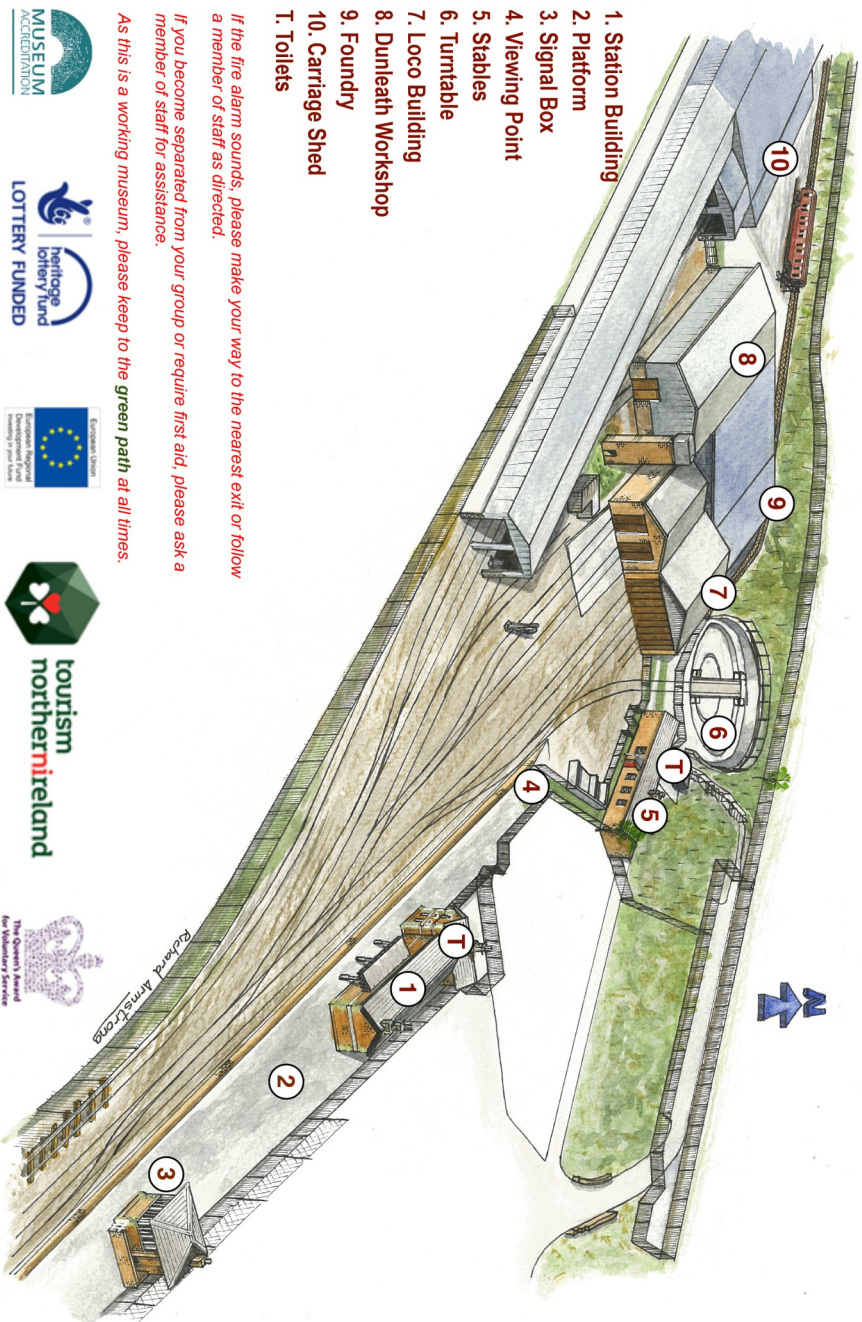
Examples of hidden disabilities include dementia, hearing loss, autism, mental health, asthma, and visual impairment, but there can be many more. It means that the person wearing it may require extra time or other assistance.



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:



1. Station Building
 2. Platform
 3. Signal Box
 4. Viewing Point
 5. Stables
 6. Turntable
 7. Loco Building
 8. Dunleath Workshop
 9. Foundry
 10. Carriage Shed
- T. Toilets

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.



**tourism
northernireland**

