



Headhunters Railway Museum
5 Darling Street
Enniskillen
Co.Fermanagh
Northern Ireland
BT74 7DP

Charity Report for 2022

The objective of the Association is through the provision of a museum to collect, preserve and interpret items of railway heritage for the education of the general public, with a particular focus on the railway companies which served Fermanagh and surrounding areas. In addition, to promote and encourage other forms of social, cultural and recreational activity within the community for the advancement of knowledge and appreciation of our railway heritage.

During 2022 we celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the formation of Fermanagh Railway Interest Group and 20th Anniversary of the opening of Headhunters Railway Museum in 2002. We were delighted to have Lord Faulkner, President of The Heritage Railway Association (UK & Ireland) join us for a celebration event with our volunteers.

As we transitioned out of the pandemic visitor numbers to the museum have steadily increased and we welcomed back our school visits and youth organisations once again to learn more about Fermanagh's railways. A number of railway artefacts were donated to the museum collection and volunteers were involved with their conservation and preparation for display. With the assistance of our museum fund we were delighted to be able to purchase several important artefacts which have a significant local connection. This has included the Sligo, Leitrim & Northern Counties Locomotive nameplate 'Lissadell', railway station lamp post signs, the brass bell from Enniskillen Railway Station, Sligo Leitrim's General Managers brass door plate and an extensive collection of documentation, timetables & reports relating to the railways of Fermanagh. We are also grateful for a number of donations which were made to the museum including tableware and signage. Our volunteers have been active in cataloguing our entire museum collection/archive and this will add greatly to our ability to be able to respond to research enquiries.

With a small grant from Fermanagh & Omagh District Council it was possible to re-design and print our museum visitor guide brochure which provides additional information and a self-guided tour of the museum. The Museum was the location for several TV programmes including ITV's DNA Journey featuring Adrian Dunbar and Neil Morrissey in addition to featuring in the local media.

Volunteers supported a number of community events as part of The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations in June 2022 and in particular the connection with railways through the Coronation Tour in Northern Ireland in July 1953 when Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh travelled by train. The highlight was a special exhibition hosted at Enniskillen Castle entitled 'Our Coronation Story' which involved partnership working with many other local community organisations such as the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association. Other events included a 'Big Lunch', musical event and Church Service. We are indebted to the Community Fund for Northern Ireland and Enniskillen Rotary Club for supporting these events.

The museum has continued to preserve and interpret items of railway heritage, which has helped educate the general public as to the part they played in the economic and social life Co. Fermanagh and the border counties until their closure in 1957. Positive feedback from visitors has been received through our visitor comments book, Tripadvisor and Social Media. The model railway continues to be extremely popular with all visitors, especially the younger folk.

Headhunters Railway Museum prides itself in the way it works with different age groups throughout the entire community in interpreting local railway heritage. During the year various organisations have visited the museum for a guided tour. Further outreach work of the museum included delivering illustrated talks on Headhunters Railway Museum, how it was established and the work it is engaged. While nurturing a local connection to railway heritage the museum is also engaged in providing an experience for visitors throughout the world, who enjoy one of the most unusual museums, which has one of the largest collection of small Irish railway items on display. Headhunter's Museum is supported by a number of volunteers, former employees and enthusiasts who continue to promote its development and give of their time freely. Our volunteers have continued to work with Belleek Pottery to promote the connection between railways and the pottery and an exhibition of railway artefacts is displayed within the Belleek Pottery Museum. Headhunters Railway Museum are members of the Heritage Railway Association, NI Museum's Council and Fermanagh Lakeland Tourism Association. It upholds the highest standards and best practice as promoted / outlined by these organisations and continues to hold a four star rating from Tourism NI's Quality Grading Scheme, which reflects confidence in its ability to operate safely and professionally. Events which the museum have coordinated further its purpose and are in accordance with health and safety guidance, which ensures that we have mitigated any harm or associated risk. The museum is located in a working barbershop and the tour is self-guided. Admission to the museum is free and visitors are not required to pay for a haircut in order to view the museum. We recognise that some visitors to the museum may wish to have a haircut and subsequently take a self-guided tour of the museum or vice-versa. However, this is incidental to providing members of the public with an opportunity to learn more about local railway heritage and enhance their appreciation and understanding. Any private benefit received by the owners of the barbershop is purely incidental to the purposes of our work. In setting

our objectives and planning our activities for the year the Trustees gave careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that activities have helped achieve the charity's purposes and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries.

Selwyn Johnston
Chairman
Headhunters Railway Museum