



PRESS RELEASE: National Transport Trust (NTT) Awards 2026

Downpatrick and County Down Railway wins restoration award for its Northern Ireland Railways 80 Class power car No. 69

Built in 1979 at Derby by British Rail Engineering Limited specifically for Northern Ireland Railways, 80 Class No. 69 is the motor car of a unique Diesel Electrical Multiple Unit. The 80 Class formed the backbone of passenger services across Northern Ireland for more than three decades and became synonymous with the region's publicly owned railway.



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Commenting on the award, NTT Awards Director Stuart Wilkinson says, "For a generation of passengers, the 80 Class defined rail travel in Northern Ireland. It also has a distinctive chapter of cross-border work, having been leased by Irish Rail to work the Cork to Cobh services in the 1980s. No. 69 also carries additional and unique historical weight as the final vehicle to operate as the Peace Train. It is the only surviving railway vehicle directly associated with the grassroots civic movement that publicly rejected paramilitary violence and advocated democratic progress in the closing phase of the conflict."

The vehicle is undergoing substantial bodywork renewal, including removal of corrosion, replacement of deteriorated steel sections and reversal of in-service modifications to return the vehicle to its correct late-1970s configuration. The approach prioritises long-term structural integrity rather than cosmetic refurbishment.

Internally, the saloon is being restored to its original Northern Ireland Railways specification, with accurate finishes and layout reinstated. At the same time, a dedicated wheelchair-accessible space is

being incorporated to ensure the vehicle can operate inclusively within a modern heritage railway environment.

The objective is to return No. 69 to active passenger service as a structurally sound, historically accurate and accessible representative example of Northern Ireland's principal post-1970 diesel multiple unit class

The National Transport Trust

Founded in 1965, (as the Transport Trust), the National Transport Trust is the UK's only national charity established to promote and encourage the preservation and restoration of Britain's unique transport heritage in all its forms – by air, land (road and rail) and water (sea and inland). The Trust is managed within a very streamlined structure, with the Board of Trustees representing the wider interests of the nation, for whose benefit the Trust exists.

Help us to help them

In order to help the UK's the preservation movement the Trust depends on its members and therefore encourages all those who share our aims to join us. Membership of the Trust is open to private individuals and affiliated organisations. You can help us to help others too; become a member, donate to the trust or you might even consider leaving the trust something in your will. This last part is vital to our work, see here for more: [National Transport Trust legacies](#)

National Transport Trust

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