



Changing the Script: Transport and Communication Museums and their Communities.

49th IATM Conference | 13-15 September 2026 | Belfast, Northern Ireland

This year, **IATM will meet in Belfast**, the capital city of Northern Ireland. For decades of the 20th century Belfast was synonymous with the civil and political conflict known as 'The Troubles'. Since the [Belfast/Good Friday Agreement](#) brought an end to the conflict in 1998, the city has made **remarkable use of its maritime and industrial heritage to change the stories it tells about its own history, and to power impressive cultural and economic change in the region.**

Drawing on this example, **we want to discuss our roles within the neighbourhoods, communities, cities or regions that surround us.** We want to look at institutions as **part of the social fabric** as well as drivers and enablers of change. As always, this IATM Conference aims to **inspire your work** and to offer the chance for **exchange and support**. We will look at the role of our museums in their neighbourhoods, region or city. Through stories and talks about different concepts and approaches towards **placemaking**, we aim to inspire your work and the communities or local businesses you interact with.

Meet colleagues from around the world for engaging discussions. Learn more about their work as well as the city of Belfast. Particularly, the role of its history and cultural institutions in **developing it from a symbol of conflict to a cultural and thus economic hub.**

Conference Programme

Pre-Conference | Sun, 13 September 2026 | Ulster Museum

[Ulster Museum](#), Botanic Gardens, Belfast, BT9 5AB

18.00 - 20.00

Welcome Reception

Welcome and Introduction from **Karen Logan**, Curator of „The Troubles“ Gallery at Ulster Museum

DAY 1 | Mon, 14 September 2026 | Ulster Museum

[Ulster Museum](#) Lecture Theatre, Botanic Gardens, Belfast, BT9 5AB

Ulster Transport Museum (Transfer organised as part of the conference)

08.45 - 9.00

Registration

9.00

Welcome to IATM's 49th Conference

Joachim Breuninger, IATM President & Director of the German Museum of Technology Berlin

09.10 - 10.30

Opening Panel

Session 1: Placemaking through Heritage in Large Infrastructure Projects

Chair: Elizabeth McKay, IATM Board Member & CEO, London Transport Museum

Graeme Craig, Director & Chief Executive, Places for London

Kerrie Sweeney, Chief Executive, Maritime Belfast Trust

Huw Edwards, Stations and Placemaking, HS2

Panel Discussion

10.30

Tea & Coffee Break

11.00 - 12.30	Session 2: Changing Cities and Identities through Heritage Chair: Dr Meredith Greiling, IATM Board Member & Principal Curator, Technology Science and Technology Dept., National Museums Scotland • Strengthening Professional Identity of Finnish postal workers: The Role of the Postal Museum in Finland <i>Suvi Jalli, Head of Exhibitions and Public Engagement, Finnish Postal Museum</i> • Lost In The City. Building a Museum Amidst a Real Estate Bonanza <i>Adam Horký, Curator of the Railway Collection, National Technical Museum, Prague</i> • Revitalizing City Centers: The Impact of Cultural Institutions <i>Stephen Quick, General Director, Musée régional de l'Outaouais Gatineau Quebec, and Paul Jennings, Director XCENTUATE Ltd. representing Dundee Transport Museum</i> Q & A
12.30	Lunch
13.30 - 14.30	Train Transfer to Ulster Transport Museum, Cultra
14.30 - 16.30	Introduction to Ulster Transport Museum Clare Ablett, Curator, Ulster Transport Museum, National Museums NI Visit and Guided tours Ulster Transport Museum
16.30	Return Train to Belfast
19.00	Conference Dinner Northern Whig, 2 Bridge Street, Belfast BT1 1LU

DAY 2 | Tue, 15 September 2026 | Titanic Belfast – SS Nomadic

[SS Nomadic](#) at Titanic Belfast, 1 Olympic Way, Queen's Road, Titanic Quarter, Belfast BT3 9EP

SS Nomadic and Hamilton Dock are located around 150m from the front door of Titanic Belfast, directly across the road from the Titanic Sign.

08.45 - 9.00	Arrival
9.00 - 9.10	Introduction Joachim Breuninger , <i>IATM President & Director of the German Museum of Technology Berlin</i>
9:10 - 10.40	Session 3: Engaging Communities Chair: Stephen Quick , <i>IATM Board Member & General Director, Musée régional de l'Outaouais Gatineau Quebec</i> Minister Gordon Lyons , <i>Minister for Communities, Northern Ireland Executive</i> • Integrating the Future: How Museums Are Rewiring Canada's Aerospace Ecosystem Chris Kitzan, <i>Director General, Ingenium, Canada Aviation and Space Museum</i> • Ethical and Sustainable Disposal; a partnership case study with UTM and Hydebank Wood College and Women's Prison Clare Ablett, <i>Curator, Ulster Transport Museum, Cultra</i> • The Heterosexual Geography of London and its Transport Network Zoe Few, <i>Doctoral Researcher, London Transport Museum and University of Westminster</i> • The Finnish Railway Museums' Social Impact Marina Bergström, <i>Head of Content, Finnish Railway Museum</i> Panel Discussion
10.40	Tea and Coffee Break
11.00 - 11.45	News from the Field IATM Members report on their current projects, questions and else
11.45 - 12.30	General Assembly
12.30 - 13.30	Lunch
13.30 - 13.45	Update from Yurii Savtchuk Director , <i>National Museum of the History of Ukraine in the Second World War</i>

13.45 - 15.30	Session 4: Placemaking in Museums Chair: Jens Toftgaard, IATM Board Member & Director Danish Railway Museum • Transported by Culture: Placemaking in Covent Garden <i>Elizabeth McKay, IATM Board Member & CEO, London Transport Museum</i> • From Ships to Global Entanglements - Shifting Narratives in the German Maritime Museum <i>Prof. Dr. Ruth Schilling, Director, and Dr Pablo v. Frankenberg, Curator and architecture researcher, German Maritime Museum, Bremerhaven</i> • Where communities come together: The PEKING as a space for stories and action <i>Ursula Richenberger, Head of Public Programming, German Port Museum, Hamburg</i> • Shifting the Gears of Slovenian Transportation Heritage <i>Matevž Šlabnik, Curator of Transport, and Barbara Rezar Grilc, Senior Curator, Technical Museum of Slovenia</i> Welcome to the 50th IATM Conference 2027 in Slovenia Natalija Polenec, Director of the Technical Museum of Slovenia
15.30 - 16.00	Introduction to Maritime Belfast & Titanic Experience
16.00 - 18.00	Visit to Titanic Experience
19.00	Conference Dinner The Bridge, Titanic Experience

DAY 3 | Wed, 16 September 2026 | Post-Conference Tours

Participants pre-select their optional tours, meeting points will be announced at the conference

9.00 - 13.00	Visit to & Tour of Downpatrick and County Down Railway (including bus transfer)
9.15 - 13.00	Visit to & Tour of Ulster Aviation Society (including bus transfer)
10.00 - 12.00	Visit to HMS Caroline (National Museum of the Royal Navy) and Belfast Discovery Walking Tour sponsored by Maritime Belfast Trust 