



Call for Papers

Changing the Script; Transport and Communications Museums as engines of social, economic and cultural regeneration

IATM Conference Belfast, Northern Ireland | 13 - 16 September 2026

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.

Our hosts, National Museums Northern Ireland (NI), operate four museums and care for large collections spanning art, history and natural sciences as well as transport and communications. They will welcome us at the [Ulster Museum](#) in the city, and we will enjoy tours of the [Ulster Transport Museum](#).

Belfast is home to a proud history of shipbuilding, and most famously is the place where the White Star Line ship, *RMS Titanic*, was built. [Titanic Belfast](#) opened in an iconic building in 2012 to enhance Northern Ireland's tourism offering. The second day of our conference will be hosted onboard [SS Nomadic](#), Titanic's tender. We will have tours of Titanic Belfast and visit the historic drawing offices and slipways where the ship was launched.

Post-conference tours will allow delegates to choose between visits to [Downpatrick and County Down Railway](#), [Ulster Aviation Society](#) or [HMS Caroline](#).

Conference Theme

Inspired by Belfast's example, we are looking for conference paper submissions on this year's theme of transport and communication museums as engines of change transforming the cultural, social and economic situations of their towns, cities or regions.

Has your museum or heritage site become a meeting point for a local community, brought new life to disused industrial heritage buildings or created a new tourist attraction for the benefit of the regional economy? Perhaps your museum has changed how it presents stories about the history of a place or period?

If so, we would love to hear from you. Share your experiences, best practice and ideas with colleagues from around the world.

Submission Guidelines

We are looking for papers for brief and concise presentations of 15 to 20 minutes in length. They should encourage discussion and new ways of thinking. We welcome innovative formats and approaches. The conference is an in-person event. IATM provides a platform for connecting a wide range of different voices, specialisms and organisations and the final conference programme will be structured accordingly.

Your submission should include:

- a working title
- An abstract (max. 300 words)
- a biography of the speaker and short description of the museum or heritage site (max. 100 words)

Please send your proposal to: office@iatm.museum

Deadline: **Submissions are open until 5pm, Friday 22nd May 2026**. The selected proposals will be announced in June 2026. If you have any questions regarding the conference or this call for papers, do not hesitate to contact us at office@iatm.museum.