**BBC Comes To Town in Downpatrick to mark 100 years of the BBC in Northern Ireland**



As part of activities and events to mark 100 years of the BBC in Northern Ireland, a special series of BBC roadshows are taking place at locations across the region.

Downpatrick is the next destination for BBC Comes to Town 2024 from 21-23 May. There will be outside broadcasts, school visits and a host of other activities to enjoy.

This year-long initiative has been developed in partnership with Libraries NI and local libraries will be a broadcast and production centre for much of what is taking place.

The BBC’s big birthday visit to Downpatrick will begin with a recording of the GAA Social podcast with presenters Thomas Niblock and Oisín McConville and guests. It will be recorded with a studio audience in the Saint Patrick’s Centre at 7pm on Tuesday 21 May. Tickets for this free event are available from the Saint Patrick Centre Box Office from 10am on Thursday 16 May. Call 02844619000 to secure a ticket. The podcast will be available to listen to on [**BBC Sounds**](https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/brand/p09h7q3x) on Wednesday 22 May.

There’ll be opportunities for school and community groups to take part in a BBC Interactive Exhibition in Downpatrick Library on 22 and 23 May. It will give visitors a chance to experience what it’s like to present a BBC weather forecast or BBC Newsline bulletin. And there’ll be other interactive fun with sports commentary, radio drama and information about BBC apprenticeships and careers. All of the school slots are now fully booked, but there will be opportunities for everyone else to call in and be part of the fun from 3pm-4.45pm on Wednesday 22 May and 3.30pm-4.45pm on Thursday 23 May.

BBC Rewind will be showcasing archive footage of Downpatrick in an illustrated talk at 1.00pm on Wednesday 22 May in Downpatrick Library. And there’ll be information and advice on how people can search the BBC’s online archive of over 30,000 recordings about local people, places and events. It will be accompanied by Picture Box, a new touring exhibition, will tell the story of BBC and its services in Northern Ireland with photos of well-known personalities and programmes – many of them on display for the first time. This will be on display in Downpatrick library from the early afternoon on Tuesday 21 May until teatime on Thursday 23 May. No booking is required. Call in and spot some of your favourite presenters and programmes throughout the decades.

BBC Radio Ulster will have several live outside broadcasts from Downpatrick and featuring local people and stories. Good Morning Ulster will be live from various locations around the town on Wednesday 22 May. Hugo Duncan will bring musical craic to St Patrick’s Square from 1.30-3.00pm and the South Eastern Education College will be broadcast centre for Vinny and Cate from 6pm-7.30pm.

BBC Radio Ulster’s Alright Pet! will be recorded in Downpatrick Library from 11.30am on 23 May.

And local schoolchildren from St Brigid’s Primary School will get to enjoy some musical interactivity with Nigel Ireland from the Ulster Orchestra, the BBC’s orchestra in Northern Ireland.

Adam Smyth, Director, BBC Northern Ireland says: “We’re looking forward to our big BBC birthday visit to Downpatrick. Community connection is at the heart of what we do. And it’s what makes BBC programmes special – showcasing local talent, stories and concerns, and bringing them to everyone.’

Thomas Niblock, BBC presenter says: “As the GAA Social goes from strength to strength the reaction has been phenomenal and this special live recording is guaranteed to provide plenty of lively debate and discussion. We have a really passionate following and I’m beyond thrilled that we’ve been able to inspire thought-provoking conversations that resonate with people far beyond the white lines of the football pitch. I’ve no doubt that will continue in Downpatrick.”