Speaker 1

The Enterprise train service between Belfast and Dublin has now been in operation for 75 years. The first Enterprise train left Belfast at 10:30 a.m. on the 11th of August 1947, and the service has operated ever since. Enterprise has been a key economic and social link between the two cities with a rich history. We spoke to some former and current staff and asked them about their fondest memories and favourite aspects of Enterprise.

Speaker 2

My fondest memory would have to be that I met my wife working for the catering on the Enterprise, and next year we're married 20 years. So the train was a bit of a matchmaker and it's changed so many lives for the better.

Speaker 3

The Eurovision train, the time Ireland hosted the Eurovision for many a time here, but this time in particular, it was really special for me because a chap from our village, Eamonn Toal was representing Ireland at the time and it was a great, great achievement I got to say to have Eamonn on the train with us and he did quite well in the Eurovision as well as he keeps reminding us.

Speaker 4

I can think of one particular time the Fleadh was on in Drogheda and it was fantastic, there was a whole carriage of musicians. They put on a little impromptu performance for everyone on the train.

Speaker 5

I think my fondest memory would be shortly after I started in the role we had the President of Ireland, Michael D Higgins, travel with us from Dublin.

Speaker 6

When in preparation for the launch of the new Enterprise service, we decided to operate a special service to Malahide for all the staff involved as a thank you, but also for them to bring a guest so that we could trial the service. And everybody was very proud to be involved in that day, no more so than my guests, my wife and my late father, who was a career railway man.

Speaker 6

And my wife had said to me afterwards that he was very proud of what we had achieved.

Speaker 7

There's one day in particular that stands out. That was when the Make-A-Wish charity made a little boy's wish come true to become the Enterprise train driver for the day. They went all out to make it a special day for him and his family.

Speaker 1

When Aer Lingus started a Dublin to Belfast air service in 1947, the Great Northern Railway responded by introducing the Enterprise rail service. Between 1950 and 1953 the service was extended to Cork. The Great Northern Railway dissolved in 1958 and its assets were divided between Córas Iompair Éireann and the Ulster Transport Authority. The two companies continued the service seamlessly and Iarnród Éireann and Translink continue to do so to this day.

Speaker 1

But what makes the Enterprise service so popular, and why has it stood the test of time?

Speaker 5

I think the service is so popular because the Enterprise, travelling on the Enterprise is an an experience. It's the different seating you have, it's the catering you have, it's the different staff you have on board. It's safe,

Speaker 7

it's comfortable and I think it caters for every type of passenger.

Speaker 6

It's very convenient. You just simply sit back and let the train take the strain so to speak.

Speaker 1

I think it's reliability.

Speaker 8

It's dependability and when you get on board, you can relax.

Speaker 1

It all began with steam locomotives named after birds of prey and Irish rivers. Diesel rail cars were introduced in the early fifties and were replaced by locomotive hauled air conditioned coaches in the early seventies. These were, in turn replaced by the current trains in 1997. The Enterprise story also reflects Ireland's social and political history over the decades from the so-called contraceptive trains of the Irish Women's Liberation Movement to the Peace Train Organisation

Speaker 1

during the troubles. And as we now look forward on this 75th anniversary. What are the future hopes for the Enterprise?

Speaker 5

My hopes for the Enterprise in the future is that with investment we get a new fleet we get an hourly service, and we reduce our traveling time.

Speaker 3

I hope to see us here in another 75 years as well.

Speaker 6

If I was to sum up the Enterprise in one word, that word would be enduring.

Speaker 2

Memorable.

Speaker 7

I'd have say connect.

Speaker 4

Teamwork. Fantastic.

Speaker 5

Experience.

Speaker 8

It was an Enterprise, it is an Enterprise and long may it remain being an Enterprise.