

## HIDDEN GEMS AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

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### **BERKELEY DEAN WISE (1855-1909) – Civil Engineer**

Berkeley Deane Wise was born on 2 October 1855 in Berkeley Forest, New Ross, Co. Wexford. He came to Ulster in 1877 as the Chief Engineer to the Belfast and County Down Railway where he remained for 11 years, inventing the Wise patent signalling system. The pinnacle of his career was his 18 years as Chief Engineer to the Belfast and Northern Counties Railway. Wise designed many of the stations on this line, but his most famous building is Portrush Railway Station, with its characteristic red brick, overhanging awnings and half-timbered gables. He was one of the pioneers who developed Ulster as a tourist destination, and designed the Glenariff paths, Whitehead Promenade, Blackhead Path and the Gobbins Cliff Path, which in its day was as successful a tourist attraction as the Giants Causeway. Post-war austerity spelt decline for the 1.5 mile walkway and it was closed to the public in the 1950s. After a multi-million refit, the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council reopened the Path in August 2015.

Wise was Vice President of the Institution of Civil Engineers of Ireland from 1904 to 1906.

Berkeley Dean Wise died in Portrush on 5 May 1909 and is buried in the City Cemetery, Belfast.