

# The RBfH Newsletter

## Rail & Bus for Herefordshire

### Winter 2020



© Rail & Bus for Herefordshire

## The RBfH Newsletter is Back

What a strange and disturbing year 2020 is turning out to be. The Covid-19 crisis with lockdowns has forced on us a complete rethink about how we go about our lives. Coping with this new strange situation has occupied us for most of the year. During this time a considerable amount was put on hold, including the RBfH newsletter.

But also, during this period of change a number of positive moves have taken place. RBfH has seen some changes in its committee with the welcome return of Professor Les Lumsdon (a previous chairman) and stalwart Andrew Pearson, whose knowledge of buses is unsurpassable. We also have a new member in John Eden. All this considerably strengthens the committee and as a result, both Les and Andrew persuaded me, over a pint or two, to return and start up the newsletter again.

When I stood down as editor in March to concentrate on our own publishing concern, I received many emails thanking me for the newsletters I had produced. However, as our business has been inevitably slowed down due to lockdown, I decided to return to RBfH and help out.

For members information the new RBfH committee comprises:

Chairman: Will Frecknell

Secretary: Andrew Pearson

Treasurer & Membership: Peter Gwatkin

Newsletter Editor: Gareth Calan Davies

Professor Les Lumsdon

Michael Sullivan

Philip Bauer

John Thorne

John Eden

Professor John Whitelegg remains our Honorary President.

There is a considerable amount to report concerning public transport in Herefordshire and indeed nationally. The main point of course is the future structure of rail and bus services, especially in respect of the substantial knocking the industry is taking during the Covid crisis with associated dramatic falls in passenger numbers and the need for government bailouts.

So, I hope that with the newsletter we can uphold the RBfH mission:

- *To promote the interests of passengers using rail and bus services within Herefordshire and between Herefordshire and regional/national destinations.*
- *To actively assist in the promotion and development of public transport services and associated infrastructure such as rail and bus stations.*
- *To develop a cooperative relationship with train operating companies and Network Rail, Herefordshire Council, Members of Parliament, parish councils and other rail user organisations.*

Gareth Calan Davies: Newsletter Editor

*Cover images: 1535 GWR service to Oxford leaving Ledbury (courtesy Mike Hart): Stagecoach service 132 to Gloucester at Ledbury Market House (GHAL)*

**THE ENVIRONMENT IS IMPORTANT  
OUR HEALTH IS IMPORTANT  
PUBLIC TRANSPORT HAS A MAJOR PART TO PLAY IN  
THE FUTURE OF HEREFORDSHIRE**

**SUPPORT BUSES & TRAINS AND HELP:  
SUPPORT RAIL & BUS FOR HEREFORDSHIRE**

# What's Going to Happen to Our Railways?

**Our Editor provides a bit of insight but no answers.**

The Covid-19 crisis, associated lockdowns and social distancing measures are playing havoc with our railways. A dramatic and quick drop in fares revenue forced the government to suspend the franchise arrangements and bail out the railways to the tune of £3.5 billion. The bailout included a 3% element to protect profits and the train companies accepted. The government were keen to point out that this was not a full-scale nationalisation of the railways.

The government and the train companies had no option if the railway network was to be kept intact. When the bailout was due to end this Autumn, Westminster decided to extend it but reduce the profit element to a half per cent. There were rumblings from the industry and of course criticism that taxpayer's money was being used to sustain train company profits. To compensate for a reduced profit level, some train service frequencies were downscaled in an effort to reduce costs.

Interestingly the Department for Transport (DfT) had already commissioned a revue of rail financing in 2018 (the Williams Revue). Covid-19 put this on hold but at least the DfT has realised that something will have to be done about the structure and financing of English railways of the future. The Williams Revue was firmly expected to pronounce that the current franchise system is no longer fit for purpose. But what is to replace it is as yet unknown and presumably the back-room boys at the DfT are feverishly trying to determine a new system!

In the meantime, what happens when a franchise comes to an end? The recent case of Arriva Cross Country provides the

answer where that company has been awarded a new three-year franchise contract. That gives an indication that the DfT considers it is going to take three years to sort out the mess.

Two existing franchises were already under English state control pre Covid, where the government has taken over as operator of last resort: These are Northern Rail and East Coast Main Line. This happened pre Covid and occurred where the operator was either stripped of the franchise because of appalling performance and overcrowding (Northern Rail) or where the operator handed back the franchise as being untenable in terms of anticipated profit levels (Virgin/Stagecoach East Coast).

We have no doubt there will be much speculation as to what new privatised system will replace the failed franchise model. So what happens now? One rail executive is reported as commenting that the government must “*provide continued stability*”, warning it will take time to “*get revenue levels back to where they were*”.

During the last lockdown, Tony Travers, Professor at the School of Public Policy at the London School of Economics, said the cost of protecting train operators from collapse could reach £6bn. “*I would estimate that the rail subsidies will end up costing £5-£6bn of taxpayer money,*” he added. “*And then there will be further questions about how much more support the industry needs if passenger volumes do not return to normal.*” Despite government moves to ease the lockdown, the number of people using the railways is still more than 80 per cent below levels recorded before the pandemic.

Now we are in a second lockdown! So what next?

# Welsh Government Set to Nationalise an English Train Service

## Our Newsletter Editor receives news from across the Border

In a bold move the Welsh Government has announced that it will nationalise the rail services under its franchise agreement. Ministers have confirmed the takeover from the current operator Keolis/Amey with services to be run by a Welsh publicly owned company Transport for Wales Rail Ltd. Keolis/Amey was awarded the franchise in 2018 but the Covid-19 crisis has seen revenue plummet prompting the Welsh government to inject £65 million to keep services going.

Welsh Deputy Transport Minister Lee Waters said: "*The whole business model collapsed in the face of Covid because the revenue was not coming in and Keolis/Amey in effect were not prepared to shoulder their share of the pain.*" The change is happening under a part of railway law that allows for the creation of 'operators of last resort' and will take place between now and February 2021 to allow the set-up of Transport for Wales Rail Ltd.

James Price, Chief Executive of the Welsh Government quango Transport for Wales which oversaw the franchise and shared branding with it, said that rolling stock is "*on the way*" and "*in essence is paid for already*". "*What this allows us to do is to reduce the profit we pay to the private sector massively over time, and make sure that when the revenue comes back, it comes back in to the taxpayer.*"

Interestingly, the move by the Welsh Government means that a train service which runs mostly in England will be nationalised by a separate devolved government. The Marches Line service from Cardiff to Manchester runs through Herefordshire and

Shropshire in the borders. It was devolved to the Welsh Government under an Agency Agreement with the Department for Transport.

Although the franchise system has been suspended in England, it has not led to the full nationalisation of the network. It remains to be seen whether or not the Welsh decision to move to complete nationalisation is in contravention of the Agency Agreement in respect of an English train service.

Chris Clarke of Shrewsbury, Chairman of the Marches Rail Users Alliance recently wrote to his MP asking for clarification on this matter. Chris has kindly forwarded a copy of the reply from Chris Heaton-Harris, Minister of State for Transport in which the minister states: *“These agency arrangements are intended to apply equally to a scenario where train services are secured directly by Transport for Wales as to when they are secured through a franchised operator”*.

Firm acceptance of a nationalised Welsh railway operating an English Train service? We shall have to wait and see. The crux of the matter is unlikely to emerge until the new system for operating English train services is finally decided. As hinted previously the Department for Transport are not expecting this to happen for some time, it being a very complex matter and the franchise system having been discredited.

### **What is the Marches Rail Users Alliance (MRUA)**

The MRUA is a consortium of rail user groups covering the Marches Line between Hereford and Shrewsbury. It comprises Rail & Bus for Herefordshire, Leominster Rail Users, Ludlow Rail Users, Craven Arms Rail Users and Church Stretton Rail Users. The Alliance is a valuable means of communication with Train Operators

## The Station where Disabled People are Forced to Travel West to Travel East

Our Editor highlights the plight of disabled people wanting  
to use the train at Ledbury Station



*Footbridge and steps at Ledbury station, the only access to the Worcester direction platform.*

The Ledbury Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018-2031 opens with: *'Ledbury is a market town with a population of 9,636 (2011 Census) and a centre for some 20 parishes in Herefordshire, as well as several villages in neighbouring Gloucestershire and Worcestershire, making a catchment population using its services and facilities of over 20,000.'* The town is growing with an estimated 1,000 new houses in the pipeline as well.

Ledbury is one of only four railway stations in Herefordshire



and is on the line between Hereford and Worcester. The train service to/from Birmingham is operated by West Midlands Railway and that to/from Oxford and London is operated by Great Western Railway. Ledbury values its station and train service.

Yet facilities for disabled people at the railway station fall far short of that to be expected in twenty first century Britain. Access to the Worcester direction platform is denied to disabled persons as it means crossing a footbridge with flights of steps. This means disabled persons wishing to travel to Worcester, Birmingham, Oxford or London have first to travel to Hereford where lifts have recently been provided to cross the tracks. They then can travel back in the correct easterly direction to their destination. Interestingly this fact also applies to young mothers with babies and infants in buggies, as well as those who wish to take their bike by train.

Attempts at getting Ledbury into the Government and Network Rail Access for All programme of investment has to date failed. This is despite the fact that transport secretary Ms Nusrat Ghani recently commented that *“We want the 13.9 million disabled people in Britain to be empowered to travel independently, which is why I am delighted to announce this roll-out of upgrades across the rail network.”*

The roll out of upgrades she refers to includes seventy-three stations, but not Ledbury and the criteria for deciding on these stations are given as:

*They have been selected following nominations from the rail industry, which engaged with local authorities and other stakeholders. We then assessed them against annual footfall, weighted by the incidence of disability in the area, and also took account of local factors such as nearby hospitals and the availability of third-party funding. Due consideration was also*

*given to the preferences of the train operating companies and, finally, a number were chosen to ensure a fair geographical spread across the country.*

Surely there is a good case for Ledbury. In 2018-19 the footfall at the station approached 219,000. Leominster, which has been provided with lifts was only 260,000. Ludlow, which already has disabled access ramps but is included in the current list for improvement, has 301,000. (*source: ORR statistics*).

With a growing town and a considerable number of both elderly retired and young families there is a need for local authorities, those representing the elderly and disabled and other user groups to start campaigning for significant improvements at Ledbury station. We can all start by writing to our MP Mr Bill Wiggin and our county councillors asking for an explanation as to why Ledbury is being forgotten.

## **How are the Railways Coping?**

**Our Chairman Will Frecknall and committee member Michael Sullivan have been down to Hereford station to observe.**

The return of students to Hereford Colleges for the winter term meant a huge bulge in passengers at a time when the capacity of trains is greatly restricted by the social distancing rules. In 2007 Hereford College merged with Holme Lacy Agricultural College. In 2012 it merged with Ludlow College and in 2018 with North Shropshire College and a £32 million new campus was developed. This meant the college catchment area was extended throughout the Marches and into Wales which resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of students travelling into Hereford by train.

Our observers saw that staff at Hereford station were increased

in order to properly marshal students through the one-way system in place and also to check tickets and security. Transport for Wales, whose Marches service takes the brunt of this student traffic had opted to put on replacement coaches and buses to cope with social distancing, bearing in mind the shortage of rolling stock that they are experiencing. It is understood this policy was adopted in consultation with the colleges.

Incidentally, the road coaches on hire are not subject to social distancing rules and hence could carry the maximum of students. This anomalous rule also applies to dedicated school services on many county bus routes.

Undoubtedly problems at Hereford station were bound to arise, especially where groups of student friends were split between train and bus. However, our observers reported that overall, the staff did have control over the situation. Professor Les Lumsdon reported that a similar increase in staff had taken place at Ludlow.

West Midland Trains, who operate the Worcester and Birmingham service adopted a different practice. Trains on this service have been strengthened to four or five coaches which means there is the capacity to cope with social distancing and student loads. This has been made possible by downgrading the Worcester-Stourbridge-Birmingham Snow Hill service from every half hour to every hour thus releasing rolling stock.

In general, it would appear that the train companies are handling the situation in a reasonable way. What happens when Covid-19 restrictions are eventually lifted remains to be seen. But by then we all hope that both Transport for Wales and West Midlands Railway will have received the new trains that have been long promised.

## **Bus Service Changes in Herefordshire**

### **Our Secretary, Andrew Pearson gives us an update on bus services in Herefordshire**

At the time of writing on 8 November bus services in Herefordshire have returned to their pre-Covid timetables with the following exceptions:

**T14 Brecon – Hereford** reduced from 7 per day (5 on non-college days) to 5 per day (4 on non-college days).

**X3 Abergavenny – Hereford** reduced from 6 per day to 5 per day.

**71 Hereford – Credenhill** early and late journeys axed but daytime frequency restored to half hourly. Sunday journeys reduced from 9 to 4. In addition, because of car parking in Whitehorse St the bus is no longer able to serve Westfaling St but does a double run from Whitecross to Green Lanes.

**72 Hereford – Bobblestock** early and late journeys cancelled but half hourly frequency restored.

**74 Hereford – Newton Farm** 1 early and late services cancelled and frequency reduced from every 12 minutes to every 20 minutes. Sunday services reduced from 16 to 8

**81/81A Hereford – College Green** reduced to 6 journeys per day.

**420 DRM journeys Hereford – Bromyard – Worcester** reduced from 5 journeys per day to Bromyard and 3 to Worcester to 4 to Bromyard and 2 to Worcester with one extra journey to Worcester on Saturdays. First journeys Bromyard – Worcester unchanged.

**447 Bredwardine – Hereford** Normal service on schooldays but

no service on school holidays.

**449 Madley – Hereford** Normal service on schooldays but reduced to 2 hourly service on Saturdays and school holidays.

**469 Bromyard – Bishops Frome – Hereford** reduced to one bus per day each way to allow for scholars only on the other bus each way.

**476 Ledbury – Hereford** reduced from 13 per day to 7 per day. Sunday service axed.

**492 Leominster – Hereford** reduced from hourly to 2-hourly.

**674 Bromyard – Ledbury** now scholars only.

**675/6 Malvern – Ledbury** 08.00 from Malvern and 15.25 from Ledbury now scholars only.

**802 Leintwardine – Hereford** now scholars only.

In addition because of the landslide which closed the road from Hereford – Fownhope in February the following services are still affected and the road is not expected to reopen until February 2021.

**453 Hereford – Fownhope** reduced to 4 journeys per day of which the first from Hereford and the last from Fownhope run non-stop via A438, A417, A449 and B4224 to avoid the congestion in Haugh Wood.

**454 Hereford - Holme Lacy – Fownhope** now runs 3 return journeys to Holme Lacy only.

**National Express no longer serve Herefordshire.**

# Can Buses Help to Combat Climate Change?

**Committee member Professor Les Lumsdon writes:**

Transport is one of the main emitters of greenhouse gases in Britain, but lamentably there has been little or no reduction since 1990. This is in sharp contrast to other sectors which have performed far better. Herefordshire is worse than most counties with surface transport emissions accounting for 32% of the total. Clearly, there's an urgent need to address this if we are to keep global warming below 2 degrees. That's why it is worth asking whether the bus can play a greater role in helping to solve this seemingly intractable predicament?

Car travel is the main problem as it accounts for 56% of transport emissions although the recent increase in vans is also a cause for concern. In contrast, bus and train emissions amount to only 5% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Britain. Some commentators, especially those associated with the road lobby, argue that all will be good if we simply switch to electric cars as soon as possible, but this is only partly true. A number of experts in the field including our President, Professor John Whitelegg, sound a note of caution. If we are serious about reducing the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from vehicles then we will still need to reduce the amount of journeys we make by the car. The Tyndall Centre at Manchester University, for example, has calculated that car mileage will need to reduce by 58% although this could be less if other lifestyle changes reduce the need to travel. That's where the bus comes in.

In a recent report by Transport for Quality of Life on the impact of transport, car journeys between 5-25 miles are estimated to account for 43% of total transport emissions (based on Department for Transport data). Furthermore, most car trips are now made for leisure and shopping. This is where people could be encouraged to change mode of travel from the

car to bus (and train in the case of Colwall, Ledbury and Leominster). The RAC has just issued a report which indicates that car culture is stronger than ever because of Covid-19. Despite this, the report notes that 43% of respondents in their survey said they would use their cars less frequently if there was better public transport. That is a lower percentage than hitherto but even if 10-20% of car journeys and mileage were reduced it would establish a positive trend in the reduction in emissions.

In a recent IPSOS poll 66% of the British public indicated that they are taking climate change seriously. But in reality, to what extent would they be willing to change their transport habits? Unless the bus network is made attractive most people will not contemplate change. Convenience counts for a lot and thus it will be essential to shape a policy which looks at the quality of door-to-door journeys. That will require investment by parish, town and Herefordshire Councils to improve infrastructure such as bus shelters (with real time information) so that people can wait for a bus in the dry knowing that it is on its way. It will necessitate preferential treatment for buses on the roads leading into Hereford and the market towns such as at traffic lights, plus the use of other technical fixes to give the bus an advantage over general traffic. Above all else it will improve reliability. There also needs to be a review of timetables; a good start would be an hourly frequency on all principal rural routes from early morning to ten at night and later on Fridays and Saturdays as well as the re-introduction of Sunday buses. In Hereford, the frequencies have to be higher to attract users, preferably 15-30 minute schedules on all routes.

That's quite an ask! Herefordshire Council has until now systematically reduced the bus network as well as the frequency on many routes and there's been a wholesale removal of evening and most of Sunday buses. It has not been a

transparent policy, but rather a series of budgetary cuts which Rail & Bus for Herefordshire fought hard against, otherwise the damage would have been far more severe. At the same time bus operators have ramped up their fares on most routes to cover costs thus making services far less attractive to fare payers. That was certainly the position until the new authority came into power in 2019. Fortunately, we now have a council that is more pro-active in relation to public transport. It has moved beyond the rhetoric of announcing a Climate Emergency and is looking seriously at different ways to reduce CO2 emissions whilst acknowledging that transport will be the hardest sector to tackle. However, if an alternative, attractive public transport system is put in place we know from experience elsewhere that it can work. Take a look at Cornwall, Devon, Isle of Wight, Nottinghamshire and York for inspiration. These councils have been investing in their public transport for some time and it is working...people are getting back on board.

There's clearly a need for a policy re-think in Herefordshire and in terms of fares that cannot come quickly enough. A new county day/weekly ticket, preferably multimodal, would help for starters as well as a reduction in many of the short distance fares which people perceive as unfair. In the latest National Travel Survey 58% of respondents indicated that they would use the bus in the future if there was a standardised fare somewhere between £1-2. And there's a lot we can learn from really smart bus companies such as, Go Ahead, Trent Barton and Transdev in terms of a passenger orientated approach.

That is where we come in. We can do more to inform people so as to encourage a change in hearts and minds. In the words of the national Climate Change Committee: "Act Courageously-It's there for the taking..." Thus, while we are asking Herefordshire Council to step up to the mark, we also need to be there to support new interventions, initiatives like a railway station bus



hub that we'd be proud of, the re-introduction of routes and gaps in timetables, and in addition a massively improve service delivery. It is the only way we'll get people back on board, and achieve the zero-carbon target by 2030.

If you'd like to join in our bus project work then let our secretary know, you'll be welcome.

## **Bridge Street & the Old Bridge Hereford**

**Committee member Professor Les Lumsdon gives praise to Herefordshire Council**



Herefordshire Council introduced a number of measures as part of the Government's Safer Towns and Cities initiative in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This included the closure

of Bridge Street and the old Wye Bridge to traffic and giving over more space to pedestrians and cyclists. Despite some initial concerns by local businesses, the scheme clearly has achieved its objectives of making this part of town more relaxing and safer for people. The increased number of people now walking and cycling into town via this route is very noticeable.

From the bus user perspective, buses northbound into town are allowed access over the old Wye Bridge and that has been a win-win. When you alight it now feels safe crossing the road into King Street without cars speeding down the street. There has been another benefit. Buses picking up in Broad Street on their outbound journey are suffering reduced congestion, i.e. from cars parking illicitly at the junction with East Street or hovering mid-road waiting for a parking space. Broad Street seems to be enjoying a calmer atmosphere than hitherto. Bus users have gained from this initiative introduced by Herefordshire Council and we recommend that you write to the Portfolio Holder, John Harrington, to tell him about the benefits, so that we can in due course seek this intervention to be permanent. Contact John Harrington on [john.harrington@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:john.harrington@herefordshire.gov.uk)

## **Covid-19**

Covid-19 has certainly affected attitudes to public transport in a negative way yet in a recently televised Despatches report a virologist found no Covid or other infections on public transport sampled; that was in contrast to hospitality outlets where several were found. Nevertheless, Central Government continues to press the case against use of public transport.

It is estimated that passenger demand was around 30% of pre-Covid levels for trains and 60% for buses in October 2020.

According to the RAC car travel has risen to about 90% of its pre-Covid levels supporting the argument that people are going back to their cars for perceived safety reasons.

Rail & Bus for Herefordshire is keen to plan ahead for a time when there's a vaccine and Covid 19 is sufficiently restrained for people to travel more freely and sustainably.

## **Traveline Under Threat**

### **Professor Les Lumsdon reports:**

In a recent article in *Coach and Bus Weekly* it was reported that Traveline East Midlands and South East & Anglia websites have been closed with a notice saying that this was a result of the Bus Services Act 2017. Evidently, the government was concerned that there was insufficient timetable information available for intending passengers. It has taken a long time for the penny to drop. In the Act, there's a statement that bus operators will be required to provide timetable and real time information as well as fares in a format readily accessible to the public. This has to be completed by the end of this year. Another key reason for abandonment of traveline in those areas was that the websites and software supporting them were outdated; it would cost too much to upgrade or replace.

Fortunately, Traveline West Midlands is still going strong after 20 years of service, but it also has the same problems as the other traveline websites which begs the question as to how long it will last. It currently provides information for the whole of England which is important when you are travelling to another part of the country for business or leisure. The organisation *bustimes.org* provides a similar service across the entire country, but focuses on bus timetables only.

So, how would a visitor cope in Herefordshire? In fairness, all of our mainstream bus operators have timetable information on their websites. DRM has a useful map on their website and Stagecoach also provides specific route maps. However, there's no information about fares and how to access real time information. So, there's a fair way to go as yet.

Several progressive local authorities provide bus maps and timetables on their websites. Herefordshire Council provides a superb map on their website as well as updates about bus services. There used to be a paper copy of a map alongside the award-winning timetable booklet; they are both gone. But here's the dilemma...would a visitor be willing to spend the time going to each respective bus operator to see what is and isn't possible for outings around the county. Probably not. That is why there is a need for all local scheduled service timetables to be listed with pdf/printable files in one place on the council's website. It would help to certainly encourage sustainable travel in the county by visitors but would also be a boon to residents reliant on the bus network.



*T14 service between Brecon and Hereford*

## From the Archives



A Leyland National of the National Welsh bus company passes Wormelow on the 48 service from Hereford to Brecon in 1989. The company had been privatised in 1988 and survived until 1992 when it went into receivership. Its Eastern Division which included the Forest of Dean and Herefordshire was acquired by Stagecoach who renamed the company Stagecoach Red & White. (Red & White services with headquarters at Chepstow was the pre 1968 nationalisation company that operated in this area). Today the service has been renumbered 36 and is operated under contract to Herefordshire Council by Stagecoach in Wye & Dean, part of Stagecoach South West.

## From the Archives

Bromyard was late on the railway scene with the branch line to the junction with the Hereford-Worcester line at Bransford Road not being completed until 1877. The continuation to Leominster was until much later. The Leominster section closed in 1952 and the Bromyard branch in 1964. Today the line of

the railway is an access road to an industrial estate. The house and yard in the mid distance on the left of the photo is now the home of DRMBus and where the crane can be seen in the goods yard there is now a narrow gauge railway, the Bromyard & Linton Light Railway.



*A well known archive photograph of Bromyard station in Edwardian days.*

**Please contribute to your newsletter. Members can send articles, photographs old and new, current and past experiences of public transport in Herefordshire and the Borders or anything else of transport interest to the editor. (email: [ghal@btinternet.com](mailto:ghal@btinternet.com))**

**Articles, if possible should be sent in word format or in handwriting. Photographs and images should be sent as a Jpeg or otherwise the original can sent to the editor at 5 Biddulph Way, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2HP.**

## Stump Up for Trees

*Of all modes of transport, the train is perhaps the best aid to thought: the views have none of the potential monotony of those of a ship or plane, they move fast enough for us not to get exasperated but slowly enough to allow us to identify objects.*

That's how Alain de Botton describes it. He's right of course and that is exactly how it was the other day, day dreaming my way through the unfolding Herefordshire landscape towards the Black Mountains. Over the Monnow into Wales and the line soon curving its way poetically between the Skirrid and Sugar Loaf mountains down to Abergavenny. But there's more to the story. Be sure to sit on the right-hand side so that you can catch sight of the words 'Stump Up for Trees' etched out of the bracken clad slopes of Bryn Arw. There's a Welsh phrase to catch hold of too, *Daw eto ddail ar fryn*, meaning 'there will be leaves on the mountain again'.

This is the latest publicity move by a local community charity seeking to encourage the creation of woodlands across the Brecon Beacons with the laudable aim to mitigate climate change as well as improving biodiversity in the uplands. Take a look at their website for a more detailed explanation; it is packed with information about this vibrant project. Phew. A million trees on the Beacons, well there's food for thought.

Alain de Botton *The Art of Travel* Penguin (2003)  
Stump Up for Trees [www.stumpupfortrees.org](http://www.stumpupfortrees.org)



## **In your next RBfH Newsletter issue**

**Mike Hart, a member from Ledbury, starts a new series of Tales From the Embankment**

## **Your RBfH Contacts**

**Will Frecknall (Chairman): [will@clarach.wyenet.co.uk](mailto:will@clarach.wyenet.co.uk)**

**Andrew Pearson (Secretary): [pearsondore@yahoo.com](mailto:pearsondore@yahoo.com)**

**Peter Gwatkin (Treasurer): [pmgaccountancy@gm.com](mailto:pmgaccountancy@gm.com)**

**Gareth Calan Davies (Newsletter): [ghal@btinternet.com](mailto:ghal@btinternet.com)  
5, Biddulph Way, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2HP**

## **Join Rail & Bus for Herefordshire**

**Help us protect & develop Herefordshire's  
valuable bus and rail services**

**Memberships £8.00 per annum on 1st Feb.**

**Please provide your name, address, tel no. and  
email with a cheque for £8.00 made payable to  
Rail & Bus for Herefordshire and send to**

**The Treasurer (RBfH), 60 Broomy Hill,  
Hereford, HR4 0LQ. (email:  
[pmgaccountancy@gmail.com](mailto:pmgaccountancy@gmail.com))**

**Standing Order & Bank Transfer also accepted**