

# Rail & Bus for Herefordshire

## Autumn 2021 Newsletter



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## **Your RBfH Committee**

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Committee Members:

Les Lumsdon, Michael Sullivan, Philip Bauer,  
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## **From Your Chairman**

### **Notice of Annual General Meeting**

This year's AGM could not be held in the spring as usual due to Covid restrictions We are pleased to now give notice that Rail and Bus for Herefordshire's 2021 AGM will be held at the Quaker Meeting House 21 King Street Hereford on Tuesday 26 October at 2pm

Nominations to the Committee should be sent to the Secretary Andrew Pearson (pearsondore@yahoo.com) .

### **Proposed increase in Subscriptions**

We have managed to keep production of the Newsletter going during the pandemic thanks to the enthusiasm of the editor and support from members of the committee. A number of members expressed their gratitude for its receipt during the dark days of lockdown.

We examined the costs of producing a paper newsletter back in the spring and realised that the cost of printing and distributing four copies per year using any commercial printer exceeds the £8 subscription. Fortunately about three quarters of the membership receive their newsletters by email and we have sometimes been able to secure charitable printing rates.

I spoke with several of those members who receive printed newsletters. They all valued their paper copy and most were concerned that the cost of printing and distribution exceeded their subscription. Asked whether they

would be prepared to pay a higher subscription to receive the printed newsletter, nearly all said ‘yes’.

Committee also noted that there had been no increase in the subscription since before 2002! A 25% increase in the subscription over 20 years was felt to be reasonable and well below general inflation.

So, in accordance with clause 8 of the constitution, your committee recommends to the Membership the following increase in subscriptions:

**That from 1 February 2022 annual subscriptions are increased as follows:**

- **for those receiving newsletters digitally to £10 per annum**
- **for those receiving newsletters by post to £15 per annum**

## **From Your Editor**

Post-Covid and lockdown British public transport finds itself in a state of flux. The realisation that the industry will never be the same is now sinking home. Changes in travel patterns with working from home and the increase in internet shopping means public transport companies and managers have to reassess where their market is likely to be in the future.

Coupled with this is the long uphill struggle to attract passengers back to both buses and trains in a post-Covid situation. Bus companies are presented with an urgent need to reassess the costs of operation. Many smaller companies have already given up whilst large scale takeovers may loom on the horizon. The National Express Group has already made a £480 million bid for the Stagecoach Group.

The Government announced its strategy for buses in the white paper Bus Back Better. There are some bold initiatives in the strategy but a lack of commitment to stable and long term financial support for bus services

The railways have been brought back into closer government control with the franchise system being thrown out and replaced by a contract system, although the details are still far from clear.

Meanwhile the devolved governments of Scotland and Wales go their own way leading at times to strained relationships with Westminster. Devolutions

for the English regions is showing signs of faltering although there is a strong case for these regions to determine their future public transport requirements.

This edition of your newsletter contains a number of articles of direct relevance to all this dynamic change. I hope you enjoy it.

## In this Edition

- New station for Pontrilas. Optimistic news
- Fair Fares
- Is the Marches Line Being Forgotten
- Hapless Shapps
- The HS2 Vanity Project
- Update on the Ledbury Station Project
- Herefordshire Bus Service Improvement Plan
- Bus It - A Great Herefordshire Council Initiative
  - Bus Service Changes
- Update on the Hereford City Zipper Bus Project
  - Bus It to Bodenham Lake
  - From the Archives

*PS The archive photo on the cover of the Summer Newsletter was of the interior of Three Cocks Junction signal box on the Hereford-Brecon line where it met the Mid Wales railway from Newtown.*

*Where's the signal box on this newsletter's cover?*

**Support your bus and rail services**

**Support Rail & Bus for Herefordshire**

**Ask a friend to join us**

**To join Rail & Bus just send your name and contact details to the Secretary or Editor**

# New Station Optimism Grows in South Herefordshire

*RBfH member Matthew Engel gives a comprehensive and positive overview of this important rail development.*

Other than winning major international football tournaments, few outbreaks of English optimism have been quite as futile over the past half-century as the belief that a railway line or station might reopen.

It does happen now and again (and more than that in Scotland and Wales). But far more often the idea gets derailed, leaving behind the debris: overblown headlines, wasted feasibility studies and broken dreams.

Now South Herefordshire has gone into the optimism phase, with suggestions that the trains that have rattled nonstop along the 24 miles from Abergavenny to Hereford might now stop at Pontrilas, for the first time since 1958.

There was a brief flurry about this in the late 1990s but the then-franchise holder, Wales & Borders, had no interest. This re-run is different, far more organised, far more promising. This does not mean it will happen: the present prime minister is full of promises. Covid and the resulting budgetary cutbacks are already holding things up.

However, there are reasons to believe it has a chance. To understand this, we need to get rid of some misconceptions and misreporting. For a start, there is NO plan to re-open the old Pontrilas station: too cramped, the access too difficult. The proposed site is about half a mile north, opposite Pontrilas sawmills. This is the biggest industrial site for miles around so the loss of open countryside is minimised, but there is maximum potential for parking.

Far from being a desolate rustic halt, the new station has the potential to make a serious difference to the transport deficit over a wide area.

There is the parking itself. Before Covid curbed travel, Hereford, Abergavenny and indeed Newport were all suffering capacity crises. In the case of Abergavenny, the parking arrangements are actually dangerous, potentially fatal. For many journeys, this would offer a convenient alternative to people from Hay, Ross, Hereford's southern suburbs and even Monmouth.

But it would create new rail users too. For the residents of south-west Herefordshire it would be an obvious boon. The greatest beneficiaries would be the older teenagers who nearly all go to college in Hereford itself. This involves horrendous rush hour travel through the Belmont bottleneck and over the one and a quarter bridges into the city itself. There is anecdotal evidence that Golden Valley students are seriously disadvantaged by the appallingly long journeys involved. There is another, underused, way to cross the Wye – by rail – but none of them can now use it. It would also be a viable alternative for commuting, light shopping and evenings out.

Then there is tourism, something Herefordshire needs to encourage. The south-west corner – which was meant to become a national park 70 years ago and never did – is one of its prize assets. This way it can attract cyclists and walkers. For that reason, I sincerely hope the word Pontrilas is dropped. It has no resonance (outside military circles) and is usually mispronounced. Calling the station Golden Valley – or Golden Valley Parkway if we must – would inspire curiosity and thus visitors.

There is also the matter of timing. In many ways the stars could not be better aligned. The coalition now running Herefordshire council has scrapped the southern bypass and wants to use the money saved for green-tinged alternatives.

And the route itself is now under new management: Wales & Borders is long forgotten; Arriva has gone, unmourned. Transport for Wales is owned by the Welsh government – but its most important route is largely in England, and the politics dictates that it cannot hurl money at Welsh improvements and let the over-the-border bits go to hell. Since the station would be so close to the border, this has benefits on both sides.

The estimate is for a no-frills station costing £10m, where half the trains would stop. Nigel Harris of the Railway Consultancy, who drew up the proposal in conjunction with Professor Clive Stainton, says: “It is a relatively cheap project and scores highly on benefit-cost ratios.”

Will it happen? Well, rail usage has to bounce back from Covid. But the government has dropped its previous insistence that new stations have to be bought with vast new housing estates. There is a risk that the station would be too successful and overheat demand for new housing. That’s something the council would have to control.

Already the plan has the backing of the MP, Jesse Norman, the council cabinet member for transport John Harrington and the local councillor Peter Jinman. It meets all the criteria of Rail & Bus for Herefordshire's mission statement.

In a county with fewer railway stations than any other bar tiny Rutland, this is a project this organisation should be doing its utmost to support as well.

Matthew Engel

## Fares Fair

The Campaign for Better Transport recently made a very important point which is given below.

*'The effects of climate change are being felt around the world. Earlier this month, the UN chief warned of a "code red for humanity". And with the UK hosting the UN Climate Change Conference this year, it's even more important that our country reduce its carbon emissions.*

*So it makes no sense that people travelling by green public transport must pay increasing fares while fuel duty for drivers has been frozen for a decade and the Government is considering cutting air passenger duty.*

*Last week the Government deferred a decision on whether rail fares should increase. We think fares should be frozen for next year, followed by a full review: we need to rebalance pricing in favour of greener modes.'*

Clearly the imbalance in pricing is symptomatic of a lack of integrated transport policy in order to tackle climate change and seriously reduce carbon emissions from the transport sector. It could be that the whole situation is too difficult for the government to tackle.

However, a small shire county is showing the way. Herefordshire Council has recently introduced a scheme which makes bus travel free at weekend and together with this has introduced a series of new Sunday services.

If Herefordshire can do it, then the whole of England can do it. (see the article Bus It in this newsletter).

## **Is the Marches Line being Forgotten?**

A recent article in Rail Future Wales has sounded a few alarm bells this side of the border. The article in question hints at the Welsh Government seeking an alterative rail route connecting South and North Wales. The article reached RBfH via Steve Wright of Transport Focus West Midlands.

*'A rail route linking north, west and south Wales could be a step closer following the recent Senedd elections. Two disused lines would need to be reopened: Bangor-Caernarfon-Afon Wen, and Carmarthen-Aberystwyth. The original alignment would be followed, except in Aberystwyth, where it would entail excessive demolition of housing. Here, an alternative route via a tunnel under Pen-y-Banc would join the line in from Barmouth. Passing loops at or near Pencader and Tregaron would allow an hourly service.. '*

If the Welsh government is serious about major investment in the Welsh rail network then what does this mean for the Marches Line. Outside of the investment in the South Wales Metro, the transport and economics experts in Transport for Wales are looking to a reorientation of the rail business core. This means a progressive shift towards railways as a tourism asset. This is clearly the case where a high mileage of the network is rural or semirural

The diversion of the Cardiff-Holyhead service to a Welsh internal route whether is be through West Wales or investment in the Heart of Wales line as a prime high quality train service may yet look to be highly desirable.

But what happens to Cardiff-Manchester and local English traffic on the Marches Line. Clearly this train service is being viewed as something of an anomaly. A service which has most of its length in England, whose revenue is primarily English and whose cost of upkeep is primarily English. Yet it is in the hands of a devolved Welsh government.

The services are currently worked on an Agency Agreement between the Department for Transport and the Welsh Government. The big question is what happens to that agreement when the new rail structure comes into being.

At the present time the Marches Line is in no man's land, falling between two governments neither of which seem keen to invest in the route. The comment from Steve Wright is therefore more important than ever:

*'It makes it even more important that we engage with Transport for Wales to*

*try and get their buy-in to developments along the Marches line – however long-term this has to be.'*

## Hapless Shapps

*RBfH member Nick Jones considers the new Great British Railways logo.*

The microscopically tiny brain structure of Transport Minister Grant Shapps (joint author of the government's white paper Great British Railways) was perfectly demonstrated in late September by the DfT announcement that Network Rail's familiar 56-year-old red 'double arrow' logo was to be 'relaunched' in four shades of green as the new network's corporate logo (train travel is green-clean: geddit?). The news was greeted by graphic designer Gerry Barney, creator of the classic brand mark, as "a total mess" and he refused to sign a 'statement of acclamation', penned for him by media gurus at Shapps' Rail Delivery Group. The fee charged to the DfT for this crackpot idea is not recorded.

This Alice in Wonderland approach to what is probably the most significant reorganisation of the entire rail network in more than half a century makes no sense. Transport writer Christian Wolmar tends to agree. "The whole point of the double arrow logo was its brilliant simplicity. Adding different colours dilutes its powerful clarity and could confuse people about its meaning" Wolmar's latest paeon to rail travel, *Cathedrals of Steam*, is a fascinating examination of how, as a result of cut throat inter-company competitiveness, one capital city managed to accumulate 15 rail termini (Moscow has 9 and Paris only 7).

Nick Jones



## The HS2 Vanity Project

*Nick goes on to comment on HS2, taking as a benchmark an article in the Guardian newspaper of 30-07-2021)*

*'Depleted and unwanted: HS2 – Johnson's £100bn vanity project'; "HS2 boss Mark Thurston takes home £660,000pa; he requires the support of 15 colleagues all on £250,000pa; and at least 300 HS2 senior executives are on £100,000pa. Additionally, the HS2 project annually shells out £600-million to consultants. HS2 is still dithering about what Curzon Street Station should look like; not a kilometre of track has yet been laid; and the only tunnel has been excavated by Swampy!'*

Nick Jones

The nervousness now surrounding HS2 has spilt over with the announcement that the Government has deferred decisions on the design of the eastern leg of phase 2b of the scheme. This means that it is now highly unlikely that northern towns such as Leeds and Sheffield will be served. A huge area of northern England will be unlevelled. HS2 is likely to be truncated to just London-Birmingham-Manchester. It could well be in danger of becoming a second Great Central Railway, the last main line to be built in Britain and the first to be closed.

But then HS2 could always be turned into an electric motorway for lorries. Who knows the way that the Department for Transport thinks?

## Update on Ledbury Station Project

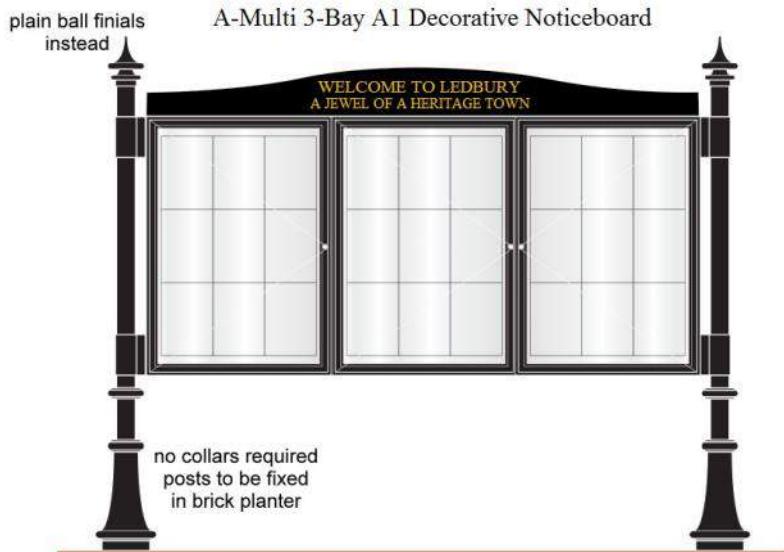
*Your editor is RBfH project manager for this project and gives an update.*

The project is now moving towards completion. All the artwork has been prepared, and the display cabinet has now been installed at the station.

The cabinet has three glazed and locked panels and will have plain ball finials. The base collars on the posts have been removed as the cabinet is to be positioned within an existing brick planter surrounded by plants. Panel 1 (left) in original calligraphy gives a brief description of each of Ledbury's main heritage buildings representing the Elizabethan, Georgian and Victorian eras. Panel 2 (middle) gives a map of the town in relation to the station and

the location of the heritage buildings listed in panel 1. The map is surrounded by original artwork of the buildings. Panel 3 (right) describes the coming of the railway which celebrates 160 years of serving Ledbury..

Quote 24754



Three-fold brochures are also being produced for distribution. These are:

1. *Visit a Jewel of a Heritage Town – Ledbury by West Midlands Railway*
2. *Walking on History – The Ledbury Town Trail*

The Town Trail is a traffic free route from the station to the town and follows the course of both the Hereford & Gloucester Canal and the later Ledbury-Gloucester branch railway line.

The project is aimed at strengthening the links between the railway and community, promoting the heritage of the town and encouraging would be visitors and locals alike to use the train service as a sustainable form of transport.

## **Bus Services Improvement Plan**

### ***RBfH Committee Member Les Lumsdon reports on progress***

Tim Edwards and Peter Hardy from Integrated Transport consultancy have been working with Herefordshire Council to put together a Bus Services Improvement Plan which we have referred to in recent newsletters. We submitted a detailed plan to the consultants and Andrew Pearson, Will Frecknall and Les Lumsdon had a useful meeting with Peter to discuss our proposals in more detail. Since then we have also been involved with a wider stakeholder group discussion and a public consultation exercise online to which we have responded accordingly. The responses from all three dimensions of consultation will form the evidence base to support any proposals that arise in the plan.

At the same time, discussions have taken place with bus operators; we have heard from some operators that there is a consensus to develop Enhanced Partnerships as envisaged in the Bus Back Better strategy. That is good news. Like passengers, bus companies are pressing Herefordshire Council to give buses priority in Hereford so that journey times in the town become more attractive to passengers in the short term not sometime in the future.

While we have due regard for the consultants the resulting Bus Services Improvement Plan will reflect the ambitions of the Cabinet members of the council and we are hoping that their aspirations are high. If the BUS IT campaign is anything to go by we could expect an ambitious plan for the size and population of our county. Here's hoping for a bold plan!

There will be a full report in the next newsletter.

## **BUS IT**

### ***RBfH Committee Member Les Lumsdon reports.***

This is one of the most progressive public transport campaigns ever witnessed in Herefordshire. That's why Rail & Bus for Herefordshire is getting right behind it. The focus of the campaign is to encourage people back to the bus by offering free travel to all fare payers throughout the entire county at weekends. According to Councillor John Harrington, the Portfolio

Holder who has masterminded the scheme as part of a Covid recovery package, BUS IT will be in operation for a year and he welcomes our support to make it successful.

## National Importance

The launch of the campaign has been mainly through social media and it was disappointing to see that local media gave it minimal attention for it is a campaign which clearly has national significance. Yes, Swansea trialled a similar scheme over the summer, but to our knowledge there has been no similar campaign in rural authority areas in the UK. This is a first.

Given its importance, Rail & Bus for Herefordshire hopes that Herefordshire Council will be monitoring the campaign. This should not only be in terms of numbers using weekend buses but also in changing attitudes among car users and lapsed bus users. Behavioural change is difficult to ascertain especially given the effect of the pandemic, but it is certainly worthwhile to research so as to inform future campaigns.

## Bus Champions

Rail & Bus for Herefordshire will be highlighting opportunities to travel with two leaflets currently in production, one encouraging car users to give the bus a try and the other to offer suggestions for leisure travel using the buses. There's more to come in future bulletins regarding these but we are keen for members to spread the word. Thus, we are looking for members who would be like to become a bus champion in Herefordshire. Each champion will focus on one of the weekend routes (where Sunday services have been reintroduced). The main tasks are to monitor your chosen route, and to engage in the promotion of the route from time to time. If you are interested please get in touch with Committee member Les Lumsdon who will provide guidance on the project: [leslumsdon@hotmail.com](mailto:leslumsdon@hotmail.com)

## Bus Service Updates

*Compiled by RBfH Secretary Andrew Pearson*

**23/8/21-15/10/21**

B4349 closed between Clehonger and Kingstone so buses are diverted as follows:

T14 Brecon – Hereford & 39 Peterchurch – Hereford via AA465 omitting

## Clehonger

39A Hay – Hereford direct from Madley to Clehonger omitting Kingstone  
449 Hereford – Madley route now Hereford-Madley-Kingstone-A465-  
Hereford

## 5/9/21

34 Ross - Monmouth transferred from Stagecoach West to Nick Maddy reduced timetable 40 Ross – Greytrees transferred from Stagecoach West to Nick Maddy increased timetable

40A Ross – Tudorville from Stagecoach West to Nick Maddy increased timetable

44 & 944 Ross – Kings Thorn from Stagecoach West to Nick Maddy  
74/74A Hereford – Newton Farm increased to 4 per hour of which 2 serve Hunderon

75 Cancelled. Hunderton served by 74A. Hampton Park served by extra Sargeants A service

77/77A Hereford – Bobblestock

77 cancelled 77A increased to half hourly

81/81A Hereford – College Green cancelled but College Green served by 77A

412 Hereford- Broad Oak-Wormelow renumbered 812 and Hereford-Broad Oak not served

413 Hereford – Kilpeck – Broad Oak afternoon journey operates from Allensmore if passengers on board

426 Hereford – Bodenham revised timetable and operated commercially

440 Pontrilas – Abbeydore last journey now 16.53

446 Hereford – Almeley new early morning journey to Almeley

## **As part of Herefordshire's Free Weekend Buses extra Sunday services were introduced on:**

Nick Maddy 34 Ross to Monmouth 4 journeys

Nick Maddy 40 Ross – Greystree 3 journeys

Stagecoach West 36 Monmouth – Hereford 3 journeys

Lugg Valley 401 Leominster – Barons Cross 4 journeys

DRMBus 420 Bromyard – Hereford 3 journeys

Lugg Valley 426 Bodenham – Hereford 4 journeys

Yeomans 454 Fownhope – Hereford 4 journeys

Sargeants 461 Kington – Hereford 3 journeys

Lugg Valley 492 Leominster – Hereford 4 journeys (pre pandemic operated

commercially)

Lugg Valley 496 Leominster – Pembridge circular 4 journeys

First 600 Ledbury Town Service 3 journeys First 675 Malvern – Ledbury 4 journeys

## 6/9/21

Scholars only buses ceased creating extra journeys on the following:

DRM 420 Bromyard – Hereford

DRM 476 Ledbury – Hereford

DRM 469 Bromyard – Bishops Frome – Hereford

Stagecoach South Wales T14 Brecon – Hereford (but pre-pandemic this extra bus was available to passengers to/from Brecon but now runs out of service)

First 675/6 Malvern – Ledbury Services now reopened to passengers

First 674 Bromyard – Ledbury

Lugg Valley 802 Leintwardine – Hereford

Yeomans 809 Hereford – Peterchurch

DRM Old Colwall - Ledbury

National Express 445 Hereford – Ross or Ledbury – London have restarted

## Zipper Project on Track

### **RBfH chairman Will Frecknall gives us a short update**

We are pleased to report that the Zipper project has cleared its next hurdle of being part of the final package approved by the Herefordshire's Stronger Towns Board. Its budget came under sustained pressure which was met with spirited resistance. The budget was reduced from £1.8M to £1.7M, which we are confident is still sufficient to deliver the scheme.

Following recent discussions with the County Council covering a number of matters on which they could make a positive contribution, a meeting between ourselves, the City Council and their consultant is scheduled for early October. We have ten months in which to develop the full Business Plan. Onwards and upwards.



## Bus It to Bodenham Lake

by Les Lumsdon



This is the first in a series of articles about some of Herefordshire's loveliest corners served by bus. BUS IT...free travel for passengers in Herefordshire at weekends and with NEW Sunday buses on several routes makes short outings from Hereford possible. Give the bus a try this autumn.

Thirty-five years ago Bodenham gravel pits ceased operation and nature slowly started to make a comeback. Recently, thanks to the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and New Leaf, there's been an amazing transformation in encouraging wildlife back to this part of the Lugg Valley. The 45-acre site is now a nature reserve, one which has a special appeal at this time of year, as it is an overwintering place for unusual migratory birds.

The lake is easy to access from the Bodenham War Memorial, the last stop on the 426-bus route from Hereford. There's an easy 7–10-minute walk to the reserve. Follow the narrow lane past the Memorial (check out the information on the Information Board) down to Bodenham church. In the churchyard turn right at first, then go left through the churchyard. Once over a small wooden bridge, go immediately right on a path which leads to the reserve. Some surfaces can be muddy during winter months and are not suitable for wheelchairs.

There are walks around the reserve and a bird hide from where you can observe wigeon, goosander and great crested grebe. In autumn it's possible to spot a Green or Common Sandpiper and, if you are lucky, a kingfisher darting across the water or a snipe feeding in the shallows. The habitat has been enhanced by shallower water edges, the planting of over 1600 reeds, and the formation of islands and nesting platforms, all of which have been funded by the Heritage Lottery fund and EU development funds topped up by supporters of the Wildlife Trust. These improvements have encouraged all manner of birdlife as well as otters and other wildlife.

There is another dimension to the nature reserve which will appeal to those who love woodpeckers (Green, Greater and Lesser Spotted) birds which also frequent this part of the reserve. The old orchard has been augmented by more recent planting of traditional local culinary and dessert apple varieties. At this time of year you might expect to see mistle thrushes, redwing and fieldfares feeding in and around the orchard as you walk through the leafy lines of these fine fruit bearing trees.

Allow time to wander back to the Memorial for the bus back!

### **Information:**

**Service 426** Lugg Valley Motors (Journey time 40 minutes)

Operates Daily Departs Hereford Shire Hall 1030, 1200

Returns Bodenham Memorial 1240, 1500 (Saturday and Sunday only),  
1710 (Mon-Fri only)

**Contact:** Yeomans Canyon Travel: [www.yeomanscoachholidays.com/](http://www.yeomanscoachholidays.com/)  
Bus-Timetables or phone 01432 356201

**Herefordshire Wildlife Trust:** [www.herefordshirewt.org](http://www.herefordshirewt.org) or phone  
01432 356872

**Englands Gate Inn:** a 20-minute walk along the lane; there's a bus stop near to the pub. Open all day at weekends. Phone 01568 797286 to check opening times.

## From the Archives

The editor continues his rummage through the transport archives

Discovering the archive photograph of the interior of Three Cocks Junction signal box prompted this article. Three Cocks or Aberllynfi in Welsh is a small hamlet just across the border in Powys. It was in 1864 that the station was opened when the Hereford, Hay and Brecon Railway and the Mid Wales railway arrived and created a junction.

The railways in this part of Powys stemmed from a convoluted arrangement. In effect the Hereford company went no further than Three Cocks. The section onward to Talyllyn was vested in the Mid Wales Railway. At Talyllyn a junction was made with the Brecon & Merthyr Railway and the final section from there into Brecon was vested in this company.

Three Cocks Station was a sizeable rural junction with four platforms. The lines into Three Cocks were single and worked by the single line token system. The train service was sparse, comprising 5 trains each way on the Mid Wales Railway and 4 trains each way on the Hereford line.



*Train from Hereford at Three Cocks junction*



*Peace and quiet at Three Cocks junction looking towards Brecon*

There would have been long periods of quiet at the station in between trains, except perhaps for the arrival of the daily goods train and the one long distance train from Treherbert to Aberystwyth. The station had a fully licensed refreshment room; very useful as connections between the two services could be difficult at times!

The goods yard handled a variety of freight traffic including livestock for which there were a number of cattle and sheep pens.

Passenger traffic on both lines was never large, especially after the Second World War and the rise of private car ownership and local omnibus services. The end came in 1962 prior to Dr Beeching's report on the Reshaping of British Railways.

### **From the Archives: Memories of Midland Red**

Midland Red pioneered quite a number of long distance express services. One such service was the X91 Hereford-Leicester.

The service was started in 1929. The Midland Red archive states: *Until the late 1960s, the Service X91 was operated by one crew from Hereford*

*depot and one from Leicester working the whole route, once in each direction. The journey time was 5½ hours each way, with a generous meal break of around 1½ hours at the terminus, making a 12½ hour day for the crews. Today this would be illegal under driving hours regulations, but in days-gone-by, it was quite common for staff to work double shifts so a 12½ hour day would not have been unusual. In around 1969 the workings were changed so crews would set out from Hereford and Leicester and swap buses at Stratford-upon-Avon, with vehicles working the whole route but the crews would return their home depot having worked only half the route. Later, in the mid-1970s, the workings were changed so that vehicles would return to their home depots and through passengers changed at Stratford-upon-Avon.*

The service ceased in the mid 1980s.



*This X91 journey unfortunately never got any further than Ledbury on its run to Leicesterr. As can be seen, the front offside wheel has collapsed and somewhat bemused and disgruntled passengers are assembled on the pavement awaiting a replacement bus.*