

# **Rail & Bus for Herefordshire Newsletter Summer 2017**



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**Hon. President: Professor John Whitelegg  
Newsletter Editor & Chairman: Gareth Calan Davies**

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# The Great Rail Franchise Debate

Apart from the weather, if there is one topic that is guaranteed to raise conversation and even heated debate it is Britain's railways. Ever since privatisation the subject has been tossed about between the different factions that claim either success or failure. The truth of the matter is that it is not privatisation in itself that has caused problems with the system, it is the way that privatisation is implemented and overseen by government and the Department for Transport (DfT).

The franchise system is a case in point. MPs on the Commons Transport Committee have warned that Britain's rail franchising model is '*no longer fit for purpose*'. That is a pretty strong comment. Christian Wolmar, arch critic of the system and writing in Railwatch, states ..

*'The future of franchising is in doubt following the departure of National Express, which once ran nine contracts, from the rail industry. This high profile departure has highlighted a number of problems for the franchising process, which is beset by a paucity of bidders and a lack of clarity about the precise purpose of the system. While British companies are leaving the industry, foreign based businesses are taking over. The entry of the Italian state-owned Trenitalia, which has taken over the c2c franchise from National Express, means that four European state railways are now involved in running UK railways'*.

Coming back to government the committee indicated there were 'serious deficiencies' in the way the Department for Transport awarded contracts, leading to higher fares and poor performance. An independent review was called for the committee chairman saying that '*Passenger satisfaction with the railways is falling. Potential benefits are being lost and the passenger is suffering through higher fares and continued underperformance*'.

Meanwhile the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) published an economic bulletin with the striking title of 'Get Rail Competition Back on Track' which reopens the case of what is termed 'Open Access'. The CPS bulletin states that '*A deep underlying problem for the UK's railways is the lack of on track competition after a franchise has been awarded. There are currently just two long distance open operators on the UK railways. The evidence suggest that these operators are helping to boost passenger satisfaction and lower fares while not hampering the franchisee's revenue streams*'.

(The CPS is the liberal, pro markets think tank, influential in shaping Conservative policy)

The Bulletin further identifies the UK's Competition & Marketing Authority's support for Open Access calling for there to be a significantly greater role for open access on inter city long distance routes. The CPS urges that the government should publicly support the principle of open access competition and should also introduce a review of the current 'not primarily abstractive test' to see whether changes are required to encourage and deliver more open access.

So, are we getting progress or confusion and where does it leave rail services in Herefordshire. Herefordshire railways come under three franchises, namely 1. the Wales & Borders franchise covering services on the Marches line operated by Arriva Trains Wales 2. the West Midlands franchise covering the Hereford-Birmingham service operated by London Midland Trains and 3. the Great Western franchise, covering the Hereford-Worcester-London service and operated by Great Western.

A new franchise for the Wales & Borders is due to be awarded in 2018 and is currently in the formulating stage with the Welsh Government who will take over the franchise entirely from the DfT under the devolution bill. There are currently four bidders, all of whom are owned by foreign companies. There is much dissatisfaction with the current train operator, both within Wales and in the Borders, especially in respect of overcrowding, the age of the trains and repeated cancellations throughout the network. This has recently been exacerbated by the decision to close Cardiff Central station for the duration of the European cup final at the Millennium Stadium which meant that the Marches Line was deprived of a train service for lengthy periods in the late afternoon and evening without any replacement service. This matter has been taken up by the Marches Rail Users Alliance (MRUA) and Rail & Bus for Herefordshire (RBfH) with both the Welsh Government and Arriva Trains Wales. Satisfactory answers are still awaited.

Information on the progress towards a franchise award is very patchy and perhaps indicative of the difficult task the Welsh Government and the franchise award organisation Transport For Wales are facing. Rail Wales state in a recent newsletter *'Given the lack of experience of Transport for Wales in evaluating rail franchise bids, there is a risk that insufficient time will be available for it to complete its work in time to award the franchise by*

*its stated target date of January 2018, in which case Arriva Trains Wales might need to be given a short term extension to its current franchise*'. This does not bode well for early much needed improvements to the Marches Line train service.

A decision on the new West Midlands franchise is imminent. There are only two bidders, London Midlands Trains whose parent company is mostly owned by French Railways and Abellio Rail which is a subsidiary of Netherlands Rail. It is reputed that both companies have made strong bids.

At a recent London Midland stakeholder meeting in Birmingham it was evident that they are going all out to retain the franchise and it must be admitted their reliability record has improved over the last two years although overcrowding on the Birmingham service remains a problem, especially with the opening of the new station at Bromsgrove. However, one is left with the impression that they are primarily an urban railway company with nearly all investment going into the West Midlands conurbation and the electric services to Northampton, Milton Keynes and London regional services such as that to Hereford way down the list. Abellio on the other hand have a good record with their other franchise Greater Anglia which is a mix of inter-urban, urban and regional rural routes.

Our third franchisee is Great Western Trains, the renewal date for which appears dependent on completion of electrification of the South Wales route to Cardiff which is scheduled for 2019. The biggest danger for Herefordshire in this franchise is that there will be a push to direct all London journeys via Newport, thus paving the way for all Cotswold Line Trains to be terminated at Worcester with a small number running through to Great Malvern only. A very close eye will need to be kept on this one.

## **Post Graduate Diploma in Railway Studies**

I have been asked to make members aware of educational opportunities at the University of York in collaboration with the National Railway Museum. Recruitment is open for the 2 year part time online Postgraduate diploma in Railway Studies run by the University of York Centre for Lifelong Learning. The wide ranging course enables students to explore what scholars have written about the social, economic, cultural, political and business history of the railways since 1825 to the 21st century. For more information please see

<https://www.ork.ac.uk/lifelonglearning/pg-dip-railways/>

## A Vision from the Minister for Railways

In a speech earlier this year and before the mayhem following the general election, Paul Maynard the Under Secretary for Railways at the Department for Transport expressed his vision for the future of rail. He stated *'I want to see passengers receiving exemplary customer service from the moment they decide to make a journey. I want to see a reliable, punctual, timely train service, where the passenger has a decent chance of getting a seat. My radical vision is one where the passengers always come first and are never just an inconvenient afterthought in the process of moving pieces of metal along other pieces of metal. Is this really Radical? Do you think that's what customers get already. I am concerned that, far too often and despite the best efforts of committed rail staff, it remains undeniable that they don't get it, day in and day out'*. (Extract taken from RailWatch)

Brave and commendable words then and even more so since the election and the huge challenges facing the government.

## Congratulations to Jesse Norman MP



### Jesse Norman MP

*Parliamentary Under Secretary of State*

**Constituency:** Hereford & South Herefordshire (since 2010)

**Appointed:** June 2017

**Former appointments:** PUSS at Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy; Chair, Culture Media & Sport Select Committee; member of Treasury Select Committee

#### **Policy responsibilities:**

- Strategic and local roads
- Road freight and safety
- **Buses**
- Cycling
- Light rail
- Devolution
- Environment and Technology
- Housing

# Herefordshire Council Bus Consultation

The results of the consultation and the stalwart efforts of RBfH volunteers handing out our leaflets on the proposed cuts to bus services took the Council by surprise. The response to the consultation was one of the biggest they had which served to emphasise the importance of buses in both the social and economic well being of this rural county. The result was a postponement of the cuts proposed for 2017. However, the sting is in the tail as it is still on record that the council will seek to progressively reduce the bus support budget to nil over three years.

What is equally as disturbing is that operators are beginning to prune their commercial services, albeit on a small scale at the moment. This is indicative of the dire straights that some operators are finding themselves in without support, and not necessarily financial support from the local authority.

The Buses Sub-group will continue its dialogue with and lobby Cabinet members of the council. We want to stress three points:

1. That the Council needs to be more upbeat and promote existing services as a value for money contribution to our economy and social life...the constant gloom about buses is damaging every day services
2. That the definition of secondary core services in the future needs to reinstate those which serve large settlements (see below)
3. That it needs to accept that Community Transport cannot make up for the loss of mainstream routes in some areas.

An interesting point, however, that Herefordshire council have gone out to tender on eight contracts due for renewal in September 2017. The contracts involved are those for the main Hereford-Kington service and services in eastern Herefordshire operated by Astons coaches and DRMBus. Further, the contracts for eastern Herefordshire are issued individually but also as a combined contract with the title of Ledbury Area Services. One presumes that the council are hoping such an area approach where contracts can be linked using the same bus will lead to discounted prices from operators. The results are still awaited so we will have to wait and see.

In the meantime we urge you to write to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Councillor Rone at [prone@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:prone@herefordshire.gov.uk), together with your local

councillors to seek assurance that the network of routes to our main rural settlements are maintained in the future. Places which have populations of approximately 700-1000 deserve a service. These are places such as Bosbury, Canon Pyon, Colwall, Cradley, Eardisland, Eardisley, Hoarwithy, Kingsland, Leintwardine, Pembridge, Peterchurch, Shobdon, Staunton-on-Wye, Tillington, and Wigmore. Their services all remain at risk!

## **On the Buses**

### **438 St Weonards to Abergavenny Market Day Bus**

RBfH has always welcomed initiatives by I&S Coaches and the 438 bus is no exception. It is an exceptionally scenic journey starting from St Weonards, across to Broad Oak and Garway then up the Monnow Valley to Grosmont and onwards via Cross Ash and Llanvetherine to Abergavenny. The views are sublime and owner-driver Ian Phillips pauses at certain points so that you can absorb in the breathe taking views across the Skirrid and Sugar Loaf, the high ground above Abergavenny.

Unfortunately, despite efforts by RBfH this commercial service is to stop at the end of August, 2017. Whilst there are six to eight loyal regulars demand has not picked up sufficiently for the service to continue. Full marks to Ian and his family for getting behind this venture but at the end of the day it has to cover its costs. There's one thing you can do, however, is to step on board during the coming weeks as you'll not find a more scenic route packed with border heritage in the Welsh Marches. The bus leaves St Weonards (turning to the church) at 0930 and returns from Abergavenny at 1315.

### **X11/15 Buses to change operators**

Powys county council has retendered these services and Celtic Travel of Llanidloes has won the services from Builth to Hereford on Wednesdays and Builth to Ludlow on Mondays. The incumbent operator is Roy Browns Coaches.

There has been a re-tendering of bus services in the Bromyard and Ledbury areas in recent weeks and this may well entail a change of operator in some cases and a minor tweak to timetables in other instances. The Hereford to Kington and Llandrindod Wells service has also been re-tendered. As yet, there are no details of the outcome of this process.


Herefordshire Council is currently working on a new timetable book which

will update and inform us of any changes to service from September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2017. As mentioned elsewhere, it is unlikely that there will be major changes this year following efficiency measures brought in by the council's public transport team but inevitably there will be some minor changes across the county so look out for the new edition of one of the best bus timetable books published in the UK sometime in late August.

## Back to the Old Days



ASSOCIATED WITH THE BRITISH ELECTRIC TRACTION CO. LTD. AND BRITISH RAILWAYS.



### BOSBURY

AGRICULTURAL and HORTICULTURAL

## SHOW

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 2nd, 1951**

**Special Traffic Arrangements**

Service	Inwards TO BOSBURY	Outwards FROM BOSBURY
417 BARTESTREE (Cross Roads) ..	9.9 a.m., 2.14, 3.19 p.m. ..	5.55 p.m., 8.35 p.m.
417 BRANSFORD (Fox) ..	8.19 a.m., 11.15 a.m. ..	4.13, 8.35 p.m.
417 CADLEY (Preston Cross) ..	8.38 a.m., 11.38, 12.59 p.m., 2.30, 3.40, 7.40 p.m. ..	12.23 p.m., 2.14, 3.16, 4.13, 7.25, 8.35 p.m.
417 DORNINGTON (Farm) ..	9.14 a.m., 2.19, 3.24 p.m. ..	5.55 p.m., 8.35 p.m.
417 HEREFORD (Bus Station) ..	8.55 a.m., 2.19, 3.5 p.m. ..	5.55 p.m., 8.35 p.m.
477, etc. QT. MALVERN (Belle Vue Ter.) ..	11.42 p.m. ..	6.30 p.m., 8.35 p.m.
**417 LEDBURY (Memorial) ..	9.45 a.m., 12.19, 2.0, 3.0, 3.56, 4.40, 6.13, 8.50, 8.16 p.m. ..	8.52 a.m., 11.52, 1.0, 2.44, 4.0, 5.59, 6.30, 8.0, 8.35 p.m.
417 LEIGH BINTON (Somers Arms) ..	8.26 a.m., 11.33 a.m. ..	4.13, 8.35 p.m.
417 LUGWARDINE (Church) ..	9.8 a.m., 2.11, 3.16 p.m. ..	5.55 p.m., 8.35 p.m.
417 STIFFORDS BRIDGE ..	8.35 a.m., 11.35 a.m. ..	4.13, 8.35 p.m.
417 STORRIDGE (Church) ..	8.31 a.m., 11.31 a.m. ..	4.13, 8.35 p.m.
417 TARRINGTON (Foley Arms) ..	9.20 a.m., 2.25, 3.20 p.m. ..	5.55 p.m., 8.35 p.m.
417 WORCESTER (Newport Street) ..	8.10 a.m., 11.0 a.m. ..	4.13, 8.35 p.m.

†—Change at Ledbury.

\*\* A frequent Service will be run between LEDBURY and BOSBURY in addition to the times given.

The Company will make every effort to maintain these Services, and will accept no liability for loss, damage, injury or delay sustained by any passenger by reason of unpunctuality or failure to maintain Services.

THE BIRMINGHAM & MIDLAND MOTOR OMNIBUS CO. LTD.

Chief Offices: BIRMGHAM, Birmingham. WORCESTER, Newport Street. (for enquiries re services) WORCESTER: Angel Place. HEREFORD: Bus Station. QT. MALVERN: Worcester Road MALVERN LINK: Richmond Road	Telephone: Bearwood 3030. " Worcester 4898. " Worcester 2598-7. " Hereford 2428. " Malvern 443. " Malvern 981.
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M/201/7/51. (DS). D. M. SINCLAIR, General Manager.

*The friendly "Midland Red"*

FREE ENTERPRISE AT YOUR SERVICE

This advert was spotted framed on the wall of the Bell Inn at Bosbury. It harks back to those halcyon days when bus travel was the main way of getting around Herefordshire and visiting the various agricultural shows.

The 'friendly' as Midland Red was nicknamed had an extensive network of rural services throughout Herefordshire. The poster proudly proclaims at the bottom *'Free Enterprise at your service'*.

Perhaps Firstbus who acquired Midland Red West should take note.

RBfH is an active member of the Hereford Sustainable Transport Group (HSTG) campaigning for better sustainable public transport for Hereford and the County including a possible light tram route and an electric bus network for the City. More news in our next issue.



## Refreshment Boost on the Marches Line



*Heather Aston, the proprietor, with the Mayor of Leominster at the centre of the opening ceremony of Cuplings Coffee Bar on Leominster Station.*

The Marches Line is alive and well and going places with the opening of the new coffee bar at Leominster Station. With a delightful pun in the name of *Cuplings*, this new much needed facility was ceremoniously opened on Wednesday 17 May by the Mayor of Leominster, Councillor Roger Pendleton with Samantha Edgerton, the Line Manager representing Arriva Trains Wales, Councillor Clive Thomas representing the Leominster Rail Users Group and most importantly Heather Aston the proprietors.

The well stocked coffee bar is located in the original station building which dates back to the mid eighteenth century when the Shrewsbury & Hereford Railway Company reached Leominster from the north. The line was unusual in that it became jointly owned and managed by the London & North Western Railway and the Great Western Railway, not always a happy partnership.

Leominster was once described as the *Grand Junction of the Marches* with branch lines to Bromyard and Worcester in the east and Kington & Presteign in the west. It originally had five platforms, an extensive goods yard and a small engine shed. Today it is served by the trains of Arriva Trains Wales on the route between South Wales and the north.

Leominster Council have always shown an interest in the station. In 1984

with the help of the Development Commission part of the station was converted to a workshop for Leominster District Council. Today the volunteers of the Leominster Rail Users Group keep the station looking good with colourful flower beds in conjunction with Arriva Trains Wales under their station adoption scheme. Arriva trains are keen to encourage Community Rail Partnerships and the opening of Cuplings is a big step in the right direction in developing the Marches Line as an attractive and important railway to use.

RBfH wish Heather all success in her venture and look forward to working with the Train Operating Company in the development of the Marches line in conjunction with the communities it serves.

## **A TRAIL IN THE MAKING**

### **The Heart of Wales Line long-distance walking trail**

Written by Rachel Francis

The story of ‘A Trail in the Making’ begins in late 2015. It begins in a pub.

Paul Salveson, widely recognized for his pioneering work in Community Rail, had agreed with Arriva Trains Wales a pot of money to fund a feasibility study for a walking trail linked to the Heart of Wales Line (HoWL). The HoWL line is under used and yet it is a vital public transport link for rural Wales. It is also much loved, passing through stunning scenery and great walking country. A rail-based walking trail eh? A group of us trooped off to the pub to find out more.

At this meeting was Les Lumsdon. Les lives locally to the Heart of Wales Line and as you probably know is Bus Coordinator for RBfH. He is a widely travelled professor, specialising in the relationship between transport and tourism – in particular sustainable transport. Les has a particular love of walking and has written books detailing a number of major walks in Britain. Les Lumsdon and colleague Alison Caffyn, a consultant specialising in tourism development, were asked to carry out the feasibility study for a walking trail that would weave between stations along the HWL line.

Les said: *‘You can’t just plan a 140-mile long-distance walking route in the comfort of your office - you have to go out there and walk it. You have to get*

*out in the weather, meet the farmers, and work with what you find. If there is no route across a stream, the question is – should we find a different route or build a new bridge? If a path you thought existed has been diverted, you go back to the drawing board. We have based the route on existing rights of way but we also wanted to ensure there are links to those stations that are just off the main route. So that has been another challenge - there are 30 stations between Craven Arms and Llanelli. We have been fortunate to find support from experienced walkers along the route – they have been instrumental in helping design the trail.”*

In 2016, the feasibility study was completed, presenting us with a viable trail and a plan. The trail begins in the old railway town of Craven Arms. It passes through remote upland, woodland, and the salt marshes of the Loughor Valley, en route to the Millennium Coastal Park in Llanelli. It is suitable for people looking for a long distance challenge, but equally for those who wish to walk the trail in sections, using the train to access day or weekend walks and using local shops, cafes, pubs and overnight accommodation along the way.

In January 2017, with a super-duper trail steering group firmly established, we launched a crowd funding appeal. This got us on local TV and radio for the first time, giving interviews in Welsh and English and enjoying some really good coverage in the local press. We have raised £5,000 from crowd funding online and especially via the Heart of Wales Line Travellers Association. We have also received support from Arriva, Network Rail Wales, Railway Employees & Public Transport Association (REPTA), and Councils/Right of Way teams in Shropshire, Powys, Carmarthenshire and Swansea City and County.

On Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> July we launch the Northernmost section of the trail with the unfurling of a banner and lots of cake followed by a guided walk led by Rail Ramblers. Very exciting. We are expecting a big crowd. More info Rachel Francis [rachelzzyx@gmail.com](mailto:rachelzzyx@gmail.com)

There is still along way to go before we complete the whole length of the route, it's an ambitious idea to pull off, but each step of the way we gather support - so we're *'keepin on, keepin on'*.

To sponsor the Trail, send a cheque marked TRAIL made out to Heart of Wales Line Travellers' Association, to PO BOX 778, Swansea SA4 5BL. Please include name and contact details.

Trail in the making also provides an exciting vision of what can be done with marketing the Marches Link by linking up with walks from the stations at Ludlow, Leominster and Church Stretton. There is probably a wealth of information on town and country walks already contained in these towns which can be galvanized into an attractive leaflet. A second leaflet could cover the stations at Ludlow and Colwall on the Worcester Line. Is there anybody out there who will volunteer to research such a project further?

## **‘When We Cut Rural Bus Routes We Cut our Vital Culture and Tourism’**



So reads an article in the arts section of The Times in December last year. Correspondent Richard Morrison puts forward the view that bus services are vital to tourism, a vital economy in rural areas. Herefordshire in no exception where the picturesque landscape, historic and attractive villages may in the future no longer be enjoyed over the hedgerows from the windows of a bus. The onslaught on our country bus services continues. At the time of the article it is estimated that some 2,000 routes had been withdrawn in the

previous three years. But Mr. Morrison also goes on to say that marketed properly our rural buses could become a tourist attraction in their own right. A last vestige of a disappearing Britain that we once loved.

An article in The Guardian by John Harris argues that the bus remains the most democratic form of transport and we ignore the crisis in our bus services at our peril. Reports by the Institute for Public Policy Research pick up the same threads stating that Funding Cuts and rising fares have hit local bus services hard. The Government should use the Buses Bill of 2017 to help those individuals and communities that rely on buses in rural areas in rural areas. It argues that the Government should enable local authorities in small towns and rural areas to combine forces in order to franchise commercial bus services and pool budgets.

There are already signs that what is left of the commercial bus service network in rural areas is creaking and if the operators themselves decide to abandon services, the local authority has not the means to provide financial support through the tendering and contract system. The government in the Buses Bill prefers the concept of quality partnerships between operators and local authorities and there are already guidelines for such an approach. The problem is however that wholesale cuts by local authorities in the past five years have seriously damaged the trust between operators and themselves. It is this trust and cooperation that needs to be rebuilt if a total loss of local bus services in rural areas is to be avoided.

The government can help in other ways; firstly by recognizing that some form of special support is urgently needed by the rural shire counties. The city regions have received considerable amounts of government money, mostly in the form of capital grants for new vehicles but it must be recognized that the country bus is a totally different animal. Urban operators can weather the storm by reducing frequencies routes without dramatically affecting passengers. Reduce the service frequency on a rural route and the buses disappear. It is to be hoped that Herefordshire Council will stick by their word to lobby MPs and parliament for special treatment for rural areas before another rural facility is added to the list of post offices, village shops and public houses that have closed. Surely our leaders realise that buses are important to the social and economic fabric of rural as well as urban areas.

**The message is loud and clear. Rural public transport services, bus and train are in a state of threat and uncertainty for the future. Make your voice known. Use them and question your councillors & MPs**

## Rail Freight - The Future?



### Rail Freight Companies without any Freight

The last Train Crew Depot at Hereford has just closed. This is in the aftermath of the dramatic announcement by Deutsch Bahn Cargo UK Ltd of a cut back in staff due to a serious dip in UK freight traffic by rail. We all now and again echo the feeling that more freight should be put on rail to relieve our creaking road network. However, there are other underlying causes to the decline of rail freight. Earlier this year the Minister for Transport cut the Mode Shift Revenue Support Grant to rail freight companies by £4.2 million to be followed next year by a further cut of £15.2 million. At the same time the DfT has launched consultation on a policy for increasing the length and payload of large articulated lorries. Joined up thinking seems to have disappeared from the DfT portfolio.

The decline of freight movement on the Marches Line is readily detectable. The only traffic to be moved out of Herefordshire by rail is the crushed stone from the gravel pits at Moreton on Lugg via a siding off the main line. A number of these long trains leave Moreton every week for various destinations around the country. Invariably the road haulage industry will see the government's action as another stepping stone to putting more freight on the roads. The transfer of the traffic from Moreton on Lugg to road haulage

would have a dramatic effect on the roads in Herefordshire. You only have to stand back against the wall on the main street through Eardisley to witness the convoys of articulated stone lorries, empty and full playing havoc with this old black and white village. Eardisley is not up to such a pounding and neither are any of the already sub standard roads throughout Herefordshire.

## **Despondent Rail Passengers call for Better Services in Wales**

Thus reads the headlines in a recent survey and report by Transport Focus. But what about the Borders. We are part of the same franchise and suffer the same mediocre and at times appalling service. Has transport Focus hit a niggling raw nerve in the English shires served by Arriva Trains Wales. To echo recent comments by passengers at Hereford and Leominster. *'If we are not careful the Welsh will look after themselves in this new franchise. The Welsh government is suspiciously quiet on priorities and where responsibilities lie with the new franchise'*.

**The Deutsch-Bahn (ATW parent company) response to new rolling stock for the Wales & Borders franchise.**



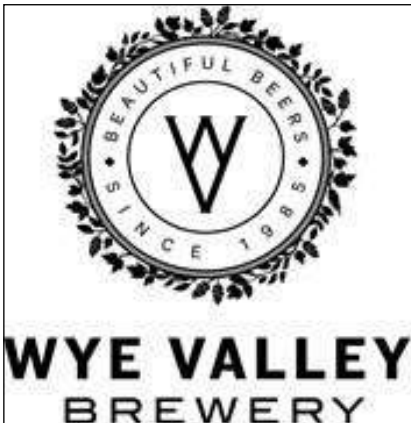
**Members are reminded that the Marches Line is continually plagued by weekend engineering works. Please make sure you enquire before you travel. The plague has now spread to the Birmingham line.**

# Website Development

The Rail & Bus for Herefordshire new website is up and running and looking good thanks to Lakewood, our web developers. Now a few of us will have to try and learn how to insert and edit.

The site can be accessed by typing in [rbfh.org.uk](http://rbfh.org.uk)  
Any mistakes in the set up text the editor must take responsibility for.

This valuable move in raising the profile of RBfH and attracting young members with an interest in transport has been made possible by generous donations via Vernon and Peter Amor from Wye Valley Brewery; via Phil Evans, MD of Pre Metro Operations Ltd; and Cheryl Davies, owner of GHAL Productions of Ledbury together with a number of members who have paid more than the £8.00 subscription to our group. All this means that the website has been financed without recourse to dipping into our funds which steadily grow as RBfH gets better known. **If you have not paid your subscription then please do so we can continue to develop**



**A Huge Thanks to Everyone**



## Contribute to your Newsletter

Articles, news, photographs etc. with a railway and/or bus content are always welcome for the RBfH Newsletter. Articles up to a maximum of 400 words plus illustrations are suggested as a guideline. Articles and other items can be submitted to your chairman either in hard copy via the post or electronically via the chairman's address or email shown in the RBfH Committee list.

## Changes at your Committee

As announced at the AGM both Rachel and Naomi have stepped down as Treasurer and Membership Secretary. Naomi however has stayed on the committee and thanks to you for that. We have a new Treasurer, Mr Peter Gwatkin and a new committee member in Will Frecknall, a civil engineer with a keen interest in both trains and buses. The membership role has been combined with that of newsletter editor which your chairman is handling with assistance from some new members. If there are any other members out there who feel they would like to help then please let a member of the committee know. One casualty has been lack of time to organise open meetings for the Spring. A volunteer to manage this role would be most welcome.

### **The RBfH Committee**

**Chairman:** Gareth Calan Davies 01531 633594:  
ghal@btinternet.com

**Vice Chair:** Sue Warren      **Treasurer** Peter Gwatkin

**Membership Secretary and Newsletter:** Gareth Calan Davies

**Buses Sub Group:** Les Lumsdon: leslumsdon@hotmail.com

#### **Committee Members:**

Michael Sullivan; Philip Baeur; John Thorne;  
Naomi Bell; Will Frecknall; Andrew Pearson

RBfH email: railfh@gmail.com

RBfH website: rbfh.org.uk

# A Thoughtful Letter on Air Pollution

Catharine Sadler, one of our members brings up the important matter of air pollution in a letter to the Hereford Times. She states:

*Dear Sir*

*Hereford Council must be congratulated on halting its bus service cuts and taking note of its consultations strong support for maintaining rural communities lifeline public transport routes (Funds for rural Bus routes Protected, Hereford Times, 6th April)*

*The council's decision coincides with a report from Greenpeace earlier this month revealing that more than 2,000 schools and over 1,000 nurseries and playgroups across England are sited within 150 metres of a road emitting illegal levels of nitrous dioxide (one of which they claim is sited in central Hereford).*

*Public health experts have repeatedly pointed out that exposure to diesel traffic fumes in large cities such as London and Birmingham affect the long term health of those with chronic cardiac and lung disease, can increase asthma incidence and stunt the long term development of small children by 10%. However, Greenpeace's new revelation that children's health in smaller cities such as Hereford may also be affected is even more concerning.*

*It could be argued that buses emit as much pollution as cars but it should be born in mind that a fully occupied double decker bus could prevent at least 70 polluting car journeys on traffic clogged roads.*

*With these worrying new facts in mind, let's hope that our council presses ahead with its plans to make Hereford a public transport, cycling and walker friendly city in the future, so we can all stay healthy*

*Sincerely  
Catherine Sadler*

(Catherine Sadler is a freelance writer on health issues)

Public transport has a huge part to play in reducing air pollution and improving the built environment especially in urban areas. Rail & Bus for Herefordshire is a working member of the Hereford sustainable Transport Group whose blueprint Council's vision and Local Transport Plan aims and policies. The blueprint will appear on the RBfH website in due course and at the present we are working on schemes to introduce electric buses for which there are government grants together with the longer term vision of a kinetic energy light tram route between the Enterprise Zone, the central area redevelopment zone with its urban village and University campus sites. This is an exciting vision which would also serve well the South Wye housing areas. Further information on these projects will be included in the Autumn Newsletter so watch this space.

## ***Join Rail & Bus for Herefordshire and help protect and secure the development of our rail and bus services***

Herefordshire stations handle in excess of 1.5 million passengers per annum and the number is growing. Herefordshire buses account for in excess of 36,000 passenger journeys per week.

**Herefordshire rail and bus services are important.**

- ◆ ***Help in the development and future of rail and bus services in Herefordshire***
- ◆ ***Help get improvements at your local station***
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Membership is £8.00 for a year payable on 1st February. For those joining after October membership is free until following February.

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You can also pay by Standing Order or a Bank Transfer. For details contact the chairman Gareth Calan Davies at the above address or 01531 633594: email [ghal@btinternet.com](mailto:ghal@btinternet.com) or the treasurer Peter Gwatkin at 60 Broomy Hill, Hereford, HR40LQ: email: [pmgaccountancy@gmail.com](mailto:pmgaccountancy@gmail.com)

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