

# Town & Railway

Ledbury  
Herefordshire



Ledbury Market House & Station

# RBfH

Rail & Bus for Herefordshire



**Rail and Bus for Herefordshire in partnership with West Midlands Railway launch a new project for Ledbury Railway Station under the banner of:**





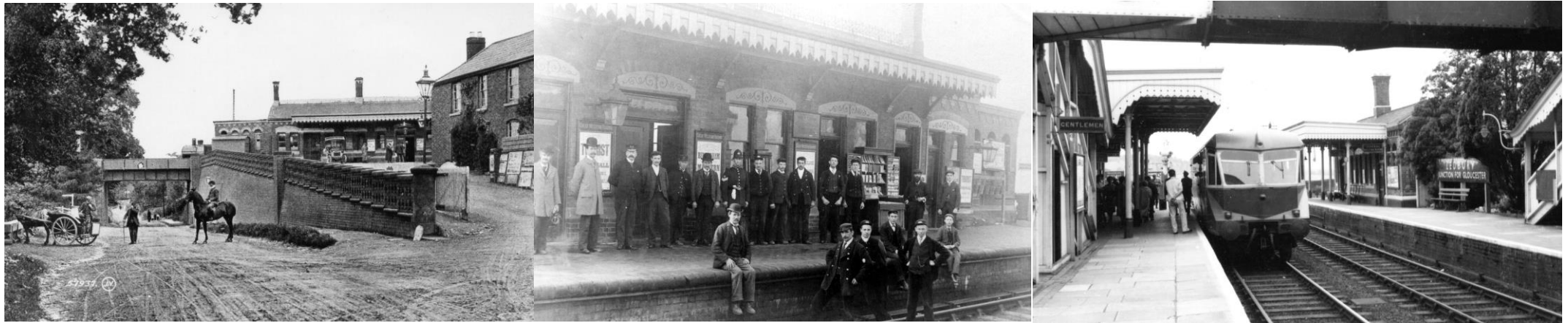
# Ledbury Town

Ledbury is an historic medieval market town on the West Midlands Railway network. It owes its origins to the church and the establishment of St Katherine's Hospital for travellers by the Bishop of Hereford c.1231 at a crossing of medieval pack-horse routes. The hospital remains today as well as its Master's House from which the establishment and small farm was supervised. Around the cross roads grew the medieval town which is now a jewel of heritage buildings from Elizabethan, Georgian and Victorian times.



# The Railway

The railway arrived in 1861 after considerable engineering works boring tunnels through the Malvern Hills and spanning the valley of the Leadon at Ledbury by a magnificent viaduct which still carries the trains today. The station at Ledbury was a fine building which also had a licensed refreshment room. There was a large goods yard and a small locomotive shed. In 1885 a branch line through the town to Newent and Gloucester was built with a superb skew bridge over the Hereford Road. The line closed in the 1950s and today it is a town trail that will take you from the station to the town centre.







Observer newspaper 1 October 1989

## Town Grows - Railway Declines

By the 1960s Ledbury was a growing town but the railway was in decline. The reshaping of British Railways (the Beeching Report) saw the closure of many stations and lines. Ledbury was lucky to retain its trains but the station was reduced to an unstaffed halt and the splendid buildings were demolished. The station and trains grew remote from the town as cars and buses became the main form of transport.

In the late 1980s a transport geographer living in the town negotiated with British Rail to open a small wooden ticket and information office at the station and operate as an agency. This was eventually agreed and it became one of the forerunners of community rail linking the community and its station. The enterprise still functions today.

## Rediscovering the Railway

The project of the late 1980s was but a beginning. Rail usage began to increase. Between 1998 and 2018 the numbers increased by over 100% from 101,387 to 216,606 passengers per annum (source: Government annual station usage statistics).

In 2021 Ledbury is set to further build on the previous success with a new project at the station. The project, funded through a grant from the West Midlands Trains Community Fund, with additional support from Ledbury Town Council and Ledbury Civic Trust, will enable a new glazed display cabinet to be positioned at the station containing an art map of the town and its heritage buildings together with a history of the town and its railway in original calligraphic script.

Local community artists will be producing the art and calligraphic work and the project will be managed for Rail & Bus for Herefordshire by local transport geographer Gareth Calan Davies.

This is an exciting community project designed to bring station, community and town even further together whilst promoting Ledbury as a jewel of a heritage town on the West Midlands Rail network. It will help encourage visitors to the town and strengthen the community whilst at the same time supporting and encouraging use of the train service.

## Find out More and Keep in Touch

Regular news items about the project will be produced including more info about the history of the town and railway together with introductions to the artists involved in the project.

To keep in touch contact Gareth Calan Davies, project manager for RBfH on  
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[www.rbfh.org.uk](http://www.rbfh.org.uk)

To find out more about this and other community rail projects throughout the West Midlands contact Fay Easton  
Stakeholder & Community Manager at West Midlands Railway on  
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[www.wmr.uk/about-us/your-community-your-fund](http://www.wmr.uk/about-us/your-community-your-fund)