



May 25, 2021 09:15 BST

West Midlands Railway passengers invited to discover their artistic sides with Ledbury Poetry Festival

Rail passengers in Herefordshire and Worcestershire are being invited to discover their artistic sides while taking the train thanks to a new poetry project.

The “Poetry on Platforms” scheme will allow customers travelling through stations between Hereford and Birmingham to uncover a treasure trove of poetry and railway history.

Passengers will be able to use their mobile phones to scan QR codes at stations along the route, creating a 'Poetry Trail'. The scheme has been launched thanks to a partnership between rail operator West Midlands Railway and organisers of the renowned Ledbury Poetry Festival, supported by the local community.

Fay Easton, head of community and stakeholder for West Midlands Railway, said:

"As a local rail operator being right at the heart of the community is so important to us, which is why we are delighted to support this fantastic project with Ledbury Poetry Festival.

"With more people beginning to return to the railway, I am sure this project will provide a great deal of enjoyment to our passengers as they travel through this beautiful part of our network."

The project has been developed as part of West Midlands Railway's "Your Community, Your Fund" scheme, financed by the Department for Transport. Under the scheme, West Midlands Railway and sister company London Northwestern Railway will invest in dozens of community projects across the network over the coming months.

Phillippa Slinger, manager of Ledbury Poetry Festival, said:

"We have long wanted to highlight the important role the railway has played to the Festival over the years.

"The legacy of the railway is little known and we are keen that more people are made aware of how the line has shaped and determined much of the area's cultural landscape.

"We always encourage our poets, performers and audience members to travel by train when visiting us and we hope this project will further encourage sustainable travel methods."

The project has been supported by the Friends of Dymock Poets as well as other local and nationally-renowned poets. One poem sees poet John Hegley share his memories of visiting Ledbury Poetry Festival and eating custard

creams at Great Malvern station while thinking of his father.

Ledbury Poetry Festival takes place between July 2-11. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the event, which features poets from across the world. See www.poetry-festival.co.uk for more.

About West Midlands Trains

For further information on this release, call our press office on 03300 955150 or email press.office@wmtrains.co.uk

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- **London Northwestern Railway** services operate between Liverpool and Birmingham, and on the West Coast Main Line to and from London Euston.
- **West Midlands Railway** services operate to destinations across the West Midlands via Birmingham New Street and Birmingham Snow Hill.

For more information on these services visit westmidlandsrailway.co.uk or londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk

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