



## PRESS RELEASE

# VALE OF RHEIDOL RAILWAY TO ACQUIRE BRECON MOUNTAIN RAILWAY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**The Vale of Rheidol Railway (VoR) is pleased to announce it is in negotiation for the acquisition of the Brecon Mountain Railway (BMR). This merger represents an historic milestone for both railways and safeguards the future of the BMR for future generations to enjoy.**

The Vale of Rheidol Railway, has a rich history dating back to 1902. Known for its breath-taking journeys from the coast at Aberystwyth to Devil's Bridge in the Cambrian Mountains it has been continuously operating as a tourist railway for 120 years carrying visitors from across the globe. It has a unique history as the last steam railway to be operated by British Rail.

By contrast, the Brecon Mountain Railway is a much newer railway, built by Tony Hills and his business partner Peter Rampton as a narrow gauge railway using the track bed of the former Brecon and Merthyr Railway. The line climbs through the Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons) National Park with picturesque views of the Taf Fechan reservoir. The locomotives and rolling stock give a flavour of American Narrow gauge railways.

The BMR and VoR have a history of collaboration, with BMR successfully acquiring the Rheidol line in 1988 when it was put up for sale by British Rail (BR). Both lines operated under unified management until 1996, at which point a decision was made to establish them as distinct entities, with Mr. Hills overseeing the BMR and Mr. Rampton taking charge of the VoR.

In the intervening years both railways have invested significantly in enhancing their offerings, with BMR extending services to Torpantau and the VoR developing new workshops, restoring stations and launching new visitor facilities. Regrettably, Mr. Hills passed away in 2015 and Mr. Rampton in 2019.

This new merger between VoR and BMR will bring a range of benefits to both railways and their visitors:

- Securing the legacy of both Peter Rampton and Tony Hills
- Investment in enhanced visitor experiences at both railways
- Economical synergies: The merger will allow for shared resources, increased operational efficiency, and cost savings

- Job opportunities: With the expansion of operations, there will be new job openings and career prospects.

Vale of Rheidol Managing Director Llŷr ap Iolo said. *“this proposed acquisition seems the natural progression for the Vale of Rheidol to carry on the legacy of both Tony Hills and Peter Rampton. Having worked with them for over 30 years, it will be a privilege for us to continue Tony’s work with the American two foot gauge theme of the BMR.*

Brecon Mountain Railway Managing Director Matthew Hills said.” *Bringing the two railways back together will not only guarantee the future of BMR but also the development of the railway. I and my fellow director believe that this is the best way to secure the future of the railway and my fathers legacy “*

The Vale of Rheidol Railway and the Brecon Mountain Railway will continue to operate as separate entities, each with its unique charm and character. The VoR is expected to take over BMR operations in Spring 2024.

For more information, please visit the official websites of the Vale of Rheidol Railway ([www.rheidolrailway.co.uk](http://www.rheidolrailway.co.uk)) and the Brecon Mountain Railway ([www.bmr.wales](http://www.bmr.wales)).

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