

This isn't going to be a rant about the quality of my daily bus journey although there might be a little bit of complaining - I wouldn't want to disappoint you. Our community council has been gathering bus breakdown feedback over recent months. I'm not sure how comprehensive their survey is as a quick straw poll of my bus buddies revealed a distinct lack of awareness that they were even collecting information and only one person who had completed their form. One woman regularly complains directly to Stagecoach (she has a manager on speed dial) and gets free tickets for her trouble.

If one was to believe what one reads in the papers, then Stagecoach have taken at least some of their complaints on board and they have announced major investment in new vehicles. Of course the cynics amongst us might suspect that this is just a well-worded press release about investment they were going to make anyway (for operational and economic reasons) dressed up to look like they care about their customers.

To be honest, I don't suffer much from bus breakdowns. When I am going to work, there is always someone passing who obliges me with a lift and on the way home I just wait patiently until the next one turns up an hour later. I tend to be fatalistic rather than angry. I'm glad I'm not a bus driver though, as they take some abuse. I suppose it's easier to shout at them than at Ann Gloag in her castle.

To drive to work would take me around 30 minutes, but the bus journey, with all its detours and stops, takes 1 ¼ hours. I leave home an hour earlier than I would if I drove in. But I suspect with a car I would be delayed leaving work ('just finishing this off') without a bus timetable to force me out the door.

Travelling by bus allows me to relax and I make the most of that time. I spend the first 20 minutes of the journey in company with a comedian who entertains me with his terrible jokes. Once he departs the bus I apply my face cream and make-up, hand cream and perfume. I then eat my breakfast, drink my coffee and read my book.

I have my earphones permanently stuck in my ears, often listening to the morning's news but sometimes with no sound which means no conversation with random strangers. I have to say that this tactic is rarely necessary in the morning, as (mostly) everyone else seems as unwilling to converse as I do.

On the way home, I read the daily paper and/or my book and snooze for the second half of the journey. I just hope that my snoring and dribbling does not offend the other passengers too much. Somehow I always wake up just as the bus is rolling towards my stop. My subconscious must know the twists and turns of the road and I come to at just the right time.

All of which explains why I will not be signing up for the proposed new car-share scheme in our town. I fear that car-sharing means half an hour of polite conversation at both ends of the day or the embarrassment of falling asleep while someone is telling me about their little darling's latest success. I would hate to let someone down when I oversleep (it's bad enough telling the boss). If there really was something that I had to stay and finish at work, I would have to know far enough in advance to inform my sharer and these things usually arise five minutes before you intend to leave. I couldn't decide at the last minute to go for a drink with work colleagues or head off an hour early to make the most of a rare sunny day.

The occasional lift shared with friends is lovely. But my independence and time alone is precious. Public transport gives me that luxury.