

Shrewsbury
Aberystwyth
Rail
Passengers'
Association



Newsletter
No. 62
January 2014



97302 on a Network Rail test train in the snow at Newtown on March 22nd 2013. Photograph: Gareth Marston.

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This is the quarterly newsletter of the Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Rail Passenger Association. Contributions are welcomed from members and non-members about the mid Wales rail scene. Views expressed in it are those of contributors and not necessarily representative of the Association and its Officers as a whole. Information provided is published in good faith, but the Association cannot accept responsibility for any loss or damage arising therefrom. The Editor reserves the right to abridge or amend copy.

Want to Join SARPA?

The membership fee is currently (for membership up to 31 December 2014) £8.00 per annum for individuals and for organisations. Please make any cheques payable to SARPA. Donations are of course welcome.

- SARPA will lobby for better rail services.
- Act as a watchdog to safeguard the lines future.
- Meet in public once a month.
- All members will receive our quarterly Newsletter free of charge.
- Members with access to e-mail can be included in our electronic network if they so desire.

The majority of our expenditure goes towards the cost of publishing and distributing our newsletters. We occasionally pay for room hire. Any surplus is held as an emergency fund for the future. None of the officers gains financially in any way from SARPA.

Please send cheques, payable to SARPA, to:

SARPA Membership Secretary: [23 High Street, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7JP](#). Make sure to include full name, address and telephone number and also e-mail address if you wish to become part of our electronic network.

Chairman's Message

We are truly impressed with the results of the recent survey carried out by the Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Line Liaison Committee (SALLC) with regard to the projected service enhancements on the Cambrian Main Line. There were over 6000 respondents and the projected increase in usage which would result from having more trains is generally in line with what we at SARPA would expect from experience elsewhere, though we would stress that this figure would knock any "normal" government predictions to pieces!

It was well before my time but I am told the story of what is now referred to as the "hourly Service" began many years ago in 1997, under the aegis of a previous organisation. This was the Cambrian Rail Users' Group (CRUG) which eventually morphed into SARPA in 1999. In the wake of the line speed enhancements carried out by British Rail in the early 1990s, several members got together and schemed out a skeleton timetable for some extra services in the Upper Severn Valley. They figured out that it would be perfectly possible to run an hourly service between Shrewsbury and Newtown without any extra fixed infrastructure being required. Trains would cross at Welshpool and the idea was that a single Class 153 would suffice for rolling stock.

The idea was put to Central Trains, the then operator, who liked the idea. All the same, they maintained they hadn't any stock to operate it, though the service was costed at around £400k. Apparently it was then, in the autumn of 1999, that the Development Board for Rural Wales became involved, along with Lembit Opik and the concept was increased to become a full hourly service for the whole line between Shrewsbury and Aberystwyth. The downside was a consequent increase in cost, with extra infrastructure being required, and the service could no longer be operated with a solitary Class 153!

The result has been that successive funding providers have somewhat taken fright. I have rather lost count of the number of times various delegations from SARPA have been to see the respective Ministers, firstly at Westminster and latterly in Cardiff. Each time we have been given the same tale. Essentially this is along the lines that the "hourly Service" is an aspiration but at the present time there is no money to fund it. Indeed, the service was promised to start in 2011 but was postponed to 2015.

Now, looking at the Welsh Government website we find that the service “might be included when the new franchise is granted in 2018”.

Heigh Ho! It might pay those good people in Cardiff to take a look at the present franchise agreement from 2003 where the Cambrian Hourly Service is actually included already! Nevertheless, the actual Franchise Agreement lists a number of service enhancement options including those for the Cambrian, but there is no obligation to introduce them during the life of the franchise. It's not just here where they haven't been implemented. An obligation actually to introduce the service after 2018 would therefore be a somewhat belated start.....

We rather feel that if those at the Development Board had listened to us, instead of making a bid for a full hourly service, an enhanced train service might have been achieved over 10 years ago. After all, what we had proposed was an affordable way to test the water rather than asking for the moon. In truth, this would follow an established practice here on the Cambrian for improvements to the service. 30 years ago there were no Sunday trains at all in wintertime. To evaluate demand, British Rail put on a bus which ran from Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth in the evening. Similarly, the present 05.14 from Aberystwyth only ran on Mondays and Saturdays at that time. In the early 1990s efforts were made to improve things and the service ran every weekday but originating from Newtown.

The lesson to be learned here is one of working together, rather than one organisation taking over an idea in the hope that they will cloak themselves in glory. Ahem!

It is clear that there is a demand for an improved timetable here. SARPA's position has always been one of enhancing the service at times of day where there are significant shortfalls. The full-scale hourly service is something we support but which is not necessarily the path to an improved timetable. The true strength of the survey undertaken by SALLC is that it outlines clearly the heavy demand for more trains. The large number of responses should leave the Welsh Government in no doubt as to the veracity of this. We must all work together to prevent them from wriggling out of this commitment again.

Whilst on this theme I would like to extend my most heartfelt thanks to all SARPA members who have assisted in making my job as Chair that much easier and more pleasant. In particular, Mr Harvey, Mr Morris, “Dusty Cat” Mr Redfern, Mr Denis Bates, Cllr Williams, Mr Goodhew and “our Man in Borth” Many thanks!

Wishing you all a prosperous 2014.

Angus Eickhoff
Moel y Garth,
Welshpool
December 2013

News in Brief

Rural Railways Concessionary Scheme

The Welsh Transport Minister, Edwina Hart, has announced that the rural railways concessionary scheme is being continued, to enable passengers in Gwynedd, Powys, Carmarthenshire, Flintshire and Wrexham with bus passes to have free train travel. However, it is not being made available for passengers from Ceredigion.

The scheme was started in 2007, providing travel on the Heart of Wales, Cambrian Coast, Conway Valley and Wrexham to Bidston lines. It did not include the Cambrian main line.
[*Cambrian News*, 17th October 2013.]

Possible reopening to Caernarfon?

The possibility of re-opening the Menai Bridge to Caernarfon line has been put forward in draft plans by the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways. The proposal is for a standard gauge line, ending at a new station in Caernarfon. The Welsh Highland would be extended through the Maes Tunnel to the new station.

The project has been costed at under £40 million. It has the backing of Dwyfor Meirionnydd Assembly Member Lord Dafydd Elis Thomas. The aspiration to reopen the line has been included in the North Wales regional transport plan. Arriva Trains Wales included a similar proposal in its bid for the Welsh franchise in 2003.

[From the *Railway Herald*, Issue 382, 23rd October 2013]

Chester to Wrexham redoubling

The Welsh Transport Minister, Edwina Hart, has confirmed that the £44 million project to double the single line between Chester and Wrexham will go ahead. The work is to be delivered by Spring 2015. Together with line speed improvements, it will reduce N-S journey times by up to 16 minutes.

It has also been confirmed that there will be extensions, to March 2014, to the concessionary rail schemes on the Conway Valley Line, the Welsh section of the Wrexham to Bidston line, the Cambrian Coast and Heart of Wales lines.

Resignalling between Shrewsbury and Crewe

The Shrewsbury to Crewe modular signalling scheme has now been commissioned, with control of the line being undertaken by the Regional Operating Control Centre in Cardiff. The signalling is bi-directional; five level crossings have been converted to manually controlled barriers with obstacle detection.

[From the *Railway Herald*, Issue 386, 20th November 2013]

Gwili Railway extension to Carmarthen

The Gwili Railway will soon be opening its southern extension to a new station on the outskirts of Carmarthen. In April next, there will be two days of charters, which will recreate typical trains of the line in BR days: Dinmore Manor hauling short trains of maroon liveried stock. Details of these are available at www.donbishop.co.uk

[From the *Railway Herald*, Issue 386, 20th November 2013]

Pont Briwet

BUSES will replace trains on this bridge near Penrhyndeudraeth on the Coast Line to Pwllheli, until a structure over the Afon Dwyryd is completed in 2015, Network Rail(NR) has confirmed. Detailed examinations have established piling work in the river bed for the new Pont Dwyryd crossing is significantly affecting the structural capability of the wooden viaduct it is replacing making it impractical to run trains during the remainder of the construction works.

We hear that Arriva Trains may stand to pocket £10k per day for loss of service compensation. NR will also be paying for the replacement buses. From information we have received, we understand the final cost could be over £5m. If this is correct, we would bet that Deutsche Bahn and the bus companies think that Christmas has come around twice this year!

Mark Langman, NR route managing director for Wales said: "We fully understand the inconvenience this will cause and we apologise for this. However, the safe operation of the railway is our absolute priority."

"Following the examinations, we found the only option to complete the new bridge was to keep the railway line closed until the new structure is in place. We will work closely with Gwynedd Council and its contractor so the new bridge can be completed as soon as possible so that rail services can resume".

The line has been closed since early November after monitoring equipment detected movement to Pont Briwet viaduct during construction works for the replacement bridge. The bridge was scheduled to remain open whilst the new bridge was constructed immediately alongside it. Youngsters use the train service to go to school and the closure of the bridge means an eight mile detour through Maentwrog.

Parents and other commuters, already angry the bridge would be closed over Christmas, are furious the bridge will closed for more than 18 months. One said: "There was every likelihood of this

happening from the moment the piledrivers started work. Network Rail should have foreseen this in their planning for this project. Iâ€™m disgusted they put the news out just before Christmas."

Cllr, Gareth Thomas, who represents Penrhyndeudraeth on Gwynedd Council said:

"Residents and business owners are aware of the on-going safety issues in relation to the bridge, and closing the bridge for such a long period of time due to the holiday period, causes grave difficulties in the locality."

The original Pont Briwet crossing is a wooden viaduct built in the 1860s. The new bridge will be a modern structure capable of carrying heavier trains at a faster speed, as well as a new road crossing. Until the new bridge is opened, Arriva Trains Wales will be running an amended timetable. All (northbound) services from Machynlleth will now terminate at Harlech. Buses will take people on to stations towards Penrhyndeudraeth, Porthmadog, Criccieth and Pwllheli. However, currently the line is closed completely from Dovey Junction, after the storm damage in early January.

Passengers are advised to check with National Rail Enquiries for detailed, up to date information.

Welshpool

The condition of the footbridge remains of grave concern with warning signs now put up telling passengers of "uneven surfaces" following the Powys CC repairs. One regular commuter reports that whenever it has rained standing water gathers and he always ends up getting his trouser leg wet as the springy surface bounces up the water.

Bus/rail integration? SARPA were told that buses didn't stop at the station because Edinburgh Woollen mills objected to it. A simple 5 minute chat with the Manageress established that the company would welcome the town bus service: it was 50-seater rail replacement coaches blocking the entrance waiting for lengthy periods that they did not like. Powys CC who tender the town bus service were informed immediately some months ago, but no one has heard anything since....

Carno

The Station Action group have had a meeting with the new Welsh Government Transport Minister Edwina Hart, where by all accounts an official admitted that the previous cost benefit analysis claiming that thousands of people would not travel to Aberystwyth because the train stopped at Carno was a load of old codswallop, which somehow we knew already.

Wrexham

At long last the funding for re doubling the single track line between Chester and Wrexham has been announced by Welsh Government, or has it? It transpires that only Saltney Junction to Rosset will be done leaving a 4 mile stretch of single track between Rosset and Wrexham North. Whether this will help better connections from the Cambrian to Wrexham/Chester/Liverpool remains to be seen, with the Welsh Government seemingly obsessed by the need to provide an hourly service between Holyhead and Cardiff as its rationale. Figures from the Office of Rail Regulator reveal that the current 9 trains day between Holyhead and Cardiff only generate c. 300,000 journeys per annum. In contrast the Cambrian which still awaits its long promised hourly service sees 1,600,000 journeys per annum.

Shrewsbury

In to be expected fashion there is no sign of the station refurbishment going ahead. Network Rail have offered Virgin Trains a token once a day path for reinstated London trains on Sundays to Fridays, and none on Saturday. Virgin still want to run via Oxley curve Stafford and the Trent Valley.

Cardiff

At a recent Passenger Focus event a presentation by latest ATW MD Ian Bullock claimed that Arriva had invested £30 million above its franchise commitments, although no breakdown of costs, schemes and dates was provided. This allegedly averages £3 million a year. An examination of ATW's Profit and Loss accounts in the last 5 years reveals an average pre-tax profit of c£18 million a year, after tax the profit equated to 6% of turnover twice the "low level of 3%" claimed by ATOC as an industry average. The franchise has received in excess a £ One Billion in public subsidy since 2003.

Aberystwyth

The Welsh Government has announced again the station refurbishment - maybe if they keep announcing it people will believe it has happened?

Machynlleth

We understand that TraCC has not yet obtained the match funding required for the Access for all footbridge.

National Assembly For Wales

Enterprise and Business Committee, The Future of the Wales and Borders Rail Franchise December 2013 Report says:

"Most of the written evidence we received was critical of the current franchise agreement. Criticisms included the lack of demand forecasting and provision for passenger growth and investment by the operator, failure to reflect Welsh Government policies and priorities, limitations in the performance management regime, inadequate rolling stock, poor core services standards, inadequate provision to support community rail, and the cost and complexity of fares".

Full details can be found at <http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/documents/s22565/Report%20-%20December%202013.pdf>

Membership 2014

Membership fees are now due for 2014. Please send a cheque, payable to SARPA, to:

SARPA Membership Secretary: [23 High Street, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7JP.](#)
Make sure to include full name, address and telephone number and also e-mail address if you wish to become part of our electronic network.

The Future of the Wales and Borders Rail Franchise

Submission by SARPA (Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association).

Whether the current franchise meets passenger needs and what lessons should be learnt from it;

1.1 A misplaced assumption of no growth at the start of the present franchise has not proved at all helpful. There was no compulsion on the operator themselves to develop the business which has meant that incremental improvements in passenger numbers have required additional levels of funding from government. There must be a clear plan to grow the business and in future the operator must be required to demonstrate an investment programme to achieve this.

1.2 The present industry structure has meant that the railway is unable to respond quickly to changing needs, even where it is abundantly clear that the provision of an enhanced passenger service would generate substantial growth in traffic. We have observed that the Welsh Public Transport User's Committee (PTUC) at one of their meetings commented unfavourably on what was referred to as the "glacial pace of change" within the rail industry.

1.3 Meanwhile, the problem of fragmentation remains and which is the primary driver of the high fare/high subsidy railway created by the 1993 Railways Act. At 2012 prices British Rail in its last year needed £6.00 of income per passenger journey made; by 2012 this had risen to £8.00 of income per passenger journey in the restructured industry, with a network and rolling stock fleet fundamentally the same size as in BR days but carrying double the number of passengers and generating 240% more revenue. If privatisation had delivered on its promises unit costs should have come down rather than gone up. British Rail was a vertically integrated organisation and the evidence base points towards this structure being more efficient. The McNulty report published in 2010 concluded that railways in mainland Europe were on average 30% more efficient than in mainland Britain. The Westminster Government for ideological reasons chose to ignore that these railways were vertically integrated.

1.4. We make comment on service frequency and draw the attention of the committee to a report by the Westminster Parliamentary Transport Committee published in 2005. In conclusion No 12 they stated "those responsible for rural railways should aspire for a reliable hourly service as a minimum" (House of Commons Transport Committee "Rural Railways" 5th Report of session 2004-05

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200405/cmselect/cmtran/169/169.pdf>)

2) How passengers should be involved in the franchise development and delivery;

2.1 The current franchise was planned in a vacuum with a democratic deficit. Passenger groups like SARPA commented at the time that the new franchise needed to accommodate growth but a "no growth" model was foisted on the people of Wales. This was done by the then Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) and co-signed by Welsh Government in 2003. This arrangement was proved wrong almost overnight and we feel rail user organisations like SARPA, which represent passengers should have far greater input. We have a track record of being proved right.

How communities and local government / Regional Transport Consortia should be involved. Could they be involved in specifying the franchise or perhaps even in delivering services?

3.1 The Mid Wales Transport Consortia – TrACC could do better things if given the powers and budget, though in its present guise it has difficulty living up to expectations. Decision making has to be decentralised and open to the public, too many mistakes have been made behind closed doors in the past and this must not continue.

3.2 The rolling programme of electrification in the UK suggests that there may be a case for Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) business unit centred on the Cambrian and operationally separate from the rest of the franchise in the future – SARPA would welcome exploring potentially decentralised delivery structures involving Local Government / Local Communities / Local Staff

3.3 Nevertheless, the operator must be encouraged to take the lead in the provision of extra services beyond the Passenger Service Requirement (PSR) where these may prove profitable.

4) The management model to be adopted, including the Welsh Government's proposal for a not-for-dividend franchise;

4.1 The not-for-dividend proposal is an interesting development and is worth further investigation. Overall, TOC profits account for 3% of franchise costs and 1.5% of industry costs on average throughout the UK which is equivalent to 12p per passenger journey. Nevertheless, the amount of money this represents is actually quite substantial. In our case here in Wales, the current franchise operator made a profit of £8.6m in 2012 which goes to benefit the parent owner, Deutsche Bahn. This money could otherwise be used to improve capital infrastructure here in Wales and its transference to improve the financial position of a foreign state rail operator is clearly unacceptable.

4.2 The Deutsche Bahn business model itself may be worth further investigation as an alternative. The organisation has been extremely successful in spreading its operations throughout the World, including taking over the Welsh franchise operator, Arriva Trains Wales (ATW). It now operates in 130 countries. If successful this may offer considerable scope for development, though there may be constitutional questions to be resolved first. This may be a matter for the Silk Commission.

4.3 Passengers want solutions that work. A return to the natural structure of the railway – vertically integrated is required as the other themes discussed will be easier to achieve if the railway is efficient.

4.4 The current structure of the rail industry sees more interference and micro managing from government than British Rail ever had to contend with. For instance Officials in the Department for Transport have needlessly procured the world's most expensive train – the "Super Express Train" to be built by Hitachi and which will be forced into use in Wales. They have also specified the number of carriages on commuter routes at franchise changeovers, leading to gross overcrowding. Civil Servants are not up to the job of running railways and really, this should be left to railway professionals.

4.5 SARPA's experience of Welsh Government Officials is one of people who have often demonstrated a poor grasp of the subject matter and fail to answer the questions asked. The recent Welsh Government funded refurbishment of ATW's Class 158 fleet saw officials insisting that the original and inadequate plans had to be adhered to even after we had gone directly to ATW and convinced them to make alterations to the better. Thankfully the trains now have a passenger specified interior as opposed to a civil service one. The relationship with the Welsh Government has to be that of one that is arms length and free from day to day interference in operational matters.

4.6 A vertically integrated railway which is free from Civil Service and Political interference is required with long term agreed investment plans that have been drawn up with local communities, passengers and local government.

5) How the franchise specification should improve the passenger experience, including issues such as franchise length, targets / incentives and the core service standards which should be included;

5.1 Specification should not just be a dumb list of numbers of trains per day. Passengers and the wider economy in Mid Wales have been failed by the current franchise not including any specifications for improved connections, commuter trains into regional centres or catering for additional seasonal traffic.

5.2 Once in situ a mechanism must be available to allow for changed circumstances and flexibility as opposed to 15 years of stagnation in a changed world. Genuine sanctions must be in place to penalise poor performance – ATW escaped fairly scot-free for 5 years of sub standard punctuality on the Cambrian between 2003 and 2008, though we commend the improvements to timekeeping on this section which have taken place since.

6) The routes, particularly cross-border routes, which should be included;

6.1 In general, the routes of the existing franchise should be included. Cross border flows are of serious importance to Wales and these should be developed. In particular, the opportunity to improve links between Mid-Wales and Manchester/North West England should not be missed. The link between Aberystwyth/Pwllheli and Birmingham is of vital importance as it gives easy access to a vital hub on the UK rail network.

6.2 The sectors from Aberystwyth to Birmingham and from Carmarthen to Manchester are likely to remain diesel operated for the foreseeable future. The new programme of electrification should not become a barrier to the maintenance of through services on east-west routes.

6.3 These east-west links to centres of economic activity are particularly important in the absence of proper links from the Welsh interior to the capital in Cardiff. The Welsh government has not been to the fore in planning new railways within Wales, with the exception of the area south of Merthyr. Since the days of Beeching, it has been difficult to persuade politicians as to the high economic value of rail links. It is not 10 years since the present chairman of SARPA sat opposite a transport minister in Westminster who expounded that he thought "Beeching was right" Clearly there is still some work to do in the way of displacing such attitudes.

6.4 In the north, the line from Wrexham Central to Bidston may be better placed to become part of Merseyrail in the event of its electrification. Indeed, by applying the same principle in the northern part of the Merseyrail system, good connections to the North West from intermediate stations to Bidston could be achieved by electrifying the section from Ormskirk to Preston.

7 The rolling stock needed for the new franchise. What factors need to be considered and how this should be procured? Will new rolling stock be required?

7.1 Civil Servants should not be allowed to procure new rolling stock. As an example, the procurement of the Super Express Train has been a protracted farce. A rolling stock strategy is needed which aligns with electrification plans and potential cascades of rolling stock from other parts of the UK. The franchise is already short of rolling stock having seen growth without additional vehicles., Extra carriages are needed for all areas. Today. The rail industry expects a 3.3% annual growth rate over the next 15 years. Cascaded refurbished Electric Multiple Units (EMUs) will still deliver a step change in service provision on Valley Lines and for local services along the South Wales main line, new EMUs should not be a priority here in the short term.

7.2 Nearly half the Wales & Borders fleet will be around a third of a century old when the franchise ends and most of it will be replaced by cascaded units. However another quarter will be 25 years old and none of these can go on forever. A fleet of new purpose built rural DMUs is probably the best option for a number of reasons.

7.3 There is nationwide shortage of stock with no guarantee that any cascades will be available as the areas they come from will have uses for them. New build units are easier and cheaper to fit with ETCS signalling equipment than trying to find space on units not designed to accommodate it. The remaining DMU pockets following continued electrification can have a proper allocation of stock with aim of eliminating all BR built DMUs by 2023.

7.4 Rolling stock should be purchased directly and owned which is cheaper than leasing. Whether the trains should be owned by the Welsh Government and leased to the operator or owned outright by the franchise holder, will need to be the subject of consultation. At present leasing costs are too high and where ex-BR units are concerned, large sums are being paid to lease old trains.

8) Whether additional lines, enhancements to existing lines, new stations or other infrastructure are needed;

8.1 The Welsh rail network was decimated by the "Beeching Cuts" of the 1960s, with a fairly comprehensive internal network being removed almost entirely. Indeed, a map of proposed routes for

1984, published in 1965 showed no railways at all West of Shrewsbury, though astonishingly, what has since become known as the “Heart of Wales” line was to be retained.

8.2 It is time now to reconsider those closures. Whilst the Welsh government is in an invidious position owing to the cost involved, it should not shrink from the task. Internal communications are particularly bad within Wales – indeed, it is difficult to think of another modern European nation with such poor connectivity.

8.3 It is clear that the railway now has a greater part to play with regard to improved public transport. The decimation of the Welsh rail network throughout the 1960s is now a serious block to economic regeneration and sustainability. The lack of effective public transport restricts access to jobs, healthcare and education. Indeed, one flourishing company in Ceredigion has indicated to us they are considering relocation to the Bristol area because of poor connectivity.

8.5 An enlarged rail system for Wales would bring benefits to business. The train is a productive method of travel as with modern electronic communications, people may continue to work whilst they are travelling. This is not possible with a car. Moreover, car ownership is becoming prohibitively expensive for some sections of society, especially the young. We point out that even the UK government has acknowledged that car use has declined by 4% overall since 2007 and that driving licence holding amongst young men has fallen by 13% since 1997.

8.6 We have commented at 6.3 above with regard to the difficulty of persuading politicians to adopt rail as a preferred method of transport. Rail offers better value for money over long distances in a predominantly rural nation such as Wales. To achieve similar journey times by road as a modern railway requires the building of a dual carriageway. We note that some commentators have suggested that the £800m total spend on the A465 upgrade would rebuild the line between Aberystwyth and Carmarthen or return the railway to Brecon.

8.7 We would like to see the following stations on the Cambrian mainline reopen- Bow St, Carno, Abermule and Hanwood.

The SARPA Committee. 12th September 2013 <http://www.sarpa.info>

Club 55. The styles compared

ScotRail

- Only £19 Return
- Over 55, proof of age required. Outward travel 13 Jan to 31 March.
- Return journeys must be completed within **one month**.
- Valid all over Scotland and to Carlisle or Berwick from stations within Scotland.
- Valid on ScotRail, Cross Country, Trans Pennine Express and Virgin services.
- Senior and Disabled Railcard holders can obtain an extra £2 discount
- Break of journey **NOT** allowed, other than for connections.
- Hotel deals available too.
- Free tea or coffee if you buy a cake (Club 55 Voucher required)
- First Class upgrade available:- “Club 55 Premiere”. Only £35 return.
- Restrictions:- Not to arrive Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee or Aberdeen before 0930. Not to depart Edinburgh or Glasgow 1643 to 1810. Some weekend restrictions around 1800 on Cross Country between Edinburgh and Aberdeen.

Full details from :- <http://www.scotrail.co.uk/club-55>

Arriva Trains Wales

- £28 Return (anytime). £23 Return with Friday travel **NOT** allowed.
- Over 55, proof of age required. Outward travel 5 Jan to 29 March.
- Valid for **8 Days ONLY**.

- Valid all over Wales and to Arriva Trains Wales destinations in England.
- Special "Add on" rates for Chiltern, Cross Country, Northern Rail and Merseyrail destinations, including London Marylebone (Chiltern).
- Senior and Disabled Railcard holders can obtain an extra £1 discount.
- Break of journey allowed.
- No First Class upgrade or hotel deals
- Restrictions:- Travel **NOT** allowed before 0900 Mon-Fri except:- Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth/Pwllheli; Shrewsbury-Swansea via Heart of Wales route; Neath-Milford Haven/Pembroke Dock/Fishguard; Wrexham-Bidston.
- Restrictions:- Arrival at London Marylebone **NOT** allowed before 1000 or departing same between 1600-1900 Mon-Fri.
- Restrictions on major sporting event days. No travel to/from Cardiff stations/Grangetown on 1 & 21 Feb. Also 15 March. No travel to/from Cheltenham/Gloucester 11-14 March inclusive.

Full details from :- <http://www.arrivatrainswales.co.uk/Club55/>

Restriction to London Marylebone seems a little academic, seeing as you can't use the ticket before 0900 anyway!

SARPA FINANCIAL REPORT FOR OCTOBER 1, 2012 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2013

1. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

| INCOME | 2012-2013 | 2011-2012 | EXPENDITURE | 2012-2013 | 2011-2012 |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|
| | £ | £ | | £ | £ |
| Subscriptions (1) | 587.00 | 580.50 | Newsletter (2) | 279.90 | 516.42(4) |
| Bank interest | | | Administration (3) | 60.82 | |
| | | | Venue hire | 20.00 | |
| | | | Web hosting | 72.00 | 144.00 (5) |
| TOTAL | 587.00 | 580.50 | TOTAL | 432.72 | 660.42 |

The excess of income over expenditure in 2012-2013 was £154.28 (2011-2012 -£79.92)

Notes:

1. Includes both subscriptions and donations. Many members round up the £8 dues to £10. There are 53 (65) individual members and 9 (3) Councils. At the year end 12 individuals had not renewed their membership. One subscription credited has not been identified and one person paid in advance for 2014.
2. Includes the cost of printing, distribution, &c.
3. Includes travelling expenses and stationery.
4. In 2011-2012 there was a reprint of *Newsletter* number 58.
5. In 2011-2012 the fee for web-hosting covered 2010-2011 and 2011-2012.

2. BANK ACCOUNT MOVEMENTS

2.1 Account 20148148

OPENING STATEMENT

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| 2012: OCTOBER 1: | £859.02 |
| Add excess of income over expenditure: | £154.28 |
| Total | £1013.30 |

CLOSING STATEMENT

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| 2013: SEPTEMBER 30: | £1013.30 |
|---------------------|-----------------|

2.2 Account 90334545

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Opening balance | £275.67 |
| Interest added | £000.06 |
| Closing balance | £275.73 |

APH.,
September 18, 2013

The case for new railways in west Wales

A presentation by Rob Phillips given to a meeting in Lampeter on 17th October 2013

Good evening

What I'm going to do in this session is to put forward one option – the one I think is most feasible – for getting a train service to Lampeter. I deliberately don't say "re-open the railway" – the development needs to be fit for Wales in the 21st century, rather than the 19th.

If I was tasked with making it happen with an appropriate budget, this is what I would aim to provide. The second part will be to look at how it could happen. I don't want anyone to be under the illusion that it can be done overnight, or that there won't be many difficulties and obstacles, but we also need to realise that with the political will, it can be done.

When the Carmarthen to Aberystwyth line was closed to passengers in 1965 Wales was a very different place. Railways were in decline and those in authority thought this was the natural progression. The answer to falling demand was cuts. No-body thought that actually looking at the service pattern or investment was worth the bother – apart from John Betjeman! If they had, there would probably still be a busy railway through Lampeter today.

Beeching's report recommended closure of "duplicate routes" – and this line was seen as a duplicate to the Shrewsbury line. The fact that they served different markets entirely was not relevant to a mind-set, which still prevails today, that London and the south east of England is the centre of all! I've heard it said so many times that there is no demand for transport within Wales from north to south! Hardly surprising if the journey is all but impossible.

In 1997 Wales voted for devolution – just – and people are starting to think what this will mean on the ground. Transport within Wales now became important, and demand grew for better links between south, west, mid and north Wales.

For the first time, there was an authority which could work on a Wales-wide basis. In 1998, Friends of the Earth published this plan for 1998 Cambrian Express Rail Link. I knew the document existed but had never seen it. Remarkably similar to the suggestions that I'd made in the Grapevine article. Great minds think alike. It's available on the CCC website and is worth a read. I've also posted it to the Facebook group. It calls for a new public transport spine up the west of Wales, linking the 3 "E" prongs of the Welsh railway network. This would create a figure of 8 rail network, cutting journey times between points in the west, creating new travel opportunities and making the network more flexible. A plan based on a local service to Lampeter would be unlikely to be viable in any calculation. It needs to be part of a bigger plan.

My proposals

So this is what I would propose:

Four aspects to the capital plan

- "New" railway from Carmarthen to Aberystwyth (56 miles)
- "New" railway from Afon Wen to Bangor (25 miles)
- New station at Morryston on the Swansea District line, and upgrading the line. The district line – built in 1906 to allow fast running to west Wales – would allow a Cardiff – Carmarthen journey of 1 hour 30 minutes.
- Upgrade of Cambrian Coast line for faster running

Carmarthen – Aberystwyth would follow much of the original alignment, but with new sections between Allwalis and Carmarthen and possibly some other locations to speed up services. Line would have a maximum speed of 65mph, allowing an average journey from Carmarthen to Abersytwyth of 1 hour and 30 minutes. It would be a thoroughly modern railway with no level crossings, ETRMS signalling and minimal infrastructure. Stations would be at Pencader & Llandysul, Llanybydder, Lampeter, Tregaron, Llanilar & Llanfarian. The line would be single track with passing places at Pencader & Llandysul, Lampeter and Tregaron. It would be unlikely that stations would be staffed,

but should have ticket machine, help point and real time information. Somewhere like Lampeter would be a candidate for an agency station – a cafe and travel office run privately.

Morrison station would have direct access off the M4 at Ynysforan, and would serve the north Swansea area.

On the northern section there would be new stations at Penygroes and Caernarfon, with a passing loop at Penygroes.

This would give the figure of 8 network and connect the 3 main sections of the Welsh railway network which are currently only connected on the eastern end. It's worth noting that the rail network in Ireland follows a similar pattern – centred on Dublin, with routes radiating north, south and west. The the Western Rail Corridor connects the Dublin – Cork/Tralee line with the Dublin – Galway line at the western end.

The Train Service

The service would obviously be affected by other services on connecting lines and is especially complicated on the single track Cambrian lines, and I haven't tried to re-write the national rail timetable, but as a basis this is what I would propose.

Re-casting part of the South Wales Main line timetable to allow for a Cardiff – Morrison -Carmarthen –service where the train would divide. One portion would run to Milford Haven, the other to Aberystwyth and then to Machynlleth. Based on running via Morrison, this should give a journey time to Cardiff from Lampeter of around 2 hours and 15 minutes, and 3 hours from Aberystwyth. FoE believed the Aberystwyth – Cardiff journey could be done in 2 hours 20 minutes. This service would provide connections at Carmarthen with services to Haverfordwest and Milford Haven and to Fishguard Harbour for onward travel to Ireland. At Cardiff there would be connections to local services, London for trains to mainland Europe and the south west of England. At Machynlleth, it would connect with the Cambrian Coast line service every 2 hours to points north, Shrewsbury and Birmingham International.

A modification to the Cambrian Coast line service would see it run from Machynlleth to Criccieth, where the train would divide and have portions for Pwllheli and Bangor, where there would be connections for Holyhead, on to Ireland, the north Wales coast and Manchester.

Trains would be relatively modern diesel multiple units. These can be run at low cost, are flexible so can be turned around without needing extra infrastructure and can be divided on route to serve more destinations at minimal cost. While the Class 158 super sprinters used on the Aberystwyth service are over 20 years old, when refurbished they provide a good travel experience. They are quiet, fast (90mph), comfortable and air conditioned. The newer class 175 trains are a higher specification, but cost more to run. While we all like new trains, what we're really after is something that does the job. Trains should all have reserveable seating, air conditioning, toilet, trolley service and, audio-visual announcements, power points, wi-fi and luggage/bike space.

Local bus services would be routed via railway stations at Pencader & Llandysul, Lampeter, Tregaron and Caernarfon. Plus Bus tickets would be available.

All stations would have free car parks and bike racks for rail passengers. While we may want to encourage walking and public transport to stations, many people will be attracted to the train if they can drive from their home, which may not be on a bus route, to the station. The railway will need their business!

Practicalities - What is the cost and can it be justified?

Some statistics to bear in mind

- Population along Carmarthen – Aberystwyth route is around 55,000
- Population along Aberystwyth – Shrewsbury route is around 50,000 (excluding Shrewsbury)
- X40 bus route carried over 110,000 passengers in 2011

- Aberystwyth station sees over 320,000 passengers annually – an increase from 240,000 in 2004/5
- Carmarthen station sees over 420,000 passengers annually, up from 289,000 in 2004/5
- Aberdare station sees 538,000 passengers annually – a station that Beeching closed as uneconomic. The population of Aberdare is 31,000
- Pencoed railway station sees over 230,000 passengers a year. Another Beeching closure as uneconomic
- Cost of upgrading the A465 to dual carriageway - £800m
- Cost of the purchase of Cardiff Airport £50m
- Cost of HS2 is £15.8 and £17.4 billion for 120 miles

What would be the cost and can it be done? Of course it can! Pretty much anything can be done if there is the will and the money to do it. I was a bit disappointed to hear Prof. Stuart Cole's comments on Radio Cymru this morning when he said how it would be difficult because the land has been sold and built on in some cases. Yes, bridges will need to be replaced, new embankments built and land bought but these are no obstacle to building a road, and weren't an obstacle when the railway was first built. Nobody said the Carmarthen Eastern bypass couldn't be built because the Welsh office didn't own all the land and there was no bridge over the river!

It is simply a matter of whether the cost can be justified. Incidentally, that road cost over £30 million – for 3 miles – in 1997! Railways have been re-opened elsewhere. In Wales, we've seen the Aberdare and Maesteg lines in the 1980s and 1990s. These were done by the old Mid-Glamorgan County Council because they realised that re-opening the railway lines was cheaper than large scale road improvements and were more socially inclusive. These were followed by the Vale of Glamorgan and Ebbw Valley lines, as well as a new service to Fishguard. All of these were on lines that were still in being, although disused in some cases, and in order to re-open the lines to passengers new track was laid, signalling installed and new stations built. It's also worth noting that all apart from the Fishguard service are in the Cardiff travel to work area.

A rural railway is going to have different economics. Heritage Railways have re-opened lines against stiff odds. The Welsh Highland Railway in Gwynedd was abandoned in 1937 but recently re-opened. The Ffestiniog Railway had to build around a pumped storage reservoir which flooded a section several miles long when they re-opened their line. That was done by volunteers on a shoestring! In Ireland, stage one of the Western Rail Corridor between Limerick and Galway opened a few years ago. The line had been closed in the 1970s. In Scotland, the Waverley Route, controversially closed in 1969 is being re-built from scratch. From a civil engineering basis, the Carmarthen – Aberystwyth and Criccieth – Bangor lines are a walk in the proverbial park.

Cost

Last weekend I was at the Plaid Cymru annual conference in Aberystwyth. There was a motion on the agenda which I was due to speak on which called for a full survey in to the costs of a Carmarthen Aberystwyth railway as part of a national transport plan. TRACC have also called for this study. Until then, we have to make an educated guess.

Looking at the costs of the Western Rail Corridor in Ireland of £2.4m per mile, (the line was still owned by Irish Rail, so legal and purchase costs aren't counted) and the Waverley route costs of £11.6m per mile (including land purchase, re-building the formation etc. – probably closer to the cost for this project) the cost of Aberystwyth – Carmarthen would be in the region of £134m - £649m (The FoE report suggested figures of between £110m and £150m in the late 1990s – about £220m now and) and the Criccieth – Bangor Section between £72m and £348. This morning, Stuart Cole estimated a cost of around £700m.

Where would the money come from? The short answer is from either the Welsh Government, The UK Government or the EU – or a mix of any of them. They would have to be persuaded that it is worth it.

If the plan is just based on a local train service or local transport network of any kind, that level of investment will be impossible. To even have a hope of being seen as viable, it would need to be part of a package of measures that has tangible, national benefits, far outside those to the local area. It would need to be an integral part of the Welsh railway network to allow for long-distance services to points both north and south, and capable of carrying freight (even if local freight isn't going to amount to a great deal of traffic, through traffic could be routed via the lines). The benefits of a heavy rail scheme, fully integrated with the national network would include

- Linking north, mid, west and south east Wales – inter-regional travel
- Better connections to Ireland
- Socially inclusive transport
- An alternative to private travel, more environmentally sustainable
- Massive boost to the local economy. Travel to work and investment would be much more likely
- Boost to tourism
- Option for local freight – timber traffic especially
- Give diversionary routes for freight trains away from congested lines of south Wales and the English midlands
- More environmentally sustainable transport.

So, how does it happen?

There are some things that must happen for the plan to become reality, and some which would help it along the way. The Welsh government is responsible for passenger train services, but not for rail infrastructure. If rail infrastructure were devolved, it would mean that the WG could specify the High Level Output for Network Rail. WG would also be given a Barnett slice of the UK rail infrastructure budget. At present, Scotland and Northern Ireland have responsibility for rail infrastructure and get a percentage of the UK Government's rail infrastructure spending for England and Wales. However, most of the money for projects in England and Wales is actually spent in England. Even with the electrification of the South Wales Main Line and the Valley Lines, we will still be getting less than our fair share of rail infrastructure spending.

Over the next control period, there will be £1bn spent in Wales – 3% of UK rail infrastructure spending. If this was devolved, we should expect approx. 5% (this is the percentage of the UK population in Wales using the Barnett Formula).

That equates to an additional £135m per year. If the HS2 project is included, it means an additional £1.9billion for the Welsh Government to spend. The new railway could happen without devolving rail infrastructure spending, but given that the UK Government spends less on Welsh railways than they should, it would be a much harder push.

Even if infrastructure spending was devolved, the Welsh Government would still need to be persuaded. So far, they don't seem interested, although Elin Jones has raised the issue in the Senedd on a number of occasions. We need all the local and regional AMs, county councils, businesses and community groups from the area affected – right up from Carmarthen to Arfon (and ideally from Pembrokeshire and Ynys Mon who would benefit from better connections from Wales to Ireland) to be banging the drum for this.

The actual stages in the process

- A large, cross party and cross sector campaign to make the case
- Persuade the WG to adopt as policy and allocate funding
- Detailed planning
- National Assembly passes a Transport and Works Order
- Let contracts
- Construction

- Agreement with the train operator on service levels, costs, fares etc. In my submission to the WG consultation on the sham of the next passenger train contract I emphasised the need for a mechanism in the contract to add new services.
- Handover and testing

If it is done as one big bang – it would be at least 6 years from when the minister says yes. If it done in stages, it would take longer. The Waverley Route Act was passed in 2006, tendering in 2009, construction started in 2010 and the line is due to open in 2015.

Construction can be speeded up by working on several sites at once. FoE suggested a group to be set up including AMs, MPs, county, community and town councils, civic society, business etc to lobby and steer the project. That seems like a good idea. Hearts and minds need to be won and people with skills and knowledge need to make the case. Proper plans need to be drawn up, tested and re-drafted. But we need to get all the people and organisations with an interest involved. We're not pushing at an open door here. The Cambrian News article about petitions and the Welsh Government's brush off response to questions about the railway line with little or no effort to look into it show what we will be up against. It's a fight that can only be won on economic development grounds – and a strong business case will be needed. The Western Rail Corridor and Waverley Routes were no hoppers. Well- argued and lively campaigns won the day.

I'd love to see it happen. It would transform the area for the better, and have far reaching benefits. If it happens I'll be on board the first train and I'll buy everyone at this meeting today who joins me a coffee from the trolley!

The view from Milepost 62 with the Brigadier

Back during my school days my public school's wartime sojourn to a dilapidated country house in the Northern Home Counties was mercifully relieved by the fact that the Great Central Mainline passed nearby, and that a wartime UP freight loop and signal box were installed just two fields away from our dingy austere school. A number of boys, including me, soon discovered that one of the signalmen was a friendly chap, who would let us come in the box and even pull off the levers – under supervision of course. This was a great fun for 12 year olds away from home – Hogwarts is third rate compared to this! Freight trains that got put into the loop often stayed there some time, especially the coal trains or "windcutters" as they were known on the old GC line. I got to know one footplate crew quite well, and spent a lot of time in the big enclosed cab of an Austerity 2-8-0 helping prepare the fire and listen to stories – and was treated to bacon and egg sandwiches cooked on a shovel too! The driver was Big Harold – a 5'4" man in his mid 40's with a slight beer belly. He was the local branch convener of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen back at their shed in Nottinghamshire. His fireman was Little Harold a 6'1" heavily built man in his early 30's.

Yes I'm wallowing in nostalgia. However all good things come to an end unfortunately, and after the summer of 1944 with transatlantic traffic going straight to France the volume of war traffic fell off and our signal box was shut out and the loop unused. Our school stayed in the country due to extensive damage to our London property, caused by an American anti-aircraft battery trying to shoot down a doodlebug – friendly fire is not new! One Sunday morning in the Autumn of 1947 I went out on a long walk and came by the railway line. Much to my surprise I spotted steam coming up from a locomotive positioned on the mainline near our old loop with permanent way gangs dismantling the loop and signal box. With a heavy heart I started to trudge off when I heard a shout "hey up lad long time no see". The two Harold's had volunteered to work Sunday to say goodbye to their old haunting ground. I was welcomed up into the cab like a long lost friend and spent time catching up. The talk soon turned to the impending Nationalisation of the railways under the Labour Government. Big Harold was all for it and enthusiastic, "better pay, fewer hours and we'll be driving a diesel – Little Harold will be able to rest his arthritic knee. Wait and see lad it will be much better for the passenger too". A happy few hours were spent which distracted from the demolition going on. Dusty is tugging my arm – there'd better be a point and there is. Having come back from the Malayan Emergency and been abroad for nearly 3 years I was on my way home travelling via Nottingham Victoria in February 1960 on a cold bitter day. Everything was still steam powered which was something of shock having spent the last few years involved heavily with helicopters. An ancient Great Central R.O.D 2-8-0 clanked slowly

through the station on a coal train, its crew were huddled up against the boiler with the open cab offering little protection, the driver about 60 was grey haired and much shorter than the taller fireman who reached down and rubbed his knee.....

Nationalisation had not lived up to its promises for the Harolds! Indeed roll the clock forward and compare the promises of rail privatisation with what's actually happened. Marvel at the Tory ministers who said that fares would come down! I'm sure you'd agree there's a theme here – ideology never seems to live up to its promises. The great achievement of rail privatisation – the growing passenger numbers the TOC's erroneously claim credit for was of course never envisaged by the ideologues who thought that the inevitable decline of rail would be better managed in the private sector! It's proof of the success of rail privatisation scream ATOC, ignoring the plethora of outside influences such as rates of population growth not seen since before the Victorian era, the end of the rise of the motor car and cheap motoring and the re-emergence of our regional cities as drivers of economic growth. There's nothing an ideologue hates more than hard facts and here in Wales the pastel shade socialists are cooking up their own ideology based solution for our railways and not paying attention to the hard facts. Clearly re-nationalising the railways is seen as a bit too old hat for modern day centre left parties. However that rhetoric about the TOC's profits being behind all the ills of the railways is a seductive message and sorting out those scum bag undeserved profit making micky takers will be a vote winner! Yes – it's the not for profit franchise that might be coming to a railway near you in another 5 years if, but, dependent on quite a few things.

First of all here's my big beef. It's 2013 today and the need for solutions to overcrowding and more rolling stock is a day to day reality for regular travellers today. However, the not for profit franchise is to replace the current one in December 2018! So if they pull their finger out and order new stock it might be 2020 before we see any at best. Passengers want solutions now, not wishy washy promises of jam tomorrow. Still it's nice that the left recognise the inadequacies of the current arrangement, which after all was imposed by themselves! The Labour Welsh Government was a happy co-signatory of the Wales and Border franchise agreement in 2003, lest we forget acting under orders from London where Labour were in power at the time. So just how much investment will a not for profit franchise unleash? ATW have averaged £13 million a year in profit in the last five years. Yes this sounds a lot, however let's consider one of the Chairman's favourite projects – restoring the Mid Wales line. With £13 million a year this would take around 50 years to complete and not a penny would be available for anything else! Let's get this so called profit bonanza in context, and even then we're assuming the not for profit organisation is as focussed on surplus generation as a profit making one. Then there's things like inefficient rolling stock leasing which it will still do; it will still be a separate company from the one that runs the tracks with all the wasteful interfaces. There are many more problems with the railways than "profit taking". In the meantime the First Minister Carwyn has his wish for borrowing powers for Wales so that £ Billions can be spent on the so called M4 Relief Road and the second runway at Cardiff airport for all its imaginary Transatlantic traffic. Crumbs from the table for rail from the Welsh left? In fact not for profit looks very much like an election gimmick for the 2016 election – don't be fooled.

Talking of the old Great Central mainline Dusty and I found this year's Conservative party conference most enlightening. The Tories were in the G-Mex centre which of course is the old Manchester Central railway station, and was the terminus of Midland expresses from St Pancras that came across the closed Peak Forest line. Up stood Ministers defending the need to build High Speed 2 on capacity grounds – and rightly so. However the irony of where they were was not lost – Manchester once had three main lines running to it; in fact all the big Cities that will be served by HS2 did have at least two mainline routes to them until the madness of the 1960's. If we still had Paddington to Birkenhead (for Liverpool), Derby to Manchester Central and the Great Central Mainline as complete trunk routes would we need additional capacity now? We might not have got an official apology this year for what's known as Beeching and a public denouncement of the criminal Marples, but the very existence of HS2 is an admission that some of the closures and hoping the motor car would solve all our transport needs of the future was wrong.

Minister sets up group to examine improvements to the Cambrian railway line

Edwina Hart, Minister for Economy Science and Transport, has announced the creation of a group to consider recommendations for improving the Cambrian main and coastal railway lines.

The Cambrian Rail Implementation Group will examine in detail the findings of a report by the Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Rail Liaison Committee, which was commissioned by the Welsh Government and has been published today (Wednesday 27 November).

The report was made following an exercise during which over 6,500 responses were collected both online and in-hand. According to the committee, the report clearly shows a significant need for an hourly service in order to enhance connections to employment opportunities, business and economic opportunities, improvements to tourism links, as well as providing a much needed boost to connectivity to services such as education and medical care.

Cllr Mansel Williams, Chair of the Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Railway Liaison Committee who conducted the survey said, "The recommendations in the report to the Minister are based on the analysis of the survey returns. We were careful to ensure that we gave both rail users and non-rail users had the opportunity to give their opinions."

"The volume of survey response has been very high and the results back up a number of existing reports made over the past few years that show the need for an hourly service along this key transport artery for Mid Wales."

The recommendations made in the report are:

- The introduction of an hourly rail service from Aberystwyth to Shrewsbury;
- The introduction of tourist train services on the coast line for the summer months;
- Improving the current Friday only 1859 service from Machynlleth to Barmouth by extending it to Pwllheli and running from Monday to Saturday inclusive;
- Consider if any further actions might be needed when the new franchise is granted in 2018.

The Transport Minister said: "I am grateful to the Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Rail Committee for carrying out this survey on rail services in mid Wales. I have now setup a group to look closely at these recommendations and report back to me in January on the costs and feasibility of implementing them."

Notes

The report is based on a survey of residents, students and businesses along the Cambrian Lines to which there were 6,570 responses received.

A copy of the report can be found here www.wales.gov.uk/

SARPA Meetings in 2014

| | | | |
|-----------|---------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| February | Tuesday 4th | 1830 | The Sportsman Newtown |
| March | Saturday 8th | 1130 | Cambrian Hotel Aberystwyth |
| April | Tuesday 1st | 1845 | White Lion, Caersws |
| May | Tuesday 6th | 1745 | Railway Station, Shrewsbury |
| June | Saturday 14th | 1145 | Borth, Railway Hotel |
| July | Saturday 12th | 1145 | Tywyn Wharf, Talylyn Railway Station |
| August | Tuesday 5th | 1845 | The Sportsman Newtown |
| September | Saturday 13th | Time and location to be confirmed | |
| October | Saturday 11th | 1100 | AGM, White Lion, Machynlleth |
| November | Tuesday 4th | 1845 | Sportsman 18.30.Newtown |
| December | Saturday 13th | 1100 | White Lion, Machynlleth |

Websites

Our website <http://sarpa.info>

Webmaster Angus Eickhoff. Website host is mid-wales.net

Other sites of interest:

A useful alternative to the National Rail Enquiries site
traintimes.org.uk/

Arriva Trains Wales
www.arrivatrainswales.co.uk/

National Rail Enquiries
www.nationalrail.co.uk/

Train and Bus Information Midlands
www.centro.org.uk/wwwroot/HomePage.asp

LondonMidland
www.londonmidland.com/index.html

Virgin Trains
www.virgintrains.co.uk/default.aspx

Chiltern Railways
www.chilternrailways.co.uk/

Network Rail
www.networkrail.co.uk/

Railfuture/Railway Development Society
www.railfuture.org.uk/

Cambrian Rail Partnership
www.thecambrianline.co.uk/

The Association of Community Rail Partnerships (Acorp)
www.acorp.uk.com

Passenger Focus
<http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/>

North Wales Coast Railway
www.nwrail.org.uk/

Circular tour of North Wales by rail
www.penmorfa.com/Cambrian/

Ffestiniog Railway timetable
www.ffestiniograilway.co.uk/timetable.htm

Vale of Rheidol Railway timetable
www.rheidolrailway.co.uk/timetable.htm

Talylyn Railway
www.talylyn.co.uk/

Welshpool and Llanfair Railway timetable
www.wllr.org.uk/timetable.htm

Welsh Highland Heritage Railway
www.whr.co.uk/index.php?pid=51

Fairbourne Railway
www.fairbournerrailway.com/index.htm

Borth Station Museum
www.borthstationmuseum.co.uk

Rail Photographs by Richard Jones including many of the modern Cambrian scene
<http://railphotos.fourecord.com/index.php>

Useful addresses

Arriva Trains Wales:

St Mary's House, 47 Penarth Road, Cardiff CF10 5DJ. Tel 0845 6061 660
Email: customer.services@arrivatrainswales.co.uk

Network Rail:

Community Relations, Railtrack House, Euston Square, London NW1 2EE

Newtown Station Travel

The Railway Station, Old Kerry Road, Newtown, Powys SY16 1BP. Fax. 01686 621966
E-mail newtownstation@btclick.com

The Association of Train Operating Companies:

ATOC, 3rd Floor, 40 Bernard Street, London WC1N 1BY

London Midland

London Midland, PO Box 4323, Birmingham B2 4JB. Tel. 0121 6342040

Association of Community Rail Partnerships

Rail & River Centre, Canal Side, Civic Hall, Slaithwaite, Huddersfield HD7 5AB

Virgin Trains

Virgin Trains, Customer Relations, PO Box 713, Birmingham, B5 4HH. Tel. 0870 789 1234

Traveline Cymru for all public transport information

www.traveline-cymru.org.uk Tel.0870-6082608

Rail Franchise Performance Manager Rail and New Roads Division, Transport Wales, Welsh Assembly Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ. Direct Line (029) 2082 6849

Public Transport Users' Committee for Wales Secretariat

Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3NQ. E-mail ptucwales@wales.gsi.gov.uk

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