
Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association

Newsletter No. 89

JANUARY 2023



A PICTURE FROM THE PAST

In the early 60s the Cambrian Coast Express prepares to leave Aberystwyth behind Manor Class 4-6-0 No. 7823 *Hook Norton Manor*. The engine was built by British Railways in 1950, and was withdrawn in 1964, and subsequently scrapped.

Photograph: W. E. Bates.

NEGES GAN Y CADEIRYDD

Mae'n debyg mai eleni fydd y flwyddyn llawn olaf o'r Dosbarth 158 yn gweithio ar y Cambrian ac mae SARPA wedi bod yn brysur, gan lobio gwleidyddion a chwestiynu Trafnidiaeth Cymru ynglŷn â'u cynlluniau ar gyfer y lein, yn ogystal â materion sy'n effeithio ar y lein ar hyn o bryd.

Rydym yn parhau i bwysio ynglŷn â dibynadwydd ar y Cambrian ac yn ein cyfarfod mis Rhagfyr roedd Elin Jones, Aelod o'r Senedd dros Geredigion, wedi ymuno â ni yn ystod ein cyfarfod yn Aberystwyth i glywed am ein pryderon. Rydym ni'n ddolchgar iawn am ei chefnogaeth ac wrth gwrs yn cydweithio â gwleidyddion lleol o bob plaid er mwyn cadw pwysau ar Lywodraeth Cymru a Thrafnidiaeth Cymru.

Yn ddiweddar, mae gwaith pellach wedi bod ar Bont y Bermo i'w gryfhau. Mae SARPA yn gefnogol i'r gwaith yma, sy'n bwysig iawn er mwyn gwarchod dyfodol y lein. Roeddem ni hefyd yn falch iawn o weld bod trên gwennol wedi bod yn gweithio rhwng Harlech a Phyllheli, gyda bysiau rhwng Harlech a Machynlleth. Mae hyn yn rhywbeth tebyg i'r hyn rydym ni wedi bod yn galw amdano ers amser. Fodd bynnag, doedd y bysiau a'r trenau ddim yn cysylltu yn dda ac roedd rhaid i deithwyr rhwng gorsafoedd i'r gogledd o Harlech a gorsafoedd i'r dwyrain o Fachynlleth (neu 'r ffordd arall) aros am awr a hanner yn aml ar ôl cael y bws. Felly rydym wedi holi Trafnidiaeth Cymru am wella'r trefniadau ar gyfer tro nesa' (mae gwaith pellach yn digwydd eleni).

Yn ddiweddar, mae Trafnidiaeth Cymru wedi bod yn ymgynghori ar yr amserlenni arfaethedig ar gyfer Rhagfyr 2023 ymlaen. Ar y cyfan, mae'r amserlen arfaethedig yn well na'r disgwyl. Bydd gwasanaeth bob awr o leiaf o rywbryd yn 2024 ymlaen – gobeithio! Rydym hefyd yn falch bod gymaint o drenau trwyddo o Lein yr Arfordir i Birmingham Rhyngwladol. Fodd bynnag, bydd rhai trenau 2-gerbyd rhwng Aberystwyth ac Amwythig angen cerbydau ychwanegol arnynt er mwyn osgoi gorlwytho. Hefyd mae problemau gyda'r cysylltiadau rhwng rhan Aberystwyth o'r lein a Lein yr Arfordir yng Nghyffordd Dyfi yng nghyfeiriad y gogledd (mae'r cysylltiadau yng nghyfeiriad y de yn dda). Rydym felly wedi rhoi adborth yn galw am welliannau, tra'n cydnabod bod yr amserlen arfaethedig yn well na'r disgwyl.

Blwyddyn newydd dda i chi gyd, gan edrych ymlaen at gydweithio i sicrhau gwelliannau pellach i'r gwasanaeth Rheilffyrdd ar y Cambrian.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

As we enter what appears will be the last full year of Class 158s working on the Cambrian, SARPA has been busy, lobbying politicians and questioning Transport for Wales regarding their plans for the line, as well as matters currently affecting the line.

We are continuing to apply pressure regarding reliability of service on the Cambrian and in our December meeting Elin Jones, Member of the Senedd for Ceredigion, joined us in our Aberystwyth meeting to hear our concerns. We are very grateful for her support and we of course work with politicians of all parties in order to keep up pressure on the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales.

Recently, further strengthening work has been undertaken on Barmouth Bridge. SARPA supports this work, which is very important for the future of the line. We were also very pleased to see that a shuttle rail service was in operation between Harlech

and Pwllheli, with buses between Harlech and Machynlleth. This is similar to what we had been calling for a long time. However, the buses and trains didn't connect well and passengers travelling between stations north of Harlech and stations east of Machynlleth (or vice versa) often had to wait for an hour and a half after travelling on the bus. We have therefore asked Transport for Wales about improving the arrangements for the next time this happens (further work will be carried out this year).

Recently, Transport for Wales have been consulting on the proposed timetables for December 2023 onwards. Overall, the proposed timetable looks better than expected. There will be an hourly service at least from some time in 2024 onwards – hopefully! We are also pleased to see that there will be so many through trains from the Coast Line to Birmingham International. However, some 2-car trains between Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury will require strengthening to avoid overcrowding. There are also problems with connections between the Aberystwyth section of the line and the Coast Line at Dyfi Junction northbound (southbound connections are fine). We have therefore given feedback calling for improvements, whilst acknowledging that the proposed timetable is better than expected.

A happy new year to you all, and I'm looking forward to working together to ensure further improvements to the services on the Cambrian Lines.

Jeff Smith

Cadeirydd SARPA/SARPA Chair



Flashback to 1987: The Cardigan Bay Express leaving Machynlleth behind ex-LMS 2-6-0 Mogul No.46443. Photograph: Denis Bates.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Pwllheli: the former Pwllheli West Signal box which has been used to house the ground frame needed to control movements into the sidings and the western end of the run round loop at Pwllheli station is undergoing structural repairs with scaffolding having appeared around it. In common with many locations the station was rationalised by BR, in this case as long ago as 1977 when the second platform was taken out of use and the section of the line from Porthmadog was controlled solely by the signal box there. Point work that was left at such locations was usually controlled by the means of a ground frame with the levers being out in the open - however at Pwllheli for reasons that are not known they retained the old signal box and put the ground frame in there undercover. Train crew operate the frame when needed.

The box itself is of some historical interest, though the station in Pwllheli at its current location was opened in 1909 the signal box installed as "Pwllheli West" is in fact older, having been recycled! The box is of a standard Dutton & Co Type 3 pattern who supplied many such boxes for the Cambrian Railways in the late 19th century. The one at Pwllheli was originally installed at Elan Junction on the Mid Wales route between Moat Lane Junction and Brecon, a couple of miles south of Rhayader to control the movement of materials onto the works railway that was built to assist in the construction of the Elan Valley dams. Installed in 1895 it was largely redundant by the time the dams were completed in 1904 and then surplus to requirements by about 1906. So, the Cambrian Railways had it dismantled, moved to Pwllheli and erected there to control the "new station" built in 1908/1909.

Barmouth Bridge Works: the latest round of work on the structure was completed on Saturday 10th December. The use of the remaining bit of railway land at the north end of the station as a yard for materials saw road/rail vehicles using the stretch of line to/from the bridge under an engineering possession. This unfortunately meant it wasn't possible to run a service between Barmouth and Pwllheli as access to the station was blocked. Barmouth station canopy was also renewed. TfW did leave 2 units at Pwllheli and ran a Pwllheli to Harlech shuttle during the second blockade period from Mid November to early December. Refuelling was done from the remaining siding in Porthmadog as road access here was easier than in Pwllheli where there are no refuelling facilities.

Tywyn: taking advantage of the line closure with the works on Barmouth Bridge the track in the passing loop (approx. 1km in total) was completely relaid in late November/early December. There had been work on several other bridges between Dyfi Junction and Barmouth Bridge earlier.

Aberystwyth: no further log trains have run since October. It's understood that with Rail Head Treatment trains and the work on the coastline requiring engineering trains being run the 3 ETCS fitted Class 97's were unavailable until mid December.

Bow St: concerns have been expressed about the paucity of customers at the reopened station.

Newtown: a DDA compliant lift and footbridge similar to the one installed in Machynlleth is due to be built at the station during 2023.

Welshpool: as passengers have returned to the railway complaints have grown about the car park being used by non-rail users.

Shrewsbury: WMR introduced Class 196 DMU's, the same type of train as TfW's Class 197's planned for our line in November, on their route from Birmingham. The internal spec for their CAF Civitys is different to TfW's.

Sandwell and Dudley: from the December timetable change TfW trains from Shrewsbury to Birmingham International will stop there instead of Smethwick Galton Bridge, having swapped stopping patterns with the West Midlands Trains from Shrewsbury which will now stop at Smethwick Galton Bridge instead. The change is related to the imminent reopening of the stations on the Camp Hill line between Birmingham New St and Kings Norton, which are due to be served by WMR Shrewsbury to Birmingham trains being extended. It's felt that inconveniencing a relatively limited number of passengers from west of Shrewsbury that change at Smethwick Galton Bridge outweighs the improvement in intra region connectivity in the West Midlands county, Shropshire passengers will still be able to change using the WMR trains.

This robust plan to pay a compromise is made necessary because of line capacity already being high on the congested Stour Valley route between Birmingham and Wolverhampton.

If you're wanting to travel to Dudley town centre/ zoo it is still best to change at Wolverhampton and catch the bus from there.

Midland Connect: published their vision for rail services in the West Midlands over the next 20 years. Up to the end of this decade the focus is on taking advantage of HS2 with infrastructure spend required to divert existing services from the East Midlands, Hereford and Worcester, South Wales and the South West into Moor St station to interchange with the HS2 Curzon St station.

In the longer term by the early 2040's they envisage the line from Wolverhampton to Shrewsbury needs to be electrified and will see an increased service of 4 tph. One a direct InterCity service to London Euston using the existing mainline, 2 all stations local services and a fourth coming through from Wales which will terminate at Birmingham New St. These improvements are made possible by moving long distance services that current use the congested Stour valley line onto HS2.

TfW Class 197 CAF Civity's in service: Early December has seen TfW's new trains introduced in service on the Conwy Valley line and between Chester and Liverpool via the Halton curve. These trains have attracted much attention and many pictures/ travel reports have popped up. Summarising the comments about the internal layout, passenger info systems, luggage space, seats, view from windows they are generally

favourable. However, the storage area for the catering trolley and whether a 2-car unit operating on its own will be sufficient for passenger numbers are the negative points.

Post pandemic travel patterns: Pre the pandemic season ticket holders made up 39% of all usage with business travel around 11%, discretionary travel was 50% of total usage anyway. Mainstream media's description of anyone that uses rail services as "commuters" was always nonsense. So how have things changed?

The overall rolling daily average of usage in November/December 2022 is officially around the 85% mark according to official DfT figures. However, you have to bear in mind that the rolling daily average that produces this figure includes the strike days, where the few remaining services produce really low usage numbers. Also, there are operators with significant problems such as Trans Pennine Express and Avanti who are struggling to run services and most operators under DfT diktat have not yet restored their pre covid level of service. Overall usage would be much closer to pre covid levels if we had the full timetable operated and no strikes, 85% of 2019 is around the levels of usage seen in 2015. Friday 18th November saw usage hit 99% of its pre covid level. The demise of the railway due to the fact that "everybody works from home" has proved to be a crock of nonsense and anyone trying to spin that line needs correcting.

However, within that the pattern of what type of traveller that now travels and when have changed. Peak hour commuting traffic is around 60% of pre covid levels, with Tuesday to Thursday being significantly busier than Monday and in particular Fridays, which had been noticeably quieter even pre covid. With season ticket sales around a third of what they were, a lot of people are coming into the office a couple of days a week and working from home the rest. Come Friday after the morning peak there has been an increased discretionary market lasting all weekend, with many locations reporting usage levels higher than pre covid.

Prior to Covid South East Trains and South West Trains accounted for 40% of all UK rail use, with season ticket holders to London being their mainstay, accounting for c.65% of their customers. You don't need a degree in Maths to see that the substantial drop in central London commuting has to a large degree been replaced by other travellers elsewhere in the UK. These new patterns are still developing and growing, and will do so through 2023, hopefully after a resolution of the current industrial relations problems. Planning for the rail network must reflect this, not what people thought it would be in May 2020.

STOP PRESS

TfW December 2023 Timetable Consultation shows hourly service on Cambrian Mainline.

A sort of early Christmas present arrived in the SARPA email account inbox in mid-December 2022 - the consultation from TfW for the December 2023 timetable change. To say we were pleasantly surprised is an understatement: after close on a quarter of the century of waiting, at long last we have seen sight of an actual real timetable showing the full hourly service between Shrewsbury and Aberystwyth. It's still nearly 12 months off, but we can now see the long overdue improvements being planned as TfW receive their new rolling stock.

On the Cambrian

UP Direction

- There will be an hourly service from Aberystwyth starting at 0527 in the morning as far as Machynlleth until 2330 at night.
- 15 of these trains will go through to Shrewsbury, 1 to Birmingham New St and 13 to Birmingham International. The last service to Shrewsbury being at 1930.
- The first service in the morning (0527) is planned as a four-car set. In addition no fewer than 7 services from the coast will join up at Machynlleth to form four car services to Shrewsbury & beyond (0804,0904,1004,1204,1404,1604 & 1804). The remaining 7 trains will be two car 2 trains that will gain extra carriages at Shrewsbury and be four cars to Birmingham International. 2 trains will be reinforced to six cars between Shrewsbury and Birmingham International (0527 and 1330 from Aberystwyth).
- On the coast there will still be 9 trains a day, 8 from Pwllheli (every 2 hours from 0734 to 1934) and 1 from Barmouth. The first 7 UP trains will all be through to Birmingham International.
- Trains will depart at the same minutes past the hour from stations apart from the first service in the morning tidying up the current mess.

DOWN Direction

- There will be an hourly service from Shrewsbury starting at 0626 in the morning until 2130 at night with 3 early morning trains starting at Machynlleth from 0450.
- 2 services start from Shrewsbury, 1 from Birmingham New St and 13 from Birmingham International.
- There are 6 four car services from Shrewsbury (0726, 0930, 1130, 1330,1530 and 1730) that will split at Machynlleth with portions going up the coast. The 1930 from Shrewsbury is also four car.

- All services from Birmingham New St/International that go onto our line will be 4 car in length with the 0906 and 1706 strengthened to 6 cars.
- On the coast there will still be 9 trains a day, 8 to Pwllheli and 1 to Barmouth. 5 trains will be through from Birmingham International, 1 from Birmingham New St.
- Trains will depart at the same minutes past the hour from stations apart from the first service in the morning tidying up the current mess.

At Shrewsbury

To/from Chester

Northbound connections from Cambrian arrivals are non-existent with services departing as Cambrian trains arrive; southbound trains from Chester have c.15 minute connections.

An hourly service is on offer operated with a mix of 2 car units from Birmingham, 3 car units from Cardiff, 3 loco hauled services with First Class and Restaurant facilities and a token London service operated by Avanti that runs to Shrewsbury via the Trent Valley Crewe and Chester!

To/from Manchester

Northbound connections from Cambrian arrivals are generally 20 minutes, from southbound there will be 45 minute waits.

Every 2 hours there will be a five-coach loco hauled trains with First Class and Restaurant facilities, the other hour will see a five car DMU working. A big boost in capacity.

The local all stations shuttle between Shrewsbury and Crewe remains two hourly in frequency operated by 2 car units with Northbound connections of 50 minutes and southbound of 20 minutes.

To/from Cardiff

Southbound connections from Cambrian arrivals are generally 20 minutes for trains coming from Manchester, northbound trains heading for Manchester have 45-minute waits with 15 minute waits from trains heading for Chester via Wrexham.

From/ to Manchester there will be every 2 hours a five-coach loco hauled train with First Class and Restaurant facilities, the other hour will see a five car DMU working. A big boost in capacity. In addition there will be on most hours (but not all) a service to/from Holyhead/Chester 3 loco hauled services with First Class and Restaurant will be supplemented by 3 car DMU's on the other trains.

The Heart of Wales trains (6) have generally lengthy waits for Cambrian connections and the stopping pattern on Cardiff services for Church Stretton/Craven Arms gets jumbled up when these trains run.

We understand that the above will initially be operated by the existing Class 158's with the new units being introduced "late in 2024".

Overall, we will give this Grade B. There is a better than expected capacity boost for the Cambrian Mainline with more four car services as well as the extra trains to make the hourly service. However capacity on the coast in the summer months remains a concern, and connections at Shrewsbury still need to be improved.

CAMBRIAN CORNER

Ken Robinson

Cambrian Coast services, as readers will know, have been recently affected by ongoing work on Barmouth Bridge and track-work in the Tywyn area. A shuttle service was provided (by 158 829 + 158 830) between Pwllheli and Harlech and bus replacement services between Harlech and Machynlleth, over the period 19th November until 9th December, with a full Pwllheli - Machynlleth service due to re-start on Saturday morning, 10th December. In the event, 'due to overrunning engineering works' this did not materialise until late afternoon on the 10th. During this period, the 158 units were kept overnight at Pwllheli but usually fuelled at Porthmadog yard around once a week, the unit being fuelled travelling empty stock from Pwllheli to Porthmadog Yard late morning and returning to Pwllheli mid-afternoon.

Picture © Ken Robinson



Porthmadog on 6th December, with 158 829 having just arrived from Harlech, whereupon passengers were told to change trains and walk from the down platform (left) to the up platform (right) to board 158 830 for the onward journey to Pwllheli. This was so that 158 829 could be taken forward to the yard at Porthmadog for fuelling - a change to the usual procedure described above. Apparently, this unit was fairly low on fuel compared to 158 830.



Above: 158 830 at Pwllheli on 6th December, about to depart with the 11:37 service to Harlech.

Below: 158 829 in the yard at Porthmadog, having just arrived as 5G00, the 10:20 empty stock working from Pwllheli on 22nd November 2022. *This was on a different date to the other photos, but included to show a relatively rare 'empty stock' working on the Cambrian Coast.



ON THE MOVE

Gareth Marston

Credibility is everything

Drive your car on a motorway in top gear at cruising speed, get a clear run and you can easily go over 50 miles with the needle on the fuel gauge hardly moving. Try travelling the same mileage on single carriageway roads, and as we all know, the result is different: constant acceleration/deceleration, stopping at junctions, speed limits, gear changes slowing down for other traffic etc and the same vehicle will see its fuel gauge move noticeably. It's one of the basic laws of physics that a fast-moving object requires less energy to continue moving than an object that is stationary/slow moving does to get going and as we all should remember from our school days there's even some lovely equations for it...what relevance to rail user groups I hear you ask?

Despite mass publicity and vocal support from sections of the mainstream media the Stop HS2 campaign has been a failure. Simply put the campaign lost credibility largely due to its own campaigners who spread misinformation and told lies about HS2 that were easily disproved. They said that the running costs of a line with trains travelling at high speeds which would consume vast amounts of energy would mean it would be a high fare only line for the mega-rich; would not be used and therefore had no business case. This of course ignored not only the fares and usage levels found on existing high-speed services around the world, including HS1, but also the laws of physics as described above. The cost of energy used on HS2 has been worked out at a third per passenger kilometre than now as the trains won't have to mix it with slower moving services slowing down/ accelerating etc

Another favourite trope of the anti-HS2 brigade is "ancient woodlands will be destroyed" queue the nominally reputable organisation the Woodland Trust that provided a list of "ancient woodlands" that would be destroyed. The only problem when checked was most of these woods turned out to be miles from HS2's route, unaffected by it and included conifers planted in the 1970's! This time Google maps was required rather than a knowledge of physics and other High-Speed lines. The anti-campaigners have been their own worst enemies: how easy has it been for HS2 Ltd and the DfT to question the credibility of those who oppose the line? The answer is very easy when they use easily disprovable arguments. The anti-campaign was great at sharing their many reasons they thought the line should not go ahead with each other; in the social media age all it took was a few clicks, so more opposition groups/individuals started repeating the same untruths that had already been debunked, and the whole movement became a toxic circle of self-induced destroyed credibility. In desperation some of them lost the plot completely. My personal favourite was the argument that increased temperatures due to climate change would mean the tracks would spread. One of the other 30 countries in the world that have built or are building High Speed Rail is Saudi Arabia. This time pictures of trains running through a desert where it's over 100 degrees in daytime and freezes at night dispelled that accusation! Strangely, with over a hundred HSR lines in the world to choose from, opponents to HS2 have never used real life verifiable examples to back up their points.

As rail users we are generally arguing for something to be done, not opposing, but we need to heed the lesson that credibility is everything. So, remember:

- Don't make things up – you'll get caught out.
- Don't take what other people say at face value and repeat it even if they seem to be in the same camp as you- especially true in the age of social media.
- Fact check everything you can.
- Back up your arguments with real life verifiable examples.

The disrespect agenda

Over on mainland Europe many countries are implementing a form of “climate ticket” lowering the cost of rail travel to encourage more rail use to fight climate change and help their citizens with the cost-of-living crisis affecting all of Europe. It costs their governments money but strangely all these countries can afford it even though they too have suffered from the economic consequences of the Covid pandemic and the Russian invasion of the Ukraine. In stark contrast the UK Government has no plans to get more people using its rail network and is seemingly happy to have a smaller less useful rail network using the pretence that passenger numbers and revenue haven't returned from pre covid as an excuse. Forget all the talk about modernisation they utter- if they were serious then fare reform would have been top of the list! It's the latest in the long line of policies from the **disrespect agenda** waged against rail users who want available staff help, assistance, advice, security, and reassurance when they travel and, even more so now that usage has shifted away from the 5 day a week commuter to infrequent discretionary travellers.

Cost driven micromanagement from DfT officials has stifled a large chunk of the railway's ability to encourage customers back after Covid. It's yet another example of officials and politicians wailing and gnashing their teeth at the consequences of their own poor decisions. Government currently likes bandying about seemingly big numbers usually accompanied by a lack of context. The UK rail industry is going to spend £24.5 Billion this year including HS2 construction costs, wow that's sounds big, doesn't it? Let's all suck our teeth and talk about savings for taxpayers etc.; what they don't shout from the rafters is the UK economy is expected to be around £2.2 Trillion in size this year (a trillion is one thousand billion in case you didn't know). Rail expenditure is just 1.1% of UK GDP; cutting this by £ 2 Billion which is what is being planned by Government brings it down to around 1%. Whilst the UK has a large well used network that runs high frequency trains, it's only rated mid ranking in terms of how good it is compared to our European neighbours. The reasons for this are our high fares and poor punctuality caused by lack of investment. When we look at the Tier 1 nations in the European rail league table your Germanys, Switzerlands, Netherlands, Austrias etc., we find they spend a bit more than we do: around the 1.25-1.4% of GDP mark. Which goes to show that cutting the rail budget is a political choice not an inevitability, due to factors beyond the responsibility level of UK politicians. It's all about priorities and the Westminster Government doesn't want to spend to make its rail network be in Tier 1.

For a country with the second highest population and third largest economy in Europe, this is indeed a strange thing. It shouldn't even be discussed: we have the

economic clout, and its not as though we don't know about all the downsides and failures of investing in mass motor vehicle ownership. More **disrespect**? The second Prime Minister of 2022 (Liz of the 49 days - remember her?) so obviously had a hand inserted up her rear end and was being operated by the Big Oil funded lobbyists from 55 Tufton St as to almost be parody. These shadowy funded from abroad groups have a long history of arguing against investment in public transport. We need a political party in power that can operate in our national interest, using evidence to make decisions not indulge in flights of fancy for sectional interests that fund them.

British Rail, according to Jimmy Saville, was getting there. Then at least we can say this side of Offa's Dyke that the Welsh Government is trying to get there: talking to the unions, reaching a settlement, and following through on investment commitments made in June 2018, albeit excruciatingly slowly, is at least on a different page to Westminster. The Deputy Minister for Climate Change Lee Waters recently commented about how expensive rail is. Now you can't catch up on decades of underinvestment in one cheap hit, beyond the completion of the Core Valley Lines and delivery of TfW Rail replacement stock that will be completed by 2025, the investment cupboard thereafter is bare. In 2020/2021 we spent a sum equivalent of 0.9% of Welsh GDP on our network. If we are not to do stop start investment cycles and match the rhetoric about dealing with climate change this level needs to permanently ramped up by around a third – that would be a respect agenda!

Newtown December 2022



The 1529 from Aberystwyth to Birmingham International in Aberystwyth on Thursday 9th December. Formed of four cars due to the coastline being closed for work on Barmouth Bridge. More 4 car formations will be seen as far as Machynlleth after December 2023 (see article). Photograph: Gareth Marston

MONTHLY MEETINGS

January	Saturday 14th	11:15	Royal Oak Hotel, Welshpool
February	Saturday 11th	12:30	Railway Inn, Borth
March	Saturday 11th	11:30	Town Council Chambers, The Cross, Broad St, Newtown.
April	Saturday 15th	11.45	Wharf Station, Tallyllyn Railway, Tywyn
May	Saturday 13th	11:15	AGM. White Lion, Machynlleth.
June	Saturday 10th	11:00	Red Lion, Caersws
July	Saturday 8th	12:30	Railway Inn, Borth
August	Saturday 12th	11:30	Town Council Chambers, The Cross, Broad St, Newtown.
September	Saturday 9th	11:15	Royal Oak Hotel, Welshpool
October	Saturday 14th	14:15	White Lion, Machynlleth
November	Saturday 11th	11:30	Railway Station, Shrewsbury
December	Saturday 9th	11.45	Town Council Offices, Baker St, Aberystwyth

WANT TO JOIN SARPA?

The membership fee is currently (for membership up to 31 December 2023) £10.00 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 line's 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.

To join please send your details, making sure to include full name, address and telephone number (and also email address if you wish to become part of our electronic network) to:

Bill Redfern, SARPA Membership Secretary, 8 Plas Edwards, Tywyn, Gwynedd, LL36 0AS, along with cheque for the membership fee, or, and preferably, you can pay directly into our bank account: Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Rail Passengers Association: Barclays Bank: sort code 20-61-08: account 20148148, and send your details to

Bill_sarpa@outlook.com

USEFUL ADDRESSES

Transport for Wales: Customer Relations, Transport for Wales Rail Services, St. Mary's House, 7 Penarth Road, Cardiff . CF10 5DJ Tel. 0333 3211 202

Network Rail:

Community Relations, Kings Place, 99, York Way, London. N1 9AG

Association of Community Rail Partnerships

The Old Water Tower, Huddersfield Railway Station, St George's Square, Huddersfield HD1 1JF

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

For Train Times and Fares Call:

08457 48 49 50 (24hrs) 0845 60 40 500 (Welsh Language Service)

0845 60 50 600 (Textphone)

For ticket reservations please call: 0870 9000 773

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

Chairman: Jeff Smith, 17 Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, SY23 2AZ. Tel. 07964 179 799. Email abergogledd@gmail.com

Vice-Chairman: Ivor Morris, 2 Dingle Road, Welshpool, SY21 7QB. Tel. 01938 554463.

Treasurer and Membership Officer: Bill Redfern, 8 Plas Edwards, Tywyn, LL36 0AS. Tel. 07769685117. Email: bill_sarpa@outlook.com

Secretary: position vacant.

Newsletter Editor: Denis Bates, 86 Maesceinion, Waun Fawr, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3QQ. Tel. 01970 617667. Email: denisebbates@gmail.com

Webmaster: Angus Eickhoff. Contact by email angus@anguseickhoff.co.uk

Distribution Officer: Robert Knight, 8 Tanrallt Street, Machynlleth, Powys, SY20 8BE.

Committee Members

Roger Goodhew: 12 Granville St., Shrewsbury, SY3 8NE.

Tony Harvey: 23 High Street, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7JP. Tel. 01938 559087. Email: tony@montgomeryshire.eu

Thomas Wheeler. Contact by Email: sarpa@sarpa.info

Roger Whitehouse. Contact by Email: sarpa@sarpa@sarpa.info

ASSOCIATION CONTACT POINT

Email: sarpa@sarpa.info

WEBSITES

Our website <https://sarpa.info>

Webmaster Angus Eickhoff: angus@anguseickhoff.co.uk

Website host is Hostinger: <https://www.hostinger.co.uk/>

Find us on Facebook - Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1506868396111739>

Other sites of interest:

A useful alternative to the National Rail Enquiries site:	www.traintimes.org.uk/
Transport for Wales	www.tfwrail.wales/
National Rail Enquiries	www.nationalrail.co.uk/
London Northwestern Railway	www.journeycheck.com/londonnorthwesternrailway/
West Midlands Railway	www.westmidlandsrailway.co.uk
Avanti West Coast	www.avantiwestcoast.co.uk
Chiltern Railways	www.chilternrailways.co.uk/
Network Rail	www.networkrail.co.uk/
Railfuture/Railway Development Society	www.railfuture.org.uk/
Railwatch: the quarterly magazine of Railfuture	www.railwatch.org.uk
The Association of Community Rail Partnerships (Acorp)	communityrail.org.uk
North Wales Coast Railway	www.nwrail.org.uk/
Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways	www.festrail.co.uk/
Vale of Rheidol Railway	www.rheidolrailway.co.uk
Talyllyn Railway	www.talyllyn.co.uk/
Welshpool and Llanfair Railway	www.wlfr.org.uk/
Welsh Highland Heritage Railway	www.whr.co.uk/
Fairbourne Railway	www.fairbournrailway.com/
Borth Station Museum	www.borthstationmuseum.co.uk
Real Time Trains	realtimetrains.co.uk
Live Rail Record	https://live.rail-record.co.uk

MEETINGS OF THE ASSOCIATION

Month Day Time Venue

January	Saturday 14th	11:15	Royal Oak Hotel, Welshpool
February	Saturday 11th	12:30	Railway Inn, Borth
March	Saturday 11th	11:30	Town Council Chambers, The Cross, Broad St, Newtown.
April	Saturday 15th	11.45	Wharf Station, Talyllyn Railway, Tywyn
May	Saturday 13th	11:15	AGM. White Lion, Machynlleth.
June	Saturday 10th	11:00	Red Lion, Caersws
July	Saturday 8th	12:30	Railway Inn, Borth
August	Saturday 12th	11:30	Town Council Chambers, The Cross, Broad St, Newtown.
September	Saturday 9th	11:15	Royal Oak Hotel, Welshpool
October	Saturday 14th	14:15	White Lion, Machynlleth
November	Saturday 11th	11:30	Railway Station, Shrewsbury
December	Saturday 9th	11.45	Town Council Offices, Baker St, Aberystwyth

Articles in the Newsletter contain the views of the contributors, not those of the Association.

Copy deadline for the next newsletter is 22nd April 2023