

Shrewsbury
Aberystwyth
Rail
Passengers'
Association



Newsletter
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The new GWR livery, with garter crest, as being applied to the Vale of Rheidol coaches. The 1715 arrival at Aberystwyth on 18th July, 2013. Photograph: Denis Bates.

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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 2013) £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

It was interesting to hear on the radio recently about events in Brazil, where the people had taken to the streets on account of increases in the cost of public transport. In truth it turned out that there was more to the story than just a hike in travel fares. All the same, it is difficult to imagine anything similar happening here.

Maybe the time to demonstrate about changes to public transport in this country would have been 50 years ago, when the odious Beeching Report was published? No doubt the philosophy behind it emanated from Transport Minister Ernest Marples; of whom let us just say that today, conduct such as his would probably lead to loud calls for his resignation. The effect was to deprive great swathes of the UK of public transport provision and make people dependent on the motor car. It is ironic and probable that there would have been less damage done to provincial towns had people actually taken to the streets and set things on fire, as opposed to the iconoclasm that was done perfectly legally to accommodate humanity's answer to the Daleks. Road vehicles don't do stairs very well either but you have to admit the scale of their invasion has been pretty comprehensive.

In the end, the great British Public's response was more along the lines of "Mustn't Grumble" rather than howls of protest. There were some small demonstrations here and there but not much worthy of note. Looking back half a century its astonishing that such large scale removal of a service for the public was achieved so easily.

Recently, there has been discussion within SARPA regarding the proposed new footbridge at Machynlleth, designed to make the station compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). The projected cost for this is said to be £2m, which all would agree is quite a large sum for quite a small structure. There have been views expressed that spending this amount on a bridge when apparently there is not enough money to run any extra trains is a nonsense. At first thought, I have to say I concurred. After all, a "Rolls Royce" solution would be to operate Machynlleth station from a single platform face which would obviate the need for a bridge. It could also be linked to the bus interchange being proposed by Lloyds Coaches. Easy.

But wait. The money allocated for the bridge is DDA money, no doubt ring-fenced to the nines and not available for anything but to make the railway DDA compliant. Moreover, the present platform face

is not actually that long and given that 6 car trains are now a reality, then it needs an extension to accommodate two of them at any one time. Now you need a crossover as well to enable trains to pass each other in the platform. Moreover, SARPA understands that the bus interchange proposal did not score very highly in a cost-benefit analysis so sadly, that's not likely to happen either. The funding for all this would probably have come from an infrastructure budget rather than a DDA one and so suddenly, the single platform face idea is not looking very wonderful at all, let alone simple! In addition, once provided, the new bridge will make things easier for more than just the disabled. It may even make it easier for the railway to do more things than just carry passengers. We should not be upset about the amount of money which DDA compliance is costing. Even if we cannot afford to run extra trains for the moment, there are lessons for us here. The disabled lobby has been very successful in persuading the government to attend to its needs and make better provision. Disabled people too need to be able to travel, to get to work, to college, to hospital. Quite simply, they have won the argument in favour of their needs. Not only have they won the argument, they have achieved this by and large without taking to the streets and definitely without setting anything on fire.

This is of course impressive and a great achievement. We should look to the disabled for inspiration. We have to get the message across that better public transport is good for the economy; that building more roads is unsustainable; that cars contribute to rural poverty. If you don't believe the last one, just consider their insurance and running costs. Think about a young couple, both under 25 and they each need a vehicle to get to work because of poor public transport. Factor in the rent. Factor in a child and the pressures on those people are enormous. Suddenly we get to a situation where more rolling stock and integrated transport can have a positive effect against social breakdown.

Probably by now you're wondering how I'm going to tie all these disparate threads together. Or even if I'm going to manage it at all!

Well, it's not 10 years since I sat in Westminster, opposite a Minister of State for Transport, at a meeting arranged by one of our local MPs. The Minister was rather holding forth, which I thought was a little rich, considering that along with a great many other good folk, I was paying him as opposed to the other way round. When I managed to get a word in edgeways, I had the temerity to suggest that in Wales we should be making attempts to reopen railways which were closed in the 1960s as this would improve connectivity in a land where it is very much absent. His response was that "There is nothing there." Now I'm not entirely sure as to what the good people of Ystradgynlais, Brecon, Builth, Llanidloes, Mold, Denbigh or Caernarfon might have to say about being regarded as "Nothing" but I can take an educated guess. He then went on to say that he thought "Beeching was right....."

Winning the arguments? Clearly we still have a little work to do here.

Angus Eickhoff
July 2013

Moel y Garth
Welshpool

News in brief

Statesman Rail trip derailed

A planned charter train from Aberystwyth, in early October, has had to be cancelled, as no Class 97 locomotive will be available. All four locos are required on the 5-6th October, principally to run treatment trains to keep the railway free of leaves and other autumn debris. [*Cambrian News*, 4th April 2013]

Birmingham New St

Half the new station concourse came into operation in April.

Shrewsbury

ATW's proposed NSIP funded £200,000 station refurbishment has drawn much criticism as the materials it will be using would not be in keeping with the station fabric and more critically that the work will do nothing to expand capacity for waiting passengers.

Contractors seen at work in the old Bay platforms 1 & 2 are working on pipes that are carried underneath the bridge over the River Severn.

Shropshire to London Trains

Yet more farce, as Network Rail has rejected Virgin Trains track application (and that for Blackpool trains) as they will supposedly have an impact on punctuality, though strangely the rejection came after Virgin Trains started to sue Network Rail over performance on the west coast mainline. Arriva Trains Wales were even looking at altering their timetable to ensure connections.

Caersws

The part of the station building formerly used as offices is up for sale for £125,000. The low price reflects the small size of the rooms and the work needed to convert the building back into living accommodation. The station building like all the other ex Newtown and Machynlleth Railways station buildings was constructed using stone cut from Talerddig cutting during the construction of the line.

Borth Station 150: 1863 - 2013

Saturday, 6th July saw a Gala Day at Borth station to mark the 150th anniversary of the opening of the line from Machynlleth (the line on to Aberystwyth opened in 1864). The events were organised by the the volunteers, led by George Romary, who have transformed the old parcel and ticket offices into the Borth Station Museum. The events were opened by Mark Williams, MP for Ceredigion; they included stalls, miniature steam train rides, specially composed music, a barbeque and a laser and firework display. Borth's own choir, Chocolate, a juggler and other performers added to the fun with visitors and volunteers appearing in period costume. [*Cambrian News*, 11th July.]

A long overdue refurbishment of the station roof and canopy has begun. The station railway museum was used for the filming of a welsh language TV detective series.

Aberystwyth

The station forecourt has now been acquired by the County Council from J D Weatherspoon. However the refurbishment will not start until after tenders for the work are returned in the autumn. [*Cambrian News*, 25th July 2013]

Carmarthen Line reinstatement

The Welsh Government claims to have sent officials looking at the track bed of the line following recent calls for its reconstruction. Building on the track bed and other development is a hallmark of the route apparently, and they claimed that in parts there was no trace left of the route which would make restoring it very expensive.

David Morgan and Rob Phillips, both of Lampeter, have produced a report calling for the reinstatement of the line. Although there are many obstacles in the way - land has been sold, there are new buildings along the line, and bridges have been removed - the line could be built for the £800 million to be spent on the dualling of the heads of the valleys road. They include a "Photoshopped" image of a class 175 unit at Lampeter station. [*Cambrian News* 11th July; *Grapevine* (Lampeter newsletter) July-August]

Old friends return

Early July has seen a continuous period of sunshine and high temperatures which of course have attracted people to the coast in large numbers onto the existing length trains. Open hopper windows on ATW Class 158 units confirm that the air conditioning is not working and some units have come to a grinding stop coming up Talerddig bank as their engines have overheated.

Matthew Prosser, Fleet Director of ATW, has issued an apology for the malfunctioning of the systems (<http://www.arrivatrainswales.co.uk/240713Aircon/>):

We are aware of defects with the air conditioning system fitted to our class 158 fleet and apologise for any discomfort experienced recently as a result. We are currently delivering a £0.5m investment in upgrading the air conditioning system fitted to this fleet to make it more reliable. We are aware of some technical issues highlighted with the upgraded system in the current hot weather and are working closely with the vehicle owners and manufacturer of the air conditioning system to resolve these problems.

We would also like to take this opportunity to convey our apologies to all customers who may have experienced discomfort whilst travelling on our services during the recent hot weather.

Vale of Rheidol Railway

Trains have been very heavily loaded. On a number of occasions eight coaches have been used. As this train is too long for the engine to run round at Devil's Bridge, diesel No.10 has been added as a pilot, to enable shunting.

Buttington Crossing Incident.

On Tuesday 16th July the 1127 from Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth was in collision with a tractor and trailer on an occupation crossing (Buttington Hall Farm Crossing) just East of Buttington Level Crossing. No one was hurt and though the train was not derailed, it stopped and passengers were evacuated. The train was seen passing Trewern School at approx 1655 returning to Shrewsbury at low speed. Presumably the ERTMS kit at the front end had taken a hammering. See the photograph below.

One of our members was on the train. He said there was a tractor and trailer on the crossing and fortunately, the train hit the trailer. There was damage to the gangway door on the unit. An outside window pane of one saloon was broken. He told us the driver was trapped as the damaged door prevented him from getting out of the cab.

A short distance away, the main A458 was blocked by the barriers to the level crossing on that road remaining in the lowered position. They had been activated by the approaching train, which stopped short.

Ironically, the incident occurred on the same day as the Parliamentary Transport Committee (<http://www.parliament.uk/transcom>) announced an inquiry into safety at level crossings (See <http://tinyurl.com/nkdn27o>).

One suspects that the collision may have been caused by a failure to use the lineside telephone provided to ascertain the whereabouts of any rail traffic. This would seem a slightly daft thing to do, rather on the same lines as overtaking on a blind bend with double white lines or driving the wrong way down a dual carriageway. If this is indeed the case, a willingness to obey the rules would simply have saved a large number of people a great deal of irritation and inconvenience. It probably means that Arriva may have difficulty in strengthening the formation of trains over the busy summer months, as they now have one Cambrian Line unit out of commission.

The driver of the tractor has been arrested on suspicion of endangering safety.

This crossing was the site of an earlier, almost identical, incident on the 20th January 1970. Again the train was approaching from Shrewsbury, and a tractor was being driven across. The driver of the tractor was uninjured, but shaken. He said that he'd looked along the line, but could see nothing coming. He had "just about got the front wheels on to the lines when I heard a hoot and the train hit the front of the tractor. It tore away a 56 lb weight on the front of the tractor, then stopped further down the line and three chaps came back to see what had happened. It was hazy and there is a little hut alongside the line which tended to camouflage the dark green engine. This was a passenger train but the coaches were not lighted, and there was only a small 'lantern' on the front. They should have headlights."

Clearly sighting at the crossing is difficult. The crossing is approached from the Shrewsbury direction round a right-hand bend. Looking at the line on Google Earth, there does not appear to be a hut in the vicinity. The train was presumably locomotive hauled, with a green livery, which would blend in with the scenery; and we were in the era of oil lamps. Did one lamp mean it was a stopping passenger train?

Road access to Dovey Junction

An untarred track has, until now, provided vehicle access to Dovey Junction station. However, it has now been padlocked by Network Rail. They state that “the road access is privately owned by Network Rail and is only of authorised users, including railway staff, to get to the track site to carry out emergency or maintenance work. However, owing to reports of several incidents of trespass, we have decided to close this private road for safety reasons.” [Cambrian News, 11th July.]



Up trains are frequently now early at Newtown. The 1130 from Aberystwyth waits for over five minutes on Thursday 2nd May.

Recovery time is built into the timetable. Previously the time was taken up by waiting at Caersws, but with ERTMS this would now mean closure of the road crossing there during the wait.



A Shrewsbury garden seen from the line. The headboard on the green and cream door reads “Osprey Express”, and the totem above “Shrewsbury West”. Photograph: Denis Bates.

Trespassing and the Ospreys

This year there are again osprey eggs in the nest at Dovey Junction. Monty, the male, has a new partner, Glesni, after his partner of the past few years, Nora, did not appear. It is presumed that she died during the winter, probably in Africa.

On the 7th June the nest was approached by two trespassers on the railway. The event was recorded by the Dyfi Osprey Project's Facebook site

<https://www.facebook.com/dyfiospreyproject?fref=ts>

They posted the following account:

Every year we vigorously guard against the two main threats to osprey eggs - egg thieves and nest disturbance. Both have deadly consequences for protected Schedule 1 birds of prey like the osprey and can carry the same maximum penalty by law - six months in prison.

These two decided to walk several hundreds of metres down part of the main Aberystwyth to Birmingham International railway track this morning passing the osprey nest. They also had two dogs with them, black collies and neither of them on a lead. The trains pass this part of the track at 60 mph - it's also on a bend. As they turned the bend one of them got a smart phone out and took photographs of the ospreys, both of which were in the air, alarm calling.

Thanks to our 24 hour volunteer workers, we spotted them straight away and the police were called immediately and a set procedure activated and put in place. The two osprey eggs were left unattended for seven minutes in total while Glesni and Monty were circling overhead. Two things could have happened during these seven minutes, the eggs could have been taken by the many crows that nest nearby, or they could have got cooked in the heat. This happened before 9am so fingers crossed the temperature wasn't hot enough then - time will tell.

A big thanks to Dyfed-Powys Police and British Transport Police for their extremely quick response and also to Chris and Morwenna our protection volunteers - you were brilliant. We're sure these two people did not mean any malice to the ospreys but their actions today put their lives at risk, their dogs, the ospreys and passengers on any passing train.

The stupidity of this behaviour cannot be overstated. Both continued down the track after taking photographs of the ospreys and then crossed the live track again before climbing workmen's stairs to Dyfi Junction platform and boarded a train shortly afterwards. The matter is now in Police hands.

Please guys - we know who you are and if you ever want a ride to Dyfi Junction, please let us know. We will gladly give you a lift.

The ospreys can be observed, using live cameras, at the Dyfi Osprey Centre. It is on the A487, between Glandyfi and Derwenlas, open daily from 10 am to 6 pm. There is also a website

<http://www.dyfiospreyproject.com/stream>

with information on the project, and a live webcam.



Rail priorities: Cambrian lines

From written statement on rail priorities, 18 July 2013, by Edwina Hart, Minister for Economy, Science and Transport

There are number of issues in this statement which have relevance to the Cambrian lines:

1. Following the assessment of delivery priorities referred to in my statement of 10 July, I can confirm that I will deliver our current programme of rail capital investment which includes station improvements at:...Aberystwyth....
2. I shall be reviewing the processes and decision making behind the rail infrastructure project to reduce North - South journey times and redouble the railway between Wrexham and Saltney. The Welsh Government committed to this project in 2008 and contracted Network Rail to deliver it, but the project has been significantly delayed.
3. I am committed to improving transport services in Mid Wales. In terms of the Cambrian Main Line hourly service, the way is clear for an operator to introduce additional services though it is important to be mindful of the tough financial settlement we are facing. I have asked the Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Railway Liaison Committee to co-ordinate work with the other rail interest groups to investigate the demand for rail services. I will also consider the strategic role of the Marches line between Newport and Shrewsbury/Wrexham. I have been clear that this should complement the work of the Local Growth Zones and be consistent with the tourism strategy.
4. Accordingly, initially for the Cambrian Line and the Heart of Wales Line, my tourism sector panel will provide a view on the feasibility of proposals for summer tourist trains on a trial basis. I will make an announcement for summer 2014 in due course.
5. It is vital that we set things right for the future. I am focusing work on securing the right arrangements and specification for the next Wales and Borders franchise. I have been clear that we can not afford to be in the same position where the terms of a franchise agreement limit our ability to react to a changing economic climate and provide services where they are required.

Whilst we welcome the statement, it gives no indication as to whether the Minister will follow the commitment of her predecessor, Carl Sargeant, to introduce the enhanced service in 2015. We have asked the Minister for clarification.

Wrexham - Saltney redoubling

The Liverpool Daily Post reports that the probable scrapping of this project has caused North Wales Assembly Members (Conservative, Liberal-Democrat and Plaid Cymru) to protest. They fear the cash that was supposed to redouble and upgrade the line is being spent on rail projects in South Wales instead, which will cause fury across the region.

<http://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/north-wales-news/claims-cash-north-wales-rail-5373358>



The damaged 158 DMU, 158823, after the Buttington Crossing collision, before returning to Shrewsbury.

Photograph: Angus Eickhoff.

Summer Saturday Trains in 1981

A different world entirely, well you wouldn't expect a clock face timetable would you?

Aberystwyth: Saturdays June 1st 1981 to September 19th 1981.

Source: British Rail All Lines Timetable, Table 75.


Departure	To	Arrivals	From
0515 DMU	Crewe arr 0830	0636 LHCS 2 nd class only	Shrewsbury dep 0410
0715 DMU	Crewe arr 1030	1122 DMU	Shrewsbury dep 0855
0900 DMU	Shrewsbury arr 1120 joins with 0737 from Pwllheli at Machynlleth.	N/A Coast DMU	Birmingham New St dep 0825
1007 LHCS 1 st & 2 nd Class	London Euston arr 1533	1256 LHCS 1 st & 2 nd Class	London Euston dep 0740
1145 DMU	Machynlleth arr 1210 connects with 1030 Pwllheli to Birmingham New St arr 1544	1510 LHCS 1 st & 2 nd Class	London Euston dep 1010
1400 DMU	Crewe arr 1710	1713 DMU	Wolverhampton dep 1348 splits at Machynlleth with portion going to Pwllheli arr 1848
1605 LHCS 1 st & 2 nd Class	Wolverhampton arr 1930	1852 DMU	Shrewsbury dep 1643
1800 LHCS 2 nd Class only	Wolverhampton arr 2114	2107 DMU	Machynlleth dep 2035 connects with 1730 from Chester to Pwllheli.
1900 DMU	Machynlleth arr 1931 connects with 1710 Pwllheli to Shrewsbury arr 2113	2241 DMU	Shrewsbury dep 2033

LHCS – Local Hauled Carriage Stock
DMU- Diesel Multiple Unit

A different timetable to today by many means! You'll note there were 9 trains a day between Machynlleth and Shrewsbury, slightly more than today, though the number of trains between Machynlleth and Aberystwyth are slightly less. Up until 1982 units were stabled overnight at Aberystwyth, negating the need to run early morning trains down from Machynlleth and late night runs back there. 3 different DMU's would have been stabled on a Friday night/Saturday morning, the signal box was still open and there were three operational platforms. 2 units would still have been in situ when the morning mail train arrived formed of the stock for the later 1007 to London Euston. Interestingly though it carried 1st class accommodation the 0410 from Shrewsbury was not advertised as such nor the 1800 to Wolverhampton, so in theory you could have travelled in the first class sections on a 2nd class ticket (1981 was pre standard class days too!). The 0825 DMU from Birmingham New St to Pwllheli had no connection to Aberystwyth but is shown for completeness; the 0740 from London Euston was just 42 minutes behind. Today passengers for the departure at Aberystwyth often crowd the doors of the arriving train before passengers get off: it was different in 1981. The LHCS that formed the DOWN Mail waited three and a half hours to return to Euston. The 1122 DMU arrival from Shrewsbury split with one unit heading back at 1145, the other unit staying till 1400. The 1256 and 1510 arrivals from Euston waited nearly 3 hours before returning. Also, locomotive release, shunting moves and multiple platform occupancy were the order of the day.

The different destinations also stand out. Today it's Birmingham International and Machynlleth on the destination displays; back in 1981 the variety was greater. There were 2 arrivals from London Euston but only one return. Splitting and joining took place at Machynlleth, but only a couple of times a day. There are only 2 trains through to Birmingham New St, however, the 0515, 0715 & 1400 DMU's to Crewe were timed to connect at Shrewsbury with the Inter City services to London Euston giving a sub 20 minute wait and connections to Chester, North Wales, Liverpool, Manchester and Scotland were available without changing at Shrewsbury by going through to Crewe. Connections toward Wrexham and Chester were much better than today. However the Marches line was in the Western Region and the Cambrian in London Midland and connections between the two regions were generally poor. The connectional highlights were the 32 minute wait at Shrewsbury from the 0715 from Aberystwyth for the Manchester Piccadilly to Newquay Holidaymaker Express. It left Shrewsbury 1005 and arrived at its destination in Cornwall at 1721 via the Severn Tunnel. The 1135 Paignton to Manchester Piccadilly arrived Shrewsbury at 1618 in time for the 1643 to Aberystwyth. Overnight travel from the north of England was also possible: the mail train from York departing at 2208 and arriving at Shrewsbury at 0303 and connecting with the 0410 to Aberystwyth. In the opposite direction the 1900 departure from Aberystwyth got you to Shrewsbury for 2113 in time for the 2250 to York; this arrived at 0311.

Today trains cross at Talerddig seven times a day. Back in 1981 Dovey Junction was used once, Machynlleth twice as were Talerddig and Westbury. Newtown saw three trains cross.



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MR. HERBERT WILLIAMS, Superintendent
of the Line, Cambrian Railways, Oswestry.

OSWESTRY, June, 1915. S. WILLIAMSON,
General Manager.

The way it was - Cambrian Railways advertisement from the Railway Magazine for July 1915. Cover price was 6d.

Reginald Dawson (1922 – 2012)

The Talyllyn Railway have kindly allowed us to publish this obituary of Reg Dawson, a Talyllyn member who was also a civil servant at the Department of Transport. It would appear that without the input of the Talyllyn, not only would the Cambrian Lines have closed but probably much of the remainder of the network too.

Reg Dawson became a member of the TRPS in 1955 when he was in the RAF. Having volunteered at the outbreak of war he started as a radio mechanic, but was discharged when it ended in 1945, and married Betty in 1946. After training as a teacher, he rejoined the RAF and was based in Jordan and then Hendon until he finally left the RAF as a Flight Lieutenant in 1960.

In August 1960 he secured at 38 a relatively senior position as a Principal Civil Servant in the Ministry of Transport. He was already interested in railways, although in his unfinished autobiography he describes his early interest in the TR as “more akin to industrial archaeology than railways”.

When he became responsible for pay policy in the nationalised industries, this brought him into contact with senior railway managers including the Operating Superintendent at Euston, which resulted in an invitation to join him on the first of many rides in the Divisional Manager’s saloon. From then on Reg sought all opportunities to be professionally involved with railways, but all too often found himself dealing with other transport modes and increasingly with European Union matters in Brussels.

Meanwhile, Dr Beeching had produced his infamous report in 1963, and the rail network carrying passengers shrank from 12,600 miles in that year to 9,000 miles in 1972, the year in which Reg was to be plunged into the greatest personal and moral crisis of his life, narrowly escaping at best dismissal from a secure and well paid job and at worst a prison sentence.

In 1965 Barbara Castle became Transport Minister and set about stabilising the shrinking British Rail network through legislation which, among other things, provided a subsidy for loss making services. In February 1968 Reg was summoned by the Permanent Secretary who told him that he was being promoted to head the division dealing with grants for unremunerative services. “So I was to do the work I coveted and get more money for doing so” Reg wrote later. As luck would have it, the Cambrian Coast Line had already been selected in 1967 as the guinea pig for this process.

Seeking ideas for preserving the Cambrian lines, which in 1968 delivered around 15% of the TR’s passengers as well as volunteers, Reg phoned me as Secretary of TR Co and TRPS and recently appointed Editor of *Railway Gazette International*. My office near Waterloo was not far from the Transport Ministry and we met for lunch to discuss tactics.

Dr Stewart Joy, an Australian economist, had been recruited to advise the Minister on implementing Barbara Castle’s new rail policy and was overseeing a pilot cost/benefit study of the Cambrian Coast Line. Reg was invited to join him on a visit in August 1968, and declaring his interest in railway preservation ensured that Joy got a footplate trip to Abergynolwyn as well. But on the way back to London Joy told Reg he was determined that the study should show a grant was not value for money, and expected the Shrewsbury - Aberystwyth line to close as well when it lost the Coast Line traffic. This opened Reg’s eyes to the fact that Barbara Castle’s pro-rail policy was being actively opposed by a substantial body of Transport Ministry officials.

These included the Permanent Secretary David Serpell who had persuaded Dr Beeching to be Chairman of British Rail, and went on to write a report on *Railway Finances* published in January 1983. This included the infamous Option A which would have cut BR’s network to an allegedly profitable 1,630 miles.

Sensing correctly that he was likely to be moved out of railways, Reg’s final fling was to surreptitiously arrange a modest grant enabling BR to resume Sunday services on the Cambrian from July 5 to September 6 1970. This produced a significant upturn in TR passengers on the 10 Sundays, and was a factor in thwarting the Transport Ministry’s efforts to close the Coast Line.

Before that, Reg had briefed me about a secret high level meeting of about 20 civil servants to produce a case for drastically shrinking the network without telling the Transport Minister or any other politician. I went to Chapman Pincher who duly published this story in the *Daily Express* on May 15 1970.

Matters rested there until June 1972 when Reg wandered into an adjacent office and spotted a blue A4 document called *Railway Policy Review*. It had a high security status with numbered copies, but after some soul searching he decided in late July to let me borrow but not copy it. This was frustrating because I knew Reg wanted to expose what was going on, but without the document the story had no credibility. So I had a choice: copy it or forget it.

Through August and September I explored ways to break the story with maximum impact, and finally got the *Sunday Times* to tackle it. They did a terrific job and it duly appeared on October 8 1972 with massive coverage and a huge map of lines likely to close.

Reg tells how he was questioned by security staff of what was now the Department of the Environment, which had absorbed transport. By then they knew whose office the copy had come from because the *Sunday Times* Chief Sub-Editor, who had interviewed BR Chairman Richard Marsh on Friday October 6, had handed over a photocopy which Marsh refused to hand back, and it had handwritten notes in it. Reg writes "I came as close to panic as I ever have done during my whole life." He was asked whether he knew me, and explained that we were both involved in the Talylyn Railway and had lunched together in London on October 2.

After the media had followed up the *Sunday Times* story, where my line was that I had been called in as an expert to help them deal with the policy review (which was true), things quietened down. Reg worried that one of the two journalists who happened to be in the *Railway Gazette* editorial office when he gave me the blue book might give the game away. Around that time Reg and I agreed that there should absolutely be no communication whatever between us until this crisis blew over.

On November 14 the *Daily Telegraph* announced that the Director of Public Prosecutions had told Scotland Yard to find the person responsible for stealing the blue book, raising hackles in Fleet Street. Sure enough, on November 29 Detective Superintendent Croucher and Detective Sergeant Whisker from Scotland Yard raided the *Railway Gazette* office looking for this document.

They were in our office for three hours searching for the blue book, but thanks to the *Daily Telegraph* warning it was well hidden. At that time we shared a room with the *Railway Magazine*, and the Editor John Slater courteously pointed out which filing cabinets and book shelves belonged to them and were therefore not covered by their search warrant!

The police action that really brought the national media to boiling point was that they also interviewed the Editor of the *Sunday Times* Harold Evans on December 7, and then told him and two of his reporters that they faced prosecution under the Official Secrets Act.

Shortly after that we realised that *Railway Gazette* phones were being tapped, not just in the office but also our homes. One result was that one of my journalists was visited at home twice by police who threatened to expose the fact that he was homosexual and lived with a male partner. They told him what they had found out by listening in to a call to a friend, proving conclusively that they had tapped his phone line.

I then arranged to meet TRPS member Phil Glazebrook at Euston who worked for the Post Office as a telephone engineer. He knew the engineer responsible for the private telephone exchange in our office block who was able to confirm this, and showed us the bright solder where the wires had had been installed. When after intensive preparation the *Sunday People* broke the phone tapping story on December 18 the press went berserk. Police were tapping press phones without Home Office clearance that was a legal requirement.

Because of a strike there were no national newspapers in the south on Monday, but northern editions did come out so I phoned our legal adviser and TRPS member Jeremy Wilkinson in Manchester who arranged for furious press reactions to this revelation to be copied and posted to me overnight. Leslie Huckfield MP, who we were absolutely certain was recorded in a conversation with me, secured an adjournment debate in the Commons.

All this time Reg was fearful that he would be charged under the Official Secrets Act or the Theft Act. So was I, but the real risk for me was being jailed for contempt of court if Reg was prosecuted and I refused to reveal who had passed the blue book to me. This would be the judge's decision with no protection of a jury vote. Happily, the phone tapping scandal broke the government's nerve. On January 17 1973 the Attorney-General announced that there was "insufficient evidence to charge anyone". But for Reg the moment of triumph came in July 1973 when the Transport Minister John Peyton assured MPs that "draconian cuts of the kind at one time rumoured following the escape of a

regrettably mobile document are not in the view of the government the answer to the industry's or the nation's problems."

Since 1972 a few passenger lines have closed but others have re-opened. The national network carrying passengers is still almost exactly the same, and successive governments have been so terrified of closing lines that when Sir Roy McNulty was charged in 2010 with carrying out his *Value for Money* study of the railways he was firmly told not to recommend closing lines or stations. So what Reg and the TRPS team actually achieved was railway preservation big time.

Back in the 1970s Betty and Reg had decided to move to Tywyn when he retired, and bought a plot of land not far from Wharf. Although he retired in 1982, they had to build a house and did not actually occupy it until 1993. Here they regularly hosted the ritual stuffing of the quarterly *Talyllyn News* when they were put into envelopes and pre-printed address labels applied – a task now undertaken by the printer. In 2003 they sold up and moved to a flat in Llandudno where a warden could keep an eye on them as Betty succumbed to Alzheimer's and Reg to "Parkinson's plus", to quote from a letter Reg sent me on September 5 2012. He also told me that they had decided to end their lives at Dignitas in Zurich, where they died peacefully together on September 17.

He wrote "My lack of skills confined my activity to things like stuffing the News, and my most useful action for the TR was probably to grant-aid Sunday trains on the Cambrian. But I love the TR and had a bitter-sweet final ride on it last week. Next time we shall be ashes to Brynglas." And so it was on October 1 with their four children and their families present.

Richard Hope

The view from Milepost 62 with the Brigadier

Oh dear - the Welsh Government's First Minister has been huffing and puffing about the possibility of cuts..... Dusty was standing on top of the Welsh dresser and has dived off with legs spread pretending to fly: she's now pointing to Cardiff on a map. What is she doing? Of course! It's funny how these cuts are now on the agenda since the Welsh Government found £50 million lying around with nothing to do in this age of austerity to buy Cardiff airport! Mrs Hart, their new Transport Minister has apparently made noises suggesting transport in rural areas is best served by driving: are we in for another misguided attack on rural railways? I hope not but we must be prepared. Already our bus services are under attack, The Memsahib returned home the other day with some roller skates. Apparently Mrs Lloyd at the Post Office told her "you'll need to have your skates on once the bus timetable is cut again, as you wont have so long in town to shop anymore"

Dusty and I have been looking at past attacks on our line and the arguments made.

The Coast Line was saved from closure in the early 1970's as the public inquiry into closing it came to the conclusion that doing so would cause hardship for rail users. The basic underlying reasons for this conclusion remain valid today. It's to do with rail and road geography along the south Gwynedd coast: basically the railway crosses over a number of estuaries and is the quickest means of north to south axis travel for the communities it serves, whereas the roads detour often for many miles inland before finding a river crossing. For example Llwyngwrl to Barmouth is 19 minutes by rail but 65 minutes by bus with a 7 minute change at Dolgellau. This would in particular hit school children travelling to High School hard, and though the numbers of them are not as high as yesteryear I'm told the primary school numbers are up and an upturn in secondary numbers and therefore season ticket holders on the coast is expected in the next few years. So not only would hardship result from closure but also the political storm prior to it and after would be intense. The Governments of the 70's, 80's and 90's all came to the conclusion that they would like to close railway lines, but the negative effects of the political storm, bad press and diversion of energy from other things would far outweigh any monetary benefits brought by closure which were in fact rather small. Of course today there would be the new context of a South Wales Labour government closing down lines in rural non Labour voting areas - a fine advert for devolution. The Ghost of Wilson's cabinet and the Central Wales line rides again?

Still there are those that even now that like to tell us that the replacement high quality coach is a better option than the train. I've always marvelled at this: if the coach was so good how come the once

a day National Express coach to Aberystwyth rarely manages double figure passenger counts yet the railway station sees the best part of a thousand journeys a day? Now if these misguided folk are serious they would of course plan a replacement coach network with the same capacity to carry the existing rail passengers plus some growth, wouldn't they? How many coaches would you need to carry nearly a million passengers a year over eighty odd miles of twisty single carriageway rural A-roads? Dusty has just brought up a fur ball at the thought of it, in fact I feel a bit queasy too... (30 minutes later)

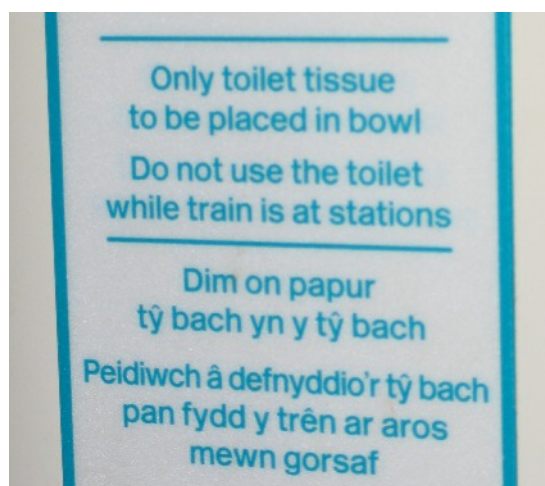
Thankfully the cleaning lady from the village was round to clear up the mess.

Dusty reckons you'd need 3 departures from Shrewsbury an hour with a mix of one express per hour to Aberystwyth via Llanidloes, one express to Newtown then stopper to Aberystwyth via Machynlleth and one stopper to Newtown. With spares and some spare capacity for the summer, maybe a fleet of 20 coaches like they use on the T4 Newtown to Cardiff Traws Cambria run, then there's the bus drivers, finding and building a suitable bus maintenance depot etc. The start up costs would be in the £ millions and then you'd need to replace the coaches every 5 years or so. Dusty says no one would use it: of course the overwhelming evidence is that people do not use bus replacements for trains in any thing like the same numbers as they use the trains. Please see the fate of the Beeching era bus replacements and all the Bustitution debates over the years. This is the key point: trains are more popular for long distance journeys and change of mode is a barrier to travel.

So what happens instead? Well if folk do travel they'll drive, and of course all that extra road traffic will lead to even more calls for the Pant/Llanymynech, Woolaston Cross to Buttington and Newtown bypasses to be built plus the replacement Dyfi Bridge. If you were sensible you'd be doing stuff to try and avoid all that expenditure, not encourage it! Aberystwyth University maybe is in a remote rural location, but a large part of its attractiveness is that it has a rail service. All those fee paying Chinese students who get in the wrong portion of the train at Shrewsbury may not be so keen to come, and I'm sure the Vice Chancellor's spreadsheet will not look so healthy without the rail link. It's not only the Higher Education sector in Ceredigion that benefits: there are some 150 railway employees on the Cambrian, most of whom are based out of Machynlleth all with relatively well paid jobs for the area; the tourist trade on the coast is forever on a knife edge, the visitors that come by rail or use rail once here make the difference with their spend. All in all the railway underpins the economy of North Ceredigion, western Montgomeryshire and southern Gwynedd. The value of the railway line is found outside the profit and loss spreadsheet of the railway in its multiplier effect. The numbers may be small beer to those in our metropolitan areas, but in rural areas such as ours they are crucial. Of course someone will probably educate Mrs Hart to the reality of the situation, hopefully before any silly suggestions are made, but will we then just end up playing the status quo game? No doubt we will be told how they have saved our line from malicious cuts imposed by Westminster, but stretch our minds back just ten years to 2003 and how the prospect of cuts were floated before the letting of the Wales and Border franchise. The fact that there were no cuts was supposed to distract us from the fact there were was no investment – a catastrophe we still live with today. This is the real dangerous game we face – years of more stagnation wrapped up as some miracle of deliverance.

Three Cocks Cottage

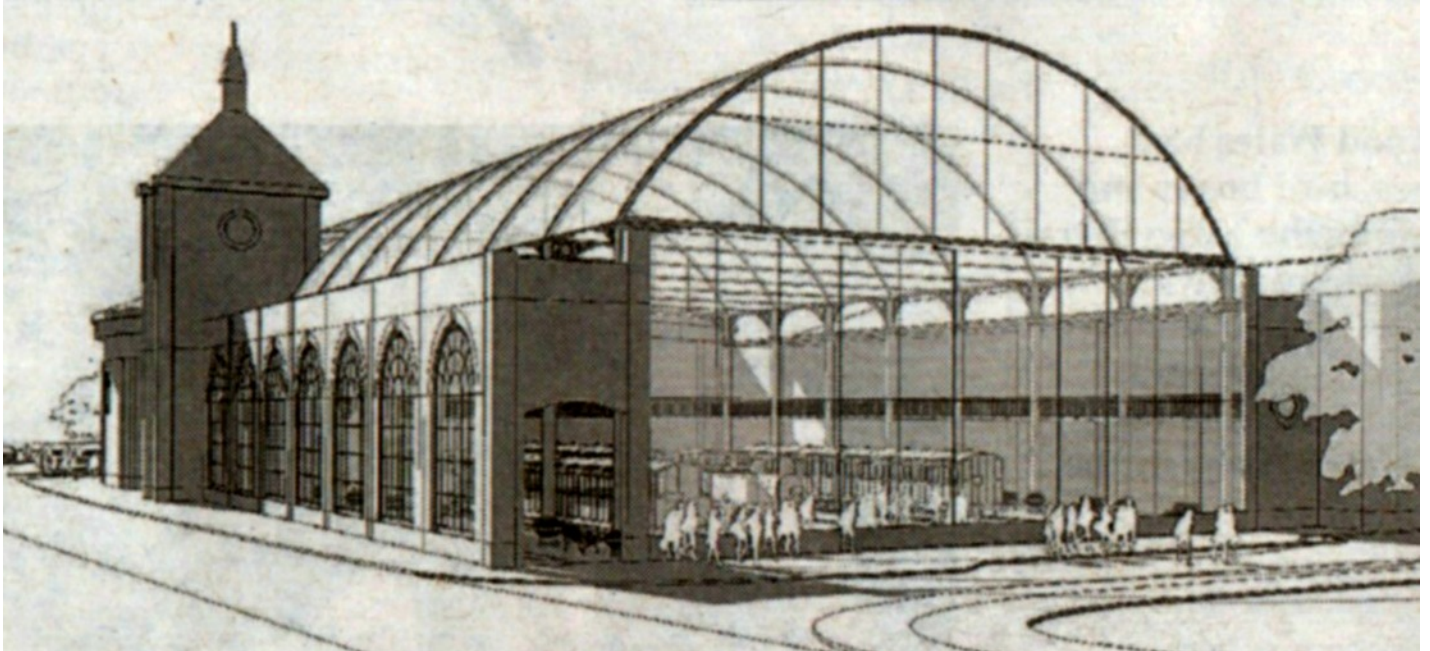
June 2013



In the refurbished 158s. Dim on papur tŷ bach yn y tŷ bach - "Only use little house paper in the little house". Not quite the same as the English, which refers to the toilet bowl!

Developments on the Vale of Rheidol Railway

A new museum building is planned for Aberystwyth, and will be built using part of the Victorian roof of London Bridge station. Sixteen columns and spandrels and fourteen elliptical beams, along with other elements, have been dismantled to form the barrel roof of the new building. [*Cambrian News*, 6th June 2013]



Artist's impression of the Vale of Rheidol museum. The workshop building is on the right. [*Cambrian News*, 6th June 2013]

New developments are appearing thick and fast. Both Rhiwfron and Rheidol Falls Halts have been provided with platforms, fencing and shelters; Nantyrone will shortly follow. Aberystwyth station now has a waiting shelter, and its own toilets. Four coaches have now been painted in a vintage GWR livery, previously carried by the 1922 open coaches when new (see cover picture).

A new venture is the provision of summer evening excursions. These will be run on Wednesdays during August, departing Aberystwyth at 1830 and returning at 2130. A dining option is available, with a variety of meals at Devil's Bridge. This has to be booked two days in advance; the cost for this being £25 for adults, and £9 for children. Cost without dining is £18 for adults and £5 for children. Booking can be made either by phone to 01970-625819 or online at www.rheidolrailway.co.uk

The railway is now asking for volunteers, specifically to help with the Station Restoration Project, developing the stations along the line. Either telephone the number above, or email to info@rheidolrailway.co.uk

Beeching and the Cambrian

Tim James

It was hardly surprising that by the early 1960's the railways in the UK were in financial trouble; since the 1854 and 1884 Railway and Canal Traffic Acts they had been used as an unpaid tool of Government macro economic policy. The railway companies could make a living out of it whilst they were still virtually a monopoly, however from 1919 onward they weren't. Two World Wars saw the railway being used virtually free of charge by Government too, and when the Government decided to fund railway modernisation in the mid 1950's they decided to buy a railway future based on the Railway and Canal Traffic Acts of the previous century, not the realities of the second half of the Twentieth Century. Government had ridden the railways to a financial stand still; a common carrier railway

reaching all corners of the Kingdom would need some form of subsidy as well as money for modernisation, something the new Transport Minister in 1958 would not countenance, as he wanted the money to build roads. Beeching's task was to make the railways pay: there was no strategic policy as to where or what their role in the UK would be, just that they had to cost the Government not a penny more. Perhaps the only surprising thing is that the report took so long to produce from when "reshaping" was announced by the politicians in 1960.

The many faults of the traffic surveys in April 1961 have been well discussed and outlined in my previous articles. The Reshaping report's authors really didn't have a proper picture of where people travelled from and to, or seasonal variation or crucially what **actually** happened when a station or line closed. As we saw in one of my earlier articles, when you crunched the numbers on the examples of uneconomic lines given in the report, it was clear that a large chunk of the savings claimed by closure were because it was assumed that over 75% of the contributory revenue generated by a closed line would still fill the railways coffers. Contributory revenue being the proportion of fares set aside for travelling off the line i.e. most of your fare from say Caersws to London would count from Shrewsbury onward, only a small percent on the Cambrian itself. However there was no mechanism put in place to ensure that people could railhead from the main line to their destinations and vice versa. The report's authors also assumed with their duplicate route theories that most traffic was from the large points to each other, rather than generated in between, thereby it would remain and costs would be saved by closing the duplicate route. The closing of the Beverley to York section of the Hull to York via Beverley line is a good example. It was assumed that 28% of the direct revenue would remain as passengers would opt to travel the longer via Selby route between Hull/Beverley and York and 87% of the lines contributory revenue would remain via rail heading. Now part of a strong local campaign for reopening, its supporters have pointed out for years that neither two figures actually materialised. The report's authors talked themselves into savings by closure perhaps out of desperation without knowing what would really happen.

So how does this fit with the Cambrian? Many assume that the Cambrian was kept as the resultant hole in the railway map was politically unacceptable, however the report's authors were not concerned about leaving huge holes in the UK rail network map - the Kyle of Lochalsh and Thurso/Wick routes were put up for closure, as was the Waverley route, coastal Lincolnshire, Central Wales line etc. Sections of the Cambrian coast line had over 10,000 passengers a week according to the April 1961 survey, which the report assumed was potentially viable, the northern and southern connections via Afon Wen and Lampeter were dotted bottom category lines (less than 5,000 passengers a week), but the two inland routes, the Cambrian mainline and the Barmouth to Ruabon line were hatched middle category routes (5000 to 10000 passengers a week). Duplicate route theory came to play with four routes to the coast as the report's authors assumed that goods and passenger traffic from closing three of the routes would divert via the one remaining one to the coast. I suspect the Cambrian mainline was closer to the magic 10,000 passengers a week mark than the Ruabon to Barmouth line, and therefore in the eyes of the authors had the potential to be viable if traffic diverted onto it. It was not a political decision but fitted in with the theory. It also ran through more population and connected better with the main network at Shrewsbury than via Bala. The modified services proposed for Aberystwyth to Shrewsbury would strip out the costs of all the smaller stations and speed up services which were after all to take more people to the coast that had once travelled via Caernarfon, Bala and Lampeter. The speeded up services would be more attractive and of course traffic at the village stations would railhead. An article in Modern Railways magazine from December 1964 tells us about the upturn in goods traffic on the Cambrian mainline following the withdrawal of through goods traffic on the other routes in May 1964. It was claimed an extra 6000 tons a week were being carried. The article waxes lyrical at the proof that Beeching's medicine had worked. Summer 1964 was the last period of full steam working and my research has uncovered the fact that a large chunk of this reported upturn was coal: a lot of it for the soon to be departed locomotives on the line itself. The rest consisted mainly of domestic coal as this was still the primary source of heating in homes and business, and this was an area that rail was competitive in and it had to be moved to Mid Wales long distances. The traffic gradually declined and lasted until 1983. The article also states that the summer traffic would all continue via Shrewsbury. A typical summer Saturday in the early 1960's saw around 7/8 holiday trains over the soon to be closed routes plus another 4 via Welshpool. Duplicate route theory saved the Cambrian mainline.

The report rubber stamped the closure of Moat Lane Junction to Brecon line. Whitchurch to Welshpool was also deemed a no hoper, but the higher passenger traffic between Welshpool and Oswestry and then to Gobowen in the 5000 to 1000 passengers a week category, and Oswestry station's status as high category revenue earning station perhaps needs further investigation. A green dot station like Oswestry had passenger receipts of over £25,000 per annum, the average passenger journey in 1961 generated 3 shillings or 15p in revenue. A green dot was equivalent to sales of c.167,000 tickets at the average price – Oswestry was one of just half a dozen green dot stations in the UK that were put up for closure and closed. Clearly the report's authors felt that with Gobowen on the Chester to Shrewsbury line being so close everyone would decamp and railhead as they would from the village stations in between Whitchurch and Welshpool. Today Gobowen has an hourly service and a station footfall of c.200,000; its car park is full and people are known to use it as a rail head. However as the only rail station for some 30,000 people in NW Shropshire & North Powys, including the 17,000 souls in Oswestry, the usage is perhaps not that great when you consider the average rail footfall per person per year in the UK is 25 and in Wales 16. If you drew a similar map of station revenue by category proportionately today the green dot would be a £1 million plus revenue station. Going back to 1933 passenger ticket sales at Aberystwyth were 97,000 at Oswestry they were 133,000. When British Railways Board put up the Gobowen to Oswestry shuttle for closure in 1966 it claimed that the direct passenger revenue on this two and quarter mile section was £4800 per annum, that's £2,133 per mile per year. In contrast the direct passenger revenue claimed for the Carmarthen to Aberystwyth line in 1964 was £18,900, just £338 per mile per year. Clearly the route out of Oswestry to Gobowen was not seeing two men and a dog but was used. At the 2d passenger revenue per mile assumed by the report this indicates that c.4920 passengers a week were using the Oswestry to Gobowen line (more than use Gobowen now). Not the magic break even number from the report, but the majority of the revenue chalked up by Oswestry station was being allocated elsewhere, the £4800 at very best was just 19% of the total revenue from 1961. Gobowen to Oswestry in itself would not have been the primary flow but travel elsewhere connecting with the Paddington to Birkenhead expresses at Gobowen as this was the quickest route to gain access to larger places rather than by the Whitchurch to Welshpool route. It would seem that Oswestry might be an example of a closure which lost money rather than saved it, which of course is one of the big reasons why the Beeching plan never achieved its aim of stopping the losses.

The railway line from Gobowen through Oswestry down to Llyncllys Junction and the Blodwell Quarries was kept open for freight until 1988 and the A483/A5 Oswestry bypass was built with automatic level crossings, Oswestry station itself being open for general freight until 1971. The actual cost of keeping Oswestry open to the Gobowen shuttle was probably not that high given that the track and permanent way had to be kept in situ, as well as the junction at Gobowen for freight. BRB did its usual hatchet job of supposed high costs at the TUCC hearing which were higher than even the report's theoretical model, but keeping just one platform with a run round loop and maybe given its revenue generating a lightly manned booking office open for parcels as well would not have been unrealistic, but BRB was expecting thousands of pounds of revenue to migrate a few miles away to Gobowen whilst doing absolutely nothing to ensure capturing it. The naïve belief in keeping contributory revenue and an abject failure to understand what actually happens when a line/station closed coloured the reports views. Savings by line closures whilst keeping the bulk of passengers and revenue was plainly wishful thinking, and trying to have one's cake and eat it. What of further south to Welshpool? For a rural line not running into a major population centre its usage at the 1961 survey was quite high. The 10 mile gap between Llyncllys and Buttington Junctions is not that far, a single unit shuttling roughly once an hour between Gobowen and Oswestry would spend a lot of its time lying idle with crew reading newspapers, the same unit could probably be diagrammed to make 6 or 7 trips a day to Welshpool and back, plus shuttles just to Oswestry from Gobowen, but we'd have to be in world where cost reduction and proper analysis of traffic and revenue and a will to keep things going were in place, not desperate assumption.

The most ridiculous closure proposal in Wales in the report was the Wrexham Central - New Brighton - Chester Northgate lines. What is now the Wrexham to Bidston line and the line between Dee Marsh Jnc and Chester Northgate were continuous lines in the traffic survey, with passenger traffic over 10,000 a week. Furthermore the route from Wrexham to Dee March Jnc. and from Mickle

Trafford Jct. to Dee Marsh Jct. carried over 10,000 tons of freight a week, mainly due to Shotton Steel Works. The report assumed that the passenger trains duplicated the ex GWR mainline between Wrexham and Birkenhead, and having two stations in Chester was also a duplication. Chester Northgate was another green dot station. The passenger trains from Wrexham to the Wirral remained, but much traffic was lost as the link into Chester was closed to passengers. But the line from Dee Marsh Jct. to Mickle Trafford Jct. remained open for freight until the early 1990's, though the short stub into Chester Northgate was closed. Today on the route which is now a cycle path the village of Blacon is a suburb of Chester City with a population of 20,000, and on the Welsh side built in the early 1990's the 2000 acre Deeside Industrial Estate employing thousands promotes itself as one of the premier business sites in the North West.

BR itself estimated that there were only ever £7 million of savings identifiable from line closures. Beeching thought there were £30 million which goes to show the fallacy of much of the line closure policy. In 2010 the residual BRB Board responsible for land and structures of ex railway lines that had not been sold off – another thing the report's authors didn't anticipate - had an annual budget of £7 million. 50 years on it would seem that residual liabilities have outweighed the savings made. A third of the network might have only carried 1% of the traffic, but it wasn't the main component of a deficit of over £80 million. The reality was that the bulk of the losses were a direct consequence of Government policy that kept the railways overstaffed and archaic, to deal with declining sundry goods traffic, not the existence of branch lines. The closures led to a period of declining passenger traffic on the network that remained, and encouraged the public and business to view it as yesterday's mode, undermining the line in the sand rationale behind the closures. Today some people still take the view that Beeching saved the railways, but his positive intent on investment in liner trains and InterCity services was ignored by Government, and his misguided line closure policy was all too readily accepted at face value, and extended further beyond his recommendations.

New Guardian Trains booking service

The *Guardian* has launched a booking service for rail travel across much of Europe, in partnership with Loco2, an online travel agent that focusses exclusively on train travel.

On the website

Guardian.co.uk/guardian-trains

it is possible to search for train times and prices across Europe, as the site integrates timetables from two of Europe's largest rail booking systems. Readers can then book their chosen rail journey via a link to Loco2.

It is not possible to include tail travel within the UK, but does feature train services departing from London. More European countries will be added in the future.

Lecture:- "Observations on the Modern British Railway Scene"

Ian Baxter will speak at the Corve Room, Ludlow Mascall Centre, Lower Galdeford, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1RZ. on Wednesday 18th September at 7.30 pm

Ian Baxter is a senior rail manager currently with Chiltern Railways and was formerly with Network Rail. He was involved with the infrastructure planning for the proposed hourly service for the Cambrian lines.

SARPA Meetings in 2013

Saturday 10th August	1145	Borth	Railway Hotel
Tuesday 3rd September	1845	Caersws	Red Lion Hotel
Saturday 12th October	1100	Machynlleth	White Lion AGM
Tuesday 5th November	1745	Aberystwyth	Cambria, Pier St.
Tuesday 3rd December	1830	Newtown	Sportsman

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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