

Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association

Newsletter No. 99

SUMMER 2026



Old and new in the yard at Machynlleth

In the yard, on the 28th April at 1617, a road tanker is delivering diesel fuel. Both the old, a 158 unit on the right, and the new, a 197 unit on the left, may be in line for refuelling. The 197, which is equipped with ERTMS, is being used for driver training. The first 197 to appear on the Cambrian was in 2022; it is hoped that they will replace the 158s in September. Photograph: Jim Wall.

NEGES GAN Y CADEIRYDD/CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Mae'r Cambrian wedi dioddef cryn dipyn o ganlyniad i'r tywydd poeth diweddar. Mae problemau wedi bod gyda'r systemau awyru ar yr unedau 158 ers blynyddoedd ond yr haf hwn mae'r sefyllfa wedi gwaethygu, gyda dim ond ychydig wasanaethau bob dydd ar adegau. Mae SARPA wedi holi ers blynyddoedd ynglŷn â chynlluniau Trafnidiaeth Cymru i ddygymod â thywydd eithafol a newidiol iawn – mae'n eironi creulon bod digwyddiadau o'r fath yn taro'r rheilffyrdd, sydd i fod yn rhan o'r datrysiad i leihau allyriadau carbon.

Fodd bynnag, mae gwaith SARPA yn parhau. Er enghraifft, codwyd pryderon am ddiffyg pwyntiau cymorth, neu bwyntiau cymorth diffygiol, ar sawl orsaf ar y Cambrian. Roedd hyn yn achosi problemau i deithwyr er enghraifft pan oedd trenau'n cael eu canslo a nag oedd modd i deithwyr canfod wybodaeth am y trefniadau bysus. Yn dilyn y pwysau hyn, mae gan Drafnidiaeth Cymru gynlluniau i osod neu uwchraddio pwyntiau cymorth ar hyd y Cambrian erbyn 2028-2029.

Bydd SARPA hefyd yn cadw llygad ar ddyfodiad yr unedau 197. Fel y dywedwyd troeon dros y blynyddoedd mae'r symudiad o ddau dŷ bach ym mhob uned i un yn debygol o achosi problemau, yn arbennig am fod tai bach yr unedau 197 yn ddrwggenwog am dorri yn ystod teithiau. Bydd rhaid felly i ni sicrhau bod Trafnidiaeth Cymru yn cadw at eu gair i redeg yr unedau 197 mewn parau y rhan fwyaf o'r amser.

Yn olaf, mae Gweinidog Trafnidiaeth newydd yn Llywodraeth Cymru a chabinet newydd yn San Steffan. Edrychwn ymlaen felly at gyfleoedd i barhau i bwysu am fuddsoddiad ychwanegol yn y Cambrian.

The Cambrian has suffered a lot as a result of the recent hot weather. There have been problems with the ventilation systems on the Class 158 units for years, but this summer the situation has worsened, with only a few services each day at times. SARPA has asked for years about Transport for Wales' plans to cope with extreme and very changeable weather - it is a cruel irony that such events affect the railways, which are supposed to be part of the solution to reduce carbon emissions.

However, SARPA's work continues. For example, concerns were raised about the lack of help points, or faulty help points, at several stations on the Cambrian. This has caused problems for passengers, for example when trains were cancelled and passengers couldn't obtain information about the bus arrangements. Following this pressure, Transport for Wales has plans to install or upgrade help points along the Cambrian by 2028-2029.

SARPA will also keep an eye on the arrival of the Class 197 units. As has been said many times over the years, the move from two toilets in each unit to one is likely to cause problems, especially because the toilets on the 197s are notorious for failing during journeys. We will, therefore, have to ensure that Transport for Wales keeps their word to run the 197s in pairs most of the time.

Finally, there is a new Transport Minister in the Welsh Government and a new cabinet in Westminster. We therefore look forward to opportunities to continue to argue for additional investment in the Cambrian.

Jeff Smith, Chair of SARPA

RAIB Report 08/2026 June 2026 on the Collision between two passenger trains near Talerddig, Powys, 21 October 2024

Summary (extract)

At around 19:26 on Monday 21 October 2024, train reporting number 1J25, the 18:31 service from Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth, collided with train 1S71, the 19:09 Machynlleth to Shrewsbury service. The collision took place near Talerddig, Powys. Both train services were operated by Transport for Wales Rail Limited (TfWRL). The trains were operating on Network Rail's Cambrian lines. This is predominantly single track, with passing loops provided at intervals to allow trains travelling in opposite directions to pass each other. Train 1J25 had been approaching the loop at Talerddig, with an intended stopping position within the loop, so that train 1S71 could pass it. However, train 1J25 did not stop as intended, continuing through the passing loop and into the single line section on which train 1S71 was approaching. The head-on collision occurred while train 1J25 was travelling at approximately 39 km/h (24 mph) and train 1S71 was travelling at approximately 11 km/h (6 mph) in the opposite direction. At the point where the collision occurred, train 1J25 had travelled around 1,080 metres beyond its intended stopping position. A passenger travelling on train 1J25 suffered fatal injuries as a consequence of the collision. Three people on this train were also seriously injured, including the train's guard, and 18 other people received minor injuries. The driver of train 1S71 suffered serious injuries, and the remaining five people on this train all suffered minor injuries. Neither train derailed, but extensive damage was caused to both trains. Damage was also caused to railway infrastructure in Talerddig loop. The railway remained closed until 28 October 2024.

RAIB's investigation found that the accident was caused by train 1J25 passing its authorised stopping position and entering the single line beyond, which was occupied by the approaching train 1S71. Train 1J25 passed its authorised stopping position due to a combination of three factors. These were that the wheel-rail adhesion in the area approaching the Talerddig loop was low, although not exceptionally so for this area during October. In addition, the two sanding systems fitted to train 1J25 which could have mitigated the prevailing low adhesion conditions, and avoided the accident, did not dispense sand. The automatic sander did not function, probably due to the presence of electrical faults in its control circuit, while the manually operated emergency sander was not activated

by the driver. The third factor was that the approach speed of train 1J25 towards the eastern entry to Talerddig loop was such that the deceleration required to slow the train for the loop could not be sustained with the available wheel-rail adhesion. Having passed its intended stopping position within Talerddig loop, train 1J25 entered the single line beyond. This area had exceptionally low wheel-rail adhesion and was on a steep downhill gradient. This meant that, even though the brakes on train 1J25 remained applied, the train did not decelerate as it approached train 1S71. There were no engineered mitigations to prevent train 1J25 entering the occupied single line in the event of an overrun.

<https://www.gov.uk/raib-reports/report-08-slash-2026-collision-between-two-passenger-trains-near-talerddig>

NEWS IN BRIEF

How to pass three trains at Barmouth

With the Brittanic Explorer in the down platform at Barmouth, how do you cross two service trains?

Both service trains are brought into the other platform, but not coupled together. Then passengers and crew are swopped between the trains, so that the up train can return as the down train back to Pwllheli, and the down train can become the up train back to the midlands.

John Rogers

25th May Sadly John Rogers leader of the Cambrian Coast Line Action Group has recently died, John organised the March to Downing Street in November 1972 to save the line.

Aberystwyth

On Saturday 18th April at Aberystwyth, engineering work between Shrewsbury and Birmingham saw diagrams altered and the 1030 Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth and the 1230 return working were operated as a 4 car set. Photographs: Gareth Marston.





Left luggage facilities at the Express Cafe across Alexandria Road from the station.

Herring gulls have been nesting on the ballast between the tracks. On the 22nd June there were fledglings living dangerously close to the tracks. Photograph: Denis Bates.



A report on pedestrianising parts of the town centre being made public has been deferred until after the Senedd election. This has drawn an almost hysterical response on social media from “motorists” thinking their “freedoms” are being eroded and Aberystwyth will become a ghost town” without people being able to park right outside every shop. However, experience elsewhere in the UK and rest of Europe is that these schemes usually result in more footfall for the businesses in the pedestrian zone and boosts the local economy. Plans are very unlikely to include Alexandria Road outside the station as this is where the bus station is, and road access to the station for Taxis and people being dropped off and collected.

National Rail and Road Usage

DfT's own figures shows that National Rail Usage for the first 4-week period in 2026/2027 (up to 3rd May 2026) was 120% of usage in the same period pre covid in 2019 - confirming that rail use has not only recovered from the covid pandemic but grown. The same statistics show that road usage whilst it recovered to pre-covid levels far quicker has remained static for around 4 years with it being around 103% of pre-covid levels.

The DfT had stated that it expected National Rail Use to recover to 84% of pre covid levels..... Meanwhile bodies like Highways England have submitted many (and got many approved) business cases for road schemes that have depended on predictions of rising traffic levels to achieve the positive cost benefit ratio the schemes claim they have to get approved. With road traffic in fact flat lining despite Westminster

having spent a decade and half pursuing policies to increase road usage there seems to be a disconnect between transport spending priorities and what is happening in the real world.

Britannic Explorer

Following strong representation from SARPA regarding the cancellation of service trains to accommodate its runs in 2025, the 2026 runs of what is described as "Britain's most expensive train" have been retimed so as not to lead to services being cancelled. Trial runs took place in late March, early/mid-April and fare paying runs in May.

Marches loco reliability impacting on Cambrian

TfW have formally agreed to search for replacements for the Class 67 locos they use to haul the Manchester to Cardiff and Holyhead to Cardiff services with 1st class and restaurant facilities. The reliability of these locos, in conjunction with the ex-East Coast Mainline MK4 coaches, has been a lot lower than expected, with numerous occasions of diagrams having to be worked by Class 197 DMU's that lack 1st class and restaurant facilities, meaning services are not run as advertised. There have been multiple complaints of people sometimes travelling quite long distances wanting to travel 1st class and use the restaurant facilities and being let down so TfW have added a section on their website so passengers can check if their operating – which is hardly ideal!

<https://tfw.wales/service-status/first-class-service-availability>

This causes a knock-on effect as the Class 197's are then not available in the quantity required to run the full timetable elsewhere, meaning that on occasion Class 158's have been commandeered from Cambrian diagrams to cover for shortfalls elsewhere. Monitoring of publicly available websites like Real Time Trains (that show what units are running services) often shows that short forming and cancellations on the Cambrian coincide with TfW being unable to run the advertised service along the Marches with the planned units and diagrams. The practice of pinching resources from the Cambrian to cover failures elsewhere didn't really happen under ATW and has been a considerable and unwelcome downside of TfW since 2018.

TfW Head James Price confirms TfW are actively looking at ordering additional rolling stock

James Price has confirmed that the 65% uplift in capacity across the franchise finally being delivered this year will all be used up by 2030 if current growth rates continue – extra capacity will be needed. James has made it clear that that any additional stock to boost capacity needs to be ordered in the next 12-18 months, given lead times to be ready when it's needed. He's also stated that you can't encourage growth and then just stand still – a big criticism that was obvious in the original 2018 franchise plans.

TfW have been in discussion with Welsh Government – a welcome common-sense approach thinking ahead. This issue will be an acid test of how the new Plaid Cymru Cardiff Bay administration deals with real pressing issues from the real world they can control.

Machynlleth

A small quantity of Class 197 units (3) have been seen at Machynlleth depot almost on a permanent basis since late March. They are there for staff training purposes and have been observed making training runs in all 3 directions. The May engineering closures did work associated with their full introduction.

The last of the 77 Class 197's ordered have been accepted into service by TfW. The ones accepted but not in regular service can be seen parked up in the sidings between Holyhead station and the town centre – a nice steel footbridge with public access built with EU money as part of a so-called regeneration project around 20 years goes over the siding giving close views.

Bow St- Aberystwyth stations car park?

The car park here is often near full and observations seem to confirm that it's being used by people who in the past would have used Aberystwyth station, taking advantage of the fact that car parking near Aberystwyth station is at a premium and finding a free space a few miles away. Often customers using Bow St have tickets from further afield to/from Aberystwyth and many appear to being collected or dropped off there perhaps just for one leg of their journey.

Shrewsbury

TfW laid on an additional later train on the Saturday night of the Loop festival (Saturday 3rd May 2026) departing Shrewsbury @ 2303 it called at Welshpool, Newtown and Caersws terminating at Machynlleth (0020). Whilst welcome and part of a general pattern of supporting events across the Wales and Border network by TfW, advertising of this service was limited. If these services are to be a success and repeated, people do need to know about them.

Cardiff Bay

The previous Labour Welsh Government announced that it too would not be raising rail fares from 1st March 2026 following Westminster's lead. The announcement was left very late (it didn't make the 22nd February deadline for SARPA 98!) with many suspecting the timing was pitched at trying to support Welsh Labour's Senedd campaign. Whilst a welcome move, after literally decades of inflation and above inflation price rises, the fundamental issue of fare reform has still not been tackled. Adding tap and go facilities in SE Wales and NE Wales has simply added to complexity and created more layers with other areas missing out on the benefits within the zones.

Meanwhile in Berlin

...the Deutschland Ticket is now in its 4th year. The price has increased to 63EURO per month (about £55) and gives unlimited travel on all regional public transport (bus, underground, trams, local/regional heavy rail) but not InterCity services. With 12 million subscribers nationwide (around 1 in 6 of the adult population) it generates revenues equivalent to two thirds of state rail operator Deutsch Bahn's total revenue.

Birmingham New St

Network Rail are replacing all the escalators in the station that date from the 2015 rebuild that have proved troublesome over the years.

Did you know that the station is built on the site of the Victorian city's slum housing and red-light district, called "The Froggery" due to its marshy nature? City fathers were glad of the clearance. Construction started in 1846 and the station was opened in 1854 replacing several smaller termini stations on the outskirts of the city centre, including Curzon St where the HS2 terminus is being built now.

Midland Metro opened its east side extension as far as Millenium Point in April.

Senedd 2026 Election

The election brought a change in constituency boundaries, voting system and representation. No fewer than 7 Senedd Members representing 2 new "super" constituencies (Gwynedd Maldwyn and Ceredigion Penfro) which have the Cambrian line in them now form part of the ruling Plaid Cymru administration. Two of them are based in locations with stations on our line: in Aberystwyth long standing Senedd Member **Elin Jones** and ex-Mayor **Karen Ferguson** plus **Elwyn Vaughan** the now ex Powys County Councillor for Glantwymyn (the rural parish to the east of Machynlleth which had Cemmaes Road station in it).

Elin Jones sent campaign leaflets out promising that Plaid Cymru would introduce new trains on the Cambrian line. Amazingly new Class 197 DMU's were already undergoing testing and staff training based at Machynlleth and are due to be in service on the line in September. Elin will not have to wait long to claim credit!

Plaid have shaken up the Ministerial portfolios with transport responsibility previously under the Cabinet Member for Transport and North Wales and now just a Deputy Minister for Transport – a Mark Hooper from the Vale of Glamorgan who is an accountant with a background in community companies and is described as a "leading thinker on independence" – sources down south indicate he has made comments in the past stating that the Welsh Government owning Cardiff airport is bonkers; tolls should be reintroduced on the Severn bridge and the M4 at peak times; and car usage curtailed.

Former Conservative MS Russell George stood as an Independent in Gwynedd Maldwyn but failed to be re-elected. Russell and his office staff have probably done more than any other Senedd politician/office staff to raise constituency concerns about rail services. He also attended SARPA meetings, and his input will be missed. The party political dismissive childlike responses he got from Labour Ministers to legitimate concerns from his constituents left a sour taste in the mouth.

The 5 opposition MS's in the two constituencies are from Reform and the Conservatives – none of whom lives near our line. Both parties campaigned heavily as a main issue as they did in Wales in the 2024 General Election – when neither party won a seat – on reversing the 20mph road speed limits, "ending the war on the motorist" and building more roads. It's unusual for transport issues to feature as a main issue in Senedd or Westminster elections and these parties pitched them, especially the reversing 20mph limits as a referendum on a "deeply unpopular policy". However, using the party's own criteria these anti safety/pro motoring /oil consumption policies have been clearly rejected by the Welsh electorate once more.

It ain't half hot mum

Battery Sergeant Major Williams would have been getting hot under the collar this summer as a series of heat domes caused by global warming stretched up into western Europe from North Africa. Temperatures over 30 degrees were recorded for the first time in May, June and July in Wales and England. This impacted on services over the second May bank holiday, not helped by a fatality on the line near Shrewsbury on the 22nd, leading to cancellations and bus replacements, and lightning strikes on the North Wales Coast causing delays to services to Birmingham which then impacted on the Cambrian. There were also point failures. People who choose to drive to the coast were rewarded with a four-hour long traffic jam to get from Bontddu into Barmouth on Bank Holiday Monday. Worse was to come with units being out of service with faulty air conditioning units causing mass cancellations..

Record temperatures expose weakness

Questions were raised all over the UK about network resilience in the face of climate change and the railway's capacity to deal with peak crowds. Questions the DfT and Transport Secretary had no answer for, apart from the transport minister going on about nationalisation and unveiling new liveries for the trains.

Change of Prime Minister

Keir Starmer resigned as Prime Minister - ex-Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham has succeeded him. Mr Burnham, who has experience of being a cabinet Minister in the Blair and Brown administrations, brings a track record of success in Manchester, including understanding that improved public transport is the key to functioning modern city regions, and is a big supporter of extending HS2 to Manchester. He also strongly believes in devolving spending away from Whitehall to city region

Introduction of the Class 197 trains

The new 197 trains are due to be introduced in service on Thursday 17th September.



On a station seat in Machynlleth. Photograph: Denis Bates.

SUMMER 2026 TIMETABLE 18/05/2026 TO 12/09/2026

This should be the last timetable where Class 158's operate on our line. Below is what should happen Mondays to Saturdays on the Cambrian over the summer. As you can see certain services are booked as 4 car and others not. Casual travellers can be confused as to what number of carriages should be on a particular service, generally it's the services that split/join between Aberystwyth/Pwllheli that run as 4 car between Machynlleth and Shrewsbury with some minor variation. People have been known to observe 2 car trains running and draw the wrong conclusion that something has gone wrong when in fact it's one of the more lightly loaded services running they've seen.

DOWN direction from Shrewsbury

0727 to Aberystwyth	2 car
0927 to Aberystwyth & Pwllheli	4 car to Machynlleth then splits 2 to Aberystwyth/ 2 to Pwllheli
1027 to Aberystwyth	2 car
1127 to Aberystwyth & Pwllheli	4 car to Machynlleth then splits 2 to Aberystwyth/ 2 to Pwllheli
1327 to Aberystwyth & Pwllheli	4 car to Machynlleth then splits 2 to Aberystwyth/ 2 to Pwllheli
1527 to Aberystwyth & Pwllheli	4 car to Machynlleth then splits 2 to Aberystwyth/ 2 to Pwllheli
1630 to Aberystwyth	2 car
1729 to Aberystwyth & Pwllheli	4 car to Machynlleth then splits 2 to Aberystwyth/ 2 to Pwllheli
1830 to Aberystwyth	2 car
1930 to Aberystwyth	2 car M-F/ 4 car Saturday
2032 to Aberystwyth	2 car
2150 to Aberystwyth	2 car

In addition

0441 Machynlleth to Aberystwyth	4 car
0538 Machynlleth to Aberystwyth	2 car
0647 Machynlleth to Aberystwyth	2 car M-F/ 4 car Saturday
0648 Welshpool to Aberystwyth	2 car

Coast Line – all trains Mondays to Saturdays (8 each way) are booked as 2 car except:

Peak Summer from 20/07/2026 to 29/08/2026.

1055 Machynlleth to Pwllheli	4 car
1537 Pwllheli to Machynlleth	4 car

UP direction from Aberystwyth

0517 to Birmingham International	4 car to Welshpool detaches 2 cars to form 0648 service to Aberystwyth/ 2 car between Welshpool and Shrewsbury/ joins with 0638 from Crewe then 4 car between Shrewsbury and Birmingham International.
0617 to Shrewsbury	2 car
0727 to Birmingham International	2 car M-F /4 car Saturday
0827 to Shrewsbury	2 car
0927 to Birmingham International	2 car to Machynlleth joins with 0724 ex Pwllheli then 4 car
1127 to Birmingham International	2 car to Machynlleth joins with 0934 ex Pwllheli then 4 car
1227 to Shrewsbury	2 car
1327 to Birmingham International	2 car to Machynlleth joins with 1137 ex Pwllheli then 4 car
1527 to Birmingham International	2 car to Machynlleth joins with 1338 ex Pwllheli then 4 car
1727 to Birmingham International	2 car to Machynlleth joins with 1537 ex Pwllheli then 4 car
1827 to Shrewsbury	2 car
1927 to Birmingham New St	2 car
2027 to Machynlleth	2 car
2127 to Machynlleth	2 car M-F/ 4 car Saturday
2227 to Machynlleth	2 car
2327 to Machynlleth	2 car



ERTMS fitted 197 units in store at Holyhead, destined for service on the Cambrian lines. Photograph Tim Rogers.

THE GREEN LIGHTING OF AN EASY ANSWER TO IMPROVING PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN THE PEAK DISTRICT IS EASILY REPEATABLE IN MID WALES IF THE WILL IS THERE

In the Lake District Avanti West Coast in conjunction with Stagecoach have made permanent a trial from the previous two summers, whereby Keswick was created as a destination in rail planners, and passengers on through tickets can use a connecting express bus from the West Coast Mainline station at Penrith to complete the journey in around 45 minutes. The trial has boosted both rail and bus usage, so much so that Stagecoach bus is now half hourly in frequency and run by double deck buses with long operating hours. Keswick of course suffered the trauma of losing its rail link in 1972 and often comes up on the list of lines that should be reopened. Whilst its year-round population is not large at c.5K it's a honeypot for the tourist industry in the north lakes and the local roads suffer much with traffic congestion in the summer peak and year-round. It's a good example of doing something worthwhile that improves things without the eye watering spend on fixed infrastructure that afflicts the UK now – some relatively minor interventions may be necessary but we're not talking anything at scale. However, this example is only along the route of a closed railway line to a hotspot of demand, and not inclusive of an entire area which is the case further south. The good people at Hope Valley Climate Action have done a brilliant job at getting the East Midlands Combined Authority to put in a detailed bid to the DfT and secure funding for a national demonstrator trial to transform rural public transport in the Hope Valley in the Peak District between Manchester and Sheffield. It's not rocket science or radical, it's just international best practice in public transport (hence the reference to Switzerland) and applying it to a rural area in Britain.

- Regular, easy-to-remember hourly bus services.
- Guaranteed connections between buses and trains.
- Simpler tickets that work across operators.
- Better access to jobs, education and healthcare.
- A realistic alternative to driving for visitors to the Peak District.

Underpinning this and the basic building block on which the rest is laid, is the hourly all stations rail service that already runs through the Hope Valley.

They note that current poorly integrated bus services at low frequency, whilst they provide “socially necessary” services for the people who use them, consume public subsidy and are lightly used, that integration when it happens drives increasing ridership and revenue for both modes (see Keswick). “A rural corridor with modest demand can justify high frequency when it sits inside an integrated network rather than operating in isolation”. The subsidy initially will go up but after a while the increased revenue will reduce it and the subsidy spend is then on something effective and used, rather than to cart around fresh air on socially necessary lightly used services. There also needs to be a change in operator mindset away from maximising limited vehicle/driver resources usage towards a whole system resourced adequately approach.

For full details see <https://hopevalleyclimateaction.org.uk/plans-published-for-mini-switzerland-a-national-demonstrator-to-transform-rural-public-transport/>

The problems and issues in today's provision the authors outline in the Hope Valley are found all over the UK, and are familiar themes to us here at SARPA: they are not just issues within national parks. We are at last hearing the right sort of noises from Welsh Government at least about bus/rail integration, and are moving to better public control over them reversing bus deregulation. I've mentioned the Swiss *Taktfahrplan* several times over the years and am an avid supporter – after all it's worked on the continent for several decades – since my first year at High School more than four decades ago! Other countries copy it or at least parts of it. Countries whose economies are doing better than our car centric one – we've got key elements of it already in place or nearly in place in many parts of Shropshire and Mid Wales:

- The underpinning hourly rail service – we're just a few extra trains a day away from that between Shrewsbury and Aberystwyth – you're probably also going to need some medium/long term intervention for engineering/freight/charter paths, but you can go hourly passenger now.
- Shrewsbury's bus station is as close as it can practically get to its railway station given physical constraints. It's a sub 5-minute walk from the station.
- The 552/553 bus services from Shrewsbury to Minsterley that serve the closed station of Hanwood on our line is already very frequent and just needs some clockface/timing tidying up of the timetable.
- There's an hourly bus service – the X76 between Newtown, Abermule, Welshpool and Oswestry that's uncoordinated with rail.
- Machynlleth station is literally a stone's throw from a national park with an A road into it at the bottom of the station drive.
- The Trawscymru T2 service is hourly between Aberystwyth and Machynlleth until early evening via the inland A487 road not coordinated with rail.
- Aberystwyth's bus station is right outside its railway station.
- The Trawscymru T1 service between Aberystwyth and Carmarthen is almost hourly all day and already coordinated with rail.

This isn't meant to be a comprehensive review of how we implement it, but shows that we're not actually too far away from having the bulk of the basic framework/structure in place with relatively minimal effort. Other places/routes/services need more work on them and of course I've not looked at the coastline. We've talked about an hourly service on the Cambrian mainline for over a quarter of century now. What better way to get there than to make it the cement that puts the entire public transport offering in Mid Wales on a usable and sustainable footing? It's building on success and from a growing industry it needs a tiny fraction of the funding and political capital that was thrown at the failure of rail privatisation to succeed.

And what of Carno station? Which rarely features on anyone's list of reopenings....as I've pointed out to Montgomeryshire and Glyndwr Member of Parliament Steve Witherden if you live in Llanidloes (the largest settlement in Montgomeryshire without a station) a station in Carno is "about as much use as tits on a chicken" to use a local phrase. A station in Carno also does nothing in Llanfyllin, Four Crosses, Glantwymyn etc., whereas an integrated co-ordinated bus/rail network as outlined above does! The Hope Valley demonstrator is costing £7 million; Bow St station which opened 6 years ago cost £9.2 million. "The longest stretch of line in Wales without a station" simply isn't an argument when you compare inclusivity, coverage and cost. The reality is a *Taktfahrplan* covering the Upper Severn Valley and the surrounding areas will serve c 40K people versus a few hundred at Carno station for a comparable cost. If you're lobbying for improvements, selling them for the many instead of the few is an easier gig.

Gareth Marston Newtown June 2026

MEMBERSHIP

The membership fee for the forthcoming year (up to 31 December 2026) is £15.00 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 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

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

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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 (Acrop)	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
Talylyn Railway	www.talyllyn.co.uk/
Welshpool and Llanfair Railway	www.wllr.org.uk/
Welsh Highland Heritage Railway	www.whr.co.uk/
Fairbourne Railway	www.fairbournerrailway.com/
Borth Station Museum	www.borthstationmuseum.co.uk
Real Time Trains	realtimetrains.co.uk
Live Rail Record	https://live.rail-record.co.uk

MONTHLY MEETINGS

August	Thursday 20th 19:00	Monty Club, Newtown.
September	Saturday 19th 11:15	Wynnstay Hotel, Machynlleth.
October	Saturday 17th 11:30	Vestry, Capel Y Traeth, Criccieth.
November	Saturday 14th 11:45	Town Council Offices, The Presbytery, Aberystwyth.
December	Saturday 5th 11:30	The HIVE, Shrewsbury.

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

Copy deadline for the next newsletter is 22nd October 2026