

Shrewsbury
Aberystwyth
Rail
Passengers'
Association



Newsletter
No. 58
July 2012



Platform 3 at Shrewsbury in use. The 1527 departure to Aberystwyth waits for a connection on Monday 9th July 2012. Photograph Denis Bates.

Chairman's Message.....	3
News in Brief.....	4
The view from milepost 62 with the Brigadier.....	7
Llanbadarn Crossing accident report.....	8
A "GWR" candle lantern.....	9
Maltese interlude.....	9
Hourly services - East Anglia and the Cambrian.....	10
Cambrian Railways Partnership Development.....	12
A Wales Infrastructure Plan - are you sure?.....	13
Beeching and (not so much of) the Cambrian Part 2.....	14
SARPA Meeting Schedule for 2012.....	18
Websites.....	19
Useful addresses.....	20
Officers of the Association.....	20

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 2012) £7.00 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 subscribe to the Shrewsbury Rail Users Federation and 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 c/o Angus Eickhoff: The Forge, Whitehouse Bridge, Welshpool, Powys.

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.

Secretary and Treasurer

These positions are currently vacant. If you wish to volunteer for either position, please contact the Chairman.

Correction to the last issue's cover photograph,: The view of the King at Severn Bridge Junction, was taken on the 13th May 2006, by Angus Eickhoff.

Acting Chairman's Message

First of all, some good news on fares if you're travelling from/to London on a leisure trip or visiting friends and family staying overnight: there's no reason why you can't do it for less than £50 from the Upper Severn Valley anyway. Chiltern Railways are offering off peak returns between Birmingham and Marylebone for just £25. If you travel out by any train except the first train in the morning from Aberystwyth, and walk the 5 minutes over to Moor St station in Birmingham and time your return to avoid the peak evening departures (1600-1900) from Marylebone it's easy, and what's more you don't have to book in advance, just buy a return to Birmingham New St and buy again on arrival at Moor St. Normal discounts with railcards apply. You don't have to go online or book in advance.

In 2007 the Welsh Assembly Government published a document entitled the Wales Rail Planning Assessment that predicted usage and therefore investment needs on Welsh railways for the period 2005 to 2026 – it's still on their website. The low growth expected on the Cambrian raised a few eyebrows, given the overall growth seen in the years preceding. It predicted growth of 41% by 2026. It's just been confirmed that for 2011/2012 Financial Year the rail sector grew by 7% across the UK: if the Cambrian Mainline is anywhere near the national average then we have already surpassed 41% growth since 2005 on our line – 14 years early. Indeed all over the UK there are examples galore of local rail growth outstripping planning expectations – we're not unique in Mid Wales. Tough decisions on accommodating increased capacity that were thought to be in the long grass have refused to stay there and have come calling.

The Cambrian lines are an asset that if built today would cost around £1.5 Billion (Estimate based on £9 million per route mile as seen for the Borders Railway rebuilding in Scotland and a hefty sum for Barmouth Bridge). We as a nation underutilise this asset, whilst simultaneously moaning about other capital infrastructure projects not going ahead. What our Victorian forebears did in building so much infrastructure in a short space of time is unique: we clearly cannot replicate that sort of investment, and looking into the foreseeable future it looks unlikely that big capital projects will feature much. Why don't we make better use of what we do have? Most of the trains on our line are now the refurbished Class 158's and a big difference is noticeable plus punctuality is good just when we get real time information screens! So plenty of positives to report on the ground, but we still have our timetable of 8 trains a day deemed suitable for a service that was erroneously thought to be in decline which is blatantly not fit for the second decade of the 21st Century.

So what hope of further short and medium improvements within the current system? The real danger is of course that everything is deferred until the change in franchise, with Arriva riding out the last few years trying to spend as little as possible to maximise profits, the magic third party funding fairy is currently looking unlikely to paper over any more of the cracks in the franchise agreement. There have been strong rumours circulating of a big timetable change across ATW in December this year for some time, though no one in ATW has broken ranks and publicly released any detail. As I've said before I believe the resource is there to do something other than the current timetable and rolling stock diagrams if the will is there – the magic third party funding fairy is not required, just some imagination. As the East Suffolk line demonstrates incremental improvements on rural lines can pay for themselves in increased usage and revenue. ATW will soon have the availability of its long distance Class 175 and Class 158 fleets at the best it's been for some time. The Class 158 refurbishment programme has inevitably meant one unit being unavailable for some time and they have been unlucky with collision damage to a number of Class 175's, at the same time of providing a second north to south express at the behest of the previous coalition Government in Cardiff. From September this has been cancelled freeing a unit. Repaired 175's will be back in traffic and the 158 refurbishment programme finished. Beyond this window in 2015 in Scotland another route between Glasgow and Edinburgh will be electrified which in theory could release a number of DMU's to cascade south of the border. Opportunities are there before 2018: the acid test is can they be taken? Can Arriva and /or others step up to the plate?

Angus Eickhoff

News in brief

Lack of Six Coach Trains

Network Rail's metal stockade at Caersws is one reason stopping the running of six car formations promised from May, according to the industry jungle drums. With the Class 158's on our line not having selective door opening the platform at Caersws is now just too short to accommodate a six car train with all doors open. The stockade put up at great expense when the level crossing was automated will now have to be altered, though no sign of it being done has yet been seen.

However ATW have told us that the reason is that the Office of the Rail Regulator in London has to give approval for a change in working practice at Aberystwyth, and this is not forthcoming yet. It seems the rules of the route don't allow DMU's to join up with each at Aberystwyth station. This would prevent the commuter train being coupled to the 0930 departure.

Either way over-prescriptive "safety" rules seem to be impairing common sense solutions to real concerns.

Ospreys have tough summer at Dyfi Junction

Unfortunately, of the three chicks hatching this year two have so far died due to the wet inclement weather. The survivor, however, a male now called Ceulan, is thriving, and was ringed and satellite tagged on the 13th July.

Birmingham New St

Construction work has started and is expected to last through to 2015 to redevelop the station. The Midland Metro is being extended from Snow Hill station to New St itself.

Welshpool

Part of the surface of the footbridge ramps has been resurfaced but not all of it.

A rail user felt compelled to write a letter to the County Times complaining of the activities of Welshpool Town Council's car park non rail user patrol. The man had turned up incredibly early for the 0901 train one morning and had decided to go shopping in the town centre before returning for his train; perhaps understandably he was mistaken for a car park abuser.

Aberystwyth

Did you know that the Great Western Railway ran a Slip coach to Aberystwyth from Carmarthen? Detached off the back of a non stop Fishguard Boat Express from Paddington ostensibly to serve Carmarthen, the GWR tried to boost the line up to Aberystwyth in the years just after it formally bought out the Manchester and Milford Railway (1911) – though the M& M had paid the GWR to run its trains for years before.

A cold prison cell

This is where a van driver from Oswestry, one Barry Bellis, is staying, having been convicted of endangering safety on the railway following his trip across an occupational level crossing near Llanbrynmair last year without phoning Machynlleth signal box first. Mr Bellis found the front end of an ECS Class 158, and was lucky to escape from his stupidity without major injury.

1897

The Railway magazine in June reproduced its first ever copy from July 1897, which also celebrated a Diamond Jubilee – of Queen Victoria. The Cambrian receives three mentions. On the rear cover the Cheshire Lines took out an advert promoting "Numerous long-date excursions are in operation for places in the CAMBRIAN DISTRICT..." In the Pertinent Paragraphs column the Board of Trade Inquiry system is criticised and the inquiry into the fatal Welshampton accident of 1896 (Welshampton being on the Cambrian Mainline between Ellesmere and Whitchurch) is said to have been conducted in a pre-ordained fashion by the Military Officer in charge, who blamed the condition of the permanent way whilst ignoring evidence of earlier rough riding from a Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway carriage in the train. In "What the Railways are doing" the new First and Third Class lavatory coaches designed by William Aston for the Cambrian Railways are praised and their use reported on through trains from both Paddington and Euston on a daily basis.

Llynclys

The Cambrian Heritage Railway is hopeful of making progress in reinstating the track between Llynclys Junction and Llynclys South through the site of Llynclys Station this winter, after coming to an agreement with the owners. The station building is to be converted into holiday accommodation and the owner will live elsewhere. This will see 7 miles of track from Gobowen available to be used. Further plans are to get through to Llanymynech another 1.5 miles south, the distance to Buttington Junction being another 7 miles. This section is thought beyond the reach of the heritage sector as a bridge will need to be reconstructed over the River Vyrnwy and two encroachments of the A483 road at Arddleen and Pool Quay dealt with. If the land could all be bought back, though much of it runs through flat farmland, it shouldn't present any other engineering challenges.



BR Class 101 DMU at Llynclys South station on the Cambrian Heritage Railway. Introduced in 1958, some of these were still operating on mainlines 10 years ago. The operating cost of such a unit was around a third of a steam engine hauled short train, transforming the economics of stopping, rural and branch services. However the Reshaping report condemned many routes as loss making without properly taking into account the savings and increased patronage such units brought. Welshpool to Whitchurch was a route that never saw them.

Manchester and Milford Railway (Devil's Bridge Branch Abandonment) Act 1880

The government is tidying up the statute book, deleting a large number of Acts whose purpose is long past. Among them are a large number acts relating to railways:

9.149 The *Manchester and Milford Railway (Devil's Bridge Branch Abandonment) Act 1880*.²⁹⁴ was passed to authorise the Manchester and Milford Railway Company to abandon a proposed railway in the area of Llanfihangel-y-Creuddyn in Wales. The railway had been authorised by the Manchester and Milford Railway (Devil's Bridge Branch) Act 1873.²⁹⁵ The abandonment of the railway project means that the 1880 Act has now become obsolete.

Goodwick Station

Fishguard and Goodwick station reopened on Monday 14th May, with the start of the new timetable. About £325,000 has been spent on the station, and the Welsh Government has given £1.4million to fund the five extra services that operate on Mondays to Saturdays.

Vale of Rheidol Railway

During the floods of Saturday 9th June, the Vale of Rheidol embankment near Glanyrafon was washed out for some 25 yards, leaving the track suspend in mid air. The track was temporarily propped up on sleepers so that the Permaquip vehicle could reach the Devil's Bridge side of the washout. Here the rails are being removed by No.10.

The embankment was replaced and services resumed with the 1030 to Devil's Bridge on Friday 15th June. The lower photograph is of No.8 on the 1400 to Devil's Bridge on Friday 13th July.

Both photographs by Denis Bates.



The View from Milepost 62 with the Brigadier

No commercial directors were harmed in the compilation of this article

I'm afraid our foreign exchange student from Switzerland has been less than impressed with our transport system, and what's more Peter was involved in an accident with a HGV which broke his ankle when out cycling. A lobotomised lorry driver was using his "sat nav" to come down our unsuitable lane despite our forest of home made signs! Peter's had to convalesce at our place whilst his ankle mends; fortunately our youngest daughter Seren is home from her latest mission to bring aid through dance and theatre to Sub Saharan Africa. After the tale of the huge celebration the village put on for her last evening we thought we'd cheer the Swiss chap up and explain UK transport thinking through the medium of theatre. Peter wants to know why we British are so dumb about transport and also has a passion for 1980's UK TV! Dusty has brought her latest litter of Kittens to learn too.

Act 1

Apparently Harry Enfield's character Loadsamoney has a cousin who's worked at the Department for Transport for many years: meet Loadsatraffic. "Loadsatraffic, loadsatraffic it needs loadsaroads" he screams "look at my wad of predict and provide reports, loadsatraffic loadsatraffic, it needs loadsaroads. See the bypass around town A and that around town B it needs a dual carriageway to link them, loadsatraffic".

Act 2

Ahh! Next it's the cartoon character Droopy to explain what Government thought about rail in the early 1990's summoning all his renowned enthusiasm he tells us "Rail is a gently declining Victorian mode".

Act 3

Next it's King Canute c2003 "With my no growth franchises I command the people to stop using rail in increasing numbers".

Act 4

Comedian Julian Clarey explains New Labour's policy towards airports: "You can land your Jumbo on my runway anytime darling".

Act 5

And finally my favourite; it's Marvin the manically depressed robot from the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. "There isn't a business case – there that surprised you didn't it! I've got a brain the size of a planet you know and they make me do cost benefit analysis. It's all rigged you know the utter meaningless of it all, the things I could tell them but they don't listen no one at the Department listens...."

Indeed joking aside the recurring thread through British government transport thinking for decades has been to constantly overestimate the demand for road traffic and underestimate demand for public transport. These miscalculations have formed the basis of transport investment in the UK for five decades. The Beeching report kicked it all off predicting that by 1984 75% of the adult population would own a vehicle – a figure never attained. In fact road usage is now on the decline but will our esteemed brains in Whitehall and elsewhere cotton on? The evidence is out there growth in road traffic slowed down to a trickle in the late 1990's and flattened off going into decline in 2007 *before the current recession*. However all road plans are based on the notion of ever increasing ownership and usage levels, so as to justify the many savings of seconds that cost benefit analysis uses to skew the case for roads. The notion of rising traffic levels is now 15 years out of date. At least there is now some begrudging recognition of the growth in rail traffic from Government in the last couple of years. This according to some happened magically overnight at Privatisation – the reality is the long term trend in increasing rail use dates from the early 1980's.

Paradoxically the motoring lobby thinks it's getting a raw deal as the hard realities of simple economics bite home to the up to now pampered sector. At the cutting edge of the move away from motor vehicles are the young, excessively penalised by the motor insurance industry: according to some the car is now an over priced don't want to have/can't afford rather than the shiny dream. The young have many more distractions, notably the I've-phoned thingies and other personal media they would rather spend their cash on these desirables of their generation. The young of course are hit hardest by the current recession and with a lack of work a generation without the disposable income to join the motoring world is being formed, especially in areas of the country where public transport is reasonable, they've found you don't have to be forced into motoring. The simplistic view of the cost of motoring as the cost of buying petrol – so long a huge help to increased motoring – has now turned out to be a two edged sword with petrol pump prices being continually moaned about. Of course those too young too drive are having their opinions formed by their parents and other family members comments – negative association with motoring is on the rise from a young age. "Do you want a car for your 18th birthday darling? We can buy it but you must pay for the insurance and petrol yourself". "No way is you dishing me" I believe is the in vogue phrase. However Cyril the civil servant believes this is just a temporary blip caused by the recession, and all will be magically well once the recession ends and we can all get back to comfy old predict and provide. The trouble is we're now in a double dip recession that shows no sign of ending; the eurozone crisis rumbles on and on; and the price of oil is actually considered to be low due to the recession. Actually overall demand for travel is declining for a number of reasons of which the recession is but one. The one area that's growing is of course rail, at around 7% per annum, so with the overall market declining and rail growing the juxtaposition in overall market share is changing rapidly. If the current trend in declining road usage (c 1% per annum) and modest rail growth continues by 2020 rail will have over 10% market share of all journeys made. Already it has substantial shares within its market like City Region commuting and long distance that will increase eleven further.

The Army or Generals have a reputation for having the equipment and plans to fight yesterday's wars, but with the Governments in Holyrood, Cardiff Bay and Westminster still obsessed with road capacity enhancement it can be seen that our politicians are still planning for yesteryears transport needs.

Three Cocks Cottage June 2012

Llanbadarn Crossing Incident Report

The *Cambrian News* of the 5th July carried a summary of a report, by the Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) on the overrun of a train on the 19th June 2011. [SARPA Newsletter 55, p.13]

The immediate cause was that the driver failed to notice that the indicator was flashing red until it was too late for him to stop before overrunning the crossing. The driver needed to observe his screen at the same time.

It was also noted that there is - surprisingly - no interface between the the ERTMS signalling system and the level crossings on the route.

The RAIB as made six recommendations, three directed to Network Rail, two to Arriva Trains Wales, and one to the Rail Safety and Standards Board. They cover the development of engineering solutions to mitigate the risk of trains passing over automatic crossings which have not operated correctly, as well as changes to the operating equipment of Llanbadarn Crossing. Other recommendations include the processes used by railway operators to request permission to deviate from published standards, the operational requirements of drivers as trains depart from Aberystwyth, and the way in which drivers interact with the information screens of the cab signalling.

A “GWR” candle lantern

Your editor was recently given a 35 cm tall candle lantern, thought to be an item produced by the GWR in its early days. It is designed to be hung on screw heads, so that it can be slid upwards to remove it from the wall, or carriage partition. The candle rests on a spring, so that it is continuously pushed upwards as it burns.

However, not all is as it appears. A search on the Internet produced the following, at

<http://www.railwayana.net/replicas/htm>

An item made to look as if it has railway connections but in fact not being a copy of a real relic. The most common of these is the GWR candle lamp. You see them everywhere and they have a brass plate “GWR” prominently on them. They are however a flimsy copy of an item that never existed and are practically worthless. Another common one is a small brass plate Great Western Railway giving instructions about greasing nipples and another brass plate from the LMS dated 1865! re the use of water closets.



Maltese Interlude

Buggiba Bus station in Malta June 2012. Staffed, good information, very frequent routes a reasonable price structure, modern buses and all with a single operator. All bus stops observed on the island had clear information displayed, a day ticket cost just EUROS2.60. There were two routes to Valetta from our resort one inland on 10 minute frequency and another round the coast road on a 12 minute frequency with bendy buse; there was a direct bus to the airport every hour as well as to a number of villages nearby. All rather different from the excuses, lack of information and infrequent third hand buses from different operators seen in Powys.



Hourly Services - East Anglia and the Cambrian

Compare and Contrast: Rural line in East Anglia to have an hourly service introduced this December, and more reopened small low cost stations proposed in the Far North of Scotland. But in Mid Wales?

The rail press has recently been gushing about a project to turn a line that saw a two hourly service into one that has an hourly service, and it's not the Cambrian but the East Suffolk line connecting Ipswich with Lowestoft! First mooted in 2010 a reinstated passing loop has just been installed at Beccles, and franchise holder Greater Anglia has confirmed the service will be hourly from this December's timetable change. So even in these hard times projects can go ahead! In the meantime the Welsh Government announced its Capital Infrastructure plan and this paragraph appeared in it:

"Infrastructure enhancements on the Cambrian Line to improve performance and efficiency and to allow future train services to operate at a later date. 22 new miles of track have been built".

It's not a mistake: the document really does say Twenty Two miles – no wonder they insist performance and efficiency has been enhanced! It's actually 2.2 miles, and performance and efficiency has not been enhanced as anyone with a working knowledge of the Cambrian knows.

Clearly Cardiff has kicked the hourly service on the Cambrian into the long grass. The infrastructure work was first announced in 2008, started on in 2009 and was complete in 2011, with a promise of a "daytime hourly service by 2011" made. So how come East Suffolk can manage so quickly what apparently can't be done in Mid Wales?

Around 25 years ago the Cambrian Mainline and the East Suffolk line were very similar. Both were routes that historically were busier, both had survived the Beeching axe and were about to have BR's new low cost solution to saving money on signalling installed – RETB. Around 8 trains a day operated the length of each line with one through train a day to London with some shorter workings at one end. The East Suffolk is shorter at 49 miles in length and has ten intermediate stations (it was put up for closure but survived); the 82 mile long Cambrian Mainline was designated for modification and only six intermediate stations remained. The two end towns on the East Suffolk are much larger, Ipswich with a population of 138,000 and Lowestoft with 68,000 – Lowestoft is also served by a line from Norwich. Shrewsbury has a population of 67,000 and Aberystwyth 16,000. The Intermediate towns are slightly more numerous in East Suffolk; Woodbridge 11,000, Saxmundham 2,700, Halesworth 5,500 and Beccles 12,900, compared to Welshpool 5,500, Newtown 10,358, Machynlleth 2,100. Line speeds were not great on either line with 90 minute schedules on the East Suffolk and 125 minutes on the Cambrian making it the quicker partly due to fewer stations. The Machynlleth to Aberystwyth end of the Cambrian saw some early morning late night /additional workings mainly to do with stock movements back to the depot at Machynlleth; on the East Suffolk they were more commercial/ user focussed with additional peak trains from Ipswich to Saxmundham, which also stopped at Woodbridge.

In 1994 BR completed line speed improvements on the Cambrian and schedules fell to 105 minutes; at Privatisation both lines were worked by a mixture of late 1980's /early 1990's DMU's, but the London trains had gone. It would be fair to say that the East Suffolk line has fared better out of the franchising process than the Cambrian. Getting one of the more forward holders in GB Rail, initially new trains were ordered in the shape of 3 car Class 170's which still operate today. The peak workings to Saxmundham have been extended into an all day extra service every two hours using one Class 156 unit giving an hourly service on the southern half of the line. Franchise re-letting again happily coincided with the need to re signal the line as RETB became obsolete due to changes in radio frequencies. With strong support and a financial contribution from Suffolk CC the passing loop at Beccles has been reinstated, allowing the service along the whole length of the line to go hourly. The Cambrian got some additional services and some new trains, also Class 170s out of Central Trains and a pledge of an hourly service in 1999 – then disaster. Hived off into the Wales and Border franchise and its notoriously wrong "no growth" condition which precluded any investment and with a franchise holder only willing to do something with other people's money – Arriva inertia resulted. A coalition government in Cardiff Bay in 2007 with Plaid Cymru part of it saw money provided for the infrastructure work to allow an hourly service, but no money for the trains themselves. With Labour – the traditional come 4th lose their deposit in Mid Wales party elected in Cardiff in 2011 stagnation has occurred again.

The hourly service all along the line in East Suffolk is underpinned by hard evidence that usage goes up with more services. The East Suffolk fortunately had a good toe in the water with the peak hour services run to Saxmundham from Ipswich demonstrating the market was there. The operator then sensibly stuck a bit more of the leg in using existing infrastructure to make additional train runs all day long on this section. The official station usage figures from the Office of The Rail Regulator show that between 2002/2003 and 2010/2011 usage increased on the stations north of Saxmundham by 30.9% whilst on the section south with the additional trains by 74.09%. A rate of two and half times the growth on the two hourly section! Generating an extra 80,000 journeys a year on this section.

Essentially what SARPA proposed in 1997 has been implemented in East Anglia and has been very successful. To recap, we saw that additional trains could be run on the Cambrian with a morning departure from Machynlleth timed to arrive around 0830 into Shrewsbury and then run back and forth to Newtown in the daytime before going back to Machynlleth in the early evening – these could fit in between the then timetabled services without needing any infrastructure spend. Central Trains priced this up using a Single Car Class 153 train at £400K per annum to implement – in effect an hourly service from Newtown to Shrewsbury would be provided with some peak workings from/to Machynlleth. Two and half times normal growth would have seen some 140,000 extra journeys a year on this section-usage and underlying growth on the Cambrian being stronger than in East Suffolk – with each journey on the rail network averaging £5.00 in revenue it would have paid for itself comfortably. Galling to think that £millions have been spent on unused infrastructure when an initial outlay of a few hundred thousand could have seen a successful profit making service implemented.

The key factors in East Suffolk's gain have been a willingness from different operators to invest in expansion (the third franchise holder since privatisation is now installed), the line not being too far from decision making HQ's in the TOC, NR and the local authority, demonstrable success at the southern end of the line to grow on and most importantly strong local political support from the Local Authority and a local MP - proclaiming himself a champion; also there being fewer bodies which to co-ordinate. In contrast in Mid Wales we have had disinterested county councils whose HQ's are not on the line, many political representatives from different parties, none of whom have taken a lead through a multiplicity of Westminster and Welsh Assembly constituencies and regional AM's, an apathetic operator and remote decision making in Cardiff compounded by the toothless and ineffectual local transport body TraCC.

10 years ago a low cost station reopened on the Far North line at Beaulieu and provided much encouragement to Carno Station Action Group – after all it had only cost £200,000. When the £2.5 million price tag was stuck on to Carno by Network Rail many concluded that it was a deliberate attempt to block the station by making it unaffordable. NR argued that Beaulieu couldn't be repeated for lots of reasons but low and behold in the Far North of Scotland another low cost station plan at Colton Bridge priced at £750,000 for a 4 car platform – the same as Carno – was being hatched by the Highland and Islands Partnership and Network Rail. A £100K contribution from the authority has already been made. It's noted that Beaulieu's initial passenger level was assessed at just 16,000 per annum but in fact ten years on it sees over 50,000 users and therefore has paid for itself a number of times over already.

Both examples show it's clear that the insurmountable obstacles put forward against improved rail services in Mid Wales are just straw arguments - the evidence is out there that backs SARPA's long standing belief that successful revenue generating improvements could have been made years ago and at a fraction of the costs peddled about.

Cambrian Railways Partnership development

The Cambrian Railways Partnership has launched a major new feature on their website that will benefit the Wales Air Ambulance – a service that relies on charitable donations.

The latest feature is an accommodation finder for people wishing to stay in the area served by the Cambrian lines, offering people the ability to check vacancies and make reservations and bookings online via its secure website. Each time someone makes a booking, a 5% commission from the total is donated directly to the Wales Air Ambulance.

At the launch of the website, Wales Air Ambulance pilot Captain Martin Darlington said that this was another innovative way to raise funds: “We’ve had people do all sorts for the charity, and we rely on every penny that is raised to keep the service going. We’re really glad that the Cambrian Railways Partnership has managed to secure this donation scheme for us and we’re also very thankful of their donation of nearly £400 that they made from the sale of a number of items sold at various stations along the lines.”

Pictured below are David Crunkhorn, Arriva Trains Wales Station Manager based at Machynlleth, Captain Martin Darlington - Wales Air Ambulance Service pilot based at Welshpool, and Rhydian Mason of the Cambrian Railways Partnership.



A Wales Infrastructure Plan- Are you sure?

By Adrian Bailey – a Shropshire Lad

In May the Welsh Government announced a “national infrastructure plan” including transport projects. In true modern political style it was a rehash of previous announcements, and close examination was needed to spot what was new or different. There was no justification presented as to why these certain projects had been chosen and others rejected.

The hottest transport topic in Wales today seems to be the row over South Wales rail electrification and how far the wires will go – the Infrastructure plan was clear: not a penny toward it from the Welsh Government so therefore probably not much past Cardiff then! So what was on the agenda? I had noted First Minister Carwyn Jones’ demands for the Welsh Government to be allowed to borrow money to build roads and the resurrection of noises about throwing money at the M4 so was not hopeful. Somewhat surprisingly of the just five projects going ahead to completion in the current Assembly period three were rail related. Though the money allocated was predominantly toward the two road projects, £210 million versus £80 million. We found out that £80 million of European ERDF money that many had hoped would go towards rail electrification was to be put forward to a legacy Welsh Office roads scheme. The cuckoo in the nest, the A465 Heads of the Valleys dualling scheme was sucking the budget dry yet again, with just over half the funds available (£150 million) going towards Phase Three Brynmawr to Tredegar – barely five miles in length. And I thought devolution was decisions in Wales made by the Welsh not slavishly following the plans laid down by John Redwood!

I then had a look at a map of the 2011 Welsh Assembly election results and a clear indicator to the selection criteria of the five schemes emerged. Lady Porter and the Gerrymandering Westminster Council of the early 90’s would warm to it. Phase Three of the A465 Head of Valleys road scheme is of course entirely in Blaenau Gwent, a Labour area! Cardiff Area Resignalling – no prizes for guessing, the “West Wales Improvements” project in reality re doubling the track through Gowerton linking Swansea West with Llanelli both Labour constituencies, the latter one just recently taken from Plaid Cymru. “North to South journey times and capacity” – again a redoubling project between two Labour constituencies, Wrexham and Alyn and Deeside – the Transport Minister’s own constituency! No mention of any improvements to the train services over these stretches of track of course, but then again what do you expect following the Cambrian capacity enhancements? The A477 St Clears to Red Roses is in a Conservative constituency, albeit a marginal with Labour in a close second place. Call me a cynic but....

I had heard educational standards were slipping in Wales, but when the list of future transport infrastructure schemes was compared against the funds available I had a shock, with £500-£550 million allocated for a “Wales Road Improvements Plan” between 2015/2016 and 2018/2019 the document went on to list 13 road schemes estimated to cost between £850 million and £1100 million! Do you think they realise the difference? Should we tell them their sums don’t add up? The schemes all had completion/start dates on them, but clearly are not worth the ink on the paper they’re written. Half the money was inevitably another 3 phases of the A465 scheme, with hints about ploughing more European money into tarmac. The A483 Newtown Bypass has now swelled in cost to £75-£80million – if of course given other commitments it actually starts in 2014 – Ha,ha don’t worry it won’t!

I double checked that’s right: not a penny toward or a rail scheme in 2015/2016 to 2018/2019 in sight. It seems the Welsh Government believes there’s no need. What of extending the Aberdare line service to Hirwaun, or the reopening the branch to Llangefni? Or a myriad of other things like getting the Ebbw Vale line to run to Newport or creating a modern transport interchange at Pontypool & New Inn?

With around £100 million a year on offer it’s obvious that Wales cannot afford to do even a fraction of the things on the road shopping list let alone anything else; there’s no mention of the proposed A483 Pant/Llanymynach Bypass or the proposed A458 improvements through Middletown. Just as SARPA’s Chairman predicted a while back it seems Wales has opted for the choice of going for a handful of schemes that will leave most other parts of the country shouting about their vital scheme not going ahead. Or could it have concentrated on spending what money it has on transforming public transport provision instead? Wales could go some way to having a modern public transport system

with an investment budget of £100 million per annum – now that would be a **national** infrastructure plan and better use of my taxes us English pay for the Welsh Government!

SARPA Acting Chairman Angus Eickhoff comments: some very forthright views expressed from East of Offa's Dyke by Adrian! However I do agree that the prediction that a mere handful of schemes would get a green light due to budgetary constraints was right. The original National Transport Plan in 2010 listed nearly 40 road schemes and I know of people that complained about schemes not included. A Town Councillor was spouting forth about the need to have a dual carriageway to Newtown the other evening in a town pub! It's blatantly obvious that the budget is simply not there to develop the road system in the way wanted, there will always be winners and many more losers in this game – you could spend the entire Welsh transport infrastructure budget for the next decade on road schemes in Montgomeryshire alone. With road traffic now a declining mode there are many questioning the need to boost capacity in this sector simply for this reason alone. £100 million a year on rail infrastructure would make a real and lasting difference to it all over Wales in every county and even start reversing some of the Beeching cuts.

It seems we need £30 million to turn a mile of single carriageway road into dual carriageway and around £25 million to make a new mile of single carriageway road. The Borders railway project in Scotland is costing around £9 million a mile to rebuild a disused railway complete with signalling, new stations and partly double track, the Great Western Mainline rail electrification project is wiring up a mile of double track railway for around £1.3 million. In terms of per mile of infrastructure improved/provided rail wins every time, and therefore capital infrastructure investment can be spread around Wales more generously than road spend.

Beeching and (not so much of) the Cambrian Part 2

A response by amateur rail historian Tim James

The article on Beeching and the Cambrian in SARPA Newsletter 54 produced some heated comment from within and without SARPA. I wonder why? However the main reason it was written was, with the McNulty Review impending, a look back at what a previous report to save money on the railway did was topical. Though McNulty didn't go down the close lines to save money route, that's not to say it won't be on the agenda somewhere in the not too distant future, especially if all these further studies and magic longer franchises and alliances fail to produce the savings wanted by Government so it can cut the subsidy bill. To truly understand what was going on, you have to ask why was the railway "loss making" in the early 1960's? The simplistic line that is still spun to this day is that that the railways had had their day, and the exodus to motor vehicles had already happened leaving the oversized railway chuffing around in Victorian steam engines carrying no one and no freight. This had been encouraged by the 1955 train drivers' strike, and British Railways Management had squandered a blank cheque to modernise from government. A view widely repeated but is it true?

The Reshaping report states that British Railway's receipts in 1961 were £475 million with freight accounting for some £300 million. At the time the average house price was about £2,500, the average male worker earnings £1,200 a year and female £620. That makes a lot of nothing going on to reach £475 million! There were only some 5.5 million private motor vehicles compared to nearly 25 million now. The idea that the railways had already been abandoned is a myth. Passenger journeys were over a Billion in 1961 (1,025 Million) having grown in the late 1950's (i) from 890million in 1954, and remember that the population of UK was around 7 million fewer than now. Page 26 of the report shows freight carried in graphs since Nationalisation in 1948; 85% of the coal and coke tonnage from 1948 was still being carried, 85% of the other mineral traffic and about 78% of the General Merchandise: a noticeable drop but not the total eclipse by road haulage claimed – anyway coal and steel, the staples of heavy industry, were becoming less important to the economy and the drop had nothing to do with lorries. The clean air acts of the 1950's had a large bearing on coal usage declining. Freight still came to some 230 million tons lifted. Strangely there was no corresponding graph for the passenger traffic. The report said passenger traffic, especially the summer seasonal type, was shifting to family cars (page 14) but the only evidence it could trot out was noting that passenger receipts for the summer

months of 1961 were not as high a percentage of the remaining months of the year as they had been ten years before. In fact the months June to September 1961 averaged 130% of the monthly October to May receipts: the summer surge was around 10% of the passenger revenue total. Given that passenger traffic had actually grown in the preceding years the trend could easily be explained by increased usage in the remaining months! The report opted not to go into any detailed analysis: after all the upward passenger (and parcels) usage trend was at odds with the report's thrust. The report doesn't mention the 1955 strike at all; the sudden dip post 1955 is not there; in fact passenger use went up! A false excuse dreamt up after the event? The facts don't show **severe** traffic decline as the cause of the losses.

The reasons for the losses lay elsewhere in history.... The railway has been shaped by Government decisions ever since its earliest days – the losses incurred by British Railways in the early 1960's were in fact primarily a culmination of over a hundred years of consequences of Government decisions.

The main reasons why 1845- 1955

Victorian legacy

A common auto response of many is that the lines closed in the 1960's shouldn't have been built in the first place. I think this is a hugely shallow and naïve view. My great grandfather was born in Churchstoke in 1851 – a community that never had a railway, by this time the theory goes that all the lines that were profitable and survive today had been built and all the lines built subsequently should never have been built as they were never profitable. We forget the impact of the coming of the railways had on the economy and society, they were at the cutting edge of advancement in the Victorian age and revolutionised life. In the UK we invented them and allowed them to develop in a laissez-faire free for all: this was indeed a huge mistake as it resulted in maybe too many lines being built in some areas and some odd routings, leaving out places they should have gone through. There was no central coordination or planning – a feature in other countries. The rural landscape my great grandfather was born into faced a great problem - development and benefits from the railways were there for all to see, but if you lived in a part of the country that the initial burst of capitalism had not served, no one was coming along to include you in the party. As a young boy my great grandfather was 15 miles from the nearest railway at Craven Arms, a thirty mile round trip on cart tracks, collecting goods would have been an overnight affair in winter. What were people supposed to do if the railway age had not come to them? He was a groom in a large house in Montgomery at the time of the 1871 census – no doubt duties included going down to the station at Caerhowell with horse and cart to fetch people/goods. When did my great grandfather see his first motor vehicle? He was the Head Ostler at the Wynnstay Hotel in Oswestry in 1901, that's an equine profession, so probably in his fifties, and he was past his pension age of 70 before they became common. I have a photograph of him outside the family shop on the street in Montgomery in the 1930's, with not a motor vehicle in sight. That's a (long) lifetime – no one looked in a crystal ball in 1850 and said don't worry motor vehicles will be along in a few decades; they went out and built railways themselves because without them economic stagnation was feared. Most of the capital for building the lines that were later closed in the Beeching era came from individuals within the communities these lines served, not wealthy investors or companies. The 13 miles of the Llanidloes and Newtown Railway took 4 years to build not because of any engineering challenges, but due to problems raising funds, work stopped on it several times.

The investors of early Victorian Britain had their fingers badly burnt when Railway mania collapsed around their ears in the mid 1840's. It's clear that government should have taken a controlling interest in any railway development that happened after that. Gladstone wanted to but felt he could not take on the personal financial interests of his fellow MP's, many of whom were shareholders and directors of railway companies. The other Victorian legacy to add to unregulated mild overdevelopment/lack of planning was their fear of monopoly: it was soon apparent that the railways would hold a tight grip on the movement of the vast majority of goods. Legislation was introduced to allow free movement of people at cheap rates and ensure that all goods could be carried at published capped rates. The railways were never really truly commercial from the mid Victorian age on; there was no government money to help achieve these aims of cheap movement of goods and people the railways had to fund it themselves. Can you imagine the uproar today if Government told the Big

Supermarkets what their pricing structure for every single item should be and then said there was no money to help! A suggested minimum price per unit of alcohol has got them lobbying overtime to reverse the decision. Back on the late 19th century railway organic mergers and acquisitions were seen as a way forward to create larger railway companies with better economies of scale, but these were blocked for fear of monopoly. Not only did this impact on shareholder profit but also crucially the ability to invest and modernise. Away from the main lines the railway at the end of the Edwardian era were often little changed from that of the late 1880's. Independent railways with no heavy mineral traffic, such as the Cambrian Railways, barely broke even, even in the pre motor vehicle world. Though Pryce Jones was able to run his mail order business in Newtown by sending parcels by rail, Farmer Williams got the lime to improve his land in the Dyfi Valley and the hoteliers in Aberystwyth had the means for the guests to arrive at affordable rates that cost the Government nothing. Government was even encouraging the building of new lines into rural areas by its 1897 Light Railways Act.

1914 to 1955

The First World War brought Government control and no compensation for the wear and tear the war effort caused. Felix Pole, the General Manager of the GWR, wrote in 1921 "several years of government control have reduced the railways from relatively prosperous commercial concerns to a precarious financial position". The answer was the grouping and the Big Four in 1923. It was hoped that the profitable bits would subsidise the marginal services in larger companies with better economies of scale but still without state subsidy. What the railways wanted to do 30 years before – a theme we'll return to later. However the Victorian legislation on common carrier status was still there, and Government decided to sell off thousands of surplus army Lorries and created competition for the railways. It was like asking a boxer to fight with one arm tied behind his back – the road haulier knew to the penny what his competitor would charge and could undercut – a huge commercial advantage. The rise of road transport would probably have happened organically anyway, but it had a huge kick start and was gifted a huge commercial advantage. The railway was not competing on a level playing field. The Big Four campaigned to have common carrier status removed in the 1930's – the Square Deal – but Government refused despite a Leader in The Times in support. The railways wanted to carry profitable loads at commercial rates, not barely break even carrying everything at capped rates. The railways pre World War 2 were paying dividends to the shareholders but they could see the writing on the wall: they were no longer a monopoly though government treated them as such. Much has been made of the failure to modernise the railways, but where were the funds coming from, with Government generally unwilling apart from some small scale schemes in the 30's and the railways having no surplus, because of being forced to carry increasingly unprofitable loads and cross subsidise loss making lines?

The Second World War of course brought more wear and tear with no compensation again. Supermarine the aircraft manufacturer that produced the Spitfire were paid at commercial rates, the railways were taken under state control and just expected to carry war material. Post war Nationalisation has been likened to the Americans capturing Baghdad: once achieved there was no plan afterward, and it had been bought at a cost. Labour achieved its aims by buying off the private shareholders with the railways own funds: yet more money that was not used to modernise, and under state control the railways were told not to acquire diesels as the Government didn't want to import oil paid for in US Dollars and effect the balance of payments. Hence the thousand steam locomotives ordered after nationalisation.

The railway inherited by the Conservative administration in 1950 was archaic in many ways but it was a product of doing a century of successive Governments' wishes without any state funding. Today we associate the Conservative party with the privatisations of the 1980's and the view that everything is automatically better if it's in the private sector. The party in the mid 1950's however used nationalised industries as a tool of macro economic policy – they tried to keep inflation down by instructing the industries to hold down prices, with predictable results on the balance sheet of those industries as income declined against costs. We must remember that British Railways may have been nationalised, but it had a remit to make a profit and received not a single penny of any Government money.

The 1955 Modernisation plan

British Railways designed a modern system for common carrier status. In 1955 government still kept that legislation in place: this is the key to understanding the forthcoming events – the Modernisation plan was designed to comply with what the Government wanted of the railways. The vast new marshalling yards were to tranship small loads more effectively and hundreds of Type 1 and Type 2 Diesels were ordered to power pick up goods trains more efficiently than steam locomotives, the pick up goods train being a consequence of what the law of the land laid down. British Railway Managers can rightly say they were doing what we were instructed to do by Government. Do you really believe they were given a blank cheque no questions asked? Government didn't micro manage the location of each new marshalling yard, or specify the locomotives ordered, but without doubt they knew that the end product was a common carrier railway covering the entire country with diesel locomotives. Take a look at Hansard – Ministers welcomed **that** with open arms in parliament! It was believed that the modernisation plans would turn around the finances of small load freight which were already in the red. Given the money available and the size of the network it would take until 1975 to eliminate steam haulage. It was a 20 year plan, not an overnight one. Some main lines would be electrified and others handed over to diesels and the DMU's, it wasn't just about pick up goods but over half the money was for non train load freight. Initially it was to be £60 million a year. The theory that the Modernisation plan's failure was "the last straw for government" is deceitful as the Modernisation plan was drawn up for what government wanted of the railway in 1955 – for it to carry loss making sundry traffic without state assistance that the private railway companies wanted shot of 20 years before. Providing 5500 collection points throughout the country which required staff, signalling and track work, by this stage an expensive business and road haulage was reducing this traffic by around 2% per annum. Though sticking a diesel loco on the front instead of a steam one and running to a modern marshalling yard would produce some savings, would they be enough? The answer is we never found out – though looking at the figures fifty years on probably not. The modernisation plan had only been partially implemented when Beeching and his committee rolled up with their obvious pre determined agenda. In 1958 government brought forward the end date to 1970. In 1960 it decided on a committee to produce a report to "reshape" the railways. It was the same Conservative administration that signed off the 20 year plan in 1955. Something had made them change their minds mid course.

Conclusions

The report bemoans the fact that the then 5900 single track route miles only carried 1% of the traffic and cost £20 million to maintain but only brought in £4.5 million in receipts. The remaining 12,000 route miles cost £541.0 million to maintain – branch line Britain though "loss making" was but 3% of the total costs. However the report states that General Merchandise and Sundries lost the railways some £47 million. It's clear that it was not the existence of branch lines and stopping services that were causing the huge losses by 1960, rather Government's insistence on the railways accommodating common carrier status with no subsidy. As for "loss making" stopping services, the Modernisation plan would have seen these getting close to break even by 1970 by the simple expedient of using DMU's instead of steam locomotives. A DMU cost 25-30% of the cost of a steam hauled local train to run. The failure of the Modernisation Plan argument is a smokescreen – wage costs had gone up, there was (in 1960) little modernisation meaning it was still labour intensive, and the capped freight rates combined with a drift of business to road haulage meant it could no longer cover the costs of providing this facility at a **national** level. The profitable heavy mineral traffic and large passenger flows were not cross subsidising a few rural and branch lines as intended in 1923, but failing to cover the costs of a declining nationwide small load network. The Big 4 did not go on about loss making branch lines or stopping services. The debate on Nationalisation featured pleas by the Big 4 to have commercial freedom in freight traffic and they would be profitable enough to pay dividend and ensure a future "even for the more important of the minor lines" – OK some minor lines would close was the sub text but there was a future for many others.. There was no hysteria about loss making rural lines, duplicate routes or pleas for state subsidy – the Big 4 were governed by shareholder needs; if branch lines were the big Achilles heel then surely a commercial focussed organisation would have been doing something about them long before Nationalisation. Anyway the railways had weeded out the most outrageous lightly used lines throughout the decades leading up to 1960. Think of the branches to Kerry, Van,

Dinas Mawdwy, Tanat Valley, Minsterly, Welshpool and Llanfair etc., all gone pre Beeching's appointment as Chairman of BRB.

The Big 4 had been set up so that the profits made carrying heavy freight and large passenger flows could support the rest of the network. There was an acceptance that some lines may not quite cover all there costs, but having them was a desirable thing for the communities involved. The Reshaping Report actually carried on that thinking; British Railways remit was to break even so some profit could be used to cross subsidise. When common carrier legislation was repealed by the 1962 Transport Act it was decided that the railway should now concentrate on carrying profitable train load flows of freight. Even before the paint was dry on many of new marshalling yards, what Beeching called Liner trains were being rolled out. *An admission that trying to carry everything had been a financial disaster for the preceding 30 years.*

Given that DMU's were demonstrating increased passenger usage and large savings and the sparks effect was happening on newly electrified lines, the real question is why was there then a sudden panic ridden mass closure programme? After all the loss making freight train was a thing of the past as the railway could pick and choose its traffic following the 1962 Act. The maps reproduced in Part 1 showed the results of the traffic survey from April 1962. There's a series of serious flaws in them:

1. The revenue generation by station only tells us where tickets were being bought, not where the passengers were going to.
2. It failed to take into any account seasonal variation, assuming what was about on a working week in late April was evenly replicated throughout the year.
3. The freight flows mislead as well as they only show tons carried, but some freight was profitable, others not. The map shows us not what sort of traffic was being carried
4. And of course this was common carrier status freight tonnage and predominantly steam hauled local services usage, not what it would look like following dieselisation and the advent of train load freight.

The report failed to project forward what the reformed and modernised railway would be doing. Which surely was the sensible thing to do base the future of the railways on what was actually going to happen, not on something that was about to disappear, and that's only if you're interested in profit and loss, which the report claimed it was. A deeply flawed document on many levels.

The consequences of the closure psychosis was that traffic didn't stabilise at 1962 levels on the bits that remained, but bled away for the next 20 years increasing the losses and burdening the state with arguably more subsidy than if it had recognised the value of retaining a national rail network. In further parts I'll look at other aspects of the great mistake.

Notes

(i) The common and widely used statistics for passenger use on UK railways is Terry Gourvish's volumes on the Official History of British Rail. I therefore quote BR's own figures which the Reshaping Committee had access to but chose not to present to the public.

SARPA Meetings in 2012

Saturday 4th August	SARPA Summer Trip		
Use 0514 ex Aberystwyth to Shrewsbury then 0719 train to Cardiff for tour of Valleys. Further detail from Chairman. One 5 minute uphill walk involved.			
Tuesday 4 th September	Newtown	Sportsman	1830
AGM			
Saturday 6 th October	Shrewsbury	Station	1300
Tuesday 6 th November	Aberystwyth	Cambria Bldgs	1745
Tuesday 4 th December	Newtown	Sportsman	1830

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

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

Talylllyn Railway
www.talylllyn.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

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

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 of the Association

Acting Chairman: Angus Eickhoff: The Forge, Whitehouse Bridge, Welshpool, Powys. Tel. 01938-553572. E-mail angus@anguseickhoff.co.uk

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

Secretary: Vacant

Treasurer: Vacant

Newsletter Editor: Denis Bates, 86 Maesceinion, Waun Fawr, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 3QQ. Tel. 01970-617667. E-mail deb@aber.ac.uk

Shrewsbury Rail Users Federation Representative: Roger Goodhew: 12 Granville St, Shrewsbury, Shropshire. SY3 8NE. Tel. 01743 358873.

Committee Member: Angus Eickhoff: The Forge, Whitehouse Bridge, Welshpool, Powys. Tel. 01938-553572. E-mail angus@anguseickhoff.co.uk
Association email address: sarpa@sarpa.info