
Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association

Newsletter No. 79

August 2019

£22 MILLION TO BE SPENT ON BARMOUTH VIADUCT



Network Rail recently published plans for a £2bn investment in railway improvements in Wales and the Borders. There are over a thousand local schemes; £27.7m will be spent to improve the railway's resilience to extreme weather, £176m on track renewals, and £135m to improve signalling in West Wales.

The plan represents a 28 percent increase in spending compared to the last funding period (2014-2019) to increase reliability and improve performance over the next five years.

£22m will be spent on the renewal of the Grade II listed Barmouth viaduct. The last major work on it was in the mid-1980s, which concentrated on the wooden spans. In the period of this work, the viaduct was only allowed to carry DMUs. On completion of this in 1986, locomotives were again allowed across, including steam locos.

NEGES GAN Y CADEIRYDD

Mae'r misoedd diwethaf wedi bod yn amser brysur i SARPA. Rydym yn parhau i bwyso am welliannau i'r gwasanaeth ar y Cambrian yn y tymor byr ac hefyd am sylweddol mwy o gerbydau sy'n gallu gweithio ar y Cambrian o 2023 ymlaen. Ymysg pethau eraill, roedd yn fraith cael presennoldeb a chyfraniad Ioan Jenkins o Drafniadaeth Cymru, yn ogystal â Claire Williams, y swyddog Partneriaeth, yn ein cyfarfod yn siambr ysblennydd Cyngor Tref y Drenewydd.

Ar nodyn trist, collasom aelod gweithgar iawn, Peter King, ym mis Mawrth eleni. Roedd Peter yn mynychu a chyfrannu at ein cyfarfodydd yn gyson, yn ogystal ag ymgyrchu'n ddi-flino ar nifer o bynciau – roedd yn un o hoelion wyth yr ymgyrch i ailagor gorsaf Carno. Bu i mi gyfleu ein cydymdeimladau at ei wraig a byddem yn colli ei gwmni a'i gyfraniadau.

Gyda phroblemau mawr yn dal i effeithio ar y gwasanaeth a phenderfyniadau'n cael eu gwneud ynglŷn â'r trenau newydd, mae'r sefyllfa ar y Cambrian yn parhau i esblygu a bydd SARPA yn parhau i gyfleu cwynion, canmoliaeth ac awgrymiadau fel bo'n briodol er mwyn sicrhau gwasanaeth teilwng i'r holl cymunedau ar hyd y lein.

Jeff Smith, Cadeirydd, Gorffennaf 2019

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

The past few months have been a busy time for SARPA. We have continued to push for improvements to the service on the Cambrian in the short term and also for significantly more carriages which can work on the Cambrian from 2023. Amongst other things, it was a privilege to have the presence and contribution of Ioan Jenkins from Transport for Wales, as well as Claire Williams, the Partnership Office, in our meeting in Newtown Town Councils splendid Chamber.

On a sorrowful note, we lost a very active member, Peter King, in March this year. Peter attended and contributed to our meetings on a regular basis, in addition to his tireless campaigning on a number of subjects – he was one of the lynchpins of the campaign to reopen Carno station. I expressed our sympathies to his widow and we will miss his company and contributions.

With significant problems still affecting the service and decisions being made about the new trains, the situation on the Cambrian line continues to develop and SARPA will continue to communicate complaints, praise and suggestions as appropriate in order to ensure that communities along the line receive the service they deserve.

Jeff Smith, Chair, July 2019

TfW GOING TO COVENTRY?

TfW have made an application to the Office of the Rail Regulator for an open access to extend the current Holyhead/Pwllheli/Aberystwyth – Birmingham International services to Coventry, with no intermediate stops. Their detailed proposal is:

Hourly departing Birmingham International between 06:51 and 20:51 (Monday – Saturday) and at 09:43, 10:43, 11:42, 13:13, 14:08, 15:11, 16:08, 17:11, 18:08, 19:11, 20:08, 21:12, 22:17 and 23:12 (Sunday).

Hourly departing Coventry between 06:58 and 20:58 (Monday – Saturday) and at 09:40, 10:37, 11:56, 12:56, 13:56, 14:56, 15:56, 16:57, 17:57, 18:56, 19:57, 20:57, 22:00 and 22:57 (Sunday).

One extra journey from Crewe to Coventry at 05:37 (Monday – Saturday) and 08:19 (Sunday) calling at Stafford, Wolverhampton, Smethwick Galton Bridge, Birmingham New Street and Birmingham International.

One extra journey from Coventry to Crewe at 21:58 (Monday – Saturday) and 23:31 (Sunday) calling at Birmingham International, Birmingham New Street, Smethwick Galton Bridge, Wolverhampton and Stafford.

2, 4 or 6-car Class 158.



One of the Class 37 locomotives now used on the Rhymney passenger trains was in Machynlleth on 3rd March 2019, tailing a ballast train. One of the ERTMS fitted locos would have been at the head of the train.

The logo under the left hand cab is of a stag, with the caption "Highland Rail".

Photograph: Angus Eickhoff.

CLASS 37s RETURN TO SERVICE

Transport for Wales was pleased to introduce an old friend to their network last week (late June), with the re-introduction of the loco-hauled Class 37 train.

The Class 37 locomotives were last used on the network in 2005, but have been brought in to provide extra capacity on the Rhymney Valley Line, while Transport for Wales await the arrival of additional trains. The first came into service last week serving the morning and evening peak times, whilst a second is due to follow shortly.

Commuters using the service have reacted positively and have been sharing their views on social media commenting "very comfortable ride this morning!" and "I have really enjoyed my commute on this old-fashioned train".

Amongst the first to drive them was the man who drove the very last service back in 2005. Now 64, David "Dai" Beavan, learnt his trade on Class 37s as well as 150s when he joined the railway in the 1990s.

"I never expected to see them back, but it's fantastic," said David. I drove the very last one down from Rhymney in 2005 and we had a wreath on the front and lots of train spotters came down to see it, it was a really big thing. I was hoping to drive the first one down again but at least I got to be the first to drive it back to Rhymney! They are a pleasure to drive and the one we've got now really is immaculate. There was nothing worse than having to turn people away at stations because of capacity so it's great we can get people on. There are a lot of smiles in the mornings and people seem to engage a lot more, taking photos and saying, 'thanks driver'.

The number of enthusiasts who have come down to see it is unbelievable; we had about 35 to 40 on the train up to Rhymney the other day. I'd like to see them go on beyond December or January but who knows?"

James Price, Transport for Wales CEO added:

"We promised to increase capacity on the Rhymney Valley Line in our May timetable changes, and so far, we have successfully delivered 98% of that and with the introduction of the Class 37 trains we will increase capacity even further. It's great that we've also attracted rail enthusiasts from throughout the UK to Wales, to see and use the train and provide a positive impact on our tourism economy. As we progress and start to introduce modern, brand new trains to our network, we hope more people will be inspired and continue to visit Wales and document our exciting journey."

ALL TICKETS PLEASE WITH NEWTOWN STATION TRAVEL

Dumb Ticketing?

We witnessed much of what is wrong with the UK rail and ticketing system, while sitting in a pub in Manchester recently. Our youngest daughter is studying at Durham University, so one Sunday in February we met her half way for an afternoon. Mum and daughter were doing a bit of shopping in Harvey Nichols, so I had a pint in one of the pubs opposite. I settled down at a table and soon realised the gentlemen opposite me was trying to book a rail ticket online using his Smart phone. So what, I hear you say, isn't this what we all want using the convenience of technology to make our life easier, and no need to queue up at an old fashioned booking office? Well the problem was the man spent nearly the time it would have taken to do his journey messing about on his phone.....it was so painful to witness but I did not intervene. I just observed the stupidity of it, I even went to the bar to get drinks for daughter and mum when they got there, and the man was still going on my return to the table, now involving a companion.

What was this incredibly complicated journey he was booking I hear you ask? It was a day return from Manchester to Liverpool on a Saturday for two people, one with a Senior Railcard! A distance roughly the same as going from Newtown to Shrewsbury or from one side of London to another. There's virtually a walk on service between the two cities as you can imagine, three fast trains an hour with Trans Pennine Express and East Midlands Trains taking just under 40 minutes and 4 stopping trains per hour on two different routes with Northern Rail 50- 60 minutes. You shouldn't even need to think about it beyond being aware of peak times on weekdays. It's the sort of distance journey you can do on pay as you go/Oyster card in London or with the simple single or anytime day return structure on the Cambrian. However, all three operators in the North West have their own AP fares and Northern has some slightly cheaper Northern only fares meaning there's no less than 5 different fare structures on offer, plus First Class on TPE. This means there's nearly 50 different fares you can buy between two points close together - utterly customer unfriendly and a bonkers barrier to encouraging use of public transport.

"This one is only £8.90" said the man, "but you've only booked one ticket one way and forgot to put your railcard discount on" said the companion. As well as not being clear on how to navigate and use the website, they were also buying in to the myths of rail ticketing: firstly believing that you have to buy in advance and designate what train you travel on, secondly they were using a well known website that claims to sell "cheap tickets" but actually sells the same as everyone else and then charges Booking fees. While they had a prolonged game of find which combination of trains is cheapest, and clicking (or not clicking) on the right parts of the drop down menus for their circumstances, they could have completed most of their journey or done something more productive. Triumphantly after 20 minutes or so they paid £22.85 plus a 75p booking fee for their supposed bargain internet tickets with no flexibility. Of course they could have just walked up to a TVM or Booking Office window and bought fully flexible Cheap Day Returns for £24.40 on the day of travel. Was the £0.80 in savings actually worth the time and effort put into getting it? (bear in mind I did not see how they completed the sale by collecting their tickets and how much time this consumed, nor did I observe how

long they had been on their phone before I sat down). If people believe this is how you book rail tickets how much time is consumed in doing so? And also, how many people say sod it, it's too complicated and drive instead? You don't have to mess around and pre book your slot on the motorway junction/dual carriageway on the internet do you?

Rail's real value to the economy of UK Plc lies in its external benefits, not its farebox revenue. So what is the point of dragging down the external benefits by a system whereby the customer bleeds time playing pin the tail on the donkey to try and find "cheap tickets" for minimal savings, and hopefully clicks on the right parts of a drop down menu looking at the small screen of your mobile phone? Anyone who's read the inventor of the world wide web Sir Tim Berners-Lee's recent comments about it on its 30th anniversary will recognise that the consequences of the post 1993 UK Rail ticketing system meets the internet is certainly not what he intended his "empowering invention" to be used for.

How much is a minute's time worth to the UK economy? The UK Gross Value Added £ per head is c £26,000.00 (National income divided by population). Divide by 52 and divide by an average working week of 37 hours and you get a productive hourly rate of c.£13.50 or 22.5p per minute. If people spend just one minute more on average than they need to buying rail tickets, the opportunity cost to the UK economy runs in to the hundreds of £millions. Ok, you can question the £amount per minute in the methodology, but with 1.7 Billion rail journeys per annum you surely must get the point. Time wasted on booking rail tickets due to the current system is like a sheet anchor holding the benefits of rail travel back. There must be and there are easier ways to buy rail tickets.

Journeys within and between two urban areas in close proximity to each other such as Manchester and Liverpool should surely be better using the same system as in London with Oyster/Pay As you Go. A combined smartcard that includes all public transport options in the area is needed. You tap in at the point of entry then you tap out at the point of exit, the money is either deducted direct from your bank account or from your top up card. You have a simple concentric Zonal fare system for all standard class journeys with a daily cap if you make multiple journeys. There's no need for AP fares/operator only fares and messing around on the internet, it's far far less time consuming. As the Meerkat says 'simples' and Londoners have had it for years whilst the rest of us have to be lumbered with the pin the tail on the donkey fare system and multiple websites promising 'cheap tickets', unless we know how the system actually works, or prefer to do it the old fashioned way at a manned booking office if they can find one.

Smart in name only?

Not to worry as we have all been promised paperless tickets by the DfT! The Smart Ticketing on National Rail (STNR) programme is upon us. Passengers can buy tickets to load onto their ITSO compliant Smartcards. TfW are trialling this on weekly season tickets only between Shrewsbury and Wrexham from April. There will be a TfW Smartcard that will be rolled out across the whole network eventually. You'll note that with it being a trial for weekly seasons only, it's not a Pay As You Go system – oh no, you have to select and buy the ticket you want from the current system off the internet, and then download that onto your card! That's right, it's just another format for existing tickets. It's effectively just an electronic wallet for tickets you buy on the internet - but

only from the owner of your smartcard. This isn't all that smart when you think about it. Fare reform, fare simplification and fair fares it is not. The general public will still have to make guesses as to what the correct ticket(s) they need for their journey are, and will still labour under all the myths and misunderstandings of the current complex fare system – imagine all the fun and time consumption to be had on the small screen of your smart phone! Frustratingly we will have the infrastructure in place to actually have a different and better system with SMARTCARDS and readers in place but the same myriad of fares.

Bye Bye Mr Branson and his awful fares structure

Virgin Trains were the first to fully embrace airline yield management techniques and the excruciating Advance Purchase system following rail privatisation. Virgin has argued and pushed for regulated fares to be abolished on several occasions in the past, thankfully unsuccessfully. They wanted book ahead trains only with “distress purchase” prices the nearer to departure date. They in part got around not being able to do this by making up draconian definitions of Peak and Off Peak plus having joke level Anytime fares which aren't regulated. Here in Mid Wales we're thankfully exempt, but across Offa's Dyke the good folk of Shropshire have had to put up with not being able to arrive in London Euston on an Off-Peak ticket until 1130 in the morning, and then having a peak that starts at 1500 and lasts till 1900! This has resulted in half empty peak trains and overcrowded off peak ones, but lots of revenue: yield management techniques are about revenue maximisation, not providing value for money for passengers. Government has of course been complicit in this with its silo mentality franchise targets taking heed of internal departmental budgets rather than the big picture. Recently we've had news reports of Virgin's submissions to the Williams Rail Review, and surprise surprise, they have argued for a system whereby they can cherry pick what trains they run and when and the profits they make. How thoughtful of them for the needs of the general public and UK Plc!

Pretending that it will solve overcrowding they propose that all long distance InterCity services are book ahead only – now the disadvantages of this to the travelling public and UK Plc are many many fold, but let's look at one aspect of this, the fact that InterCity trains augment local services to provide more choice and capacity. In the West Midlands corridor from Wolverhampton through to Coventry long distance InterCity trains provide much needed extra capacity and a turn up and go service from the major stations to augment local trains. It's not always ideal to have local travellers on long distance trains, but can you imagine the utter chaos at Birmingham New St and Birmingham International when a big event at the NEC is on, and hundreds upon hundreds of people are barred from joining InterCity trains and then all try and crowd onto the next TfW service? No doubt a few selfish people will voice support for this “I'm all right jack” mess but let's not be fooled, it's all about a company wanting Government to guarantee a rigged market for their profits.

Hopefully with the Stagecoach/Virgin franchise bids being rejected recently because of their non compliance over pension contributions, we will see the back of them and their anti-passenger ideas.

Postscript

Sam Smith's pubs announced in late March that the use of phones in their pubs was to be banned in order to encourage old fashioned traditional conversation. The pub in Manchester in which the shocking scenes of time wasting buying rail tickets on the internet was witnessed, was one of theirs – Sinclair's Oyster Bar. Future visitors to this establishment need not worry about coming across a similar distressing scene.

Newtown Station April 2019

DISABLED RAIL TRAVEL

Network Rail has in place a programme - Access for All - to greatly increase the provision of facilities for disabled passengers. This involves a range of initiatives to provide obstacle-free, accessible routes to and between platforms. Since 2006 some £500m has been spent, and more than £300m will back the programme over the next five years.

Progress includes purple uniforms for assisted travel teams in four of Britain's busiest railway stations to make them easier for passengers to recognise. Specialist staff at London Euston, Birmingham New Street, Manchester Piccadilly and Liverpool Lime Street stations have become the first in the country to wear purple – the international colour for disability. Assisted travel is offered to all passengers who need help getting between trains and the station concourse.

Information is available on the National Rail website at

https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations/disabled_passengers.aspx

An interactive map, produced by Network Rail, is at

www.accessmap.nationalrail.co.uk

This new 'Access Map' has information about all stations across Britain and allows people to, at a glance, identify whether any station in the country is accessible, so they can plan according to their needs, and have smoother and more reliable journeys. Passengers can search for specific stations anywhere in Britain using this map, which clearly displays:

- whether stations have step free or partial step free access
- what facilities are available at a station, including accessible toilets and changing places
- where alternative accessible stations are for on-the-go planning.

The Disabled Persons Railcard offers, like the Senior Railcard, one third off fares. Further information on eligibility, and purchasing, can be found at

<https://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk/>

In Ceredigion last year 2969 journeys were made using it; up from 2401 in 2015. This is a rise of 23%; nationally the increase was from five to seven million, a rise of 43%.

Ceredigion's MP, Ben Lake, has recently attended a parliamentary event on accessibility and inclusion in rail, hosted by the Rail Delivery Group, which represents train operators and Network Rail.

He said: "Everyone in Ceredigion should have the opportunity to travel by train and today's event shows the rail industry is working hard to improve accessibility across the country and make the railway easier for everyone to use. I'm pleased to work with the rail companies to raise awareness of the discounts offered by the Disabled Persons Railcard and hope more people will benefit from the big savings that can be made."

Step-free access to stations

Between Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury this is available, except at Dovey Junction and Newtown. At Dovey Junction there is a long unsurfaced footpath, which crosses the railway, and is not suitable for wheelchairs. However, changing trains can be accomplished, with train access ramps. At Newtown the camber on the pathway leading to Platform 2 (to Machynlleth) is considered excessive and hazardous.

On the Coast Line the situation is more difficult:

Penhelig: access is only by two long flights of steps.

Aberdovey: step free, with the assistance of the Harrington Hump.

Tywyn: step free.

Tonfanau: step free, but not suitable for wheelchair users as there is a railway crossing and steep ramp to the platform.

Llwyngrwl: step free.

Fairbourne: short ramp with moderate gradient.

Morfa Mawddach: not step free.

Barmouth: step free.

Llanaber: step free, but the station is not suitable for wheelchair or mobility scooter users due to a steep, narrow access track leading to a rough surfaced and steep path to the platform.

Talybont: step free, but the path is rough.

Dyffryn Ardudwy: step free, but the station is not suitable for wheelchair or mobility scooter users as the car park has a rough surface and is in poor condition. Footpath crosses through farm gates and railway track to the platform. A 'Harrington Hump', which is a raised section of platform, is available at this station to assist with boarding and alighting the train.

Llanbedr: step free, but the station is not suitable for wheelchair or mobility scooter users. Access to the platform is via a moderately steep ramp from the main road.

Pensarn: step free, but not suitable for wheelchair or mobility scooter users as access to the platform from the car park is via a moderate ramp and a gate.

Llandanwg: step free, but not suitable for wheelchair or mobility scooter users due to a long, steep access path from the road overbridge.

Harlech: described as not step free. The access ramp to Platform 1 (to Barmouth) has a shallow gradient. Platform 2 (to Pwllheli) is accessible from the small car park via a ramp with a moderate gradient. Access between the platforms is via a footbridge or foot crossing.

Tywyn: described as step free, but not suitable for wheelchair or mobility scooter users due to no suitable set down or pick up point. The platform access ramp is situated next to the main road.

Talsarnau: step free, with Harrington Hump.

Llandecwyn: step free.

Penrhyndeudraeth: step free.

Minffordd: step free, but not suitable for wheelchair or mobility scooter users as the access path is steep in places.

Porthmadog: step free.

Criccieth: step free.

Penychain: step free.

Abererch: step free.

Pwllheli: step free.

FOUR STATIONS ON THE VALE OF RHEIDOL RAILWAY

The Vale of Rheidol Railway has now had four different stations for its Aberystwyth terminus, with the opening of the fourth on Saturday 16th February. The original station was on the south side of Park Avenue. In the 1920s, the Great Western Railway extended the line across Park Avenue to a site alongside the standard gauge station. In the late 1960s the line was rerouted into the Carmarthen line bay platforms, when the standard gauge Great Western engine shed was turned into a combined engine and carriage shed for the VoR stock. On 16th February a new station was opened, alongside the GW shed. Still to be built is a new carriage shed, to be on the site of the Carmarthen line platform roads, and a new booking office.

It is unfortunate that the station is situated further away from the mainline than its predecessor, making interchange more difficult. However, the footpath leading from the mainline station, at present closed, will be reinstated.



The first train to depart from the new station, on the 16th February, the 1030 to Devil's Bridge. No. 7 was also making its first run in public service, after its overhaul. Photograph: Denis Bates.

CAMBRIAN CELEBRATION

Photographed by Kate Jones crossing Barmouth Bridge on 12 April was a train comprising two Network Rail locos, scruffy-looking **97 304 John Tiley**, repainted 97 302 and a single coach, possibly saloon 999506, forming a 12:20 special from Shrewsbury to Porthmadog, calling at Minffordd. The reason for this was a loco naming ceremony that took place at Minffordd (National Rail) station on 12 April.

Network Rail ERTMS loco **97 302** was the recipient, and the unveiling was performed



by Dwyfor Meirionnydd Assembly Member Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas, Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism. The nameplates, in traditional BR corporate style, read Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways on one side and Rheilffyrdd Ffestiniog ac Eryri (Rheilffyrdd is the plural of Rheilffordd). Also present, having travelled in a Network Rail inspection saloon coach were Sir Peter Hendy, Chairman of Network Rail, and Dr John Prideaux, Chair of the Festiniog Railway Company - once Chairman of BR Intercity.

The picture overleaf was taken by **Gwilym Philips** just after the naming, which celebrates the partnership between Network Rail and the two narrow-gauge lines. After the naming, 97 304 took the train to Porthmadog to clear the line for the 15:37 Pwllheli - Machynlleth, ran round the train and returned it to Shrewsbury.

This item is reproduced from the North Wales Coast Railway website, with kind permission of Charlie Hulme, and the photographers.

The picture (right) was taken by **Gwilym Philips** just after the naming.

Below: A Fairlie of the Festiniog Railway is posed above 97304.

Bottom: The 17:00 Porthmadog - Shrewsbury near Morfa Mawddach (Kate Jones). It seems that 97 304 did all the haulage.





OBITUARY: PETER KING

Peter (Pete) was born in May 1955 and grew up in the village of Wombourne, Staffordshire. At an early age Pete showed a keen interest in buses and trains. He would climb the tree in the front garden to watch local buses pass the family home, and trains go by along the then Wombourne branch railway line (also known as the Wolverhampton and Kingswinford Railway), which closed in 1965. Pete always said from an early age that he would drive buses. He did just that!

Pete got his bus driving licence as soon as he could and went on to fulfil his dream of being a bus driver. He was truly happy: not many people get to have a career that they absolutely love.

Pete was also a family man. He married Teresa in 1983 in Tettenhall, Wolverhampton. Teresa would often affectionately always call him Kingy rather than Pete. When Donna was born, his fellow bus drivers proclaimed that the King's had had a princess. The family was complete when Darren was born. Pete was a doting Dad and would love taking Donna and Darren on bus trips, which they loved too. Donna and Darren loved this special time with their Dad and have many fond memories. In 2015, Pete and Teresa welcomed Son-in-Law Robert into the family. Pete had long hoped for this happy occasion and was beaming with pride when he walked Donna down the aisle.

Pete was a bus driver for Travel West Midlands (now West Midlands Travel) for many many years. He knew the west midlands like the back of his hand. Pete then moved onto coach driving including for Megabus and National Express. Again, Pete loved maps and travel so there were not many, if any, areas across the UK which were new to Pete. When there were heavy floods in Sheffield one year, Pete got his coach home hours before his colleagues - he could always think of a short cut. Pete was also obsessed with timetables, and he would spend many hours writing them out over and over, thinking of how there could be efficiencies or how an area which was desperate for more public transport could be incorporated into the timetable. Sadly, Pete suffered a heart attack in 1999. He returned to bus driving but after more heart issues years later, had to accept he could no longer drive passengers. Pete decided to carry on driving HGVs. It wasn't the same but he still loved being out and about. However, in 2014, with Pete's heart failure worsening, he was medically retired. By this time, Pete, Teresa and Darren had moved to Carno, Powys. Pete had often wished to move to Wales and he made it happen, setting up home in a bungalow in the village. Now that Pete could not work, the family loved having day trips to Borth, Aberdovey and Aberystwyth together and enjoying a quiet life. Pete joined SARPA and was an active member who would passionately fight for what he believed in. The campaign to re-open Carno station became a strong passion, although the fate of that is yet to be determined. Pete was also learning Welsh and had a great desire to speak Welsh.

Pete very sadly passed away aged 63 on 10th March 2019 at Swansea hospital. His heart could simply take no more. Pete is sadly missed by all his family and friends. He made a big impact and is remembered fondly. R.I.P Pete.

CONNECTIONS TO CREWE

We are reprinting here a letter sent by Patrick Adams to Transport for Wales following his correspondence with Russ George AM and Ken Skates.

Dear Ms Park,

I have been advised to write to you as Senior Rail Stakeholder Manager, following correspondence with Russell George AM, regarding train connections to Crewe and beyond from the Aberystwyth line.

Passengers need to change at Shrewsbury for Crewe and Manchester, and again at Crewe for any other northern destination. There is often a long wait at Shrewsbury of half an hour or more. It will become worse at Crewe when the trains to Manchester are diverted around the freight underpass as part of the HS2 plan, which will entail a long walk from the proposed new platform.

Currently we have a train service every 2 hours from Aberystwyth and the coast line to Birmingham International, with alternate hour services terminating at Shrewsbury. I understand that when the full hourly service is introduced it is intended that all trains will run through to Birmingham International.

My suggestion is that instead of running every train through to Birmingham, the alternate hour services could run through to Crewe, incorporating the existing 2 hourly Shrewsbury-Crewe local service. This would greatly improve connections without needing additional trains to run, so the cost would be minimal. The current timetable for the Shrewsbury-Crewe local service would need very little change. There would still be an hourly service to Birmingham, but on alternate hours a cross platform change at Shrewsbury would be needed, as it is now.

If none of the above are feasible, then at least offer passengers from mid Wales a journey to Crewe and beyond the opportunity to travel via Wolverhampton without incurring extra fares please.

Yours sincerely

Patrick Adams

Caersws

MONTHLY MEETINGS

2019

| | | | |
|-----------|--------------|------|--|
| September | Saturday 7th | 1215 | Railway Hotel, Borth |
| October | Saturday 5th | 1415 | White Lion, Machynlleth AGM |
| November | Tuesday 12th | 1900 | The Sportsman, Severn Street, Newtown |
| December | Saturday 7th | 1145 | Royal Naval Club, Market Street, Aberystwyth |

USEFUL ADDRESSES

Transport for Wales:

Network Rail:

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

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, 2nd Floor, 200, Aldersgate Street,, London. EC14 4HD

London Midland

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

Association of Community Rail Partnerships

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

Virgin Trains

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

Traveline Cymru for all public transport information

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

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

Public Transport Users' Committee for Wales Secretariat

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

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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ASSOCIATION CONTACT POINTS

Contact by post: c/o Newtown Station Travel, The Railway Station, Old Kerry Road, Newtown, Powys, SY16 1BP. **Email:** sarpa@sarpa.info

WANT TO JOIN SARPA?

The membership fee is currently (for membership up to 31 December 2019) £10.00 per annum for individuals and for organisations. Please make any cheques payable to SARPA. Donations are of course welcome.

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

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

Please send cheques, payable to SARPA, to:

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

WEBSITES

Our website <http://sarpa.info>

Webmaster Angus Eickhoff. Website host is <http://www.redboxinternet.com/>

Other sites of interest:

| | |
|---|--|
| Newtown Station Travel | https://www.newtownstationtravel.co.uk/ |
| 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 |
| Virgin Trains | www.virgintrains.co.uk |
| Chiltern Railways | www.chilternrailways.co.uk/ |
| Network Rail | www.networkrail.co.uk/ |
| Railfuture/Railway Development Society | www.railfuture.org.uk/ |
| Cambrian Rail Partnership | www.walesonrails.com |
| The Association of Community Rail Partnerships (Acorp) | www.acorp.uk.com |
| Passenger Focus | www.passengerfocus.org.uk/ |
| North Wales Coast Railway | www.nwrail.org.uk/ |
| Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways | www.festrail.co.uk/ |
| Vale of Rheidol Railway | www.rheidolrailway.co.uk |
| Talyllyn Railway | www.talyllyn.co.uk/ |
| Welshpool and Llanfair Railway | www.wllr.org.uk/ |
| Welsh Highland Heritage Railway | www.whr.co.uk/ |
| Fairbourne Railway | www.fairbournerrailway.com/ |
| Borth Station Museum | www.borthstationmuseum.co.uk |
| Rail Photographs by Richard Jones including many of the modern Cambrian scene | www.mylordz.com |

Copy deadline for the next newsletter is 22nd October 2019