

Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association

Newsletter No. 85

SEPTEMBER 2021

UPLIFTED BLACK BRIDGE AT MACHYNLLETH LOWERS FEAR OF FLOODING



Article by Network Rail

Black Bridge, on the Cambrian Line, near Machynlleth, now stands one metre taller than before, after Network Rail engineers and contractors AmcoGiffen worked day and night to lift it away from a river flood zone.

This resilience project will improve passenger journeys and secure the future of this vital transport link between Mid Wales and the rest of the UK.

During periods of heavy rainfall, the bridge has repeatedly flooded in the past, causing regular closures on the Machynlleth to Shrewsbury route, leaving large sections of the Cambrian lines in central Wales isolated. The bridge has been closed 30 times in the last decade, and ten times in 2020 alone, for emergency repairs caused by flood water.

What we did

A total of 360 engineers clocked up more than 32,000 hours to deliver this innovative project, in just six weeks, with the line reopening on June 28 2021.

Engineers opted to lift the 80-tonne bridge manually, rather than using hydraulics, to ensure there was no twisting or buckling of the structure. Eight, 20 tonne chains were used in total and for every 10 meters of chain pulled, the bridge was raised just 10mm. This resulted in more than 12,800 metres (12.8km) of chain being pulled through the lifting blocks for this challenging lift.

This project will protect the bridge from high river levels and significantly reduce disruption for passengers in the future.

The bridge goes over the River Dulas in Powys, which is a fish spawning river. This means there is a limited time period when we can carry out the resilience work. We are working in collaboration with Natural Resources Wales and ecological specialists, doing everything possible to protect the sensitive local environment.

Photographs: Network Rail.



The lifting blocks with the chains attached.

NEGES GAN Y CADEIRYDD

Croeso i'r newyddlen ddiweddaraf. Ers y newyddlen flaenorol mae SARPA wedi bod yn brysur iawn ac wedi cyflawni tipyn.

Mae SARPA wedi pwysleisio'n gryf bod angen adfer lefelau blaenorol o wasanaeth ar brif lein y Cambrian rhwng Aberystwyth ac Amwythig. Ar hyn o bryd mae gwasanaeth bob yn ail awr yn unig, sy'n gam mawr yn ôl. Yn ogystal, mae problemau mawr wedi bod o ran gwasanaethau cysylltiedig o lein yr arfordir. Oherwydd i Drafnidiaeth Cymru ddileu'r gwasanaeth 06:45 o Abermaw, y cynharaf y gall deithwyr o'r arfordir gyrraedd Amwythig ar hyn o bryd yw tua 11:20.

Er nad yw SARPA yn dechnegol yn cynrychioli defnyddwyr lein yr arfordir, ar lefel ymarferol mae'r 2 lein yn mor gysylltiedig fel nad oes modd eu hystyried yn llwyr ar wahan; mae lein yr arfordir yn bwydo'r brif lein.

Yn galonogol, er nag ydym eto wedi llwyddo dwyn perswâd ar Drafnidiaeth Cymru i ail-gychwyn y gwasanaethau ychwanegol, rydym wedi lobio'n llwyddiannus i Drafnidiaeth Cymru ddatgan bwriad i ail-gychwyn y 06:45 o Abermaw ar ôl y gwaith ar y draphont, fydd yn caniatáu i deithwyr o'r arfordir gyrraedd Amwythig am tua 09:20. Diolch yn benodol i Cefin Campbell AS am ei waith ar hyn.

Mewn newyddion arall, rydym yn hapus i weld y gwaith mawr fydd yn digwydd yn fuan ar Bont y Bermo. Mae cynnal seilwaith y lein i'r dyfodol yn bwysig iawn. Yn yr un modd, rydym hefyd yn hapus o weld y gwaith ar y Bont Du wedi'i gyflawni yn dilyn ein galwadau am uwchraddio'r bont hon. Dylai hyn gwneud y gwasanaeth yn llawer mwy dibynadwy.

Yn olaf, er ein bod wedi cwrdd arlein hyd yn hyn, gyda chyfyngiadau covid yn llacio rydym yn ystyried cynnal ein Cyfarfod Cyffredinol Blyneddol wyneb i wyneb, efallai ym Machynlleth. Byddai'n ddiddorol casglu barn pobl am hyn, am fod rhai pobl yn gweld y cyfarfodydd rhithiol yn haws i'w mynychu tra bod eraill yn teimlo eu bod yn cael eu dieithrio.

Fodd bynnag, mae SARPA dal i gyflawni, beth bynnag yw'r cyfyngiadau covid a bydd ein gwaith yn parhau.

Jeff Smith, Cadeirydd SARPA

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the latest newsletter. Since our last newsletter SARPA has been very busy and achieved a fair bit.

SARPA has been pushing hard for a return to the previous service levels on the Cambrian main line between Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury. At the moment there is only a 2 hourly service, which is a huge step backwards. Also, there have been major problems regarding the connecting services from the coast line. Due to Transport for Wales cancelling the 06:45 service from Barmouth, the earliest that coast line travellers can arrive Shrewsbury at the moment is at about 11:20.

Although SARPA does not technically represent users of the coast line, on a practical level the 2 lines are so intrinsically linked that it is not possible to consider them as absolutely separate entities: the coast line feeds the main line.

Encouragingly, although we have not yet persuaded Transport for Wales to restart the additional services, we have successfully lobbied to obtain a statement of intent from Transport for Wales to restart the 06:45 ex-Barmouth after the viaduct works, which will allow passengers from the coast to arrive in Shrewsbury at about 09:20. Thanks especially to Cefin Campbell MS for his work on this.

In other news, we are happy to see that major work will be occurring on Barmouth Bridge. Maintaining the railway infrastructure for the future is very important. In the same way, we are also happy to see that the works on the Black Bridge have been completed following our calls to upgrade this bridge. This should make the service much more reliable.

Lastly, although we have been meeting online so far, with covid restrictions being relaxed we are considering holding our Annual General Meeting face to face, perhaps in Machynlleth. It would be interesting to find out people's views on this, since some people see virtual meetings as easier to attend whilst others feel left out.

Anyway, SARPA is still delivering, whatever the covid restrictions are and our work will continue.

Dr Jeff Smith, SARPA Chair

NEWS OF THE LINE

Shrewsbury

Severn Bridge Junction box at Shrewsbury is the largest operational mechanical signalbox in the world., and is also a Grade two listed building. It has recently been given a £250,000 refurbishment, which has included weatherproofing, replacement of the original windows by double-glazed ones, and new timber cladding.

A Charter train to Pwllheli

The first charter train to the Cambrian Lines for many months ran on the 20 th August to Pwllheli. It was run by Pathfinder Tours, originating at Bristol Parkway behind Class 67 No.67001, changing to Class 97/3s No.97303 and 97304

TfW BUYS PULLMAN RAIL

Transport for Wales is purchasing Pullman Rail Limited from Colas Rail. The depot at Cardiff Canton is where the majority of the TfW's trains are serviced, and it is also a base for Pullman Rail operates, providing specialist engineering services. The combination of the two facilities will have benefits for TfW. The Pullman Rail services will continue to operate separately.

[From *Railway Herald* No. 736, 11th August.]

SNAPSHOTS OF PASSENGER LOADINGS

Your Editor had occasion recently to be on the stations at Aberystwyth and Borth, and took these snapshots to give a rough indication of passenger numbers during the current holiday season.



On Monday the 9th of August approximately 40 people were awaiting the arrival of the 0806 from Birmingham International, to form the 1130 departure. Some 50 passengers alighted.

On the previous Friday the 1505 train deposited about ten passengers at Borth, and about eight joined the train for Aberystwyth.



NEW TRANSPORT FOR WALES “COMM-U-TOOR” TRAINS ON TEST

Despite much informed and justified criticism, TfW have ploughed ahead with their plan for the replacement Wales and Border franchise of ordering trains more suited for city region journeys than the long distance and rural ones they will be used on. Testing has commenced on the CAF Civity Class 197 DMU's in North Wales/Cheshire/Merseyside. Lots of enthusiast websites have pictures of the trains running in various locations, but alas no internal shots of what the all-important passenger accommodation looks like.

TfW have tacitly admitted that the CAF's are a mistake by changing the Keolis Amey rolling stock plan and have acquired a quantity of ex-East Coast Mainline MK4 coaches, and now the intention is to run in their words a “quality service” between Swansea and Manchester rather than a service solely made up of “Comm-u-toor” Class 197's. Apparently the Scottish InterCity services with refurbished HST's have shown what you can do; alas with not enough sets ordered to run the hourly services between Swansea and Manchester passengers will face rolling stock roulette with some services of a proper InterCity quality and others formed with the “Comm-u-tor” Class 197's.

Meanwhile TfW will be handing their ex-Greater Anglia Class 170's back as part of the fleet shuffle about, and the good folk of rural Pembrokeshire will see only “Comm-u-toor” Class 197's. On the Heart of Wales Line ancient ex BR Class 153's will form a micro fleet solely for use through Central Wales and the Crewe to Shrewsbury stopping service.

Swiss train Manufacturer Stadler have started tests in Europe of the fleet of bi-mode and tri-mode FLIRT trains. FLIRT of course stands for Flexible Lightweight InterCity Regional Train which means of course TfW have ordered them to do short distance across Cardiff commuter trips from Penarth to Coryton – less than the distance from Newtown to Welshpool with 12 stops.

And we may as well complete the round up of all new stock in Wales and the Borders with news that the Vivarail Class 230s (the hair brained attempt to covert ex London Underground stock for use in the regions) for the Borderlands are having a testing time – catching fire regularly and are still not in passenger revenue earning service. In South Wales passengers can see progress at Taff's Well where a new depot for that made up construct the “Core Valley Lines” is being built. Loud and clear the consultation for the new franchise was and it was said that getting a seat was the number one priority for passengers. TfW have obliged with Tram Trains specially designed to have more standing space than the stock they replace.

TfW Officials appear to have used the pandemic as an excuse to hide from the genuine concern about their rolling stock orders. Consultation on mockups of the internal design of Class 197's that were promised have failed to materialise, and questions about their suitability in a post covid travel world and how they can possibly justify a new DMU in a world aiming for decarbonisation and in a supposed declared “climate emergency” in Wales have been met with stony silence. The plan is still as far as we know to introduce them on our line by December 2023 where Cambrian Rail Users will have the dubious privilege of having the planet's last brand diesel powered

trains – perhaps this is the “world class” future TfW and Welsh Government so often refer to?

The 83% Solution

The brilliant brains at the Department for Transport have consulted their all too often faulty and inaccurate crystal ball and have declared that by 2023/2024 rail use will be back to 83% of pre pandemic levels. 5 day a week commuting and business travel are expected to take a big hit, maybe down by 40%. However this will be partly offset by a increase in discretionary travel. Any increases due to the effects of decarbonisation are not factored in as the official view is we can have our petrol and diesel motor vehicles replaced by battery, hydrogen and magic yet to be invented sources.

So, with lines having different characteristics with the Cambrian being 95% discretionary travel there could be an increase in usage in store. Anyone seen the plans to accommodate it?

Road building rejected the real story of the May 2021 elections

Despite media excitement about the Hartlepool byelection local election voters across England and in Wales for the Senedd elections rejected people and parties offering road building policies.

Firstly, the so-called Metro Mayor elections in England saw individuals and parties offering improved public transport the keys to the town hall. Notably the Conservative incumbent in the West Midlands who has pursued improved public transport in his previous tenure and had a concrete plan to show the electorate was re-elected; contrast this with his fellow conservative incumbent in the West of England (Bristol and Bath) who dragged his heels on public transport and demanded road improvements and was shown the door.

Here in Wales the Welsh Conservatives went for broke and unusually put a transport policy at the heart of their key top election pledges to run the Senedd, convinced it was a vote winner. A mass road building plan would save Wales from economic ruin and lead the recovery they said but despite the Brexit and UKIP vote disintegrating they failed to increase their vote share. Instead, Labour was elected with a wafer-thin working majority and soon announced that all road building schemes not already started would be a paused to allow a review taking into account climate change and decarbonisation.

Shrewsbury followed fellow Marches county town Hereford by electing Councillors opposed to road building. Hereford pulled the plug on their bypass in 2019, the incumbent Conservatives in Shrewsbury who support the so called North West Relief Road were shocked as they were nearly wiped out in the county town largely by candidates on an anti-relief road ticket. Chief Cheer leader of the road scheme, the Leader of Shropshire Council, lost both his town and county seat. A clear message has been sent from the electors in Shrewsbury. However the road is under Shropshire County Council auspices and the road supporting Conservatives narrowly retained their majority across the county. There's now a Mexican stand off with County

Councillors from out of town trying to impose something on the people of Shrewsbury against their democratic will. The elections followed the lodging of the highest number of complaints Shropshire CC had ever seen for a single planning application (that for the road) with objectors outnumbering supporters nearly 100 to 1. The local MP and road supporter went immediately on social media saying all the objectors were outside trouble makers and that old chestnut “the silent majority” wanted it and then looked rather foolish as the local election results contradicted him. It was pointed out that he was a big supporter of Brexit and had some strong views on the democratic view of the people being followed following the 2016 EU referendum.

Where voters can have a meaningful chance of expressing their preference on transport priorities then the pattern is clear: road building is not wanted and improved public transport solutions are preferred as voters appear to be way ahead of many politicians on the issue of climate change and how we address it.



The 1029 Aberystwyth to Shrewsbury headed by 158837 at Newtown Station, on Sunday 11th April. Photograph: Gareth Marston.

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

My youngest daughter, finishing her undergraduate studies, saw me travel long distance across country to bring her home at the beginning of July. As I travelled, I drafted this piece in my mind as a checklist on the problems, faults and good parts that Great British Railways will inherit from the over fragmented, over costly and inefficient privatised railway. It also reminded me of my travelling in my younger days, when things were far easier and cheaper!

My trip was one way to Durham from Newtown (we hired a van to bring the daughter's stuff back). Planning it was easy enough as I knew what I was doing and have done the trip a number of times before. First train from town, change at Shrewsbury for Manchester Piccadilly, get the Manchester Metro to Victoria station and pick up a TPE Liverpool to Newcastle express there, should be in Durham @ either 1155 or 1255. Ticket? Again, as I knew what I was doing I made a conscious decision as the date was set by my daughters end of tenancy, to get Advance Purchase tickets, one for the TPE leg and one for the TFW one. Arrival at Piccadilly @ 0913 and departure from Victoria @ 0945 is possible if everything is working OK, but I opted for the 1045 from Victoria due to ticket type, insurance for any problems, and as an opportunity to buy a drink. No TFW AP tickets were available, so I bought 3 different day singles and separately an TPE AP ticket off the TFW app on my mobile phone. I paid £56.75 in total.

Now what if I did not know how to do this? How about looking online? There are close on 30 different websites all claiming they sell "cheap tickets", so I dabbled with a few (I will not name them but deliberately went for a selection of a Train operator I'm using, operator I'm not and a third party one) they all seemed to want to send me via Birmingham and charge the princely sum of £125.30. Travelling on the second train I could go via Manchester Piccadilly and change at Huddersfield – also for £125.30. None of them even gave me the route and trains I took. I only looked for purposes of research for this article, but as I have said before how much time and effort do people waste online looking? So much for the supposed convenience and saving money that perceived wisdom says are the advantages of the internet. The internet didn't explain that there are two main ways to travel between Mid Wales and the North-East (with sub routes both ways); the journey planner just spat out what it saw as the quickest way without any narrative or explanation. How is this customer friendly? The choices were simply not offered. £125.30 is the official Anytime Single price – it works out about 55p a mile for a c 230-mile trip which frankly is a piss take, I started my journey on a train heading to Birmingham; I could have bought a day return there and travelled the c.150 mile return trip for c15p a mile! Again, the whacky unreformed fare system makes no sense for customers. How many people would just give up after seeing £125.30 and messing around on multiple websites looking in vain for the cheap tickets promised? I should not need to have insider knowledge to make the fare reasonable. People have no confidence that the fares they are charged are fair, and are just downright confused by multiple websites and how ticketing works. Fare reform has been paid lip service to for too long. The White Paper seemed to promise one website for tickets run by Great British Railways; a start at least, but Minsters were soon backtracking saying that other retail outlets could still sell tickets also – groan. Planning journeys and ticketing is both ugly and bad for the average punter – and a deterrent to usage, the fare system, yield

management techniques and multiple consumer choice confusion acts as a brake on the growth of usage and revenue. GBR is tasked with immense cost savings, but also must get revenue and usage back up and running. You can see why the Public Accounts Committee was so critical of DfT's lack of plans.

Fare reform has been floated for a long time: the push back has always been from the Treasury frightened of an interim period where revenue may dip for a short while whilst the new system beds in, and costs need covering by the public purse. Yet here we are with the public purse covering a huge percentage of rail costs – and no action at all on fare reform. This inertia could lead to disaster as the Treasury bleats for savings from service cuts and above inflation fare increases on the existing system if usage and revenue does not bounce back sufficiently.

So, to my journey, and back to Newtown station and the pigeon mess and grass growing in the gaps in the cobbles and the tracks that greeted me. Suffice to say the condition of our stations and other infrastructure deteriorated after rail privatisation, and I like many have spent years listening to the tired old baby excuses about areas not being in leases or of franchise agreement that didn't tell the TOC to clean the stations properly. If you want to convince the public to go back to rail a modicum of effort on the first impressions would surely be top of the list? Bad and Ugly once more.

At last, a real train – on time as well as were all trains on this trip. A TfW Class 158 as expected. Just 2 cars for the half dozen or so waiting and maybe twice that number already aboard. A Conductor whom I had not seen before came round and was friendly, helpful, and pleasant and checked tickets. As it was first thing in the morning, I had not activated my tickets, so he waited whilst the onboard Wi-Fi kicked in allowing me to do this. Clean, comfy enough and too early to see what horrors the infamous non-working Class 158 air con would bring. Time soon flew on the journey to Shrewsbury, normally on arrival at 0713 the stations quite busy but not today. The Café was closed, and the handwritten sign seemed to hint it might just be till covid is over. Half an hour to kill and no drink to be had, I had brought some with me thankfully, so I settled down to observe. My Conductor was obviously under training given who the other Machynlleth conductor with him was. A 158 came down from the Chester line to join up with the Cambrian 158 and go on to Birmingham. I doubt people were left behind at Telford this trip! My train to Manchester Piccadilly was a 3 car Class 175 from Cardiff; its air con was set ready for the mid July heatwave – thankfully, I had a lightweight top to put on. The conductor stormed through the carriages on departure from Shrewsbury doing some attempt at a headcount and muttered something grumpily about face masks at someone. Auto announcements to Crewe and no sign of her again; another Conductor joined at Crewe who seemed in a better mood and cheerily told us we could bang on his door if we needed assistance after his walkthrough. The journey was on time with passenger loading quiet and the trip uneventful. I have done Shrewsbury to Piccadilly via Crewe a lot of times over the years. Back in my mid-teens to mid-twenties I racked up thousands of miles a year all over the UK and maybe took it for granted that I would travel over these lines again soon. I was thinking: when would I get the chance to go over the Pennines and up the East Coast Mainline again? Between 2001 and 2016 I easily travelled around the globe clocking up rail mileage to Cardiff and back. I never tired of the scenery on the Marches line, but I reflected it's something I have done once in the last 5 years! Mental note to make the most of the trip over the Pennines.

There were signs of increased usage at Manchester Piccadilly with the station being used by many; nationally we are supposedly at 50% of pre-covid usage but there does seem to be a lot of variance from train to train and location. Then a problem exiting the ticket check line. It seems my third ticket had not activated properly. Northern Ticket line man asked how I got on the station at X as he "knows the barriers were manned this morning" – he probably says that in all circumstances to everybody. I explained I'd bought split tickets and showed him properly activated Tickets 1 & 2. He then tried to engage me in a pointless discussion about who had sold them to me! Given that he had been shown tickets on a TfW app on my smart phone I think there was a big clue for him to work it out himself, do you not think? It did not matter; anyway I walked through. I found the refreshment places at concourse level were all open and thankfully got a coffee nearly 3 hours into my journey. I then looked at Ticket 4 and that had not activated properly either! Now this was the TPE AP ticket I had bought separately to the others, and I had got a confirmation email with a PDF of the ticket, so got that ready on my phone. I suspect the reader is wishing I had a single proper orange ticket at a sensible price reading all this – so did I.

Now some good bits. Down to the undercroft of Piccadilly and the Metro stop. I tapped my contactless bank card on the validator and waited for the first tram to Victoria, I did not wait long and tapped out at the other end. No issues no fuss, a sensible one-way fare, easy to pay and no messing around on the internet looking for the mythical cheap tickets or having to book a seat/tram to use in advance. All urban transport should be like this. Time for another coffee and then after my pdf opened the barriers without fuss my train. An almost brand new 5 coach Class 802 Bi-Mode. It had come from Liverpool for 31.5 miles on electric and was going to transfer to diesel the 70 odd miles till we got to York and then back to electric the last 80 miles to Newcastle. TPE was operating a lockdown timetable with only one train per hour to Newcastle so our train was doing 11 intermediate stops between Liverpool and Newcastle, an average of one every 14 miles, the same distance as Newtown to Welshpool. Plenty of people were using the train for short one or two hops even though it was an InterCity service. We need this flexibility of a walk on service the suggestion that all InterCity trains have to be pre booked and reservations only is bonkers and can only come from people who don't understand how the railway is used in the real world. Trains going long distances in the UK without stopping at intermediate stations are few and far between, and often the InterCity train is also the only train for short trips. My daughter's gone to Newcastle a few times from Durham, and with trains appearing at less than 15 minute intervals one can forget the timetable. The two places are served by three different long distance operators.

The table and seat I were on I found comfortable, though no one else sat around it. The air con was exactly right (for about 20 degrees outside), the conductors were all pleasant and cheerful – we had 3 different ones and most importantly the 5 x 26 metre coaches gave far more capacity than the 3 x 23m Class 185's they've replaced. It is a railway good news story that has happened recently and needs to be known about more widely across the North; likewise the dreaded Pacers had all disappeared. All local services I saw were 4 car at least. Once we got over the Pennines the loading picked up and it was nice to see lots of people using the railway. Around Church Fenton we saw signs of the impending electrification between Leeds and York and as I passed

the National Railway Museum I saw "Tornado" and "Galatea" in steam – a bonus heritage moment! Sunshine nice scenery and all too soon I was coming into Durham, the chance to the view the castle/cathedral is always ruined by having to get ready to get off – I spotted my daughter on the platform waiting and we went for drink at the pub on the platform (The Waiting Room: a Good Beer Guide entry).

As I was not knackered by driving, I was able to help my daughter pack that afternoon, we had a meal out and then in the morning finished packing and got the van, loaded it, and waited on the estate agent's inspection. We got on the road Friday lunchtime had a slow trip over the Pennines mainly due to a traffic jam in Barnard's Castle. Joined the M6 at Tebay in the Lune Gorge and headed south. South of Preston there was a 10-mile tailback heading north and traffic on the M56/M53/A55 was heavy as we got caught up with the motorists trying to get to North Wales for the weekend. Despite the van being almost brand new and hi spec the air con on it struggled to keep us cool with the outside air temperatures in the low 20's. It performed almost as well as our car and had six gears and easily cruised at 70 mph on the motorway, but the disease of traffic congestion ensured a slow and tiring trip back.

Lessons for GBR?

- ☐ Making rail attractive needs attention to day-to-day cleaning and maintenance at stations. This is not rocket science or that expensive.
- ☐ Fare reform so the brake is released on usage and growth is massively overdue. Remind the Treasury that it was them who designed rail privatization and they're in no position to lecture on costs /value for money as their bright idea has cost UK plc close on £100 Billion in waste.
- ☐ Publicise the successes at a national level (after carefully vetting your chosen celebrity).
- ☐ Pull your finger out on electrification – Investment programmes say, "were open for business".
- ☐ And remember the downsides of mass vehicle usage are still there even if the internal combustion engine is replaced with batteries for an electric traffic jam.

Gareth Marston
Newtown, Powys July 2021



Left: Twin Ticket machines at Aberystwyth, with social screening between them.

Below: A bridge over the cycle trail from Aberystwyth to Tregaron, which largely follows the former railway. Is this going to be the site for the Aberystwyth terminus of the proposed reinstated line?

The Editor's cycle is propped against the fence.

Photographs: Denis Bates



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting, scheduled for October, may take place on line, as it not clear whether face to face meetings are likely to be permitted in near future. A decision on how it will be held will be made at the September Committee meeting.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Until the Covid-19 Pandemic is over, monthly meetings will be held by video links. The next SARPA meeting will be held via Google Meet at 11:00 on Saturday 22nd May 2021.

You are invited to join the meeting using the link:

meet.google.com/mox-ydhz-dov

Or you can join by phone: 0203 957 1014 PIN: 462 570 569 #

WANT TO JOIN SARPA?

The membership fee is currently (for membership up to 31 December 2021) £10.00 per annum for individuals and for organisations. Please make any cheques payable to SARPA. Donations are of course welcome.

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

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

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

Bill redfern, SARPA Membership Secretary, 8 Plas Edwards, Tywyn, Gwynedd, LL36 0AS, along with cheque for the membership fee, or, and preferably, you can pay directly into our bank account: Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Rail Passengers Association: Barclays Bank: sort code 20-61-08: account 201481148, and send your details to

Bill_sarpa@outlook.com

USEFUL ADDRESSES

Transport for Wales: Customer Relations, Transport for Wales Rail Services, St. Mary's House , 47 Penarth Road, Cardiff . CF10 5DJ Tel. 0333 3211 202

Network Rail:

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

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

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STOP PRESS: MACHYNLLETH BRIDGE STRIKE

A tipping lorry, with its tipping trailer up, hit the railway overbridge at Machynlleth station on Wednesday morning September 1st, resulting in the closure of both the road and railway. The railway was reopened at 3 pm, but with only the down line in use. The bridge will be on single line working for sometime as the repairs might see the whole bridge closed for a week in order to jack it up & fix it. The force of the collision lifted the sleepers on the upline! However a reasonable service going on, but where 2 trains are at the station at the same time passengers will have to change trains by walking along the platform.

This follows on a similar accident at Plymouth on Sunday 29th August, when an articulated lorry hit a road underbridge. The main line just east of Plymouth was temporarily closed, before single line working was resumed. In this case it was an arch bridge, and some of the arch was damaged.

WEBSITES

Our website <http://sarpa.info>

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

Other sites of interest:

A useful alternative to the National Rail Enquiries site:

Transport for Wales

National Rail Enquiries

London Northwestern Railway

West Midlands Railway

Virgin Trains

Chiltern Railways

Network Rail

Railfuture/Railway Development Society

Cambrian Rail Partnership

The Association of Community Rail Partnerships (Acorp)

Passenger Focus

North Wales Coast Railway

Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways

Vale of Rheidol Railway

Talyllyn Railway

Welshpool and Llanfair Railway

Welsh Highland Heritage Railway

Fairbourne Railway

Borth Station Museum

Rail Photographs by Richard Jones including many of the modern Cambrian scene

www.traintimes.org.uk/

www.tfwrail.wales/

www.nationalrail.co.uk/

www.journeycheck.com/londonnorthwesternrailway/

www.westmidlandsrailway.co.uk

www.virgintrains.co.uk

www.chilternrailways.co.uk/

www.networkrail.co.uk/

www.railfuture.org.uk/

www.walesonrails.com

www.acorp.co.uk

www.passengerfocus.org.uk/

www.nwrail.org.uk/

www.festrail.co.uk/

www.rheidolrailway.co.uk

www.talyllyn.co.uk/

www.wlir.org.uk/

www.whr.co.uk/

www.fairbournerrailway.com/

www.borthstationmuseum.co.uk

www.mylordz.com

Copy deadline for the next newsletter is 22nd November 2021