
Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association

Newsletter No. 87

MAY 2022



Picture © Network Rail

WASHOUTS AT WELSHPOOL

NETWORK RAIL REINSTATES THE LINE IN SIX WEEKS

The picture above shows the completed work on the line.

The extensive repair work has included the removal of 3000 tonnes of debris, 4000 tonnes of new ballast being laid, three tamping shifts to realign and level the track, 800 metres of double track replaced, new hedgerows planted, clearing of 11 culverts and installation of new fencing and telecoms cables.

NEGES GAN Y CADEIRYDD

Mae'n bleser gennyf ddweud y bydd cyfarfodydd wyneb i wyneb yn ailgychwyn ym Mis Mai eleni. Mae wedi bod yn amser hir ers i ni gwrdd yn gorfforol ac rydym yn gwerthfawrogi amynedd y rhai nad sy'n gallu ymuno â'n cyfarfodydd yn rhithiol dros y ddwy flynedd diwethaf.

Y cyfarfod cyntaf yn y gyfres o gyfarfodydd wyneb i wyneb fydd yn yr Ystafell Slater, Gorsaf Wharf Tywyn, am 14:00 dydd Sul 15 Mai. Cynhelir ein Cyfarfod Cyffredinol Blynnyddol yn y Clwb Bowlio, Machynlleth am 11:15 dydd Sadwrn 11 Mehefin. Bydd yn braf eich gweld wyneb i wyneb o'r diwedd.

Mewn newyddion arall, rhaid canmol gwaith Network Rail i ailagor y lein ar bwys y Trallwng wedi'r llifogydd. Cwblhawyd llawer o waith mewn llai na mis gan gynnwys ailosod y traciau yn gyfan gwbl mewn mannau. Edrychwn ymlaen hefyd at y gwaith i warchod y lein rhag dioddef y fath difrod yn y dyfodol – bydd cerrig yn cael eu gosod ar hyd un ochr o'r lein i gadw gwely'r trac yn ei le.

Edrychwn ymlaen hefyd at gyhoeddiad amserlen mis Mai gan obeithio y bydd gwasanaethau ychwanegol yn cael eu cynnal yn hytrach na'r gwasanaeth bob yn ail awr sydd gennym ar hyn o bryd.

Jeff Smith, Cadeirydd SARPA

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

It's my great pleasure to report that face to face meetings will resume in May this year. It has been a long time since we met physically and we appreciate the patience of those members who could not join us in the virtual meetings over the past two years.

The first meeting in the series of face to face meetings will be in the Slater Room, Tywyn Wharf Station, at 14:00 on Sunday 15th May. Our Annual General Meeting will be held in the Bowling Club, Machynlleth at 11:15 on Saturday 11th June. It will be great to see you all face to face at last.

In other news, Network Rail deserve praise for their work in reopening the line near Welshpool following the flooding. A huge amount of work has been completed in less than a month including the complete replacement of the tracks in places. We also look forward to the work to protect the line from such damage in future – rock armour will be placed along one side of the line to keep the trackbed in place.

We also look forward to the publication of the May timetable, hoping that additional services will be provided rather than the 2-hourly service which we currently have.

Jeff Smith, SARPA Chair

OUR NEXT MEETINGS

Sunday 15th May 1400 at Tywyn Wharf Station
Saturday 11th June 1115 Bowling Club Machynlleth: AGM

NEWS IN BRIEF

Charter trains returning to the Cambrian

A Cardiff to Pwllheli charter will run on Friday 12th August.

An Oxford to Pwllheli charter will run on Friday 9th September.

Abbey Foregate Signal Box, Shrewsbury

The Abbey Foregate Signal Box was closed on Easter Sunday and Monday - 17th and 18th April - due to Covid-19. Train services between Shrewsbury and Birmingham were affected.

Pre Covid timetable between Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury to return from May 15th, 2022

At long last, and sort of coinciding with the line reopening at Welshpool, the May timetable change we will see services restored to what was running in March 2020. That is the slightly confusing 12 trains a day service on Mondays to Saturdays the whole length of the line that had been operating since May 2015, which of course has some two-hour gaps in it but is hourly at other times of the day.

Giving what's happening in other parts of the UK, we are indeed lucky to be getting back our pre-covid levels of service as the DfT is insisting on implementing a dumb non evidence based 10% cut in funding to the English based Train Operating Companies. The Scottish Government has done the same with ScotRail but not the Welsh Government with Transport for Wales Rail Services. Whether this is by positive design or accident we don't know, but welcome nonetheless. There have been complaints galore of overcrowding and people left behind on platforms in England, especially at weekends as people looking to return to using rail have found paired back services as specified by the DfT.

Rail use at the end of March 2022 on average across Great Britain was approaching 75% of pre covid levels. The DfT had told us last year that it had looked in its magic crystal ball and rail use was going to be back to 83% of pre covid levels by the end of FYR 2023/2024 i.e March 2024. With usage recovering faster than DfT expected we could be in the situation whereby the expected March 2024 levels are reached in the next few weeks, with usage rising yet higher. Yet DfT/Treasury are still trying to cut services and this is before we factor in growing demand caused by rising petrol/diesel prices.

Welshpool

Rail replacement services have had to use the Industrial Estate side of the station following complaints by Edinburgh Woollen Mills shop.

During the flooding closure of the line, bus replacement services were put on between Newtown and Shrewsbury, timed to meet with services running the normal timetable from Newtown westward. Passengers have arrived at Shrewsbury later and needed to leave it earlier than the rail timetable. The basic fact that you cannot run bus replacements to the same schedule as trains due to allowing for unloading/loading between the two modes and the fact that the coach replacement travel is much slower than the train has once more needed to be explained to people complaining that the bus replacements weren't at the same time as the trains.

For future flood resilience another £2 million is being spent on rock armour alongside the line. this work will take place once the line reopens. In fact, on many lines a “window gazer” guide saying climate change resilience works is now the norm.

Shrewsbury

In early March the Coffee shop at the station drive entrance town centre side has reported its takings as recovering now that commuters have returned.

Floodwater in February prevented the station entrance being used by the public though trains could still operate.

Class 158 refurbishment completed

Transport for Wales has completed the refurbishment of its Class 158 fleet. This project has been taking place at the Arriva Train#Care facility in Crewe since 2020. This has included recovering seats, new carpets and interior fittings, USB charging points and revamped toilets. There have also been improvements to the electrical, heating and Wheel Slide Protection systems.



Photos of some
of the washouts.
Photographs:
Network Rail.



TRAFFERTH GER Y TRALLWNG

Mae newid hinsawdd wedi bod yn effeithio'n wael ar reilffyrdd y Cambrian ers sawl blwyddyn erbyn hyn. Un o'r lleoliadau clasurol tan yn ddiweddar oedd y Bont Ddu wrth Fachynlleth, lle'r oedd rhaid cau'r lein bob tro roedd lefelau'r dŵr yn yr afon Dulas yn rhy uchel. Diolch i waith ardderchog Network Rail yn codi'r bont, mae gwasanaethau rheilffordd bellach yn llawer mwy cyson a dibynadwy.

Ond yn ddiweddar iawn, dioddefodd y traciau ymyl y Trallwng lifogydd fu'n golchi'r balast o dan y traciau mewn 35 lle gwahanol. O ganlyniad, roedd y traciau (ie, mae trac dwbl yn fan'no) yn ansaff i'w defnyddio ac roedd rhaid trefnu bysiau rhwng y Drenwydd ac Amwythig (neu hyd yn oed Telford am ychydig) nes i'r difrod cael ei drwsio.

Mae'r lein yn weddol isel yn yr ardal ac roedd yr afon Hafren wedi codi i'r lefel uchaf ers blynnyddoedd, gan foddio'r lein. Yn eironig digon, nid y dŵr uchaf oedd yn gorchuddio'r traciau a wnaeth y rhan fwyaf o'r difrod ond y tawelwch wedi'r storom. Wrth i lefel y dŵr leihau, roedd y dŵr oedd wedi'i ddal tu ôl i glawdd y rheilffordd yn torri trwy glawdd y rheilffordd er mwyn cyrraedd yn ôl i'r afon, gan greu 35 twll o dan y traciau.

Rhaid canmol ymdrechion Network Rail i drwsio'r difrod. Mewn llai na mis, roeddynt wedi asesu'r sefyllfa, cael peiriannau yn y llefydd cywir, tynnu'r hen draciau, atgyweirio clawdd y rheilffordd, gosod balast newydd a gosod traciau newydd, cyn iddynt drosglwyddo'r lein nôl i Drafndiaeth Cymru tua dechrau mis Ebrill. Allem ni ond diolch iddynt am weithredu'n mor gyflym a chadarn.

Er mwyn atal problemau tebyg yn y dyfodol, mae Network Rail am osod cerrig mawr (*rock armour*) ar hyd un ochr o'r lein yn yr ardal er mwyn sicrhau na fydd y dŵr ddim yn dinistrio clawdd y rheilffordd mewn digwyddiadau tebyg ar yr afon Hafren. Mae Network Rail wedi cadarnhau na fydd hyn yn effeithio ar y gwasanaethau rheilffordd ond bydd y gwaith yn atal digwyddiadau tebyg yn y dyfodol.

Mae SARPA wedi bod yn pwyso ers blynnyddoedd am waith i ddiogelu'r lein i'r dyfodol ac rydym yn falch i weld sawl gwelliant yn ddiweddar. Ond rydym hefyd yn galw am gynllun cyfannol i warchod y lein rhag effeithiau newid hinsawdd, gan atal difrod cyn iddo ddigwydd, yn hytrach na dim ond ymateb i ddigwyddiadau. Rydym hefyd wedi herio Trafnidiaeth Cymru am wybodaeth ddiffygiol ynglŷn â'r bysiau oedd yn cymryd lle trenau tra oedd y lein ar gau.

Eironi'r sefyllfa yw bod y reilffyrdd yn rhan o'r datrysiad i newid hinsawdd. Am hynny mae rhaid gwarchod y lein ac rydym dal i bwysu am gynllun hirdymor i wneud hyn, yn ogystal â chanmol gwaith ardderchog Network Rail yn ddiweddar.

Jeff Smith

WASHOUT AT WELSHPOOL

Climate change has adversely affected the Cambrian lines for a number of years by now. One of the classic examples until recently was the Black Bridge near Machynlleth, where the line had to be closed every time the water levels in the Dulas river got too

high. Thanks to Network Rail's great work in raising the bridge, rail services are now much more consistent and dependable.

But very recently, the tracks near Welshpool suffered flood damage which washed out the ballast from under the tracks in 35 different places. As a result, the tracks (yes, this section is double track) were unsafe to use and buses had to be arranged between Newtown and Shrewsbury (or even Telford for a while) until the damage was repaired.

The line is quite low lying in the area and the river Severn had reached its highest level for years, flooding the line. Ironically enough, it was not the highest water covering the tracks that did most of the damage but the calm after the storm. As water levels receded, the water trapped behind the railway embankment broke through the embankment in order to reach the river, creating 35 holes underneath the tracks.

Network Rail deserve praise for their efforts to fix the damage. Within less than a month, they had assessed the situation, got machinery in the correct places, removed the old tracks, repaired the railway embankment, installed new ballast and installed new tracks, before transferring the line back to Transport for Wales around the start of April. We can only thank them for acting so quickly and decisively.

In order to prevent such problems in the future, Network Rail plan to install rock armour along one side of the line in the area, in order to ensure that water cannot damage the railway embankment in similar events on the river Severn. Network Rail have confirmed that this will not affect rail services but the work will stop similar events in the future.

SARPA has been lobbying for years for work to futureproof the line and we are pleased to see several recent improvements. But we also call for a holistic plan to protect the line from the effects of climate change, preventing damage before it occurs, rather than simply acting after the event. We have also challenged Transport for Wales regarding deficient information about rail replacement buses during the line closure.

The irony of the situation is that the railway is part of the solution to climate change.

OBITUARY: PETER WILLIAM COMPTON

MARCH 1946 – FEBRUARY 2022

Peter was a former Chairman of SARPA between 1995 and 1999, and was perhaps better known in Mid Wales as the long-time owner of Newtown Station Travel. He passed away after a short illness in February 2022; he is survived by his son Sam who is a Fleet Manager for South West Railways.

Peter was a native of Ludlow, who moved to Mid Wales in the 1970's. He lived near Llandinam and was for many years Lord Davies's Gardner. Peter had a lifelong interest in the arts as well as the railways and was well known for hosting art themed events at his property and helped sponsor the Gregynog festival. He helped set up Newtown Station Travel in 1995. Peter retired in 2016 when he reached the grand age of 70; during this time he built up a reputation for navigating the UK rail ticketing system and finding deals for customers, offering a personal service with many people from across Mid Wales and further afield looking to use his services. Peter had an eye problem in his early 60's and surprised many by continuing to work so many hours beyond his 65th birthday. He never disclosed the reason why he didn't retire earlier.

TRAVELLING TO LONDON IN MK 3 COACHES

Chiltern Railways operate three sets of Mark 3 coaches on their Birmingham Moor Street to London Marylebone services. For anyone wishing to avail themselves of these coaches here are their current Diagrams (until Sunday 15th May 2022).

Stock: Class 68 + Mk3 TSO + Mk3 TSO + Mk3 TSO + Mk3 TSO + Mk3a RFM + Mk3 DVT (4 sets available). Mk3aRFMs are catering vehicles.

Six Class 68 locomotives are leased by Chiltern Railways from DRS. These are 68010 -15 (XHCE) and painted in Chiltern Silver livery, although other DRS 68s are used (68008/009), as and when needed. **DMU substitutions can occur at any time!**

Monday to Friday Only

Diagram 1

1H17 06:41 Stourbridge Junction - London Marylebone (a.09:09)
1R21 10:10 London Marylebone - Birmingham Moor Street (a.11:56)
1H45 12:55 Birmingham Moor Street - London Marylebone (a.14:53)
1T54 18:18 London Marylebone - Oxford (a.19.21)

Diagram 2

1H22 07:16 Stourbridge Junction - London Marylebone (a.09:43)
1R29 12:10 London Marylebone - Birmingham Moor Street (a.13:56)
1H53 14:55 Birmingham Moor Street - London Marylebone (a.16:42)
1K50 17:14 London Marylebone - Kidderminster (a.19.40)

Diagram 3

1H12 07:39 Princes Risborough - London Marylebone (a.08:32)
1K54 18:15 London Marylebone - Kidderminster (a.20:45)

Saturdays Only

Diagram 1

1H13 07:12 Kidderminster - London Marylebone (a.09:53)
1R24 11:00 London Marylebone - Birmingham Moor Street (a.13:06)
1H37 13:37 Birmingham Moor Street - London Marylebone (a.15:49)
1K48 17:00 London Marylebone - Kidderminster (a.19:41)

Diagram 2

1H11 06:37 Kidderminster - London Marylebone (a.09:14)
1R32 13:00 London Marylebone - Birmingham Moor Street (a.15:12)
1H45 15:37 Birmingham Moor Street - London Marylebone (a.17:49)
1K58 19:37 London Marylebone - Kidderminster (a.22:09)

From the Railtour Information Website <http://www.railtourinfo.co.uk/index.html>

FRON JUNCTION

In the North Wales Railway website (<http://nwrail.org.uk/index.htm>) Noticeboard for the 11th April was a short item on a Cambrian line junction: Fron Junction. Where is it, you may ask. The item explains it:

“..... Fron Junction is very much a 21st century creation, making the point where the extension of double track to form a Dynamic Loop, designed to reduce delays to trains and eventually allow a greater frequency. It is named for the nearby farmhouse and hamlet. It is a timing point, which can be found on the Real Time Trains system. The diagram is an extract from the Network Rail 'Sectional Appendix'. Notice that the line speed restrictions on this line are shown in Kilometres per hour, presumably to match the line's ERTMS signalling. The distances are still in traditional miles and chains [still measured from Whitchurch].”

Looking at the Sectional Appendix, the other end of the Dynamic Loop, just beyond the up end of Welshpool Station, is not given a name.

Location	Mileage M Ch		Running lines & speed restrictions
Coed Y Dinas LC (UWC)	34 79	T	
Glanhafren LC (UWC)	35 50	T	
Fron LC (UWC)	36 39 36 52 *	T	
Fron Junction	36 57 *		
Munllyn LC (UWC)	38 06	T	

DOSVIDANYIA FOSSIL FUELS, PRIVET RAIL FUTURE!

I can remember my grandfather standing on the street corner trying to sell the Morning Star newspaper back in the early 1980's; he said people used to shout, "what do you do with the money from Russia?" And worse. The reality was Grandfather was volunteering his time and giving a small amount from his pension; I doubt he would have been standing on street corners in all weathers in his mid-70's trying to raise funds and getting abused if the cause was bankrolled! Roll forward to the 2022 Russian invasion of the Ukraine and the raising in profile of the murky world of Oligarch/Russian political/financial involvement in the UK, and there are some very pertinent questions that need to be asked about the Conservative party and what the Oligarchs expected their financial contributions (which are real, declared in the public domain) to them to achieve. When you look at transport the policies pursued in the UK do appear aligned with the financial interests of the Oligarchs.

Firstly, what are the financial interests of the Oligarchs? Well, they come from a vast country rich in natural resources: oil, gas, coal and other minerals, and that's where your Oligarchs started making their money in the 1990's with their initial wealth from natural resources. They of course have then diversified into all sorts, in convoluted non transparent chains made possible by the City of London's blindness to where the loot that they service comes from. Not every Oligarch is a Putin crony though, but the ones with any financial interests still in Russia are.

It's long been evident that someone keeps putting the handbrake on dealing with climate change, delaying the decarbonisation journey. We're used to the climate change denying Conservative far right leaning forward and trying to grab the steering wheel, but are other forces at work? Whilst the UK buys its oil and gas on the open market its Government can and does do things to keep demand for such products high, such as underfunded public transport, planning laws that force people into car dependency, investing £billions on road improvements which time and time again have been demonstrated to increase traffic levels, and failing to insulate our homes properly meaning we have to burn more fuel to keep warm. Now I'm not saying that that Oligarch money has bought these policies as other factors are at play, for example your average Conservative politician has a naive belief that road improvements lead to economic development, despite the facts saying otherwise. The Conservative party have long pursued an oil dependent transport policy since the late 1950's, long before Oligarchs were invented. However, it seems inconceivable that Oligarch money is not helping nudge the agenda and lining up the ducks with their own interests. Having come out with what in large parts was a sensible policy document for addressing transport decarbonisation, Boris Johnson then undermined it by promising that every household would have their own electric car charging point on their own drive. It was classic Johnsonian over promising for a start there are millions of households in the UK that don't have a driveway: estimates say at least a third of all households don't. However, he was playing to his core vote – 50-year-old plus homeowners in the non-metropolitan areas of England who largely do have driveways, effectively promising them the green agenda meant little change to their driving habits. With 35 million private vehicles in the UK that's an awful lot of batteries and the precious metals in them that would be needed. If you were an Oligarch, worried that your money gravy train based on oil and gas would be brought to an end by the green agenda, don't

worry as in Londongrad you can now sell the products from your Nickel, Cobalt and Lithium mines in bulk. The champagne corks will have been popping on the super yachts when that announcement was made.

Putin's invasion of the Ukraine has turned this world upside down, with sanctions against Russia having many far-reaching consequences, not least that Putin-supporting Oligarchs are not the flavour of the month anymore, and being associated with them has to be seen to be avoided. It's now not a question what you are doing with the money from Russia but what are we going to do now in response to the chain of events unleashed by the tanks rolling. This of course will influence transport and the railways so how will things unfold?

Energy sources/generation/security – In the short term we've seen the usual suspects here in the UK demand an end to "green crap": lift the ban on fracking and more North Sea Oil and Gas production as there will be issues with supply of oil and gas with Russian sources boycotted. However, this would only be a very short-term sticking plaster – the glory days of North Sea oil and gas extraction are long behind us, and the UK has been a net importer of these resources since 2007. Known reserves of North Sea oil only equate to 5 years of the UK's average usage and unless new fields are discovered and exploited the industry is planning to pack up and wind down in the 2030's. The North Sea cannot cocoon us from the impact of prices skyrocketing on the world markets. In the medium to long term, countries in mainland Europe will be keen to pursue green energy sources for energy security and insulation from world commodity prices reasons, and so should we: you only have to look at Switzerland for the template. Neutral Switzerland suffered greatly in World War One as it relied on coal imports to power its railways which dried up. They decided to electrify 100% of their railways using electricity produced by hydro power. This they did by the end of the 1920's. Suffice to say it had a much easier World War Two and has benefitted from having fully electric railways ever since. The great advantage of green power is that anyone anywhere can generate power from solar, wind, wave, hydro sources and produce hydrogen. Aside from constructing the infrastructure there are no import/world commodity market implications. Mr Putin may have just massively accelerated the move to the green agenda and collapsed the medium-term demand for fossil fuels. The recent EU Versailles declaration signals the start. History tells us once a product becomes seen as a legacy one, then it dwindles away quickly as people and money will move away from it. Nigel Farage waving a union jack from a North Sea oil rig will not stop it.

Back to Boris's electric cars for everyone pledge. Those of us with knowledge of the limited quantity of rare minerals and where they are in the world have always been sceptical about the rationality of it. Now with energy security and supplies highlighted by war in the Ukraine, the policy looks reckless. 60% of the world's cobalt reserves (an essential metal in batteries) are found in one country – the Democratic Republic of the Congo – which is increasingly under Chinese influence: their policy in Africa for some time now has been to build infrastructure in exchange for mining rights. Remembering how oil and access to it has exercised much geopolitical angst and conflict, especially in the latter half of the 20th Century, do we really want to swap rare metals for oil? The blindingly obvious solution to protect one's country from reliance on foreign imported resources and world commodity prices is to accelerate the ditching

of fossil fuels and go energy security green. A transport policy that has electrified railways powered by UK green sources at its heart is just the ticket. The rail industry reckons it can in the long term with the right investment move 50% of all freight tonne miles in the UK by rail; the capacity released by HS2 gives us a great starting point.

Price shock/living standards We were already heading for the worst drop in living standards since the 1970's, regardless of the situation in the Ukraine, which will just make it worse. Those of us most car dependent will suffer the most; the press has already started screaming hysteria about it. Rail fares may have gone up this March much to everyone's disgust, but relatively speaking they haven't gone up as much as everything else will. One of the big factors identified in causing growing rail use in the 1990's/2000's was the rising cost of motoring. Since 2010 central Government has looked to hold motoring costs down whilst raising rail fares, but it now looks likely that this situation will reverse, with people looking for alternatives to ever more expensive driving. Pre-pandemic, beside the central London commuter market at peak times, the railway has always had the latent capacity to absorb more customers. Stay at home commuters in the cities outside London have in effect made space on the trains for priced out motorists. Pre-pandemic, cities like Birmingham had rail commuter modal share levels of only around 20%; there's a large market for rail still there post-pandemic. The sooner we move to tap and go contactless capped payment systems around all our major cities, like in London, the better. The rising cost of motoring will inevitably mean less road traffic: the business cases for all the proposed road schemes assume ever-growing traffic levels. Spending £billions for tiny capacity increases when the roads are decongesting is the very definition of stupidity. It's inevitable that there will be an increase in the defence budget; if transport must contribute then this pointless road building is the obvious port of call for savings within the transport budget. There will still be other pressures to save money within Government departments as we've seen with DfT's reluctance to let timetables go back to pre-covid levels. This nonsense must stop, the answer to how the rail industry returns to somewhere near its 2019 traffic levels is now clear and it needs its trains rolling. The short-term prize is reduced government support but in the medium to long term increased usage of public transport is a prerequisite to a successful shift to an energy secure decarbonised future.

Political ramifications ex US President Bill Clinton's famous electioneering quote "it's the economy stupid" remains relevant today. Voters tend to turn on politicians who oversee declining living standards; we all remember a bemused Gordon Brown complaining he wasn't being given credit for leading the world response to the 2007 financial crash. Voters of course would have preferred for the crash not to have happened on his watch in the first place! Boris Johnson's initial reluctance to ban imports of Russian oil and gas for fear of rising fuel prices was telling; his fruitless trip cap in hand to Saudi Arabia begging for more oil production even more so. However his party's ideological reluctance to intervene in the markets to help the cost-of-living crisis could well be their electoral death knell. Boris's book on how he got Brexit done, defeated the Coronavirus and stood up to the Megalomaniac Putin will of course earn him more money from his publisher's advance than the pittance he receives as Prime Minister. He might as well start writing it now: these issues will mean nothing to voters once they see their gas and electric fuel bills go up and up, the price of a litre of petrol rocket, and their wages go down with the National Insurance hike. The opposition parties who

are now very likely to be in power after 2024 have more progressive transport policies and a greater commitment to the green agenda.

Mr Putin's misery for the people of the Ukraine and his own people will open opportunities for rail's future in the UK. I was drafting a piece about how the railways should be behaving to attract back passengers and boost revenue post-covid; some big geopolitical shifts are now thankfully going to take the decisions out of the hands of current DfT and Treasury thinking. To Recap:

- Countries will become more energy supply security and world commodity price insulated conscious; this spells the end of fossil fuels and pushes the green agenda.
- There will be a push back on battery solutions even if powered by green electricity due to supply security reasons.
- The Cost-of-living crisis is likely to see in the UK current opposition parties elected who will enact a shift toward more progressive transport policies and a green agenda.

I always believed in the long run that the green agenda was one of rail's big advantages. Now we can add energy security and resilience from volatile world markets to its plus points. Of course, much investment is needed for it do this, not least on electrification, as if you need to move freight nationally over longer distances you need electrification. There is no alternative, most lines will have to be wired. Hydrogen and battery are non-solution distractions born by out of date Treasury wishful thinking that pre-dates the geopolitical shift that's occurred this March.

Using pre-pandemic statistics on passenger journeys, a 10% drop in road use with modal transfer to rail in the UK roughly equates to a doubling in rail use. Here in Wales we barely make 11 journeys per annum by heavy rail per person on average; the average German makes 35 trips and the average Swiss 60. The UK average outside London and the Southeast is just 15 journeys. Our population density per square kilometre and rail network density are both significantly above the European average despite some people's perceptions. Whilst most modal shift from private motor vehicle should go to active travel, light rail and local bus services (50% of all trips are cars driving under 5 miles distance) it's not pie in the sky that our rail network can be revamped to cope with a lot more usage.

Gareth Marston. Newtown March 2022.

Dosvidanyia fossil fuels, privet rail future! – Goodbye fossil fuels, hello rail future!

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION PROMPTLY

Your annual subscription (£10) to SARPA was due on January 1, 2022.

The simplest, and preferred, method of payment is to pay directly into our bank account:

Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Rail Passenger's Association: Barclays Bank: sort code 20-61-08: account 20148148. An email to indicate that you have done so is useful.

Otherwise you can pay by cheque made out to 'Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Rail Passenger's Association' and sent to Bill Redfern, 8 Plas Edwards, Tywyn, Gwynedd, LL36 0AS

Please let us know of any changes to your contact details by email (to bill_sarpa@outlook.com) or by post.

We are aware that we have lost email contact with some members who have failed to update us with changes to their email address. If you are not receiving regular emails from us and wish to do so, please send me an email and I will update our records.

Our thanks for your continued support for SARPA.

Bill Redfern, Treasurer and Membership Officer

WANT TO JOIN SARPA?

The membership fee is currently (for membership up to 31 December 2022) £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 20148148, and send your details to

Bill_sarpa@outlook.com

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Face to face monthly meetings are being resumed with the May meeting (see page 2). Invitations to the meetings are sent out by email. If you are not receiving emails from us, and wish to do so, please send your up-to-date email details to the membership officer bill_sarpa@outlook.com so that you can be added to the list.

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

Association of Community Rail Partnerships

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

Traveline Cymru for all public transport information

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

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

Public Transport Users' Committee for Wales Secretariat

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

For Train Times and Fares Call:

08457 48 49 50 (24hrs) 0845 60 40 500 (Welsh Language Service)

0845 60 50 600 (Textphone)

For ticket reservations please call: 0870 9000 773

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

Chairman: Jeff Smith, 17 Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, SY23 2AZ. Tel. 07964 179 799. Email abergogledd@gmail.com

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

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

Secretary: position vacant.

Newsletter Editor: Denis Bates, 86 Maesceinion, Waun Fawr, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3QQ. Tel. 01970 617667. Email: denisebbates@gmail.com

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Committee Members

Roger Goodhew: 12 Granville St., Shrewsbury, SY3 8NE.

Tony Harvey: 23 High Street, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7JP. Tel. 01938 559087. Email: tony@montgomeryshire.eu

ASSOCIATION CONTACT POINT

Email: sarpa@sarpa.info



A plaque has appeared on the Pryce Jones Building opposite Newtown station, honouring a Newtown son who pioneered mail order. In a decarbonised world with shorter range electric vehicles it makes more sense to return to a local hub and spoke distribution of parcels using the railways for the long haul element. Photograph: Gareth Marston

WEBSITES

Our website <https://sarpa.info>

Webmaster Angus Eickhoff: angus@anguseickhoff.co.uk

Website host is Hostinger: <https://www.hostinger.co.uk/>

Find us on Facebook - Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1506868396111739>

Other sites of interest:

A useful alternative to the National Rail Enquiries site:
 Transport for Wales
 National Rail Enquiries
 London Northwestern Railway
 West Midlands Railway
 Avanti West Coast
 Chiltern Railways
 Network Rail
 Railfuture/Railway Development Society
 Railwatch: the quarterly magazine of Railfuture
 The Association of Community Rail Partnerships (Acrop)
 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

www.traintimes.org.uk/
www.tfwrail.wales/
www.nationalrail.co.uk/
www.journeycheck.com/londonnorthwesternrailway/
www.westmidlandsrailway.co.uk
www.avantiwestcoast.co.uk
www.chilternrailways.co.uk/
www.networkrail.co.uk/
www.railfuture.org.uk/
www.railwatch.org.uk
communityrail.org.uk
www.nwrrail.org.uk/
www.festrail.co.uk/
www.rheidolrailway.co.uk
www.talyllyn.co.uk/
www.wlrr.org.uk/
www.whr.co.uk/
www.fairbournerrailway.com/
www.borthstationmuseum.co.uk

Copy deadline for the next newsletter is 22nd August 2022