

Issue 61 Autumn 2016

Rail Wales

Newsletter of Railfuture in Wales



The new platform 8 on the southern side of Cardiff Central takes shape in this August 2016 view. Photo Julian Langston

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Welcome

Rail Wales is published twice a year and looking back over the time since the last issue it is surprising how much change has occurred in the wider world affecting the quality of rail services in Wales.

Whilst it was known that a new Welsh Government transport minister would be appointed in May as the previous post holder, the long serving Edwina Hart, was retiring from the Assembly, few would have predicted that Wales would be soon losing its funding from the European Union as the referendum result was a surprise to many.

The new minister whose responsibilities include transport is Ken Skates, the AM for Clwyd South. With a portfolio which also covers the economy and other forms of infrastructure, Mr Skates has a large brief to master and it is rather early to assess how effective he will be in overseeing improvements to public transport in Wales.

Similarly, the actual impact on the departure from the EU is at present a matter of crystal ball gazing with Wales being a part of the UK with much to lose, in a financial sense at least. EU funds have helped pay for many of the major infrastructure investments in Wales and the loss of this money could potentially be a major blow. Most obviously in the firing line is the SE Wales Metro where as reported in Rail Wales 59 a likely EU contribution of £150m had been identified.

Readers will probably be aware that the UK government has made statements to reassure project backers that funding agreed before the Chancellor's Autumn [2016] Statement would be guaranteed by Westminster if all the money has not been received from Brussels by the date membership ends. Railfuture will be seeking guarantees that the Metro and other EU rail projects in the pipeline will not be cancelled or postponed as a result of so called Brexit.

There is potentially more positive news on the Wales and Borders franchise. At a July 2016 seminar to introduce Transport for Wales, the new organisation set up by Welsh Government to oversee the procurement of the franchise to replace Arriva Trains Wales in 2018, it was announced that the bids were being invited to operate a passenger service network similar to that run by ATW.

This news is welcomed by Railfuture Wales which was concerned at reports (see Rail Wales 60) that the post 2018 network would be reduced to minimise the distance services ran on tracks in England. The retention of the existing cross border routes will be welcome by the many passengers who make journeys from Wales to destinations in

England beyond 'border' stations such as Chester and Shrewsbury. It is hoped that franchise bidders go beyond simply retaining the status quo and show some imagination by proposing new cross border services.

Railfuture Wales is however less positive about the apparent dilution of commitment for Welsh railways to be managed on a 'not for dividend' basis post 2018. This was the stated aim of Edwina Hart. Although the commitment to the not for profit principle is confirmed in the new Welsh Government's programme for government until 2021, it is difficult to see how this will be achieved. With the procurement process now in place, unless a not for dividend/profit company submits a bid and is awarded the contract, passenger train services will continue to be provided by an organisation which seeks to generate a financial surplus from its activities, some of which will be distributed to its shareholders/owners.

Peter Kingsbury

Metro to be operated by new franchise holder

Transport for Wales has announced that the proposed new integrated transport network for Cardiff and the Valleys (the Metro) will be run by the company to be appointed to operate the Wales and Borders franchise from 2018. Bidders for the franchise are required to submit proposals for the local rail and express bus services in the area from Monmouthshire to Bridgend.

Visionary thinking is required as bidders have the opportunity to state what form of transit they will develop and operate on the main passenger corridors in this area. Bidders can retain heavy rail on all routes or propose a solution which includes light rail (trams) on some or all of the existing routes. Trams will provide an opportunity for street running in the town and city centres.

Of equal significance is the option available for bidders to take over responsibility for track and signalling in the Cardiff Valleys from Network Rail. Network Rail would relinquish responsibility for infrastructure on routes such as Cardiff to Merthyr and Rhymney with the train/tram operator responsible for track and stations.

A map showing the latest vision for the metro network is on page 10.

Follow Railfuture Cymru/Wales on Twitter [@RailfutureWales](https://twitter.com/RailfutureWales)

Welsh Rail Users speak out

In preparation for the award of the new Wales and Borders franchise, the Welsh Government undertook a wide ranging consultation at the beginning of 2016 seeking views on what matters in terms of services to be provided by the new operator.

190 responses were received. Eighty were from individuals and 24 from public transport user groups. All Welsh local authorities bar one also replied. Interestingly, 37 responses were submitted from people or organisations based in England illustrating recognition that decisions to be made on the franchise will affect many rail users in England.

What matters to rail users?

The stand out priority for respondents was value for money tickets. This confirmed the finding of other surveys. Other issues raised were the ability to get a seat, service frequency, information about delays and punctuality.

Railfuture appeared at Westminster before the Transport Select Committee in June 2016 to give evidence about the Passenger Experience - read about it at <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/article1685-Railfuture-gives-evidence>.

The Railfuture written evidence, which led to it being called to give evidence in person, can be read at <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/display1292>.

Service range and frequency

Most respondents agreed that the service network offered by the new franchise should as a minimum reflect that currently provided including the cross border services.

In terms of new services, unsurprisingly suggestions reflected where people are based. In North Wales, improvements to services to major cities in north-west England were a priority with Liverpool being the most favoured new destination to have a direct service. Better connectivity to Manchester and Liverpool airports was also required.

In Mid-Wales frequency improvements were the highest priority (NB the survey was conducted after the additional services on the Aberystwyth-Shrewsbury route had begun).

South Wales respondents also cited the need for improved frequency, particularly on Valley line services. The proposed Metro was supported, in part because this implied higher frequency. There was also a call for direct services to Bristol and Bath from locations other than Cardiff and Newport.

Performance Standards

One of the ways in which governments assess how well franchise holders are doing is to gather and publish data on aspects of performance. People were asked what aspects of performance should be measured. Punctuality received the largest number of votes followed by cleanliness, information provision, reliability and facilities for passengers.

The full results of the consultation can be seen at:

<https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/setting-direction-wales-and-borders-rail>

Railfuture Wales Update

The first AGM of the new all Wales branch of Railfuture took place in Shrewsbury during April 2016. Arriva Trains Wales kindly provided a meeting room in the historic station building.

Allison Cosgrove, the chair of Railfuture Scotland and a national Board member (and national vice chair since May 2016), gave a talk on the devolution of rail management powers to the Scottish Parliament. This occurred early in the life of the parliament and therefore provides an example of what might occur in Wales with the devolution of rail franchise powers to Cardiff Bay.

Allison pointed out the advantages of devolution including the relative ease of dealing with one minister for transport and the greater scrutiny of transport policies that occurs compared to the previous situation of relying on a select committee with a UK wide remit to undertake this task. Allison also noted that it was easier to communicate with MSPs in Edinburgh than with Scottish civil servants.

Questions were raised about the letting and management of the Scottish passenger rail franchise in light of the issue of how cross border services were dealt with. It emerged that as ScotRail runs relatively few services that call at English stations, the issue that has arisen in discussing the cross border routes of new Wales and Borders franchise has not been an issue in Scotland.

John Rogers was re-elected chairman of the branch with Mike Watson and Peter Kingsbury sharing the vice chair role. Julian Langston continues as treasurer with Rowland Pittard as secretary.

Regrettably John Rogers has subsequently resigned as chairman as a result of health problems. A replacement chair will be elected at the committee meeting on the 8th October 2016 to be held at Shrewsbury.

Swansea-Cardiff Electrification

Network Rail announced in August that it has awarded Siemens a contract for the GRIP 5 to 8 stages of the Port Talbot West Phase 1 re-signalling project, which will see the last section of the Great Western Main Line converted for electrification ahead of the new Intercity Express Programme (IEP) trains.

The work, spanning 153 signalling equivalent units, will cover the decommissioning of all life-expired relay interlockings, with these systems being replaced by Siemens' Trackguard Westlock computer-based system – previously used in London Bridge and the York Rail Operating Centre (ROC), for example.

Signalling control will be transferred from the existing panel at Port Talbot to a new Siemens Controlguide® Westcad control desk at the Wales ROC in Cardiff. Axle counters controlled through trackside functional modules will replace conventional track circuits for train detection – with new and extra power supplies being brought into service.

The significance of this news is far greater than its immediate effect on train operations. The decision provides confirmation that Network Rail is intending to electrify the Cardiff to Swansea section of the South Wales main line, which has been in some doubt, and is welcomed by Railfuture Wales.

Wales Freight News Autumn 2016

Two documents have been issued recently, one by the Department for Transport titled 'Rail Freight Strategy' which was issued on 13th September 2016, and the other by Network Rail titled 'Draft Freight Network Study' which is for consultation until 9th November 2016. The Welsh Government has not updated its Rail Freight Strategy

Department for Transport: Rail Freight Strategy

The Department for Transport's new 'Rail Freight Strategy' has been developed in collaboration with Network Rail, the rail freight industry and its customers.

It states that transporting freight by rail offers significant benefits to the UK economy, namely by reducing road congestion, improving industry productivity and cutting carbon emissions and air pollution.

It also sets out the DfT's thinking for the longer term development of the Strategic Freight Network (SFN) beyond the recent 2009-14 programme. The following are identified as key elements of the future SFN.

- Longer and heavier trains: as an early priority, key intermodal routes should be upgraded to accommodate trains up to 775m in length. Selective route capability should be provided where there is a business case for operating trains at 32 tonne axle loading.
- Freight and network-efficient operating characteristics: Network Rail should aim to achieve through running of freight trains, seeking timetabling and signalling solutions in preference to looping
- Seven-day/24-hour capability: Single line working should be standard engineering possession practice and/or diversionary routes with appropriate capability, for each strategic freight route. National engineering possessions planning should be coordinated, recognising that many freight routes are long-distance cross-country routes incorporating more than one Network Rail route
- W12 gauge: W12 should be implemented as the standard loading gauge for all strategic container routes including diversionary routes
- European Freight Link (UIC GB+ gauge) The rail network should be 'future-proofed' by ensuring that network renewals or enhancement work makes at least passive provision for UIC GB+ gauge. As a minimum first step, UIC GB+ height clearance should be safeguarded in any Midland Main Line (MML) electrification programme to enable it to link into High Speed1 (HS1) freight paths from the Channel Tunnel to London
- New freight capacity: Key intermodal routes for consideration for capacity enhancement
- Electrification of freight routes: Selective strategic and infill electrification.

For further details of the strategy visit:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/552492/rail-freight-strategy.pdf

The Strategy also reflects the Welsh Government's commitment to maximising the potential for rail freight, whilst recognising that responsibility, and funding, for rail infrastructure has not been devolved. Recent reports by Welsh Ministerial Freight Task & Finish and Freight

Working Groups promote exploring methods of supporting modal shift from road to rail, including working with Network Rail and other industry partners as part of the Long Term Planning Process, in order to maximise environmental and social benefits across Wales. Further details can be found at:

<http://gov.wales/topics/transport/freight/wales-freight-working-group/?lang=en>

Network Rail Freight Network Study

The Freight Network Study considers the future development of rail freight in Great Britain, and outlines what the industry considers to be the future priorities for enhancing the network.

It has been developed by Network Rail in collaboration with a range of stakeholders, including the freight operating companies, the UK Governments, the Rail Freight Group, the Rail Delivery Group, and the Office of Rail and Road.

The Freight Network Study considers the next 30 years and identifies a number of constraints to delivering the forecast growth anticipated on the network. A range of choices are identified to address these constraints and increase the capacity and capability of the infrastructure to enable it to support the growth of rail freight in the UK.

Two interventions are stated in relation to Wales. On the South West and South Wales to the Midlands routes greater line speeds are proposed and on the Great Western Main Line: remove sections of low line speed and completion of gauge clearance on the route to Cardiff and additional routes to Bristol.

A summary of the study can be seen at:

<http://www.networkrail.co.uk/freight-network-study-summary-document.pdf>

Wales Freight News

These are the major changes since the last report:

Scrap traffic continues to be buoyant to CELSA Cardiff and outward bar traffic has increased with company trains to Mossend and Rotherham.

There has also been scrap from Beeston and Handsworth to Newport docks for export.

The main change has been a decrease in coal traffic to Aberthaw Power Station. Recently each day there has been one train of imported coal from Avonmouth , one or two from Cwmbargoed and two from Tower colliery . Coal from Onllwyn has ceased and of the associated opencast sites Stella has closed and Nant Helen has been mothballed for two years.

Cwmbargoed also sends a daily train of coal to Port Talbot steel works and a weekly train to Hope cement works

Onllwyn now receives its coal from East Pit Gwaun Cae Gurwen and outward rail traffic includes a weekly train to Coal Products Immingham and occasional containerised coal to Mossend . During September Gwaun Cae Gurwen also sent two trains of coal per week to Aberthaw Power station.

Tower Colliery sends two trains per day to Aberthaw Power station and has commenced sending a weekly train to Hope Cement works at the expense of Cwmbargoed. Tower also sent trail loads of coal to Ketton Cement works in July.

The movement of coal from Portbury to Uskmouth power station has ceased.

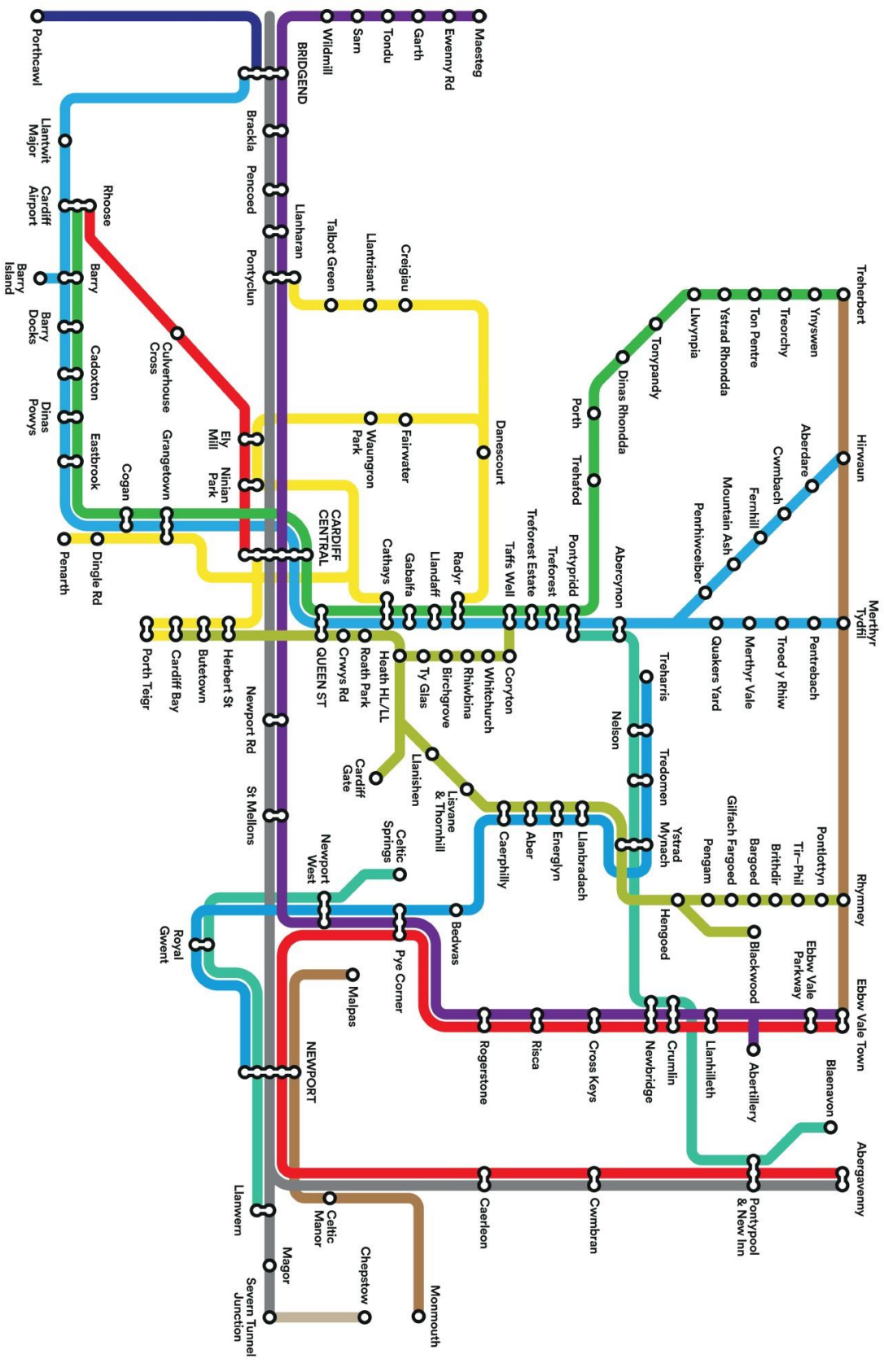
There has been an inward train of cement from Scotland to Aberthaw cement works and outward trains of flyash (from Aberthaw power station) to Scotland for making breeze blocks. Further trains of flyash loaded at Aberthaw cement works are anticipated.

Dolomite traffic from Thrislington to Port Talbot steel works ceased at the end of 2015.

Rowland Pittard

Visit the Railfuture website www.railfuture.org.uk to book [conferences](#) (Railfuture holds a summer [June] and autumn [November]) and also to buy books at a discount from our [shop](#).

Read [back issues](#) of Rail Wales at www.railfuturewales.org.uk.



Glyn Jones - a tribute



Glyn Jones, the inspirational chairman of the Cambrian Branch of Railfuture Wales for twenty years, sadly passed away on April 14th 2016 aged 73. He served in this role with outstanding qualities of wisdom, knowledge, friendship and leadership...above all Glyn could be described as a gentleman in the truest sense and his loss has been very much felt by so many who had the privilege of knowing him, as testified by the five hundred people who attended his funeral service in Aberystwyth.

Public service and serving the community were the core values that underpinned Glyn's life, as evidenced by a lifetime's service in many of our Welsh national institutions, in particular he held a variety of positions on their committees and governing bodies; notably the National Eisteddfod of Wales, The Urdd, The Welsh National Folk Dance Society and The Presbyterian Church of Wales. During 1988-90, alongside the leadership of the late Lord Geraint Howells, he served as the secretary of a public appeal that raised over a million pounds to purchase Bronglais Hospital's first CT scanner. He also possessed an exceptional and unique gift of public speaking, being able to confidently command the attention of audiences, both large and small, at concerts, festivals and public meetings. In 2005 Glyn was admitted to the National Eisteddfod's Gorsedd of Bards in recognition of his dedication and commitment to Welsh culture and his many interests and activities.

Educated at Ardwyn Grammar School Aberystwyth, he then pursued a career as a draughtsman - surveyor within the highways department of Cardiganshire County Council, which became Dyfed County Council following the 1974 reorganisation of local government. This engineering background, together with a deep love of the railways, instilled in him a holistic and broad understanding of the transportation needs of Mid & West Wales and the wider economic advantages to the whole region of an integrated system of transport. Upon retirement in 1996 he became chairman of the Cambrian Railfuture Wales Branch and in this capacity he was a passionate advocate of the need for the continuation and expansion of east-west cross-border services between Aberystwyth and Birmingham International, connecting with the Cambrian Coast services at Machynlleth. A long-standing policy commitment of the branch was to campaign for hourly services between Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury - Birmingham and this was mainly achieved with the increase in services provided in the May 2015 timetable. Glyn attended the Shrewsbury - Aberystwyth Rail Liaison Committee on behalf of the branch, which was collectively responsible for campaigning and negotiating with the Welsh Government towards this successful policy outcome.

Glyn's passion for the railways began as a boy watching the locomotives steam past on the Carmarthen - Aberystwyth line, not far from his childhood home in the village of Blaenplwyf, and it was fitting that his final contribution to railway development was to enthusiastically chair a well-attended public meeting in nearby Llanilar last September on behalf of Traws Link Cymru, the campaign to re-open the line between Carmarthen and Aberystwyth. He was on characteristically top-form introducing presentations and speakers, including local AM Elin Jones (now Presiding Officer of the National Assembly).

It was an honour and privilege to work with Glyn and his life and legacy will act as an inspiration as we continue to advocate and progress the case for railway development within the Cambrian region, across Wales and beyond.

Dylan Lewis

Colin James

Railfuture Wales sadly lost another committee member in August with the passing of Colin James. Colin, who lived in Portskewett, effectively represented the interests of rail users in South Monmouthshire and provided a link with the Severn Tunnel Action Group.

Wales Infrastructure report

South Wales Main Line Electrification

The preparations for the electrification of the South Wales mainline from Seven Tunnel to Swansea are now becoming more obvious. The revised target dates for the electrification are to Cardiff by December 2019 and Swansea by 2022, the later having been moved back into Network Rail's Control Period 6.

The first most obvious development was the completion of the servicing depot at Swansea in October 2015. The depot is at present used for stabling a few HSTs at night and is on a care and maintenance basis for Hitachi.

The second development was the clearance of line side vegetation between Severn Tunnel and Cardiff which started during summer 2015 after the bird nesting season. There are logs, from this clearance, tied in bundles along the track side.

An almost unseen piece of work but essential for electrification has been the provision of substations for the power supply from the National Grid. This has been completed on schedule and has passive provision for future electrification schemes. Sub stations can be seen at approximately 10 km intervals with two between Cardiff and Newport.

A major work stream has been the lifting or reconstruction of bridges along the route. The work being carried out between Severn Tunnel and Newport is well described on Network Rail's web site but there is less information for the work between Newport and Cardiff. In addition an assessment of work required has been made of the bridges west of Cardiff and trial borings for foundations took place in spring 2016. Bridge work commenced in September 2015 and the first major reconstruction to be completed was at Somerton Road in Newport which was completed in June 2016. On the west side of Newport, Cardiff Road bridge has been partly reconstructed and new bridges were constructed at Cuckoo Road and Maerdy Farm road in spring 2016. The first major over bridge reconstruction in Cardiff at Windsor Road was completed in July 2016.

The weekend of 17th-18th September 2016 saw the complete closure of the lines between Cardiff and Newport and the following bridge work took place. At Bridge Street just west of Newport station new steel spans were erected (the old bridge had been removed previously), at Maesglas the remainder of the bridge was removed and new steel spans erected, at Hawse Lane and Green lane the bridges were removed pending

reconstruction and at Beresford Road (Moorland Road) at Splott in Cardiff the old bridge was removed and new spans erected.

There has also been track lowering of the relief lines under the rail bridge east of Cardiff station where space was limited by the presence of the dock feeder canal below the tracks and at Magor. Track lowering will also be required in Newport old tunnel.

A number of existing signalling gantries will also have to be lifted or as in the case of Cardiff Central replaced.

Trackside work has been the piling of the tubular supports for the overhead electrification masts. This commenced between Llanwern East and West Junctions in Autumn 2015 but has recently extended to Severn Tunnel Junction and Cardiff. The bases can be recognised by circular piles at ground level often covered with a sheet of wood to give protection until the masts are erected. The piles vary in length dependant on ground conditions. June 2016 saw the erection of the first masts at Llanwern and by September 2016 masts had also been erected at several locations between Cardiff and Newport.

Piling or the construction of bases is more difficult in station areas and work at Newport station has been progressing since early summer 2016. This work has also involved cutting back the station roof on platforms 2 and 3. The old station bridge at Newport will be removed by the end of the year.

Severn Tunnel is closed from 12th September to 21st October 2016 for the installation of an electricity conductor rail supported from the tunnel roof following the clearance of large quantities of soot from the tunnel walls and repairs to the brickwork. There was also some track lowering.

The major signalling project in the Cardiff station area will be commissioned at Christmas 2016 and the panel box adjacent to the station and St Fagans crossing box will close after which re signalling work including immunisation of equipment will move to between Port Talbot and Swansea.

Cardiff Valleys Electrification

It is unlikely that the proposed electrification work will commence in 2019. The proposed funding package could be reduced as a result of Brexit and the branches to Ebbw Vale and Maesteg could be excluded as well as the Vale of Glamorgan line including the branches to Penarth and Barry Island. The anticipated funding was from Westminster

Government, Welsh Government, Cardiff City deal, local authorities and European Commission. Welsh Government/Transport for Wales has asked bidders for the new Wales and Borders franchise to make proposals for an electrification scheme that could include light rail.

Track enhancements

Rossett to Saltney Junction between Chester and Wrexham

Although the second track was completed in November 2015 it remains out of use. Faulty signal cables need to be replaced and this is expected to take place between 24th March and 1st April 2017

Cross Keys to Aberbeeg Junction: Ebbw Vale branch

Large sections of the second track have been laid but there has been no further progress this summer. Signalling equipment has to be moved before further progress can take place and new platforms have to be built at Newbridge and Llanhilleth.

Cardiff Valleys

Track is now being laid in platform 8 at Cardiff Central and this should be brought into use after Christmas 2016 (see photo on front cover).

Bridgend to Maesteg branch

The long standing proposal for a crossing loop on the branch is still being discussed by Network Rail and Welsh Government.

Halton Curve

The UK Government has confirmed that funding will be made available for the reinstatement of passenger services allowing direct services to run to Liverpool from North Wales via Chester.

Station Improvements

New bridges with lifts have been completed at Llandaf, Machynlleth and Radyr as well as Port Talbot (described in Rail Wales 60) but the ramps for the new bridge at Severn Tunnel Junction have not been brought into use.

Rowland Pittard

Viewpoint

'I was interested in the Magor station campaign in your last issue. I wondered if the idea could be pursued of providing a community bus to run between Magor and Newport via Redwick, Goldcliff and Nash. This would improve access to a bit of very poorly accessible coastline, and any local residents who used it to access the rail network at Magor would be contributing to its running costs through the community's commission on their rail fare. Visitors to the Transporter Bridge could alight at Pye Corner (that's the one SE of Newport and not the station on the Ebbw Vale line of course) and walk by public footpath.

Another new station which I think is needed is at Maesglas south of Newport where the A48 crosses the main line. It could serve as a parkway but would also have local access from the bridge adjacent to the A48. It would enable passengers from Ebbw Vale to alight short of Cardiff. Even when trains to Newport are reintroduced this would still give people a more frequent service. I also see potential for bus service from Newport passing close to the west side of the Transporter Bridge (and thereby complementing the Magor bus link) then past the station via St Brides Wentlooge, Marshfield and Peterstone Wentlooge to Cardiff. Again, this would improve public access to/from a stretch of coast which is surprisingly hard to get to given that it is so close to two of Wales' main urban centres.

Incidentally, I would also like to see yet another new station at Pilning village, about a mile west of the existing station. This would be an interchange with diverted Severn Beach trains and coaches to/from S Wales (which is why I mention it) which would come off at the M4/M49 junction (and would include those that serve Bristol Airport). Wales would also benefit from yet another potential bus connection, via the "old" Severn Bridge to Chepstow and Monmouth.

A couple more points. As one who has often used Didcot to split tickets (though mainly to/from Bristol) I support your complaint about fewer trains stopping there; and the best way for N Wales to benefit from the "Northern Powerhouse" would be through a western link to Manchester Airport enabling Trans-Pennine services from Leeds etc. to extend beyond the airport to Knutsford, Northwich, Chester and N Wales.'

Simon Norton simon@maths.cam.ac.uk

Carmarthen-Aberystwyth reopening update

Probably the most ambitious rail campaign currently active in Wales is that co-ordinated by Traws Link Cymru to secure the reopening of the Carmarthen to Aberystwyth line.

This route is about 90 kilometres long. It closed to passengers in 1965 and to freight at its southern end in 1973. The potential strategic importance of the line is immediately obvious when looking at the Welsh rail map. The route used to provide the only link between the railways of south and mid Wales on the western side of the country. Journeys could be made from South West Wales to North Wales via the Cambrian Coast line with a change at Aberystwyth and Dovey Junction. Nowadays journeys from South to North Wales require travel via England.

Much to many peoples' surprise, the Welsh Government commissioned an initial scoping study into the prospects for re-opening the line in May 2015 at a cost of £30,000. This reported in December 2015 and gave a preliminary estimate of £750 million for the construction and land acquisition cost of restoring the permanent way. The next stage which Traws Link Cymru is campaigning for is for a full feasibility study. Whether to commission this is being considered by the government.

The scoping study found that over 97% of the track bed is still in situ with the losses having mostly occurred on the approach to Aberystwyth. At the Carmarthen end, the Gwili preserved line currently operates over several miles of the route.

Railfuture Wales policy on the proposal is set out in its Development Plan 2013 which states 'as a longer-term project, consideration should be given to reopening the line from Carmarthen to Aberystwyth using, where possible, the former trackbed.'

Realisation would take many years but if achieved would be likely to be the most significant reopening in the UK, that is unless campaigners in Scotland succeed in reopening the entire Edinburgh to Carlisle line, the so called 'Waverley' route.

Read more about the Borders Railway reopening on the Railfuture Scotland website at: <http://www.railfuturescotland.org.uk/bordersrailway.php>.

If you wish to support Traws Link Cymru or find out more about the campaign, please visit www.trawslinkcymru.org.uk

Peter Kingsbury

Railfuture Wales in action

The Railfuture Wales/Cymru committee, energised and directed by secretary Rowland Pittard, has been busy submitting responses to consultations from the National Assembly for Wales and UK Government and meeting other significant players in the Welsh rail scene:

1. Evidence was submitted to the Assembly's Enterprise and Business committee investigation into 'Priorities for the future of Welsh Rail Infrastructure'. The committee report published in March 2016 makes several references to Railfuture's input.
2. The House of Commons Welsh Affairs committee decided to investigate the new Wales and Borders franchise in summer 2016 and Railfuture submitted written evidence. The committee's findings are awaited.
3. A meeting took place in late September with senior officials from the Welsh Government's rail policy team. Topics discussed included:
 - Update on progress towards new franchise including Metro proposals and funding. Railfuture's participation in consultation on the content of new franchise
 - Relationship with other operators in Wales: Virgin West Coast and Great Western Railway and Cross Country
 - Update on infrastructure/capacity improvement projects and other proposed schemes: Wrexham to Chester, Wrexham to Bidston, Halton Curve, Heart of Wales and Cambrian service improvements, Carmarthen to Aberystwyth proposals, Ebbw Vale line, Maesteg branch
 - Rolling stock for new franchise
 - Future Integrated Transport plans
4. Four companies bidding for the new Wales and Borders franchise have requested meetings with Railfuture to discuss their ideas. Meetings are likely to take place with Abeillo, Arriva, Keolis and MTR later in the autumn. The Development Plan for Railways of Wales and the Borders 2013 will form the basis for Railfuture's 'ask' from the bidders.

Can you assist Railfuture Wales/Cymru?

The Wales committee is seeking someone to maintain an email database of political contacts with whom Railfuture wishes to communicate. The list would cover Assembly members, Welsh MPs and local councillors in the 22 Welsh local authorities with responsibility for transport.

If you consider that you might be able to assist Railfuture by carrying out this task or wish to obtain more information, please contact Peter Kingsbury peter.kingsbury@railfuturewales.org.uk.

....And finally

A recent announcement from the Great Western Railway alerting service provides a flavour of things to come. It stated:

‘Disruption has been reported between Newport South Wales and London Paddington. Train services may be cancelled or delayed due to damage to the overhead electric wires.’

Thanks are extended to all who contributed to this issue. In all cases, any opinions expressed are those of the contributors, and do not necessarily represent *Railfuture* policy. Material for the next issue – articles, letters, photos or comments – should be sent to the editor, Peter Kingsbury at peter.kingsbury@railfuturewales.org.uk or by post to 22 Winchester Avenue, Penylan, Cardiff CF23 9BT, by **28th February 2017** for the spring 2017 issue. The editor may edit letters for publication

Railfuture is the campaigning name of the Railway Development Society, a UK-wide voluntary body for rail users. It receives no funding from political parties or rail companies. Annual subscription is £21 (with optional discount of £18 available, £14 for students and unwaged).

Enquiries should be addressed to Peter Clark at peter.clark@railfuturewales.org.uk or 84 North Street, Abergavenny NP7 7ED. Web site: www.railfuturewales.org.uk

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Historic North Wales: An Arriva Trains Wales class 158 unit leaves Stephenson's Conwy tubular bridge and passes below the battlements of Conwy Castle on a Birmingham International to Holyhead service.

Photo: Peter Kingsbury



Web site: www.railfuturewales.org.uk Twitter: [@RailfutureWales](https://twitter.com/RailfutureWales)

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