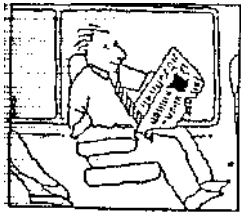The six biggest train rip-offs

Get out of Traffic and Into Training!

Pembrokeshire Rail Travellers Association

Newsletter 1 0 0: A p r i l   2 0 1 3

OUR AIMS:

1. *To Press for improvements to rail and associated bus services in the area West of Carmarthen.*

2. *To encourage greater use of the current services*

3. *To assist in the improvement of the railway environment; in particular, at stations*

4. *To liaise with other pro – rail organizations.*

PRTA: THE PEOPLE: 2012-13

CHAIRMAN: Bryan Morgan, Bulford Road, Johnston   01437 890 642

VICE CHAIRMAN, MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY & TREASURER: Robert Best   woblats1@aol.com
11, Warwick Road, Milford Haven, SA73 2LP

SECRETARY: Peter Absolon   01646 693 498 Taberna Inn, Herbrandston, Milford Haven SA73 3TD
Taberna.inn1@btconnect.com

WEBMASTER: David Harries 01646 661 340   dandh@f2s.com

TIMETABLEMASTER: David Watts 01646 692 752   davidgwynwatts@aol.com

NEWSLETTER EDITOR [temporary] :   David Watts 102 Priory Rd, Milford Haven   SA73 2ED

COMMITTEE: Keith Bowskill, Pembroke;   Allan & Erene Grieve, Neyland;   Janet Batey, Herbrandston;
            Colin Hitchings, Milford Haven.
We realise that the organisation is dominated by the Milford Haven area, and would welcome a
nomination / volunteer to join the committee from the Tenby district & also one from North Pembs.

For latest info. see the PRTA website: www.prta.org.uk

USEFUL CONTACTS.

ATW Station Manager for our area:
Arriva Trains Wales, St. Mary's House, Penarth Road, Cardiff   0845 606 1660
Ticket sales 0870 900 0773   www.arrivatrainswales.co.uk

National Rail Information www.nationalrail.co.uk   National Rail Enquiries   0845 748 4950
Welsh language   0845 604 0500   Disabled Assistance   0845 300 3005
British Transport Police 0800 40 5040   LOCAL police 0845 330 2000
Cycling on rail   0870 900 0772   Lost Property 0845 606 1660
Freedom of Wales Flexipass 0870 9000777   www.walesflexipass.com

Milford Travel. Charles Street, Milford Haven   01646 69 22 68
Milford Station Office   [open till 5pm, Mon-Fri]   01646 69 34 60

Traintracker: or current running info 0871 200 4950.   Transport for London 0207 222 1234
Great Western Ticket Line 0845 700 0125.   On Line Ticket Sales
www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk
Great Western group travel 0845 741 3777
Great Western Plus Bus   www.plusbus.org.uk check add -on fares
Great Western Customer Relations customer.relations@gwt.firstgroup.com
Virgin Trains www.virgintrains.co.uk
Arriva Cross country: www.Crosscountrytrains.co.uk [Cardiff – Nottingham]
Festiniog/ Welsh Highland Railways   www.festrail.co.uk   01 286 67 70 18

www.transport-direct.org.uk public transport info
Llandrindod Wells Booking Office – Kelsham Hannah   01 597 82 20 53
Ludlow Station Travel –   Railway Station, Ludlow   01 584 87 70 90
www.internet.xephos.com   UK all modes journey planner
www.bahn.de timetable planner pan Europe: German railways but in English!
East Midlands Trains www.eastmidlandstrains.co.uk   0845 712 5678
Swiss Timetable: www.ch.co   www.Seat61.com –a useful site for overseas rail travel

Europacar – UK car rental   0113 388 2429

Pembrokeshire County Council – for bus timetable info 01437 76 45 51
National Express   0870 580 8080   Silcox Buses 01646 68 31 43
www.silcoxcoaches.co.uk
Richards Bros   01 239 61 37 56   www.gobybus.net www.richardsbros.co.uk
First Cymru buses   0870 608 2608   www.firstgroup.com
Bus users UK   www.bususers.org   Acorn Travel 01348 74728 www.acorntravel.com
Trans Wales Bus: www.trawscambria.info UK Traveline for bus info: 0870 608 2608.
Welsh buses: www.travelinecymru.info.   0871 200 22 33
Beacons Bus   01 873 85 32 54   www.visitbreconbeacons.com

Pembrokeshire County Council Greenways 01437 77 63 13
greenways@pembrokeshire.gov.uk
Carmarthenshire County Council – transportation
publictransport@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Stena Line   0870 570 7070;   0870 575 5755
Irish Ferries   0870 517 1717;   0870 532 9543

Pembrokeshire Rail Travellers Association   www.prta.org.uk
North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum   hatti@woakes.demon.co.uk
Friends of the Earth   www.foepenfro.org.uk
Rail users: usergroups@passengerfocus.org.uk
South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium: SWWITCH www.swwitch.org.uk

South West Wales Community Rail Partnership: www.allpointswest.info
Any news, information, complaints, etc, you want to share: send to
prta@yahoogroups.com

Passenger Rail is Going Places –
Join us for the Journey.   **See the back page.**

CALL TO ACTION

Seen any vandalism lately? – seen any graffiti operators? – people behaving suspiciously around the railway?

DIAL 0800 405040 –   *HELP THE RAILWAY TO TAKE CARE OF ITSELF*

Opinions expressed in PRTA Newsletters *may* not match those of the committee

EDITORIAL

David Watts is acting *[unwilling]* editor until a volunteer *[please!]* takes over.
A combination of editor apathy & members' apathy means this 100th issue is slimmer than intended.
If you find **'Cynon Taff'** *in the middle of a word,   my computer replaced* **'ct'** *with it in places!*
With this Newsletter is a copy of the Sunday Timetable from 24 March till 12 May.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Milford's Railway: 150 years old.   *John Gale*

This year there will be a special anniversary of an important event in the history of Milford Haven: on September 7th, it will be the 150th anniversary of the opening of the railway line to the town, and the opening of the station to passengers. The connection to the main South Wales Railway [later GWR] at Johnston was a very important factor in the development of the town, especially for the opening of the Dock and the buildup of the fishing industry. Many will remember the special fish trains which left Milford for markets all over the country, and fish vans attached to passenger trains.

Robert Fulke Greville, realising the importance of railways, was disappointed that the great *Isambard Kingdon Brunel* took the railway to Neyland ['New Milford'] instead of Milford Haven town, so he promoted and supported the branch line to Johnston. The work took 5 years, mainly due to lack of finance, and the amount of engineering work required. The line was, and remains, single track, but enough room was left in cuttings and under bridges for doubling the track. The train driver exchanged tokens at Johnston signal box.

As the main line went to Neyland, with the associated engine and carriage sheds, the Milford line was very much a branch to both the GWR and British Rail; till 1965, when Neyland was closed, most passengers had to change trains at Johnston to or from the small shuttle train, affectionately known as *'The Johnston Express'*.

Because of the importance of the railway in the development of the town, it is hoped Milford Town Council will in some way be marking the anniversary. Perhaps schools and local societies would be interested in being involved. Maybe an exhibition could be arranged, and a Special Event at the station on the actual Anniversary Day.

We are very lucky today to have an excellent train service from Milford, but it is important to remember those who promoted the building of the line, 1858-1863.

There is an excellent account of the building of the railway in Chapter 3 (Old Milford) in the recently published book 'The Railways of Pembrokeshire' by Richard Parker.

DGW: Many thanks to John, who is author of several books about the Maenchlochog Railway.

The Loughor Viaduct

Work is almost finished on the new double-track viaduct, due to be opened May 2013, together with the second platform at Gowerton and re-doubling of the 6-miles single track. The line between Llanelli and Swansea was closed for 2 weeks late March/ early April for the new bridge to be put in place. The revived double track will allow faster schedules, fewer delays, better connections with Paddington trains at Swansea, and may even bring an extra train or two.

Pictures by Peter Absolon, March 2013   [Weather too dull for best results]

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Train Reliability 2012   *Peter Absolon*

Those who follow this annual article know that some new tighter train reliability metrics were introduced last year. Miles per technical incident (how far does a train run before it fails for more than 3 minutes) replaced an earlier metric which allowed the train to stand for 5 minutes before it counted as a failure. The new metrics have now been used for the second time, so that it is possible to report improvements and regressions over the last year.

How did our trains fare relative to each other? All the figures are moving annual averages.

TOC	DMU	MTIN		Change	Comments
		2011	2012		
ATW	175	12,555	15,400	+22.7%	Manchester service
FGW	HST	6,574	8,037	+22.3%	
ATW	143	5,267	7,078	+34.4%	The much maligned 'Pacers' Gold award
ATW	150	5,786	6,896	+19.2%	
ATW	153	4,750	5,736	+20.8%	
ATW	142	4,157	5,017	+20.7%	
ATW	158	1,929	3,774	+95.6%	Silver award

So all our trains got about 20 percent more reliable and a couple of types improved even more. Arriva's class 143 is now the best of the five pacer types operating in the UK, having improved by 34%, and Arriva Trains Wales won a 'gold spanner' for this improvement. These trains usually work Cardiff suburban services but find their way to Pembrokeshire during the summer, or when the right train is unavailable.

You may recall that the reliability of ATW's 158s was very bad last year, because they had been stripped down and fitted with the European Traffic Control System. While their reliability is still not superb, it has doubled over the last year. For this, ATW won a 'silver spanner' which Roger Ford suspects 'has been hard-won and is well merited.   Well done ATW!

The star performer of the year was South West Trains Class 458 electric unit class which achieved an MTIN of 106049, the first to break into six figures. These rather ugly (my view) units, built between 1998 and 2002 were once so unreliable that SWT planned to return them to the leasing company and replace them with something else!

Modern Signalling   *Peter Absolon*

Back in Newsletter 96, I mentioned the subject of cable theft (especially railway signalling cable), and wondered how this might fit with Network Rail's plan to base all Pembrokeshire signalling in Cardiff, and asked how far we were from cableless signalling. The latest *Modern Railways* has a series of articles celebrating 150 years of London Underground. We read that in the next upgrade of the underground (sub-surface renewal) between 2015 and 2018, a cab signalling system will be installed. All wayside signals will become redundant, saving cost on the trackside kit. A host of legacy systems will be swept away to be replaced by a single control room in Hammersmith for the whole of the SSR network. Track safety will be improved as there will be no need for workers to go out to maintain signals, & cable theft will cease to be an issue. The radio-based system requires just a few antennae on the trackside, otherwise, the smart stuff will be on the trains & in the new control centre. The system is already up and running on the Madrid metro. So, the future is nearly here!

Spending on Road and Rail   *D G Watts*

The major improvement in our rail service was to have been having a regular interval *hourly* train on the Milford Haven line in 2014. However, this required the Welsh Government to put up £4 million for an extra train set, to extend the Manchester – Carmarthen trains [which at present alternate with the Manchester - Milford trains] to Milford. Unfortunately, due to its need to cut overall spending in the present economic situation, theWelsh Government doesn't have the money. The*"Western Mail"* on 25 February reported that the Welsh Government's spending on Rail improvements next year is to be cut from £37 million to £21 million. Meanwhile, in the next few years the *'Heads of the Valleys'* road is to be improved at a cost of **£806 million!**

Welsh Rail Passengers: by Counties, 2000-2010   *D G Watts*
Compiled by *Mr P R Cousins* from the ORR's Station Usage Files.

Table 1: The raw figures.
For easy comparision, figures are in units of 10,000;   thus 132 = 1,320,000
Years: 2000 = April 2000 – March 2001, etc. **Stations**: number in year 2000, + new ones since.
% 2000 = the figure as a % of the Wales total.   **Up** = increase from 2000 to 2010.

Authority	*Stations*	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	%2000	%2010	Up	Up%
Wales	*210 +8*	2820	3112	3305	3647	4271	4594			1774	63%
Cardiff	*20*	1000	1171	1266	1400	1651	1748	35	39	748	75
Rhondda C.Taff	*22*	321	359	384	408	455	476	11	10½	155	48
V.of Glamorgan	*9 +2*	185	210	211	267	290	293	6½	6½	108	58
Caerphilly	*12 +3*	165	184	190	196	240	262	6	5½	97	59
Newport	*1 +1*	147	166	183	201	223	239	5	5	92	63
Swansea	*4*	128	142	140	161	208	226	4½	5	98	91
Bridgend	*9*	104	113	134	164	204	220	3½	5	116	112
Gwynedd	*27*	133	132	130	128	140	154	4½	3½	21	16
Neath Pt Talbot	*5*	72	80	83	96	124	138	2½	3	66	92
Conwy	*17*	96	87	86	91	100	115	3½	2½	19	20
Carmarthenshire	*17*	71	77	81	86	101	109	2½	2½	38	54
Denbighshire	*2*	80	70	73	80	90	94	3	2	14	17
Wrexham	*5*	48	46	51	57	70	82	1.7	2	34	71
Monmouthshire	*4*	48	51	57	63	71	81	1.7	2	33	69
Flintshire	*9*	50	43	46	50	57	65	1.7	1.4	15	30
Merthyr Tydfil	*5*	41	47	41	41	44	59	1.5	1.3	18	44
Pembrokeshire	***15***	**32**	**34**	**35**	**40**	**45**	**50**	**1.1**	**1.1**	**18**	**56**
Powys	*17*	29	32	35	37	43	47	1.0	1.0	18	62
Ceredigion	*2*	24	26	28	30	32	37	0.9	0.8	13	54
Torfaen	*2*	19	22	22	24	30	36	0.7	0.8	17	89
Blaenau Gwent	*0 +2*	0	0	0	0	29	32	0	0.7	32	oo
Anglesey	*6*	22	21	26	26	23	30	0.8	0.7	8	36

Most areas saw steady growth throughout the period. However, most N. Wales areas had decreases at first, and so their overall increase is less than in S Wales. In Table 2, the six largest increases, both actual numbers and as a percentage of the 2000 figure, are *all* in the old counties of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire, while the last four are all in N. Wales.

The 63% increase in passenger numbers in Wales gave a welcome reduction in the subsidy that the Welsh Government pays to Arriva Trains Wales. This subsidy means that fares in Wales are mostly about half those for similar distances in SE England, and usually make it cheaper for 2 people to go by train than by car. [Most people only count the petrol; the AA says an average family car costs about 24p per mile (not including overhead costs) - but two to three times that much if you can claim *"mileage expenses"*].

The table shows the huge and growing commuter traffic into Cardiff from Rhondda-Cynon-Taff, Caerphilly [which includes the Rhymney Valley], Bridgend, and the Vale of Glamorgan [Barry, Rhoose & Llantwit]. At morning & evening rush hours trains one way are packed, but almost empty in the other. Bus services are now more expensive than the train, and suffer delays due to congested roads.

Some large jumps are due to revived services where Beeching killed off the passenger trains in 1964; such as Bridgend to Barry [also serving Cardiff Airport at Rhoose], Aberdare to Cardiff, Maesteg – Cheltenham, and the Ebbw Vale line, which accounts for the Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent figures. Wrexham's large increase for the last 2 periods was due to its new service to London, since withdrawn. Anglesey's figures are mainly for ferry services to/from Ireland – it has few passengers except at Holyhead, as the rail line passes thruh no towns on the way across the Island.

Bridgend saw the largest percentage increase- up from just over a million passengers in 2000 to well over 2 million in 2010. Bridgend town till 1993 had only 1 train an hour to Cardiff; the Swansea to Paddington; but now it has 3 or 4 per hour, with the West Wales –Manchester, Maesteg – Cheltenham, and Swanline services added. The 20 minute journey and frequent trains, couple with lower house prices, make it a good place to commute to Cardiff.

Table 2: Counties ranked in order.

Rank	2000	2010	Rise (10,000)	Up by % of 2000
1	Cardiff	Cardiff	Cardiff 748	Blaenau Gwent Infinite
2	Rhondda Cynon Taff	Rhondda Cynon Taff	Rhondda Cynon Taff 155	Bridgend 112
3	Vale of Glam	Vale of Glam	Vale of Glam 108	Neath Pt.Talbot 92
4	Caerphilly	Caerphilly	Bridgend 116	Swansea 91
5	Newport	Newport	Swansea 98	Torfaen 89
6	Gwynedd	Swansea	Caerphilly 97	Cardiff 75
7	Swansea	Bridgend	Newport 92	Wrexham 71
8	Bridgend	Gwynedd	Neath Pt.Talbot 66	Monmouthshire 64
9	Conwy	Neath Pt.Talbot	Carmarthenshire 38	Newport 63
10	Denbighshire	Conwy	Wrexham 34	Powys 62
11	Neath Pt Talbot	Carmarthenshire	Monmouthshire 33	Caerphilly 59
12	Carmarthenshire	Denbighshire	Blaenau Gwent 32	Vale of Glam 58
13	Flintshire	Wrexham	Gwynedd 31	**Pembrokeshire** 56
14	Monmouthshire	Monmouthshire	Conwy 19	Carmarthenshire 54
15	Wrexham	Flintshire	**Pembrokeshire 18**	Ceredigion 54
16	Merthyr Tydfil	Merthyr Tydfil	Powys 18	Rhondda Cynon Taff 48
17	**Pembrokeshire**	**Pembrokeshire**	Merthyr Tydfil 18	Merthyr Tydfil 44
18	Powys	Powys	Torfaen 17	Anglesey 36
19	Ceredigion	Ceredigion	Flintshire 15	Flintshire 30
20	Anglesey	Torfaen	Denbighshire 14	Conwy 20
21	Torfaen	Blaenau Gwent	Ceredigion 13	Denbighshire 17
22	Blaenau Gwent	Anglesey	Anglesey 8	Gwynedd 16

Table 3: Summary by Regions

<u>Main Line</u>: Swansea, Neath Pt Talbot, Bridgend [but mainly 'Cardiff Valleys'], Newport.

<u>Valleys</u>: Rhondda Cynon Taff, Vale of Glamorgan, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil.

<u>Gwent</u>: Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent [which both feed into *Cardiff*, not Newport!], Monmouthshire.
  Newport excluded: it is in the Main Line grouping.

<u>NW Wales</u>: Anglesey, Conwy, Gwynedd [including the Pwllheli line in the Mid-Wales system]

<u>NE Wales</u>: Flintshire, Denbighshire, Wrexham

<u>Mid Wales</u>: Ceredigion, Powys [& should include the line to Pwllheli, in the Gwynedd figure]

<u>West Wales</u>: Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire.

Authority	*Stations*	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	%2000	%2010	Up	Up%
Wales	*210 +8*	2820	3112	3305	3647	4271	4594			1774	63%
Cardiff	*20*	1000	1171	1266	1400	1651	1748	35	39	748	75%
Valleys	*48 +5*	722	800	836	902	1029	1090	25	24	368	51%
Main Line	*19 +1*	451	501	540	622	759	823	16	18	372	82%
NW Wales	*50*	251	240	242	245	263	299	9	6.5	48	19%
NE Wales	*16*	178	159	170	187	217	241	6.3	4.7	63	35%
West Wales	*32*	103	111	116	126	146	159	3.6	3.5	56	54%
Gwent	*6 + 2*	67	73	79	87	130	149	2.3	3.2	82	122%
Mid Wales	*19*	53	58	63	67	75	84	1.9	1.8	31	58%

Region	*Stations*	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	%2000	%2010	Up	Up%
Wales	*210 +8*	2820	3112	3305	3647	4271	4594			1774	63%
SE Wales	*93 + 8*	2240	2545	2721	3011	3569	3810	79	83	1570	70%
N Wales	*66*	429	399	412	432	480	540	15	11	111	26%
Mid+W Wales	*51*	156	169	179	193	221	243	5.5	5.3	87	56%

The S Wales Electrification   *D G Watts*

A future improvement 'up the line' is electrification between Paddington and Swansea, and in the S.Wales Valleys. Electric trains are basically no cheaper than diesel to run; but they bring several advantages. They can call on extra power for short periods, to accelerate from stops, & to tackle steep gradients [both huge advantages in the Valleys]. This speeds up trains, so you can run *extra* services with the *same* number of trains and crews. Electric trains are simpler, less liable to break down, and cheaper to maintain: a diesel train has *three* mechanical units to go wrong: the *diesel engine*, which drives the *electric generator* which powers the *electric motors*. Thus electric trains spend less time in maintenance workshops and more time earning money at work. Altogether, you can run the *same service* with about 10 % less staff & 20% fewer train sets.

Faster, more frequent trains will mean more passengers using the railways. Experience from other areas suggests that in the Valleys, increases of 50% - 100% will result. *Motorists* will also benefit from this, as there will be fewer cars on the crowded roads, easier parking, and fewer delays at busy times; also less road traffic means fewer crashes, and so the NHS benefits; and the savings to the environment are obvious.

At present, there are no plans to electrify lines West of Swansea; but with rising traffic, soon it would make sense to electrify as far as Carmarthen; and then after a few more years our comparatively short lines could be converted, to avoid having to maintain isolated diesels down here.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Membership Fees.   Please pay **now** for **2013**

Ordinary members: £7 a year if you want everything posted, or £4 if you have it by e-mail.
Corporate members: £10 posted, or £7 by e-mail.
Cheques should be made payable to Pembrokeshire Rail Travellers Association, or PRTA,
and sent to Robert Best, *11 Warwick Road, Milford Haven, SA73 2LP.*

For downloading: **This is prepared on A4**, with 2 cm side margins, 1.5 cm top & bottom.
[Printed copies are already reduced to A5]   You can use this form for your subscription:
……

To R Best, PRTA, 11 Warwick Avenue, Milford Haven SA73 2ED

Enclosed: my cheque for   £7 [all by post] /   £4 [all by e-mail]   Subscription for 2013.

Name:……………………… Address: …………………………………………………………

Post Code …………….   Phone:……………………. E-mail:………………………………

Please also send a free *PRTA Newsletter & Timetables to this person who* may *be interested:*

Name:……………………… Address: …………………………………………………………

Post Code ……………