



Approaching the Sugar Loaf - see p. 2 [Photo © Stephen Miles]

Cymdeithas Teithwyr
Rheilffordd Canol
Cymru

Heart of Wales Line
Travellers'
Association

HoWLTA

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2014

Number 130



PRICE
£1.50

Free to Members

The Heart of Wales Explorer at Llandovery [Photo © Stephen Miles]

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From the Editor's Desktop

I took over editing the HoWLTA newsletter from Roy Palmer with issue number 123. As you

will have noticed this is number 130 and I've just realized, rather to my amazement, that it completes my second year in the job. Doesn't time go fast when you're having fun? Certainly I've enjoyed it so far and hope that readers have done so too.

In my first editorial I said that my "number one objective is, and will always be, to support and to promote the use of, and to encourage further improvements on the Heart of Wales line".

COVER PICTURES

Contrasting Diesels on the HoWL

Front Cover : DRS 20303 and 20304 pause for the token exchange at Llandovery heading Pathfinder's The Heart of Wales Explorer from Derby to Llandrindod Wells on 11th October 2014.

This is only the second time that Class 20s have worked the line. The previous occasion was in 1987 when 20021 and 20113 worked Pathfinder's Welsh Rambler railtour.

Back Cover : Looking like something from a model railway, but still managing to convey the grandeur of the Heart of Wales Line, 153323 working the 13.14 Swansea to Shrewsbury service passes over a culvert on its climb to Sugar Loaf on 11th October 2014.

(see also pages 14-16)

Photographs by Stephen Miles

One of the most significant impending improvements will be the introduction of a more user-friendly timetable from May 2015, with the possibility of further changes for the better in the future, particularly in connection with the new franchise due from 2018.

However I think we can all continue to agree that we still "**need more trains, faster trains, comfortable trains...to serve the local community**", and this is where you, our members come in....

We are going to need to encourage more people - both residents and visitors - to use the line. Please make every effort to publicise the Heart of Wales....and don't forget to continue using it yourselves whenever possible!

Peter Berry

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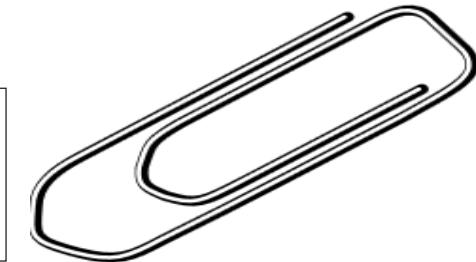
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Clippings

Please Note

The views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the HoWLTA committee.



HoWLTA Subscription Rates

Individual membership	...	£8	Overseas membership	...	£15
Family membership	...	£10	Corporate membership	...	£12

The above rates apply from 1st March 2015. Renewal date is 1st March each year.
50% discount if joining after 1st September

HoWLTA NEWSLETTER Advertising Rates

(Black & white adverts only - colour rates on request)

One issue	1 year (4 issues)
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HALF PAGE (128mm x 90mm)	£80	£200
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QUARTER PAGE (61mm x 90mm)	£45	£120
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EIGHTH PAGE (61mm x 43mm)	£25	£70
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SIXTEENTH PAGE (61mm x 22mm)	£15	£40
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HoWLTA NEWSLETTER Future Copy Dates

Winter 2015 (pub. mid-February)	Copy by 26th January 2015
Spring 2015 (pub. mid-May)	Copy by 27th April 2015
Summer 2015 (pub. mid-August)	Copy by 27th July 2015
Autumn 2015 (pub. mid-November)	Copy by 26th October 2015



Important Notice

HoWLTA members are reminded that under *no circumstances* should they write or speak on behalf of HoWLTA unless they have specific authorisation from the committee to do so. Any deviation from this ruling will be acted on immediately, as it is important that all matters which carry the HoWLTA tag should have the approval of the committee.

Line Representatives and Station Adopters

Shrewsbury
Church Stretton
Craven Arms
Broome
Hopton Heath
Bucknell
Knighton
Knucklas
Llangunllo
Llanbister Road
Dolau
Penybont
Llandrindod
Builth Road
Cilmeri
Garth
Llangammarch
Llanwrtyd Wells
Sugar Loaf
Cynghordy
Llandovery
Llanwrda
Llangadog
Llandeilo
Ffairfach
Llandybie
Ammanford
Pantyffynnon
Pontarddulais
Llangennech
Bynea
Llanelli
Gowerton
Swansea

John Creswell
Church Stretton Rail User Group
Richard Watkins
Alan Belcher
Paula Tucker
Beryl Starr; Bucknell WI; Ray Davies
Shauna Davies & Platform Pals
Steve Crump; Jim Penser

Steve Vipond; Dolau Action Group
Sue Cooke and friends

Sara Poulsom
Ann & Stephen Frodsham
The Garth Group
Ron Birchell - Llangammarch Community Council
John Price; Ainsley Jones; Station Action Group
Peter & Margaret Joyce
Gill Wright
Llandovery Town Council; Friends of Llandovery Station
Richard Rees; Hywel Jones
Eileen Mainwaring; Dennis Harrison
Ros Bellamy
David Rimmer
Gwyn Irving
Ammanford Lions
Mike Smith, Amman Valley Railway
Pontardulais Partnership
Llangennech Community Council; David Edwards
Friends of Bynea Station, Deryk Cundy
Friends of Llanelli Station

Felicity Cobley

At the time of going to press there are vacancies at those stations marked * above. HoWLTA would particularly like to hear from potential volunteers for these.

Progress Report on Forum Activities

The story so far.....Welsh Government has agreed to fund modest but useful service improvements on our route from next May. The revised timetable will be published in February in line with the rail industry 'validation' process. Work will soon start on devising the marketing process to make sure the new service is well used.

[NB: Any members who are able to help with the distribution of publicity material next Spring are kindly asked to contact David Edwards or Gill Wright.]

Funding was also made available for us to commission research into future management and operation of the line post 2018, when the new Wales and Borders rail franchise is implemented. This will enable us to have our ideas adopted as part of the Prospectus and Invitation To Tender (ITT) for the franchise negotiation process. Consultants Aecom have been working to our brief and have worked on the following topics. Each is shown below, with a brief italicised summary of findings:

—Further market research into the needs of current and potential passengers;

The line could be serving at least three times the current numbers being carried, if a more suitable service was provided. This would have considerable impact on the rural economy.

—Devising and analysis of a range of timetable options, with cost benefit analyses on them – this is vital if Government is to be able to accept them;

More trains cost more money. The optimum situation is one where, with an improved service the subsidy per passenger is reduced or at the very least not greater than now. This part of the work is still ongoing.

—Examination of the best way to link the line with other forms of public transport along the route;

Opportunities for such links with buses and community transport have been identified. The rail timetable needs to be defined first.

—Research into the availability of rolling stock that will be needed;

A short list has been drawn up. Much will depend on what happens elsewhere (the new Scottish franchise has been announced and will require stock, as will the forthcoming Northern Rail franchise). Electrification will also impact the situation.

And finally a means of payment has to be found....

—Examination into whether the establishment of an operating base on the line is feasible;

With the proposed post 2018 enhanced timetable, such an operation has merits. However it, too, may be affected by decisions on the future use of Landore depot, post electrification.

—Research into options for different forms of management.

More local focus is clearly desirable and beneficial. An analogy has been drawn between us and the Settle and Carlisle route, and the report proposes many ways in which we can emulate and benefit from their approach. Arriva Trains Wales has already indicated that they will be supportive of such an approach even before 2018.

In parallel with the Aecom work, the Forum, with help from HoWLTA members, has been looking at:

—‘quick win’ station improvements;

Mike Watson and George Scarfe have carried out an audit of our stations with help from Carmarthenshire CC and will be proposing work on, for example, shelters and CCTV. This is in addition to work already in hand under the Station Improvement Programme.

—the lineside vegetation (ie poor views) problem

We have made contact with the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership, who have worked with Network Rail on jointly funded work to drastically improve views on the Gunnislake branch. We are also aware of similar work that has been done in Scotland. We have some funding available but at the time of writing we have been unable to match it with a suitable NR scheme. Discussions proceed.

Stakeholder Meetings

Much of the above work has required discussion with a range of other ‘stakeholders’



If your club or organisation would like to enjoy a talk/slides show about the

Heart of Wales Line, then call
Tony Birdwood

on 01550 777344 or 07852 115390
or email

anthony.birdwood@btinternet.com

member of the Heart of Wales Line Travellers' Association

—from local authorities, the tourism sector, and other interested parties. Aecom has held two stakeholder meetings, and Forum Chairman Cllr Mansel Williams has also convened meetings of his Mid Wales Rail Implementation Support Group. This provides backup to the small group which will be presenting the Minister with its recommendations in early December.

120 Mile Station Garden

Gill Wright is taking the lead on this project. She has been working with students from Bridgend College on the revamped station garden at Cyngorhyd. She regularly liaises with other station adopters and with Geraint Morgan, who looks after the official Arriva Adopter scheme. By the time of the next newsletter Gill and Geraint plan to have organised a ‘grouping’ of station garden activists so that ideas and resources can be shared, and the whole scheme better marketed so that visitors are made aware of what there is to see and do.

Local groups have also expressed an interest in working at Llanelli station on the land owned by Network Rail. Arrangements are being made to take this forward, with the support of Llanelli MP Nia Griffith.

Social Media, Website and Events Listing

Social Media sites such as Twitter and Facebook have rapidly become a key business tool, especially valued for

- Real time and regular updates
 - Networking and extending reach to new audiences
 - Collaborative potential to develop relationships with partners and the wider public
- Since mid January, we have been issuing regular updates on Twitter and Facebook for the Heart of Wales Line Forum. Social media

News from the Association

Membership Matters

200 Club - HoWLTA's Monthly Draw

We have 376 members, recent winners are :

August 2014

80	J Burgess (Llandysul )	...	...	£20
201	J Lewis (Ilford)	...	...	£15
221	R Webb (Llan'dod.)	...	...	£10
227	J Richards (Hereford)	...	...	£10
231	R Welfare (Sutton)	...	...	£10

September 2014

161	K F Bishop (Abingdon)	...	...	£20
185	G A Jones (Llan'dod)	...	...	£15
211	B M Stone (Ch. Stretton)	...	...	£10
250	G M Davies (Penarthy)	...	...	£10
380	R J Bellamy (Llandeilo)	...	...	£10

October 2014

132	W Williams (Llandovery)	...	...	£20
21	P Adams (Ludlow)	...	...	£15
22	Mrs. Horrocks (London)	...	...	£10
56	M Davies (Llandovery)	...	...	£10
85	G Barlow (Llan'dod)	...	...	£10

I am slowly getting to grips with the membership and 200 club lists.

All 200 club and membership subs will be due for renewal on 1st March 2015. Please *do not renew* before then as rates for subs. have changed.

All 200 club draws commence with the April draw and end with the March draw, so renew promptly to have more chance of winning.

Nigel Bird, Membership Secretary.

HoWLTA Annual Draw Winners 2014 - See page 13

Next Committee Meeting

Saturday, 15th January 2015. Starts at 11.30am at Cammarch Hotel, Llangammarch.

See next Newsletter for dates of future meeting.

Newsletter Stuffing Session

The next stuffing session (for Newsletter #131) will be on Thursday, 12th February 2015. This starts at about 11am (to suit the train arrival times) at The Level Crossing, just opposite Llandovery Station.

Your help would be appreciated if you can spare about 2/3 hours - it's a great chance for a chat!

If you can help lease email the editor on psberry@tiscali.co.uk.

NEW ADDRESS for Correspondence :

HoWLTA, c/o The Crossing House,
Dolau, Llandrindod Wells LD1 5TG

Useful Telephone Numbers / Web Sites

Llandrindod Station Ticket Office (Kelsham Hanna)	...	...	01597-822053
National Rail Enquiries	...	...	08457-484950
Arriva Trains Wales (Customer Services)	...	...	08456-061660
HoWLTA web site	...	...	www.howlta.org.uk
HoWL Forum web site	...	...	www.heart-of-wales.co.uk
British Transport Police (24 hours National Freephone No.)	...	...	0800-405040
Network Rail National Helpline	...	...	08457-114141

(e) (1) Other officers (e.g. Publicity Officer) may be appointed by the Committee from within its elected or co-opted members.

(2) The Committee may also appoint other officers from within the membership of the Association.

Such officers shall not be members of the Committee and may be dismissed by the Committee or by a General Meeting.

(3) If a Committee member fails to attend three consecutive Committee meetings without giving valid reasons, he or she shall be deemed to have resigned from the Committee.

(f) (1) The President and Vice-Presidents shall be non-voting members of the Committee.

(2) The President and Vice-Presidents shall be appointed by and shall hold office at the discretion of the elected and co-opted members of the Committee and shall not be subject to re-election by the Annual General Meeting.

(g) Each voting member of the Committee shall have one vote, but the Chairman shall have a casting vote in the event of a tie.

(h) The entire Committee, excluding the President and Vice-Presidents, shall retire and offer itself for re-election at each General Meeting.

(i) Any member wishing to stand for election to the Committee must give at least fourteen days' notice in advance of the Annual General Meeting in writing to the Secretary. Any nominations for election to the Committee must be seconded by another member of the Association.

(j) Any member wishing to propose a motion for discussion at the Annual General Meeting must give at least fourteen days' notice in advance of the Annual General Meeting in writing to the Secretary.

Matters which have not been notified in this way may only be discussed at the Chairman's discretion under "Any Other Business".

(k) A Special General Meeting may be called by the Committee or by a written request of at least ten members of the Association to the Secretary.

(l) At least twenty eight days' notice, in writing, shall be given to members of the Association concerning the holding of a Special General Meeting.

6. QUORUM

(a) The quorum at a General Meeting shall be ten members of the Association present and voting.

(b) The quorum at a Committee Meeting shall be at least one of the officers named in 5(c) above having the right to vote, together with at least two other

elected or co-opted members of the Committee present and voting.

(c) If a properly convened meeting does not have a quorum, business may be transacted but must be ratified at the next quorate meeting.

7. FINANCE

(a) All monies raised by the Association shall be used for the furtherance of the aims of the Association.

(b) The Treasurer shall keep proper accounts and shall keep the Committee informed of the financial position of the Association.

(c) The accounts shall be made up to the end of February each year.

(d) The Auditor shall be elected by the Annual General Meeting.

8. VOLUNTARY DUTIES

Members working on behalf of the Association do so at their own risk and at all times must comply with any conditions or instructions concerning their duties which may be laid down by the Association, Network Rail, a Train Operating Company or any other relevant authority.

9. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AND RULES

The Constitution and Rules may not be amended except in an Annual General Meeting or at a Special General Meeting convened for the purpose.

10. DISSOLUTION

(a) Any decision to disband the Association shall be taken only at a properly convened General Meeting, where a simple majority of votes shall be sufficient to dissolve the Association.

(b) Any surplus funds at dissolution, after payment of liabilities, shall be returned to the membership or donated to an organisation or organisations having similar aims to those of the Association in such manner as the General Meeting may decide.

ADVERTISE HERE

A 1/16th page advert like this costs just £15 for one issue (or £40 for a year). See page 27 for full advertising rates.

specialist and author Rachel Frances is supporting this and reports that we currently have over 550 Twitter followers, 285 Facebook (FB) followers and that our FB 'reach' is over 4000. A topic of recent interest has been the access to Farmers Markets along the line. Rachel is also now looking after our 'events along the line' update (you can access it via our website www.heart-of-wales.co.uk) where she has posted information about Farmers markets and other events.

The website itself has also had a facelift and is now more accessible and quicker to respond.

Rachel welcomes news items and quirky postings that will help her maintain a high level of interest in the line: please email her at rachelzzzyx@gmail.com

Remember the Railcard (and the Powys Loyalty card)

If you haven't already got one please purchase a Heart of Wales Line Railcard. Only £5 for 12 months and it gives you a third off services on our line. Pick up a leaflet, or download it from the Arriva website, or contact Gill Wright. You are entitled to have one, no matter where you live, if you are a HoWLTA member.

Also – in the interests of supporting local enterprise – look out for the Powys Local Loyalty Card, which offers a discount at participating local Powys businesses. The aim is to keep money in the community! Go to www.localloyaltypowys.com for details.

David Edwards

Charter Train News for 2015

Saturday 25th April 2015

The Heart of Wales'

Diesel hauled from Alfreton to Cardiff (Alfreton - Loughborough - Leicester - Birmingham New Street - Gloucester - Newport - Cardiff). Steam hauled from Cardiff to Shrewsbury (Cardiff Central - Swansea District Line - Hendy Junction - Llandovery - Llandrindod Wells [arr. 13.30, dep. 16.40] - Craven Arms - Shrewsbury). Motive power will be two LMS 'Black Five' 4-6-0s, Nos. 44871 and 45407. Train returns (diesel hauled) from Shrewsbury to Alfreton.

[Tour organised by The Railway Touring Company of King's Lynn, Norfolk]

[Compiled from information provided by George Scarfe [updated: 16th October 2014]]

Thursday 30th April 2015

'The Great Britain VIII' Tour (Day 3)

Steam hauled throughout between Cardiff Central and Grange-over-Sands (Cardiff Central - Port Talbot Parkway - Swansea District Line - Llandovery - Llandrindod Wells [arr/dep times not yet available] - Craven Arms - Shrewsbury - Wrexham General - Chester, - Preston - Lancaster - Grange-over-Sands). Motive power will comprise two LMS 'Black Five' 4-6-0s Nos. 44871 and 45407.

[Tour organised by The Railway Touring Company of King's Lynn, Norfolk]

Along the Line....



^ HoWL station essentials at Llangennech on 5th September 2014. Nameboard, lighting, passenger information system, pole with platform number (why not fix it to the lamp post to reduce clutter?), shelter and step.
[Photo © Stephen Miles]

A new wind and solar powered camera for the UWC (User Worked Crossing).

[Photo © Stephen Miles]

[Photo © Stephen Miles]

[Photo © Stephen Miles]



< Ros Bellamy, Llandeilo station adopter, saw an opportunity when the information machine was sent away for repair and update and created this crocheted cover. Inside are free books for people to take and read.

[Photo © Gillian Wright]

Scaffolding covers legs of Cyngordy viaduct while they inspect the structure.

v

[Photo (c) Gillian Wright]



HEART OF WALES LINE TRAVELLERS' ASSOCIATION

Constitution and Rules of the Association

as amended by the 33rd Annual General Meeting on September 20th 2014

1. NAME

The name of the Association shall be "HEART OF WALES LINE TRAVELLERS' ASSOCIATION / CYMDEITHAS TEITHWYR RHEILFFORDD CANOL CYMRU", hereafter called "the Association".

2. AIMS

The aims of the Association shall be:-

- (a) to seek the retention and improvement of the Heart of Wales Railway (Shrewsbury - Llandrindod Wells - Llandovery - Swansea);
- (b) to help to create a greater awareness throughout the rest of Wales, and in Britain as a whole, of the value and potential of rail transport, and to liaise with organizations with similar aims.

3. MEMBERSHIP

(a) Membership shall be open to all those who agree with the above aims, upon payment of the appropriate subscription.

(b) The amount of the annual subscription shall be such reasonable sums for each category of membership as a General Meeting of the Association shall approve on the recommendation of the Committee.

(c) Acceptance of any application for membership shall be at the discretion of the Committee of the Association.

(d) The annual subscription shall be due on March 1st each year. The Committee may fix proportions of the full subscription which shall be payable by members enrolling during the subscription year.

(e) Members shall be reminded of the need to renew their subscription by endorsement of the first newsletter despatched after their subscription becomes due. If six weeks after this reminder and following one verbal or written reminder thereafter, payment has not been received, membership shall be deemed to have lapsed.

(f) If a member uses the name of the Association without first obtaining the approval of the Committee, the Committee shall consider whether such use is against the interests of the Association and the Committee shall have power to take such action in the matter as it may think fit, including the expulsion of the member concerned, from the Association. However, nothing in this clause is intended

to restrict the expression of personal opinions by members, provided that it is made clear that only personal views are being expressed.

(g) The Committee shall have power to confer the status of Honorary Life Member upon such persons as in the Committee's opinion have made outstanding contributions to the work of the Association. Honorary Life Members shall be excused the payment of the subscription, but in every other way shall enjoy the rights of ordinary individual members of the Association, including the right to be elected or co-opted to the Committee. Honorary Life Members shall be subject to the Constitution and Rules of the Association.

4. POWERS

To further the aims in 2 (above), the Association may:-

- (a) publish papers, reports and other literature
- (b) hold meetings, lectures and exhibitions
- (c) organise fund raising activities
- (d) organise excursions by rail and/or by road
- (e) make representations to local and national bodies
- (f) affiliate to other organizations having aims similar to those of the Association
- (g) take any other appropriate lawful action which may be deemed necessary from time to time.

5. ADMINISTRATION

(a) The Annual General Meeting of the Association shall be held between September 1st and November 30th each year, at least 28 days' notice of the meeting having been given in writing to members of the Association.

(b) The Association shall be administered by a Committee which shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting, subject to clause (f)(2) below.

(c) The Committee shall comprise: President, Vice-Presidents, Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary and up to nine other members.

(d) The Committee shall have powers to co-opt members to the Committee to replace any members who resign during the year and to co-opt up to three other members during the year.

HEART OF WALES LINE TRAVELLERS' ASSOCIATION

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2014

INCOME

Subscriptions
200 Club
Raffle
Donations
Sale of Goods
Railcards
Royalties
HOWL Forum
Advertisements
Interest on investments
Total

£
3,637.50
1,855.00
1,838.00
2,114.20
941.30
325.00
158.02
1,455.00
165.00
2,000.00
14,489.02

EXPENDITURE

Newsletter inc envelopes & postage
200 Club
Raffle
Fees, subs
Insurance
Railcards
Walks booklets
HOWL Forum
Surveys
Lottery licence
Timetables & business cards
Travel
Grants to stations
AGM
HOWLDC donation
Miscellaneous
Total

£
5,351.42
990.00
449.00
92.00
436.69
100.00
279.97
3,500.00
1,350.00
40.00
425.80
6.30
245.00
118.65
1,000.00
57.35
14,442.18

Excess of Income over Expenditure £46.84

BANK RECONCILIATION

Opening balance per bank statement	2,617.09	Closing balance per bank statement	1,841.25
LESS: Unpresented cheques	986.45	LESS: Unpresented cheques	163.77
		(See Note A)	
Opening balance per Accounts	1,630.64	Closing balance per Accounts	1,677.48
Opening balance per Accounts	1,630.64	Closing balance per Accounts	1,677.48
ADD: Income for year	14,489.02	ADD: Expenditure for year	14,442.18
Total	16,119.66	Total	16,119.66

Note A: This figure includes £45 of small cheques issued to 200 Club winners in the previous financial year

Stock in hand: 160 copies of Companions; 100 copies of Walks; 550 Line Guides

I have prepared this Statement from slightly incomplete information provided by the Acting Treasurer. However, I assert that it gives a fair and reasonable picture of the financial transactions for the year.

R K J Trend
Acting Treasurer

HoWL visited by Michael Portillo

On the afternoon of Saturday 23rd August word spread amongst people attending the annual Llandrindod Wells Victorian Festival that Michael Portillo (ex Cabinet Minister and now well known television presenter) was travelling on the 13.12 Swansea to Shrewsbury service train and that he would be alighting briefly at Llandrindod Wells Station at about 15.30 where the train would cross the 13.58 Shrewsbury to Swansea service. Few details about his visit were known except that he had stayed in Llandeilo on Friday night and that it was generally thought that he was in the area to film the Heart of Wales Line for a future programme in the popular television series called "Great British Railway Journeys" based upon the famous Bradshaw Railway Guides.

The Swansea to Shrewsbury train arrived in Llandrindod Wells to be met by a small crowd

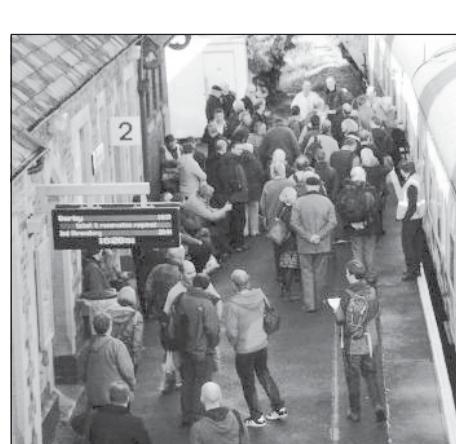
of onlookers, including many dressed in Victorian costume, hoping to catch a glimpse of Mr. Portillo. They were not disappointed because Mr. Portillo, holding a copy of Bradshaw's Railway Guide in his hand, alighted from the train to be greeted by the Llandrindod Wells Town Crier, Mrs. Janet Swindale, dressed in full ceremonial regalia. Mr. Portillo was accompanied by a cameraman, a sound recordist and another member of the T.V. production crew. He commented that the people on the platform were the most smartly dressed of any that he had seen on the Line that day!

It was soon time for the northbound train to depart and Mr. Portillo quickly boarded the train and continued his journey towards Craven Arms.

The programme will be transmitted early in the New Year.

George Scarfe

[With thanks to Mr. Brian Maund, a HoWLTA member from Llandrindod Wells,
for much of the above information]



Passengers crowd Llandrindod Wells and Penybont Stations during stops by the charter train from Derby on 11th October 2014 (see also front cover and p.2).
[Photos © Peter Joyce]



Chronicles of Llangadog Station

Volume 12

We had a mad desperate rush during the latter half of the summer months to get the station shipshape, and all neat and tidy for the impending visit of Mr. Michael Portillo. Llangadog station was to be at last on the railway map of the world. The short list of station staff and locals who were to speak to Mr. Portillo were carefully coached by the BBC language and pronunciation department on the correct way to speak the proper BBC English, and Arriva promised to switch off the station announcer lady with her weird English/Welsh pronunciations of Central Wales line stations. The Arriva company rallied to the cause and sent a huge squad of cleaners and painters to help out us poor Adopters and left us with almost a spanking brand new, state of the art country station. So many thanks to Arriva for that. However, I think that we had mixed up the dates for the visit cos when Mr Portillo's train arrived everybody was away at work or engaged in a shopping spree or other mindless activity and the Portillo train came, stopped and went on its merry way with us poor station staff completely oblivious to the fact and we were left with the sad task of rolling up the red carpets, pulling down the bunting, dismantling the 'welcome to Llangadog' signs dotted along the platform and once again switching on the the announcement lady with her weird Serbo Croat accent. There should be a law prohibiting the use of

Welsh (or even English) with a Sebo Croat accent. However, we look forward to his TV appearance on the CWL in anticipation of learning at just what stations he did alright.

Anyway, work proceeded apace on the new flower box to grace platform 1 and which is now packed with a variety of Heaths and Heathers. We have room for yet another box which at the moment is under construction and we hope to plant a solitary Japanese Maple which we hope will thrive and provide a little interest, and, interesting to note that for the first time ever we have had to initiate a watering rota for all our plants due to the exceptionally dry weather in the run up to Autumn. Also for the first time we embarked on the first serious cutting and trimming of the Lawsons Cypress hedge we planted behind the platform. This was performed entirely by hand using hand operated shears as we are banned from using anything mechanical on the platform as we are too old to know what we are doing and might injure ourselves, or worse still kill a few passengers. Anyway, the concrete and wire fence it has to hide is in fact now well hidden. Well done the Adopters. We also note that our dozen trees we planted to screen the above eyesore are growing well, due no doubt to the very nice summer weather—many of them well above the grass top level, and even the very small Japanese Larch has so far escaped the

had been in the role and in her work for the Forum (with which she was continuing). She felt that gradually the Forum had gained respect from the rail industry and in particular mentioned the improvement in relations with Network Rail, for example in the granting of licences to volunteer groups to work on NR land away from station platforms. The "120 mile station garden" concept was important in creating a positive image of the line, especially for tourists. It was pleasing that nearly all the stations had been adopted, with recent developments in this respect at Bynea, Garth and Llanelli. She commended the efforts of David Edwards and others with regard to the Local Management Study.

A presentation of a card and flowers was made to Gill by her fellow Committee members.

11. Address by a representative of Arriva Trains Wales

Ben Davies said that the company was working with the Welsh Government to implement the Minister's decision to subsidise an improved Mondays to Fridays service with effect from May 2015. He commended the volunteers at Dolau, as that station had been shortlisted for an award at the Association of Community Rail Partnerships ceremony

which was to take place shortly. As to train performance, about 35% of problems were down to ATW, but the company was doing all it could to ensure the reliability of the units working on the line. The remaining issues were the responsibility of Network Rail. The senior citizens' concessionary fare scheme would run from October 1st to March 31st as a result of Welsh Government funding, with the major change that any Welsh bus pass holder would be entitled to free travel on the line. Club 55 was also running again until October 23rd. Ben felt that it was important to get more tourists and day trippers into the area by train in order to boost the local economy and to try to achieve better integration between trains and buses.

Members' questions to Ben Davies and Michael Vaughan included:

1. Would it be possible to move pupils by train to the new secondary school at Ffairy Fach? – the May 2015 times do not appear to be suitable and in any case ATW does not have any additional diesel units for the longer trains which might be necessary

2. Will there be capacity issues in view of the new rules about bus passes? – Ben agreed that there could be serious problems

3. If ATW was to win the post-2018 franchise, will there be better rolling stock on the line? – this was impossible to answer for a variety of reasons, not least the knock-on effects of the planned electrification of the lines in south Wales

12. Address by a representative of Network Rail: no-one was present to represent NR

13. Report by HoWL Forum Joint Line Development Officers

David Edwards gave the background to the current work being done by consultants AECOM as a result of funding by the Minister, Mrs Hart. The Forum's report to her based on the consultants' work was due by the first week of December. He referred also to the service changes funded by the Welsh Government from next May and the importance of getting people to use the

new trains. An attempt was still being made to try to get rid of some of the trees and bushes which block views from the trains at some of the most scenic parts of the route, but at present NR in Wales appeared to be unwilling to part fund such work.

14. Discussion of motions notified in advance by members: none received

15. Open Forum: A number of issues were raised by members, including the form that the next contract for Welsh rail services might take, to which Prof Cole responded.

16. Any Other Business: none.



Gill receives a copy of Bradshaw's Railway Guide to add to her flowers.
[Photo © Peter Berry]

discussion, Brian Maund proposed adoption of the accounts for 2012-13. This was seconded by Catherine Berry and agreed by members.

5.1.3 Income and expenditure account covering the period July 1st 2013 to June 30th 2014

Ray Tend presented this statement to the meeting [*Editor* : see p. 22]. Following discussion, adoption of the accounts was proposed by Richard Watkins, seconded by Chris Horrocks and agreed by members.

5.1.4 Paul Harley expressed his thanks to Ray Trend for his hard work in sorting out the financial affairs of the Association, a view strongly supported by members.

5.2 Acting Membership Secretary

Nigel Bird sent his apologies for being unable to be present, but sent a report which was read to the meeting. He reported a paid-up membership total of 985 as at September 18th and stated that the 200 Club now had 376 members. Adoption of the report was proposed by Eileen Mainwaring, seconded by Brian Maund and carried unanimously.

5.3 Newsletter Editor

Peter Berry presented his editor's report.

Four newsletters had been published at the usual quarterly intervals, the next copy date being October 27th. Copies of the newsletter were now available online a few weeks after each edition was published. He had made some updates to the rest of the website, but someone was needed to check the other sections to ensure they were up to date. Paul Harley offered his services for this purpose. Paul also asked whether an electronic membership fee (at a discount from the normal rate) could be offered: it was agreed that the Committee would consider this further. John Davies then proposed acceptance of the report, which was seconded by Tim Record and carried unanimously, with thanks to Peter for his efforts.

6. Appointment of President and Vice-Presidents

The Committee gave notice, in exercise of its powers under section 5(f)(2) of the Constitution, that it had re-appointed the following to serve until the next AGM:

President: Prof. Stuart Cole

Vice-Presidents: Lord Berkeley of Knighton, Peter Black AM, Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Alun Cairns MP, Martin Caton MP, Alun Davies AM, Byron Davies AM, Geraint Davies MP, Keith Davies AM, Suzy Davies AM, Philip Dunne MP, Jonathan Edwards MP, Nia Griffith MP, Mike Hedges AM, Julie James AM, Sian James MP, Daniel Kawczynski MP, William Powell

AM, Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM, Simon Thomas AM, Joyce Watson AM, Kirsty Williams AM and Roger Williams MP

It was noted that Rebecca Evans AM had had to stand down as a Vice-President following her appointment as a Deputy Minister in the Welsh Government

7. Election of Committee for 2014-15

It was proposed by Patrick Tiddy, seconded by Catherine Berry and carried unanimously, that the following, having been properly nominated, should be elected to serve until the next AGM:

Chairman Kevin Knell; Vice-Chairman Mike Watson; Secretary (vacant); Treasurer Ray Trend; Membership Secretary Nigel Bird; Publicity Co-ordinator David Edwards; Newsletter Editor Peter Berry; Committee members : Ray Davies, Brian Dotson, Len Elliott, Chris Horrocks, Gwyn Irving, Rex Lloyd, Roger Price, George Scarfe, Gill Wright.

8. Election of Auditor

No nominations for the position of auditor had been received before the meeting and none were forthcoming from those present. Therefore Brian Dotson proposed and Chris Horrocks seconded that the meeting should accept Ray Trend's suggestion that he should ask Kevin Morris, who was known to him and had carried out similar roles for other organisations, to audit the accounts for 2014-15, and failing that that the Committee should make other appropriate arrangements: this was agreed unanimously.

9. President's Address

Prof. Cole began by thanking Gill Wright for her 22 years' service as Chairman and made a personal presentation to her of a facsimile of a Bradshaw's Railway Guide. He wished Kevin Knell well as the new Chairman and also thanked Peter Berry and Mike Watson for their work for HoWLTA over the past year, together with George Scarfe for his information service on special trains and Roger Price for organising "Folk Up The Track" trips. In addition, Stuart thanked David Edwards and Gill Wright for their efforts as HoWL Forum Joint Line Development Officers, saying that it was essential to ensure that the next franchise gives the line as much as we can get from it. He concluded by commenting very favourably on Ray Trend's financial analysis of the Association's affairs.

10. Outgoing Chairman's Address

Gill said that although she had been Chairman for 22 years, the time had flown because of how busy she

dreaded Larch disease and stands four or five feet high—at least it was very small when we planted it a few years ago.

We are disappointed to learn that Arriva have vetoed the use of the train to get pupils to Ffairfach station when the school opens next year. Our hopes that the rubbish tip

which belongs to Arriva and lies along Platform 1 might have the awful surrounding concrete fence pulled down and the area put down to tarmac and used as a dropping off/pick up point for the local buses. The cynics among the locals suggested that this scheme was a non starter anyway as the odds were against any pupil managing to walk the half mile from the station to the new school in the morning and back again at the end of the day.

We at Llangadog station congratulate Dolau station on its achievement of reaching UNESCO's World Heritage Status with a yearning that the same could be done for our little halt. If that were the case then we bet that Arriva's rubbish tip alongside our platform would be instantly transformed by Arriva into something resembling Kew Gardens. Or maybe not.



[Photo © Dennis Harrison]

And finally we show a photo of how it should not be done—the disfiguring and further desecration of our country (and our rubbish tip in the foreground) by the faceless corporate institutions that infest our country. A careless and uncaring attitude to our way of life. Poles, more poles, old poles, poles with cameras, poles with signs, poles with wires, poles with cameras to trap speeding motorists, poles with cameras to trap speeding trains, poles with flashing lights, and just old poles left to rot at drunken angles. What a mess it all is—- and nobody cares.

*Eileen Mainwaring,
Chief Adopter
Dennis Harrison,
Assistant Chief Adopter*

Post Bag

An Alternative View From the Tracks

I would like to express a contrary view to that expressed in the letter - "View from the Tracks" - from C A Price in the last Newsletter.

Railway lines are noted for being extremely important wildlife corridors and so the idea that trees and foliage should be removed just so that travellers can see the more distant scenery ignores the fact that this action in itself would cause loss of habitat to all the insects, bird and mammals that live in the lineside environment.

The countryside is becoming tragically denuded of natural flora and fauna anyway and so to deliberately perform such an act – except where matters of operating safety are concerned – would be wanton vandalism.

Trees also have a major part to play in reducing climate change impact through their ability to absorb carbon dioxide – we should plant more and not start cutting what we have.

Yes, there are some places where trees and hedges partially obscure some “far-reaching views” but there is natural excitement and beauty to be seen at closer hand in these very hedgerows.

Andrew Gilson, Wolverhampton

Water Shortage?

On Thursday 7th August the 14.03 from Shrewsbury developed a fault at Knucklas station. It ran out of water!!



I wondered if any of the attached pictures might be of interest to HoWLTA Newsletter readers to see how the driver dealt with the problem. He went to obtain water from the village, making at least four trips with borrowed watering cans.

Mary Hargreaves

[Editor : Well, I guess we've all done it at some time or another!]



European Comparison

I have just spent a holiday by train in Europe using an InterRail global pass. I did many journeys on local trains, and there are many contrasts with the Heart of Wales line. I travelled in Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Italy, Belgium and France - and in them all it was the same.

HoWLTA Newsletter

HEART OF WALES LINE TRAVELLERS' ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the 33rd Annual General Meeting

held at The Belle Vue Hotel,

Llanwrtyd Wells, on Saturday September 20th 2014

1. Introduction and welcome by the Chairman

1.1 Gill Wright welcomed members to the meeting
1.2 Gill's welcome was echoed by Cllr Lindsay Haines, Deputy Mayor of Llanwrtyd Wells, who spoke of the importance of the HoWL to the town

2. Apologies for absence were received from:

Alan Belcher, Ros Bellamy, Ray Davies, Len Elliott, Roy Palmer, Roger Price and Wyn Mainwaring

3. Adoption of the Minutes of the 32nd AGM, held at Llanwrtyd Wells on 21st September 2013:

the minutes had been circulated in advance via the newsletter. Adoption was proposed by Josephine Lewis, seconded by John Norris and carried unanimously.

4. Constitutional matters

4.1 Increase of subscription rates

The Committee proposed that the current rates should be increased with effect from March 1st 2015, to £8 per annum for individual members, £10 for families and £12 for corporate members. Adoption of this proposal was proposed by Martin Loake, seconded by Paul Harley and passed unanimously.

4.2 Amendment of Constitution

The Committee proposed two amendments to the current Constitution (which had last been amended at the 2007 AGM), namely that:

1. Section 7(c) should read “the accounts shall be made up to the end of February each year”, rather than to the end of June. Ray Trend (Acting Treasurer) explained the reasons for this proposal.

2. Section 8 should read “Members working on behalf of the Association do so at their own risk and at all times must comply with any conditions or instructions concerning their duties which may be laid down by the

L. to R. J. Prof. Stuart Cole (President), Ray Trend (Treasurer) and Mike Watson (Vice-Chairman) at the AGM.

Operating Company or any other relevant authority”, thus removing an obsolete reference to the British Railways Board.

Following discussion, adoption of these two proposed changes was proposed by Martin Loake, seconded by Paul Harley and passed unanimously.

5. Officers' reports

5.1 Acting Treasurer

5.1.1 Investment Account

Ray Trend read his report on the Committee's concerns relating to this account, which generated considerable discussion. Mike Watson (Minutes Secretary) stated that the Committee members present (assuming they were re-elected!) intended to hold a special Committee meeting immediately after the AGM to take account of views expressed by those present and so decide on their next steps in this matter. This was supported by the meeting.

5.1.2 Income and expenditure statement covering the period July 1st 2012 to June 30th 2013

Ray Trend presented this document, which had not been available at the time of the 2013 AGM. He explained that, as he was not Acting Treasurer during that period, the Committee had asked him to audit the 2012-13 accounts and the document which he had presented was the result of that process. Following



[Photo © Peter Berry]

Chairman's Chat....

First of all let me say thank you to Gill, our ex-chairman, for all the hard work she has performed on behalf of HoWLTA. Although she has stepped down as chairman, she will continue on the Committee to give help and advice.

Now let me introduce myself to those of you that don't know me. I spent 36 years on the railway, and my career started in 1968 on BR Eastern Region at Healey Mills. A move to Freightliner soon followed - a company that I would return to several times.

Following that, I spent many happy years at Sealink Harwich Parkes Quay. Working a freight yard and container depot was second nature to me, but loading container, RO/RO, and passenger ships, this was a totally new environment.

I then moved to B.R. HQ, Marylebone research and development on future projects.

Following that, a move back to Freightliner to manage their safety case and then onto London International freight Terminal, the site of the 2012 Olympic Games.

My last move was to the Port of Felixstowe where I stayed until the end of my career.

I took early retirement and then decided to live the good life, bought a farm in Brittany France where I spent a wonderful 10 years, before returning to Wales.

Apart from being involved in HoWLTA, I am an Elan Valley Volunteer Ranger. I am also actively involved in Llandrindod Wells fossil club and a volunteer for the museum.

May I also take the opportunity to thank our former Secretary Hazel. We now have a vacancy for Secretary. At the AGM, the lack of female committee members was pointed out, so come on ladies....!

If you know anybody, female or male, who might be interested, please get in touch. I can guarantee there are going to be some exciting times in the future.

One duty Hazel performed admirably was the newsletter stuffing. In the past she did it on her own, with some help from Gill. Thankfully now we have an eager group of volunteers. At the last stuffing session we had new faces and it's turning into a bit of a social event. So if you want to catch up on the news or just to chat, come along to our next session, the date will be in the newsletter [Editor - see p. 25]. One of the many things I would like to do as chairman is to meet and talk to as many of you as I can, so I hope to see you there.

My reason for joining HoWLTA was to help improve the line and service.



[Photo © Peter Berry]

We are going to see some changes next year and to help them succeed we need to start looking at ways of encouraging people to use the service. So if you have any ideas, drop a line to the Post Bag or get in touch and I will pass them onto the Committee.

As for the future, i.e. 2018, consultants have been selected to take this forward and we eagerly await their findings.

I know that I am not the only one that would like to see younger people involved with not only HOWLTA, but the Heart of Wales Line.

We have made a start with the web page and Facebook etc, but perhaps we could encourage even younger people, including schools, to get involved.

One area I am keen to be involved in is the 120 Mile Station Garden, and I would like to meet as many adopters and volunteers as I can.

I was pleased to meet some of you at the meeting in Llanwrtyd but I would like to get out and be more involved. I am very good with a paint brush or a spade. So if you need a helping hand or if you are just getting together, get in touch.

Finally, I would like to thank everybody who was at the AGM, especially the President and representatives for their addresses, as well as the treasurer for his excellent report.

It was nice to see so many of you there, it was a pity that we didn't have more time to chat.

I was quite aware that we could have taken more questions during the open forum. I will keep this in mind at the next AGM.

Kevin Knell

1. The quietest lines have at least a 2-hour service pattern. Hourly is the norm.

2. Even the most rural trains have three coaches, with easy access for wheelchairs. Four or more are often found.

3. The rolling stock is invariably more modern than our ageing 153s and 150s. Air-conditioning seems standard on all trains.

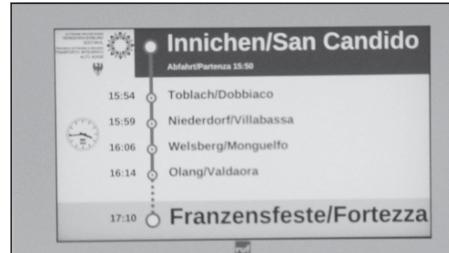
4. The seats line up with the windows, which are large and allow fine views of the scenery, even for short people like me.

5. There is generous accommodation for bicycles (and pushchairs), which are available free of charge at all times.

Here are some photos of these features:



German local train at Lindau in Austria.



Modern in-coach screen indicating stops, route and times. Note the clock face with real time of the left.

As can be seen the trains were not crowded - there was always seating no matter how busy the trains got, because of the number of coaches.

The Heart of Wales line (and others) deserves this sort of rolling stock.

Andrew Tweed, Llandrindod



Italian train at San Candido: half hourly service, six coaches long.



Room for bicycles.

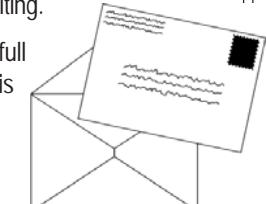
[All photos on this page © Andrew Tweed]

Letters for possible inclusion on the Post Bag pages can either be posted to me at Twin Oaks, Castle Close, Llangadog SA19 9AH or emailed to psberry@tiscali.co.uk

Your letter, if selected for publication, may be subject to editing.

Please include your full address, although this will not usually be published.

Peter Berry



Heart of Wales Line

Walk No 7

A walk from Cyngordy Rail Station up the Cynnant Fawr Valley and return under the viaduct

Circular walk of 6.2 miles (10 km). All walks are on public Rights of Way or on open access land. Explorer Maps sheet 187)

Starting at the newly vastly improved station at Cyngordy (GR 802407), walk to the south end of the platform, cross the line and take the track uphill to the left of the house 'Dildre'. Go through a gate and traverse across the field, over a low bank and to a gate in the far left corner. Through this second gate turn down left (boggy) and through the third (antiquated) gate across a quaint small stream bridge. In the field go uphill, keeping the hedge on your right, to a stile (with a Mountain Ash growing out of the stile post which I remember as a 12 inch high plant). From this stile strike diagonally right across the reedy field towards a small strip of trees to a stile, cross a small stream and uphill to the left to the skyline and a fence. This is followed to the left, along the ridge, through three gates, to a stile on the right of a cottage. There should be views of the Cyngordy viaduct (GR 808418) on your right. The second stile will bring you onto the cottage track downhill to a stile on your right. Turn left opposite this stile and through trees, diagonally up right across a bracken field (cleared by the Carmarthenshire Rangers) to an old fashioned metal barred stile. When across, continue through the next

field to a gate on the left with a second barred stile next to the gate. Through this gate turn right on to a green track which leads to the road. At the road (uphill from Llanerchindda Guest house - GR 803427) turn up hill and, at the first bend, right on to a lane. This is followed for about 2.5km (1½ miles) to a footbridge opposite Cynannt Farm (GR 812444). Cross it and right through a gate, down river to a second gate and a track leading uphill through the forestry (felled) to a wide forest track. This is followed to the right downhill, leaving a house on your left, to the road and a picnic spot. This road is followed under the viaduct (GR 808418) to the first footpath on the right across the bridge. Follow the track over the hill to join your outward track back to the rail station (GR 802407).

Walks are designed by the Dinefwr Group of Ramblers Cymru by Geoff Williams (tel. 01558-822960).

Thanks should be given to the Carmarthenshire Ranger service for the way in which they have cleared part of this route and the sensible diversions and new gates at Cynannt Farm.

Geoff Williams



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Heart of Wales Line Travellers' Association — HoWLTA

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Alun Davies AM

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Suzy Davies AM

Jonathan Edwards MP

Nia Griffith MP

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Eluned Morgan MEP

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NEW ADDRESS for Correspondence :

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HoWLTA is affiliated to Railfuture and Better Transport

Arriva Trains News

Train operator Arriva Trains Wales has fared poorly in a survey about reliability and communication with passengers.

Many rail passengers across the board do not trust their train company to provide a good day-to-day service or be truthful, fair or communicate well, according to the Passenger Focus survey, which comprised 4,000 online interviews.

Arriva Trains Wales scored 16 per cent on the trust in service question, and only 36 per cent of its customers felt it communicated well.

The survey measured delivery on basis of the day-to-day service which included five factors - punctuality/reliability, value for money, problem resolution, helpful staff on trains and helpful staff at stations.

Arriva Trains Wales was ranked 15th among its fellow train operators. Only three companies — Grand Central, Merseyrail and ScotRail — got positive marks, with First Great Western among those with the most negative feedback.

A spokesman for Passenger Focus said: "To build greater trust with passengers, it is important not only to deliver a punctual and reliable service but also to build a stronger relationship with passengers, this being based on communicating openly and honestly."

ADVERTISE HERE

A 1/16th page advert like this costs just £15 for one issue (or £40 for a year). See page 27 for full advertising rates.

Lynne Milligan, customer services director at Arriva Trains Wales, said: "The report contains some interesting and new information and we are currently working with Passenger Focus to help us further develop the overall customer and journey experience. Undoubtedly, these research findings will assist that work.

"We constantly focus on delivering safe, reliable trains, great value fares supported by the best possible levels of customer service.

"Over the past 10 years we have encouraged more customers to use our services and have seen growth of over 60 per cent in passenger journeys in this time."

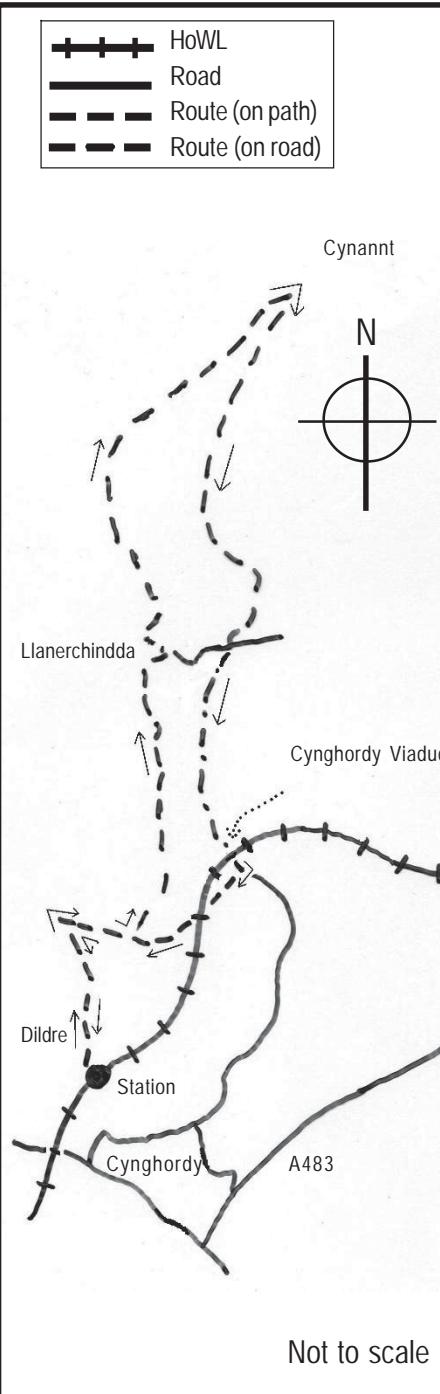
Sent in by Hywel Jones

Concessionary Travel News

Club 55 was brought back from 1st September until the end of October 2014. Unfortunately we were not advised of this until too late to give advance notice to readers and members. Advance details may be available in future on the Arriva website (www.arrivatrainswales.co.uk/club55/)

Free travel on our line with a bus pass also returned on 1st October and will continue until 31st March 2015. As announced previously this concession is now available to all bus pass holders in Wales and also applies to the following lines in Wales :

Wrexham – Hawarden Bridge
Cambrian Coast (Machynlleth – Pwllheli)
Conwy Valley Line (Llandudno -- Blaenau Ffestiniog)



1 • 2 • 4 • Lots!

(see pages 14-15)

1. A class 153 single coach unit providing the 13.12 service from Swansea to Shrewsbury on 29th July 2014 as it passes through lush pastures near Manordeilo.

2. On 11th October 2014, the 09.00 Shrewsbury to Newport is worked by 2-coach class 150 150278 across the River Tywi on Lwynjack bridge south of Llandovery.

4. Two class 150s provide a 4-coach Royal Welsh Show Special from Cardiff Central to Builth Wells. on 24th July 2014. In the foreground is the River Tywi near Manordeilo.

Lots! Nearly eight hours into its forward journey and only three minutes late, West Coast Railways 47854 *Diamond Jubilee* heads Compass Tours' The Heart of Wales Scenic Rambler from Grantham to Cardiff Central past Garnswilt, south of Pantyffynnon on 16th August 2014. (47786 *Roy Castle OBE* was on the rear of the lengthy, 12-coaches plus 2 engines, train).

All photographs by Stephen Miles.

HoWLTA Annual Draw Winners 2014

£100	L. Wilson, Enfield
£75	M. Hargeaves, Llandovery
£50	M. Headland, Bucknell
£25	A. Lynd-Evans, Cyngordy
£25	R. Welfare, Sutton, Surrey
£15	D. Pembridge, Telford
£15	M. Hooper-Immins, Weymouth
£10	D. Bennett, Guildford
£10	R. Devonald, Bath
£10	R. Griffiths, Killay, Swansea



1 - 2 - 4 - Lots!

Diesels can come in all sorts of sizes on the HoWL.

(see p. 13 for details)

[All photographs © Stephen Miles]

