

Rail Wales

Newsletter of Railfuture in Wales



Barmouth Harbour on the Cambrian Coast with a Birmingham to Pwllheli service doubled from its usual size to carry passengers to the Wakestock music festival in July 2015 Photo Dave Taylor

railfuture
CYMRU | WALES

WELCOME

The major focus for Railfuture Wales in recent months has been progress towards the award of the new franchise for passenger services to serve Wales and the Borders from December 2018. As the content of this franchise will be a major factor in determining the quality of rail services in Wales for the next decade and beyond, Railfuture has made a considerable effort to ensure that the best possible outcome is achieved.

You will read elsewhere in this issue of Rail Wales of the work undertaken to influence the franchise award and its content. Railfuture has to a large extent been operating in unknown territory as this is the first time that this process has been conducted by the Welsh Government which is to some extent finding its way through a complex procedure in which many of the rules are determined in Westminster.

The decision to establish an arm's length organisation to manage the procurement process (Transport for Wales) is innovative but it has proved difficult to obtain much information on the process, in particular the criteria which will be used to assess the rival bids from the four shortlisted operators. It is hoped that the series of consultation events taking place in the second part of March will throw some welcome light on decisions made and what remains to be decided.

Given the lack of experience of Transport for Wales in evaluating rail franchise bids, there is a risk that the insufficient time will be available for it to complete its work in time to award the franchise by its stated target date of January 2018, in which case Arriva Trains Wales might need to be given a short-term extension to its current franchise.

Meanwhile, as I write this column, news emerges of yet another report critical of the management of the Great Western electrification. The latest critical voice is the UK Parliament's Public Accounts committee. This follows an announcement in November 2016 that the scheme is to be cut back, at least in the short term, with the wires not reaching Bristol Temple Meads, as a result of the cost overruns. The main line to Cardiff remains scheduled to be electrified by 2019. The availability of bi-mode trains able to operate both under and away from the wires has helped make this decision easier than it would be otherwise.

However, the advent of bi-mode trains is a mixed blessing as this reduces the prospects for electrification from Cardiff to Swansea after 2019. This is regrettable as the service between the two largest Welsh cities will be

slightly slower with trains operating in diesel mode. Last but not least the atmospheric emissions from the diesel engines, whilst small compared to those from the parallel M4 motorway, will do nothing to help Wales meet its sustainability and environment targets.

At the Railfuture Wales committee meeting in October 2016 I was elected as the branch chairman to replace John Rogers. I would be pleased to hear your thoughts and suggestions as to how Railfuture could better serve you, its members, in Wales. Please come along to the AGM on 22 April 2017 (see below) or contact me directly with your comments if you cannot make the meeting (my contact details are on page 19)

Peter Kingsbury

AGM RAILFUTURE WALES 2017

Formal notice for this year's Railfuture Wales/Cymru AGM appears below. Following the formation of one Railfuture branch to cover all Wales in 2015, it was decided to hold the AGM in Shrewsbury in the early afternoon to allow members from all parts of Wales to attend. Please make an effort to be there and let the committee know your thoughts on what the Wales branch should be doing. Do you have any issues you wish to bring to the attention of other members? How do you think the branch should be reacting to the award of the new franchise?

If you want a longer day out and can arrive in Shrewsbury before 11.30, you are welcome to attend the committee meeting taking place in the morning.

Full details are

SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 2017 at Shrewsbury railway station (enter by door on far-left side of building to left of ticket hall entrance)

11.30-13.30: normal branch committee meeting plus [on this occasion] a warm welcome to all members of Railfuture Wales as observers.

14.00-16.00: the AGM. A warm welcome to ALL our members Minutes of the last AGM; reports from officers [with questions from the floor]; report from the Cambrian Area officers; comments/report on northern matters; election of committee officers and members; a report on Railfuture across Britain by Chris Bates, our liaison with the UK board and then an open forum for all. **YOUR CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY!**

Our sincere thanks to Ben Davies (Arriva Trains Wales) for facilitating the use of this excellent venue.

Peter Kingsbury, chairman

peter.kingsbury@railfuturewales.org.uk

tel: 029 2048 4431

CYFARFOD CYFFREDINOL BLYNYDDOL 2017

SADWRN, EBRILL 22, 2017. Gorsaf reilffordd Yr Amwythig.

11.30-13.30: cyfarfod pwyllgor y cangen ond croeso i bob aelod o Railfuture Cymru .

14.00-16.00: y cyfarfod blynyddol... CROESO i bob aelod o Railfuture Cymru. Cofnodion y cyf. cyff. blynyddol diwethaf; adroddiadau [gyda cwestiynau] gan swyddogion; adroddiad gan Rhanbarth y Cambrian; sylwadau/adroddiad gan aelodau y gogledd; etholiadau i'r pwyllgor; fforwm agored i bob aelod, yn cynnwys adroddiad o'r `canol` gan Chris Bates, ein cyswllt gyda'r bwrdd canolog, Railfuture y Deyrnas Gyfunol.

A ddiolch i Ben Davies [TAC] am drefnu'r ystafell – yr un a gawsom ni y tro diwethaf.

Peter Kingsbury, cadeirydd

peter.kingsbury@railfuturewales.org.uk

029 2048 4431.

EICH CYFLE I GAEL EICH DWEUD!

AND THE NOMINATIONS ARE

Four companies have been shortlisted for the Wales and Borders/South Wales metro rail passenger franchise commencing at the end of 2018. The Railfuture Wales committee has met all four bidders to explain its vision for improved services which would contribute to a better quality of life in Wales. It is possible that the list will be reduced to a final two in the summer with the selected franchise holder announced at the beginning of 2018.

The shortlisted bidders are:

Abellio : a Dutch company which operates the ScotRail franchise, has recently started operating the Greater Anglia franchise and is a partner with Serco in Merseyrail.

Arriva : the current franchise holder the sister companies of which operate the Chiltern, Crosscountry, Northern and London Overground franchises. Owned by Deutsche Bahn.

Keolis : a French/Canadian company which as a partner with the Go Ahead Group operates the London Midland, Govia Thameslink group and South Eastern franchises

MTR : a company with its roots in Asia with world wide experience in urban rail transport (metros). It will operate London Crossrail.

WALES INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT

South Wales Main Line electrification

Recent announcements still give an electrification completion date to Cardiff for December 2018 but the originally stated 2019 electrification to Swansea has been put back to the next financing period for Network Rail and is therefore depends on a further government decision. However, the Department for Transport's claim that many of the passenger benefits of electrification can be obtained without electrifying the whole route raises many questions about further electrification.

Trackside work

Piling or construction of mast bases continues between Severn Tunnel and Cardiff East with some mast supports erected. However progress appears slow. Work at Newport station has recently been on stop including the cutting back the canopy which is also taking place on Platform 1 as well as platforms 2 and 3

Bridge work

The work to lift or reconstruct bridges has continued between Severn Tunnel and Cardiff. In addition, a number of signal gantries have to be raised in the Newport area.

Between Severn Tunnel and Newport eight road and three footbridges have required modification or replacement. Farm Road bridge which forms the approach road to Caldicot station has been completed. A major

project now underway is the replacement of Rogiet Road bridge just west of Severn Tunnel Junction station which was demolished in December 2016. Church/Roberts road bridge has been modified. Parsons footbridge at Undy has been replaced. Reconstruction is underway at Huggets road bridge Undy where a temporary footbridge has been erected. Undy Halt and Whitwall footbridges have been replaced. Magor road bridge has been modified with the lowering of the track on the down relief line. Llandeenny bridge, which is west of the link road to Llanwern, is in the process of reconstruction and a temporary footbridge has been erected. The replacement Somerton road bridge in Newport has been completed. At Chepstow Road under bridge, east of Newport station, the required work is unusual as it involves the removal of the overhead structures and strengthening the bridge.

Between Newport and Cardiff eight road bridges and two footbridges have required modification or replacement. At Newport the former station footbridge was to be removed at Christmas 2016 but is still in position. To the west of Newport station and to the east of the tunnel the large busy Bridge Street road bridge has been replaced. Tunnel Terrace footbridge to the east of the tunnel has to be lifted. Track in the old tunnel has to be lowered. The modification of Cardiff Road bridge to the east of Alexandra Dock Junction has been completed and work is underway to complete the replacement bridge, now in place, at Maesglas Road which gives road access to Alexandra Dock Junction yard. Cuckoo Bridge west of Newport which gives access from the east to Wentloog (B4239) has been completed as have the next two bridges at Maerdy Farm and Hawes Lane. The foundations are being constructed for new bridges at Summerway east of Marshfield and at Green Lane/Heol Las bridge to the west of the village. The B4239 bridge which gives access to Wentloog from the west is unaffected.

In Cardiff five road bridges are involved. Work commenced on 18th March 2017 on the replacement of Mardy Road bridge at Rumney and this will be completed in 2018. Work commenced on Splott Road bridge connecting Splott and Adamstown on 22nd February 2017 and will be completed by 2018. This work will be completed in two stages enabling the bridge to remain open but with traffic light control. Beresford Road (Moorland Road) reopened on 17th February 2017 and the Windsor Road bridges have now been replaced. In addition, the relief lines have been lowered under the rail bridges between Cardiff Bay/Cardiff Central and Cardiff Queen Street. This has been complicated by the canal bridge which is underneath and this has had to be strengthened.

Signalling

The major Cardiff Area signalling renewal (CASR) project came to an end at Christmas 2016 when the re signalling of the Cardiff station area was completed and the Cardiff Panel signal box and St Fagans crossing box were closed. All signalling is now controlled from the Wales Rail Operating Centre (WROC) which is located west of Cardiff station (see photo on page 20) There were layout changes east of Cardiff station, the first being the junctions between the main and relief lines on the east side of Cardiff. These were moved from the constricted east approach to Central station out to Moorland Road Junction with 75mph points allowing faster entry into the down platforms at Central station. Bi-directional signalling was provided on all lines between Leckwith Junction in the west and Moorland Road Junction in the east.

At Cardiff Central, a new platform no 8 was built on the south side and a new south entrance to the station was provided which opened earlier last year. Platform 8 was brought into use on 29th December 2016. All platforms at Cardiff Central are now bi-directional and platform 0 can now used by passenger trains from the west. There is no access from platforms 6, 7 and 8 to and from the Newport direction.

A big difference for the Cardiff signalling operation is the total use of ARS (Automatic Route Setting) using an enhanced system known as ARS+ and sometimes called the Signallers' Assistant. This facility is available for all timetabled moves including entry and exit from depots and berthing sidings. As such, the workload of the signallers has decreased and has reduced the number of extra work stations required. All train moves are controlled automatically with signaller intervention only necessary for unplanned moves and at times of service disruption. Train detection is by axle counters. The level crossing barriers at St Fagans, St Georges and Llantrisant which were controlled from St Fagans are all relatively new so only the CCTV control transferred to the WROC .The automatic half barriers at Pontsarn crossing remained unchanged.

Two new re signalling projects have commenced. In North Wales from Chester to Colwyn Bay which is the start of the proposed re signalling to Llandudno and in South Wales the Port Talbot West re signalling between Baglan and Llanelli. Both involve track alterations.

Track enhancements

There has been a delay in commissioning the double track between Rossett Junction and Saltney Junction between Wrexham and Chester. A week's closure is planned at end of March and the twin track section should open on 1st April 2017. There has been no progress on redoubling between Cross Keys to Aberbeeg on the Ebbw Vale branch.

Station Improvements

There has been further expenditure of £2.5m at Rhyl with combined rail station and bus station improvements to provide an upgraded rail/bus interchange.

Work is in progress to complete the transport hub at Port Talbot with the provision of bus interchange facilities on the north side of the station.

At Severn Tunnel Junction the ramps were finally brought into use in December 2016 after remedial work.

There has been no progress with the proposed new bridge with lifts at Abergavenny. There are sighting problems both signalling and for site of the new bridge compounded by the listing of the existing bridge.

Level Crossings

Network Rail is continuing its work to reduce the number of level crossings and is working on a £7.5m scheme to close eight crossings, five road and three footpath, near Talerddig. This includes a mile of new road and two new bridges.

Branch lines with no regular traffic

- Tondy to Margam is kept as a diversionary route
- Neath to Cwmgwrach
- Waterston branch near Milford Haven
- Trecwn branch near Fishguard

The track remains on the following branches and is subject to proposals for restoration as heritage railways

- Gobowen to Nantmawr :a tram link to Oswestry has been suggested
- Brynmenyn to Pontycymer
- Cynheidre to Carway
- Gaerwen to Amlwch

Rowland Pittard

NEWS LINES

Cardiff Central: planning permission was granted in early March 2017 for a new bus station to be located outside of the rail station adjacent to the BBC Wales headquarters currently under construction. The new bus station will provide 14 bays. Although smaller than the former bus station which closed in 2015, the new station should provide a much improved environment for passengers with one well-lit and heated concourse as found in the new Quadrant bus station in Swansea.

Railfuture is pleased that a decision has been confirmed to retain the main Cardiff bus and coach terminus adjacent to Wales busiest train station as this greatly assists the ease of making entire journeys by public transport and increases the likelihood of people choosing rail for part of their journey. The target date for the opening of the new bus station is the end of 2018 but there is doubt whether this will be achieved as the transfer of ownership of a multi storey car park which occupies part of the site, and is to be demolished, has been delayed.

Possibly the greatest test yet for the facilities at the recently re-signalled Cardiff Central will arise on June 3rd when the European Champions League final is taking place at the Principality (Millennium) Stadium. As most of the spectators will be travelling from outside of Wales and probably the UK, rail will play a critical role in moving spectators to and from the stadium. The game is in the evening which increases the scale of the challenge. Great Western and its HST fleet will be pushed to the limit and it will be interesting to see how the challenge is managed.

Carmarthen – Aberystwyth: the possible reopening of this route for passenger services took a step forward in October 2016 when the Welsh Government announced that it had awarded £300,000 for a full feasibility study of the scheme. This follows completion of an initial scoping study. Railfuture Wales's policy is that consideration should be given to reopening the line and this latest comprehensive assessment should provide detailed information about the merits of the proposal which would restore a direct rail link between South and Mid-Wales.

Heart of Wales line trail: the line's travellers' association has started an interesting initiative to boost passenger numbers along the line. The trail project was launched in January. The aim is to establish a waymarked path to parallel the railway which would provide an opportunity for day,

half day or longer rambles using the train to reach the start and/or finish of each walk. Fund raising is underway and sufficient has been raised for the first section of path in Shropshire from Craven Arms to Knighton to be launched in the early summer. Knighton forms a potential link with the popular Offa's Dyke long distance path.

THE CARNO STATION RE-OPENING CAMPAIGN

Calls are often made to reopen stations. However, the amount of effort involved is frequently not appreciated by many outside observers. Here Tony Burton of the Carno Station Action Group describes the ongoing campaign to secure the restoration of this station on the Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth line.

'The first call for the re-opening of Carno Station came in 1995 in a letter from Carno Community Council to Railtrack, but the response was not encouraging. The Carno Station Action Group (CSAG) was formed in 2002 and sought to obtain funding for a feasibility study, but without success. However, in 2006, the group was galvanised into action by Network Rail's investigation of infrastructure requirements for the proposed hourly service, which looked at the option of relocating the Talerddig passing loop at Carno. Local campaigning intensified, leading to the submission of an 800 signature petition for station re-opening to the National Assembly on June 12th, 2007. The petition read "We call upon the Welsh Assembly Government to re-open Carno Station and end the wasteful practice of stopping trains outside Talerddig with no passenger benefit".

The newly established Petitions Committee considered the petition at their first meeting on July 4th and referred it to the Enterprise and Learning Committee, who in turn discussed it on July 11th. The committee considered that CSAG had presented a well-argued case and decided to hold a hearing in Carno itself and take evidence from all the stakeholders.

The hearing was held in Carno Community Centre on September 4th, 2007. Representatives of CSAG, Network Rail, Arriva Trains Wales, Powys County Council and WG each made presentations before facing questions from the committee. Unfortunately by this time Network Rail had confirmed that the passing loop would remain at Talerddig. The Committee's report concluded that a formal business case needed to be developed. Among the recommendations was one that asked the

Minister's officials to "provide support to the Carno Station Action Group in developing and submitting a formal business case for such a station."

The Minister responded that it was the role of the Regional Transport Consortia, WG, ATW and Network Rail to develop formal business cases and recommended CSAG to engage with TraCC [the Regional Transport



Campaigners at the Carno station site on a Sunday morning in 2007 before services at this time of the week were restored

Consortium for Mid-Wales]. At the subsequent scrutiny of the Minister by the Committee on 14th November, the Minister was questioned about the impact retention of the Talerddig loop would have on the feasibility of re-opening Carno station and responded "I want to give that reassurance again that the work that is currently being done, and the way that it is being done, does not compromise the provision of a station in Carno at some future point." Moreover, Mr Tim James, who accompanied the Minister, said of the TraCC Regional Transport plan then being prepared that WG "would look to see Carno as a priority within such a plan".

Heartened by the encouragement given at the scrutiny session, CSAG immediately set about the preparation of its own draft business case in

line with Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance (WelTAG) for submission to TraCC. Based on a station capital cost of £1 million, a benefit cost ratio of over 1.6 was obtained. The 62 page report, entitled the Carno Transport Appraisal was presented to the TraCC chairman, Cllr Gwilym Evans, at County Hall, Llandrindod Wells on July 1st, 2008. However, TraCC made no move to commission an “official” WelTAG appraisal, because the WG had provided no dedicated funding.

Eventually the group decided that there was no option but to re-engage with the National Assembly, so a delegation travelled to Cardiff on June 24th, 2009, and met with the chair of the Enterprise & Learning Committee and other interested AM’s. They were sympathetic and agreed to approach the Minister on CSAG’s behalf. As a result, WG gave a commitment in August to fund the Stage 2 WelTAG appraisal of Carno station.

Capita Symonds began work on a WelTAG Stage 1+2 appraisal of the re-opening of both Carno and Bow Street stations in June 2010 and completed it in May 2011.

At a late stage in the appraisal process (March 2011), Capita Symonds began to take into account the effect of possible lost through journeys on overall economic benefits for the first time, at the request of the WG transport economist. This reduced the Benefit Cost Ratio of Carno Station dramatically - from 1.15 to 0.46 - but the validity of the estimate that 3800 through passengers would be lost per year, used in the Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) calculation, was very much in doubt, so the final version of the report presented both values.

At CSAG’s request, TraCC gave a presentation of the WelTAG appraisal at a public meeting in Carno on November 14th, 2011. There was a very large turnout, with over 170 people attending. AM Russell George told the meeting that the Minister, Carl Sergeant, had told him that TraCC should progress the station rather than WG, despite TraCC’s understanding that rail schemes – whether of national or regional significance - were the responsibility of the Welsh Government.

Following the appointment of Edwina Hart as Transport Minister in March 2013, CSAG requested a meeting to discuss flaws in the WelTAG and to flag up opportunities presented by the re-development of the old Laura Ashley site. This meeting, which took place in October, resulted in an offer of collaborative working between CSAG and the WG transport economist

to refine the WelTAG business case. The outcome of this collaboration was the completion in June 2014 of an agreed revised Business Case demonstrating a benefit-to-cost ration (BCR) of 1.65:1. This was based on a reappraisal of the predicted number of lost through journeys, newer data on station operating costs, identification of errors in the original BCR calculation and elimination of some unnecessary capital costs.

CSAG were optimistic that the improved BCR would lead to the inclusion of Carno station in the 2015-2020 National Transport Plan, but when the draft appeared in December, no new stations were included at all. However, Edwina Hart agreed to meet the group in February 2015 to discuss prospects for the station and indicated at the meeting that the door was not closed.

Given the eagerly anticipated introduction of the enhanced Cambrian Line train service in May 2015, CSAG were aware of the importance of demonstrating that stops at Carno could be incorporated into the new timetable. To this end the group proposed an amended version of the new timetable with Carno stops inserted and submitted it to WG officials for consideration by Arriva Trains Wales. Unfortunately ATW concluded that the schedule as at May 2015 was too tight to allow an additional stop at Carno. This came as a surprise, as the CSAG draft timetable, in which not all trains would stop at Carno, was based on existing sectional running times, with the three minute delay due to the Carno stop coming from a reduction in the lengthy 10 to 15 minute layover of trains at Shrewsbury. In order to resolve the question, Edwina Hart commissioned independent technical advice from PRA Operations Planning Limited. They devised a modified timetable which accommodated 5 Eastbound and 8 Westbound stops at Carno, but recommended against the opening of Carno station on a widespread basis without infrastructure enhancements.

CSAG has invited all the bidders for the new Welsh Franchise to meet with the group for a briefing, and is in continuing dialogue with the WG.'

Tony Burton

THE BUSIEST STATIONS IN WALES

In the autumn 2015 issue of Rail Wales data was published on station usage at the 20 busiest stations in Wales. Readers may be interested to see how these figures have evolved over the past two years. The data is for the number of entries and exits.

Station	2013/14	2015/16	Annual change (%)
Cardiff Central	11,740,000	12,745,000	4.19
Cardiff Queen St	2,463,000	2,644,000	3.61
Newport	2,291,000	2,561,000	5.72
Swansea	2,116,000	2,159,000	1.00
Bridgend	1,670,000	1,541,000	-3.95
Cardiff Bay	1,019,000	1,190,000	8.08
Pontypridd	861,000	777,000	-4.98
Treforest	825,000	801,000	-1.49
Neath	820,000	837,000	1.03
Cathays	806,000	903,000	5.84
Caerphilly	698,000	744,000	3.21
Bangor	663,000	673,000	0.80
Barry Island	621,000	653,000	2.59
Penarth	600,000	613,000	1.09
Rhyl	591,000	537,000	-4.66
Wrexham General	591,000	538,000	-4.59
Barry	559,000	543,000	-1.38
Aberdare	558,000	566,000	0.80
Merthyr Tydfil	547,000	580,000	3.02
Treherbert	541,000	510,000	-2.95
All Welsh stations	48,634,000	51,019,000	2.42

Source: Office of Rail and Road (ORR)
Data is rounded to the nearest thousand

It is interesting to note that the stations in the top 20 list has not changed over the two years but the position of stations in the charts has altered. The gap between Cardiff Central and the next busiest station (Queen Street) has widened. Overall number of passengers using Welsh stations has increased by a total of 4.8% over the two years but a number of stations have recorded declines in the S Wales valleys and North Wales.

WALES FREIGHT UPDATE

Aggregates: There has been a decrease in trains from Neath Abbey Wharf which serves Gilfach and Cwm Nant Lecki Quarries. Gilfach has provided only three trains for one each for Hunslet (Leeds), Stourton and Washwood Heath Birmingham while Cwm Nant Lecki provides stone for the occasional trains to Angerstein Wharf in London and Colnbrook. Stone from Wenvoe Quarry is loaded at Cardiff Docks and

supplies Crawley and Acton. There has been a resurgence of grit stone being loaded at Machen after the branch was out of use for most of 2016. The busiest loading point is Moreton on Lugg north of Hereford which loads Welsh stone for Elstow, Hayes and Radlett on at least a weekly basis with occasional trains to Acton, Broxbourne, Harlow Mill and Hothfield

There is a weekly train from 9th October 2016 of blast furnace slag from CELSA at Cardiff to Rotherham for road surfacing. However, there has been no slag traffic from TATA at Port Talbot recently.

Thrice weekly trains convey lime in containers from Hardendale to TATA Port Talbot.

Car Components: A daily train continues to run between the Ford plants at Dagenham and Bridgend. Some outward traffic from Bridgend goes to Valencia in Spain.

Cement: Rail traffic recommenced on 22nd October 2016 with twice weekly trains of powdered cement from Aberthaw Cement works to Westbury and a weekly train to Moorswater near Liskeard in Cornwall. The Moorswater train was delayed starting until 30th November 2016 because of flooding in Devon. These trains are worked by Colas. Further trains of flyash loaded at Aberthaw cement works did not materialise.

Coal: The movement of Welsh coal to Aberthaw power station has finished. The last train will run from Cwmbargoed on 25th March 2017 and ran from Gwaun Cae Gurwen on the 28th October 2016, Onllwyn on the 9th September 2016 (there was a final clearance on 26th October) and Tower 24th February 2017. The movement of imported Russian coal from Avonmouth to Aberthaw continues.

The supply of coal to Onllwyn washery from Stella and Nant Helen opencast sites has ceased and East Pit at Gwaun Cae Gurwen is now the only source of coal for Onllwyn. There are up to four loaded trains a week from Gwaun Cae Gurwen to Onllwyn. Onllwyn loads one or two trains a week for Coal Products Limited at Immingham and occasional wagon load container traffic for Mossend in Scotland

The mining of coal at Tower ceased in March 2016 however there were supplies for at least another two years. Tower commenced sending a weekly train to Earl's siding for the cement works at Hope in the Peak District on 16th June 2016. Some of the remaining stocks will continued to be moved out by rail to Earl's siding until the end of May 2017.

Tower sent trial trains of coal to the cement works at Ketton in July and to Coal Products Limited at Immingham in August but there were no subsequent trains. Some of the remaining stocks will be moved out by rail to Earl's siding for the cement works at Hope until the end of May.

Cwmbargoed dispatches a weekly train to Earl's siding for the cement works at Hope and sends a daily train of coal to TATA at Port Talbot

TATA has also received coal from Killoch in Scotland (July/August 2016) and stockpiles at Redcar. This has been supplemented since November 2016 by additional trains loaded at North Blyth with coal from Northumbrian opencast sites.

Penyffordd cement works near Wrexham continues to receive a weekly train of coal from Killoch washery in Scotland.

Uskmouth power station has received coal from Avonmouth between 10th July and 8th October and between 15th November 2016 and 16th January 2017.

Coal trains from Avonmouth to Fiddlers Ferry have used the Marches line. They restarted on 15th November 2016 and finished on 7th February

Coke: Coke was brought when required from stock piles at Redcar to TATA Port Talbot during 2016 with the last train running on 11th November.

Containerised or Intermodal traffic: There are daily trains to Wentloog (Cardiff) from Daventry and Southampton. Dow Corning receives and dispatches containers containing chemicals at its container terminal in Barry Docks. There is also a train of silica sand in containers from France to Barry every other week.

Iron Ore: Iron ore continues to be brought from stock piles at Redcar to TATA Port Talbot. This traffic commenced on 15th July 2016 in pellet form using containers and finished on 24th October 2016. The movement of iron ore as pulverised rock commenced on 16th November and continues at present.

Nuclear Waste: The only freight trains on the North Wales main line are the occasional ones from Valley to Sellafield conveying nuclear waste from Wylfa power station.

Petroleum: Trains continue to run with petroleum from Robeston, Pemb's to Theale and Westerleigh but have ceased to Puma energy at Bedworth with the last train running on 18th December 2016

There are occasional trains of fuel oil from Lindsey to Aberthaw.

Scrap: Scrap traffic continues to be buoyant to CELSA Cardiff with sources including Attercliff, Lincoln, Rotherham, Saltley, Swindon and Sunderland but scrap from Exeter, Handsworth (Queen's Head), Shipley and Stockton has ceased. There is outward bar traffic from CELSA with company trains to Mossend and Rotherham.

There has also been scrap from Beeston and Handsworth (Queen's Head) to Sims at Newport docks for export. The trains from Handsworth ceased in October but those from Beeston continue at least twice weekly. Sims has also been cutting up railway wagons.

The weekly train with scrap from Trostre to TATA Port Talbot continues.

Steel and Tinplate:

Steel from the TATA steel works at Port Talbot continues to provide the main freight traffic in Wales. The main flow is steel for further processing at Llanwern while there are daily trains to other processing plants at Corby, Hartlepool, Trostre and Shotton. Both Port Talbot and Llanwern provide coil for distribution locations at Immingham, Middlesbrough, Round Oak and Swindon and for export from Birdport Newport and Newport Docks. Trostre sends tinplate to a variety of destinations including a twice weekly train to Tilbury.

A new development has been a new thrice weekly train from steel stockholders Dowd's at Newport Docks to the distribution centre at Wolverhampton which has been running since 19th October 2016.

Tar: The regular movement of tar from TATA Port Talbot to Dawson's Middlesbrough commenced in January and now up to 18 tanks are being moved each week

Timber: The movement of timber to Chirk has decreased considerably now that most of the diseased larch has been felled. The weekly train from Baglan Bay ceased in September 2016 but three further trains ran in November with the last on 29th. There have been only four trains from Carlisle to Chirk during 2017.

Rowland Pittard

VIEWPOINT

Railfuture Wales member Ray Caston of Bassaleg, Newport offers some thoughts on Simon Norton's suggestions in the last issue of Rail Wales regarding better public transport around Newport:

'Reading Simon Norton's Viewpoint, I assume he is unaware that there is already a rather infrequent (approx. 2 hourly) bus service that links Newport and Magor via Bishton and Redwick. It continues to Severn Tunnel Junction, Caldicot and Sudbrook. The frequency reflects the low population and high car ownership of the area served and it is subsidised by Monmouthshire and Newport Councils.

Simon's geography is a little askew in proposing a station where the A48 crosses the South Wales main line. The Ebbw Vale service joins the main line at Ebbw Jct, some $\frac{3}{4}$ mile west of that point, so would not provide an interchange. A station is proposed at Coedkernew to the west of Newport in the local transport plan, which would be more practical for interchange to local bus routes; and could be used by local stopping services if stations proposed for Llanwern, Caerleon and Magor come to fruition.

Both of these reflect the need for better bus/train integration. One would hope that this would be a major aim of the Metro plan. The Newport/Cardiff conurbation would lend itself very well to the tram/train proposals, but this seems a long way off.'

VACANCY: WELSH SPEAKING MEDIA REP

Railfuture Wales is looking for a someone to respond to requests from radio and TV stations for comments on rail stories in the Welsh language. This would not require a great amount of time as such requests are only received occasionally and guidelines are provided by the national media officer on how to provide comments and interviews.

If you can speak Welsh and would like to be the voice of Railfuture in the Welsh language media, please contact Peter Kingsbury (details below).

RAILFUTURE WALES IN ACTION

In addition to meeting the four bidders for the Wales and Borders franchise, a significant input has been made to the inquiry by the Welsh Assembly's Economy, Infrastructure and Skills committee which is examining the process of selecting the franchise operator. Written

evidence has been submitted and Railfuture Wales is likely to be called to appear at one of the inquiry hearings.

Submissions have also recently been made to the Welsh Government on the content of its National Development Framework, scope of the new Infrastructure Commission and Transport Appraisal Guidance.

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 **31st August** for the autumn 2017 issue. The editor may edit letters for publication.

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Join online at www.railfuture.org.uk/join
(paying by credit/debit card or PayPal account)

Enquiries should be addressed to **Peter Clark**
peter.clark@railfuturewales.org.uk
84 North Street, Abergavenny NP7 7ED.

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A Great Western service to Portsmouth Harbour in the company's 'visitor attraction' livery enters Cardiff Central in March 2017 under three of the new signals controlled from the recently commissioned Wales Rail Operating Centre which is located opposite Canton depot to the west of the station. Photo PK

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