



LDO's report October 2016 for Cambrian Coast Conference

Shopmobility at Aberystwyth

Progress has recommenced on this project and I have met recently with Dawn Toland from the Care Society to confirm next steps. We intend to have the 'meet and greet' arrangement in place within weeks. In that time signage has to be organised as well as a 'launch' press release which I hope that we can work with both the Care Society and Arriva Trains Wales to promote this useful partnership.

Floral Display at Aberystwyth Station

Thanks to support from Aberystwyth Town Council, Newman's Garden Centre, and the Aberystwyth Lyons, students from Coleg Ceredigion have been able to add serious colour to the station which many passengers and customers of Wetherspoons, Craft, and the Indian restaurant have commented on. Dai (booking office) at the station has taken the responsibility of watering and caring for the displays during Coleg Ceredigion's summer holidays and the displays are still looking excellent.

A Helping Hand – film project and follow up:

I am delighted to have been approached by Paul Maynard MP – the DfT Minister for Rail requesting a meeting about our work surrounding 'A Helping Hand' and I am currently liaising with his officials to secure a date in the near future. In addition, Liz Saville Roberts MP for Meirionnydd is also championing our film at Westminster and we still intend to hold a special function there hopefully before the end of this calendar year.

Library initiative

As a new part of the Confident Traveller Project a new initiative has been developed to forge closer links with schools and libraries, trialed for the first time in June. Pupils from Ysgol Tan Y Castell (Harlech) were taken by train to Porthmadog, accompanied by teachers and representatives from the CRP and ATW to attend a library session organised by Gwynedd Council. Pupils were given an introduction to the library, and returned to school by train with freshly borrowed books as part of a wider initiative to encourage children and young people to make use of libraries.

Arriva UK plc Society & Communities Event

This week Phil Caldwell and I were invited to hold a presentation on our work surrounding the Confident Traveller Project at an Arriva UK Society and Communities event. This is another example of how the work of the Cambrian Railways Partnership is being recognised nationally as an innovative partnership working successfully with the Train Operating Company.

Caersws community sign / Mid Wales Arts Centre

I have attended a meeting with representatives from Caersws Community Council and Mid Wales Arts to look at producing a new station sign for Caersws, potentially coupled up with a wider community project, possibly with support from CRP. A further meeting is to be held soon now that the school term has begun.

ACORP Awards:

We were successful in attaining a second overall prize in the 'small projects' category for the station displays based on the work surrounding the Confident Traveller Project where schoolchildren's own safety posters are displayed at their local stations on the Cambrian Coast line. The poster cases were funded by the Cambrian Railways Partnership.

New 'promotional' film

Filming has begun on a new promotional film for the Cambrian which we will use on social media, and our website. It will be made available to anyone who wishes to use it and features at its core the scenery and a flavour of what's to see and do in the Cambrian lines region. The focus of the film is not necessarily the train, but rather where the train can take you to – featuring coastal and in-land scenes and has been conceived to ensure it has synergy with Visit Wales themes for the next 2 years as a minimum (although it will have a useable shelf life for far longer). It has not been designed to compete with 'high brow' promotional campaigns, but is being produced very much with social media and online use in mind.

Safe Crossings Campaign:

Based on our successful film expertise and award winning portfolio(!) we are currently embarking on a new joint project with Network Rail to address the need for an information resource on correct and appropriate safe use of (mainly) occupational crossings, of which there are a great many on the Cambrian lines and indeed in most rural areas of the UK. An initial meeting has already been held with representatives from ATW and Network Rail to discuss the way forward, and I have also spoken at length with the Director of Wales YFC (Young Farmers' Clubs) who has expressed an interest in getting their movement involved in terms of assisting with the rollout of the campaign.

Publications

Two new publications are soon to be in production aimed at tourism and leisure walking markets. An all-new Cambrian Trailways based on walks on the Cambrian Coast initially – tied closely to the Wales Coastal Path network is currently being researched.

'Connections 2' will also be produced over the Winter months ready for the spring.

We are also delighted that the 'Big Trains meets Little Train' booklet has been successfully launched by the Great Little Trains of Wales team which includes details about all the little trains of Wales and also includes a specific section on the Cambrian which I worked on with the editors and publishers. The book was launched at Kings Cross Station earlier in the

Summer and was produced thanks to a DfT funding award. The front cover of the book features a shot of Penhelyg Station, and the rear cover has a shot of an ATW 158 unit crossing the Mawddach estuary – both Cambrian.

Aberystwyth University Freshers' Fair

Next week the Aberystwyth University Freshers' Fair is held over two days and we will be promoting the Cambrian Lines to students as usual sharing our stand and costs with Traveline Cymru.

Community Rail Wales

Working alongside our colleagues in the other CRP's in the Wales & Borders Franchise area we have jointly released a revamped 'No Car, No Problem' publication in time for the Shrewsbury Flower Show where myself and colleagues from the other lines spent a busy few days promoting rail breaks in Wales and the borders. This 2-day event typically sees a visitor count of circa 60,000 and is ideally placed to promote our lines (considering Shrewsbury's geographical significance in rail terms). Keeping a record over the event of where most people's enquiries were aimed at showed that the Heart of Wales, closely followed by the Cambrian lines were by far the most enquired about.

A report on this event has been prepared jointly by the Community Rail Wales team for Welsh Government (attached).

Welsh Government Community Rail Capital Fund Grant applications

We will be making an application to the Welsh Government Community Rail Capital Fund Grant scheme and had intended originally to make a bid to contribute towards an ambitious project to create an interchange and Machynlleth station that would be more user friendly in terms of allowing bus/coach access and also almost double the number of parking spaces at the station. Unfortunately, we are not yet at a stage where we can confidently make a bid due to delays in results of ground surveys which could have a significant effect on overall costs.

We are therefore hopeful that the capital grant scheme will be continued into 2017-2018 which will provide us with a further opportunity to bid for this project.

However, we intend to submit bids for other worthwhile proposals including additional station shelters for Welshpool, Dovey Junction, and a replacement of an existing (somewhat weather worn) shelter at Llanaber. Bids are to be submitted by the end of September, and I am currently in liaison with ATW and Welsh Government on this.

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REPORT ON COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIPS OF WALES & THE BORDERS SHREWSBURY FLOWER SHOW EXHIBIT AUGUST 2016

In working together the Community Rail Officers of Wales & the Borders plan several joint events, usually at stations as part of other national events such as Community Rail in The City which this year we were fortunate to be offered A free space at Birmingham New Street Station. However from past experience the annual Shrewsbury Flower Show was also selected for a joint promotion for several factors:

- It typically had an attendance of c60,000 visitors over the two days
- It was accessible to all the Partnership officers who would have to staff the stand.
- They offered covered stands.
- It was more than just a flower show, with a host of events, trade stands etc attracting a huge range of visitors.
- From past experience many visitors made Shrewsbury their based for the week before or after and were looking for information on days out. Shrewsbury as a rail hub was a great benefit and with a wide range of different places to visit.
- All Partnerships could relate to the benefit of the promotional opportunity, something a sole Partnership would be unable to afford or resource and the fact that by combining resources it was possible.
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The event was used to promote ‘Scenic Wales & Borders by Rail ‘No car, no problem’, the map which was developed over the years for use at such events. The bilingual map was revised and reprinted for the event. A wide range of other leaflets and individual display banners were also promoted and local and wider area tourism brochures available together with timetables. Heritage railways are also known to be popular with visitors so a range of their leaflets were on display. The Show also attracted the Ffestiniog Railway complete with loco and track and we liaised with them and shared the promotional literature and both attractions sign posted visitors to the other stand when appropriate.

The stand was set up by 3 officers in advance on Thurs 11th August and taken down on Sunday 14th as no vehicles are allowed on the showground outside these times. The actual show dates were 12th and 13th. Staffing of the stand was provided on a ‘shift’ basis by Sheila Dee, Rhydian Mason, Gill Wright, Melanie Lawson and David Edwards, with valuable extra help provided by Geraint Morgan (Friday) from Arriva Trains Wales who also assisted with portable display stands and Moira Davidson (Saturday).

1000 small, packaged and labelled Welsh cakes were taken, produced locally at a special rate by a small business in Llangollen. They were for use as giveaways and to thank visitors for coming to the stand: all of them were distributed, with appreciative comments about Wales frequently made by recipients.

The weather was good, though breezy, and whilst final numbers attending the show are not yet available they are expected to be in the region of 60,000 but feedback indicates that the figure is expected to be higher than the previous year.

We had available an ipad based questionnaire kindly designed and produced for us from Conwy Council via Melanie in an attempt to record the demographic characteristics of visitors to the stand, but this proved impossible given the numbers involved and their turnover. Anecdotally, most visitors were middle aged or over, and there was a slight predominance of females though many couples and family groups were in evidence. Most were from the wider Midlands area, plus others from (e.g.) West Wales, Manchester, and Liverpool. Many were local but visitors were also well represented.

A record was kept of the number of visitors taking away 'Scenic Wales & Borders' maps, and whether additional interest was expressed in particular transport and tourism topics.

The results of visitors to the stand over the two days were as follows:

Interest Area :	Numbers
Scenic Wales & Borders	452
Cambrian	113
Conwy Valley	53
Heart Of Wales Line	119
Chester-Shrewsbury	38
Borderlands Line	2
North Wales Coast	30
Other including Heritage, regional guides, timetables etc	142
Total	949

Overall comments

A number of visitors commented favourably on the fact that we were present and promoting all the railways as well as highlighting the long distance bus services and supported the idea of promoting tourism using public transport. The Scenic Wales & Borders map yet again was very popular showing as it does the entire network with more detail on this new version on the border counties and the access to and from the English cities and the airports.

Other comments included the following:

- specific travel queries ('what train do I get for xxxx')
- can I use my English bus pass in Wales?
- how do I find out about accommodation?
- what steam trains are available to travel on?
- how easy is it to get to the beaches by rail from Shrewsbury?

- I'm staying in Shrewsbury this week where can I visit on the train?
- how frequent are the services to x?

This report will be circulated to funding partners to assist in the planning of 2017 events that can be undertaken jointly.

ENDS