

**BT4C Report:- Passenger Survey at CHEPSTOW Station**  
**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2009.**  
**[www.bettertrains4chepstow.co.uk](http://www.bettertrains4chepstow.co.uk)**

**Introduction.**

The survey at Chepstow station was conducted by the Better Trains for Chepstow Team assisted by volunteers from STAG, Transition Chepstow and Chepstow FOE, with permission from Arriva Trains Wales Ltd. We also had the assistance of a 20 year old graduate who volunteered to gain "Job Experience" and helped with the survey and transferred the results into Excel tables and graphs. Grateful thanks to everyone who helped and volunteered.

We pay tribute to all the passengers who so willingly helped us and to those who expressed their support for our efforts to secure better services.

Co-operation from passengers was quite remarkable and we succeeded in gaining information from 98% of departing passengers. The total number of passengers recorded arriving and departing from the station over the day was 531. This is an 11% increase from the previous year (Monday 18<sup>th</sup> August 2008).

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> August was a fine day throughout and according to Tony from the ticket office it was a relatively quiet day and not as busy as the day before. The party of 20 who went to Barry Island was unusual.

There were no cancellations or delays and the trains operated to timetable throughout.

**Recent Changes.**

- In December 2007 Arriva TW extended the service to Cheltenham Spa instead of Gloucester. Cheltenham is now the destination for 6% of passengers compared with 3% a year ago.
- In December 2006 FGW removed train connections to Bristol from Severn Tunnel Junction. A few of these trains have been restored but Bristol is now practically cut off from Chepstow (Lydney and Caldicot). Seven intrepid passengers went to Bristol this year where only four ventured in last year.

**Survey.**

The survey is in two parts:-

- A footfall survey recording the numbers of people joining and alighting from each train.
- An hour by hour report of the intended destination for passengers departing from Chepstow.

**Footfall Results.**

The total number of passengers recorded arriving and departing from the station over the day was 531, an 11% increase from a year ago when we recorded 480.

In 2008 the increase was 8% above 2007 when the 444 passengers were recorded.

This represents a continuing increase in passenger numbers fairly well distributed through the day.

Most journeys 78% (381) are to and from the direction of Cardiff with just 28% (150) travelling the opposite direction to and from the Cheltenham.

The two hour gap in services in the Cheltenham direction during the morning peak may be a factor since it effectively prevents anyone making a journey that way between 07.50 and 09.50.

The number of freight and light engine movements observed during the day was 13.

## **Chepstow Passenger Survey.**

The following conclusions are based on information obtained from 98% of departing passengers. (2% either declined to answer or could not be asked). The responses were better than the 94% achieved last year.

In general 89% of journeys are to destinations within a 30-mile radius of Chepstow, extending to Cheltenham Spa, Bath, Bristol and Cardiff and the other 11% of passengers were travelling to destinations widely distributed across the country.

### **Local journeys.**

89% of passengers were making journeys within a 30 mile radius of Chepstow. Cardiff is the main destination attracting 34.8% with Newport next at 21.5%, Gloucester third with 12.9% of passengers.

The appalling fact revealed by this survey is that Bristol the city closest to Chepstow is the destination for only 2% (7 people in a day).

The numbers going to Cheltenham Spa is up at 6% against 3% last year.

### **Longer Journeys.**

The percentage of people making longer journeys, over 30 miles, from Chepstow was down from 15% to 11% this year. Notably the number travelling to London Paddington from Chepstow was also down, from 8 passengers to only 1.

The range of destinations was widely distributed around the country as we discovered last year and included:- Birmingham, Shrewsbury, Nottingham, Wolverhampton, Merthyr, Radyr, London Paddington, Neath, Frome, Dundee, Driffield (Near Bridlington), Caerphilly, Penarth, Leeds, Aldershot and Swansea.

## **Comments on the Survey Results.**

An outing by a party of 20 to Barry Island may not have been a normal occurrence but it served to counterbalance what seemed "a quiet day" according to Tony who runs the ticket office.

The very small number of people travelling towards Bristol is obviously due to the absence of connecting trains at Severn Tunnel Junction through most of the day. Where train connections at STJ have been restored changing trains still involves an uncomfortable wait.

The reduction in numbers travelling from Chepstow to Paddington is most likely due to the absence of regular and reliable connections to London services. It is much quicker to drive across to Bristol Parkway where there are regular direct services to London. Travelling from Bristol Parkway also cuts out the probability of a long wait at Newport on the way back to Chepstow.

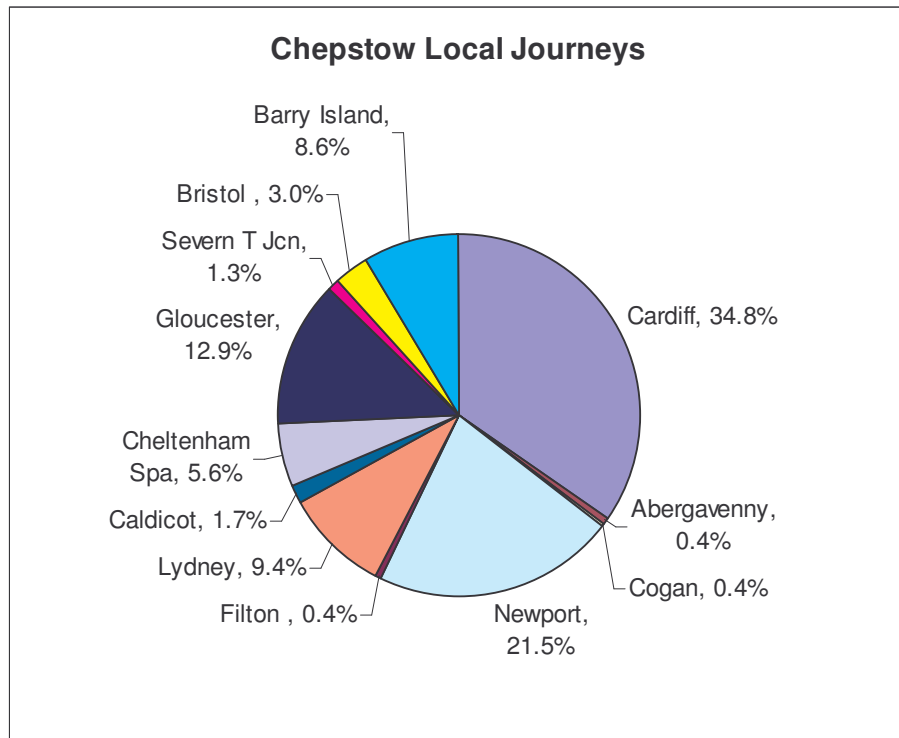
The passenger flows show how people use the present service and there can be little doubt that the potential for increasing passenger numbers is substantial if the services were improved.

There are no services at Chepstow in the Cheltenham direction in the two hours between 07.49 and 09.49 this would be the peak time for people coming to work at Chepstow from the Newport and Cardiff direction also for Chepstow people working in the Gloucester direction. Contrast this with the service in one hour between 20.52 and 21.51 when 3 trains stop!

Even more westerly traffic than before! Increase in passengers is found entirely in Westerly direction.

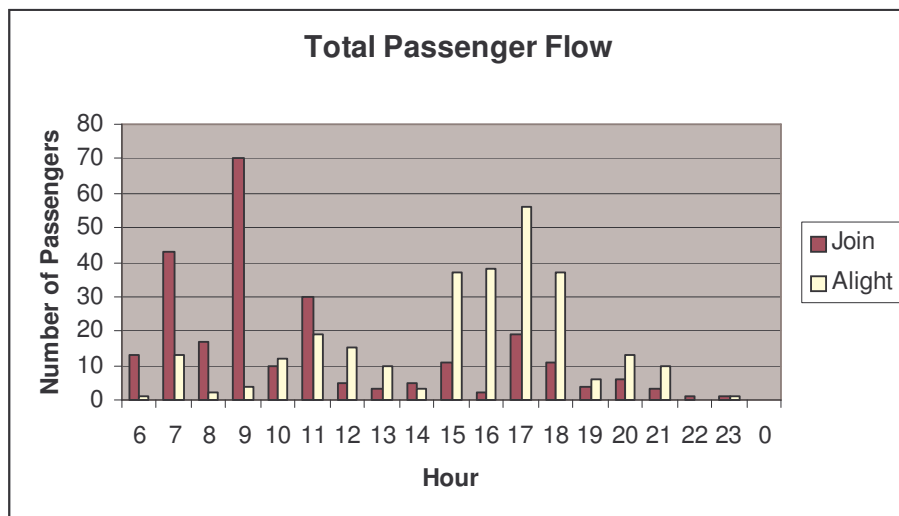
During the day several passengers turned up anticipating a train in reasonable time but had waits of an hour or more. Travelling to and from Chepstow remains problematic and uninviting and the experience puts many people off using trains.

***Report edited by Jim Jenkins, Chairman, Better Trains for Chepstow Team. September 2009***



**Figure 1: Percentage of Train Journeys in a 30-mile radius from Chepstow.**

**The following graphs show the flux of passengers boarding and alighting trains bound for the east and west respectively.**



**Figure 2: Passengers joining/alighting all trains**

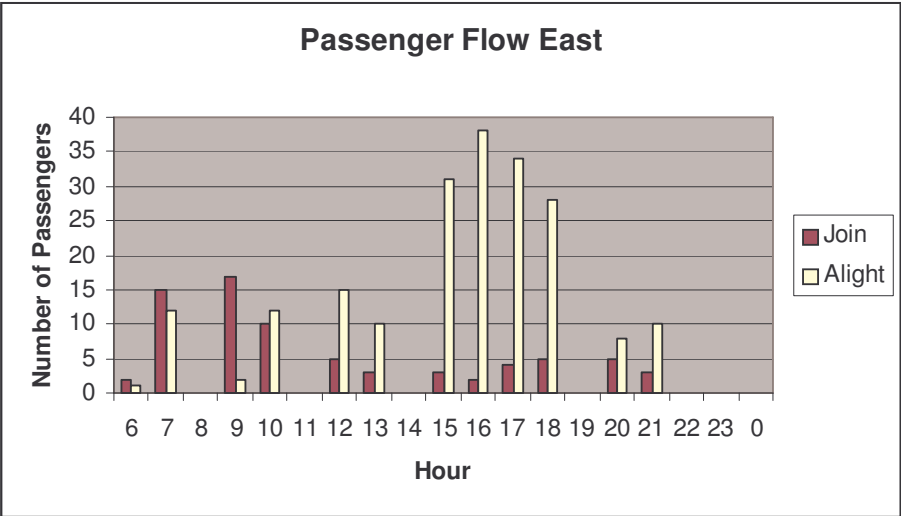


Figure 3: Passengers joining/alighting trains travelling east

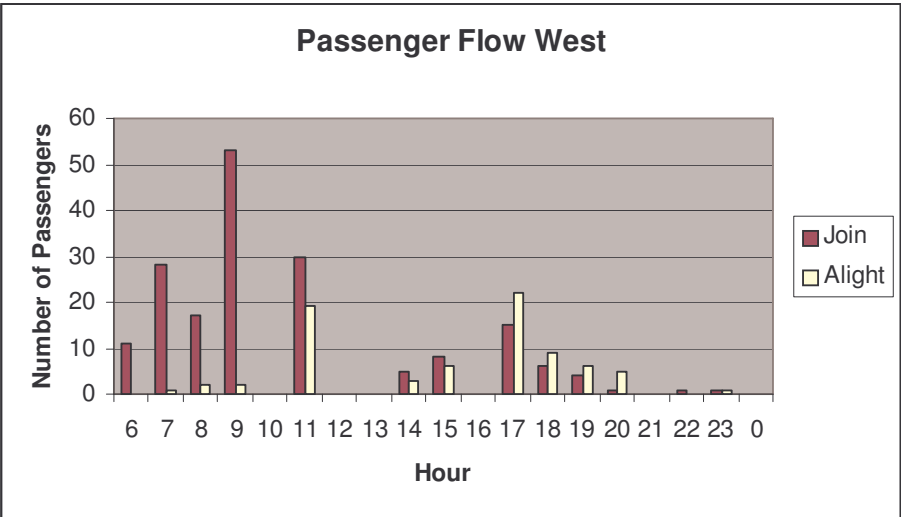


Figure 4: Passengers joining/alighting trains travelling west