

= Avonmouth railway station =

Avonmouth railway station is on the Severn Beach Line and serves the district of Avonmouth in Bristol , England . It is 9 @. @ 0 miles (14 @. @ 5 km) from Bristol Temple Meads . Its three letter station code is AVN . The station has two platforms , on either side of two running lines . As of 2015 it is managed by Great Western Railway , which is the third franchise to be responsible for the station since privatisation in 1997 . They provide all train services at the station , mainly a train every forty minutes to Bristol Temple Meads and one every two hours to Severn Beach .

The station was opened in 1877 by the Bristol Port Railway and Pier , a railway which ran along the River Avon from Hotwells to a pier at Avonmouth . The station , originally known as Avonmouth Dock , had a single platform , but was rebuilt with two platforms by the Great Western and Midland Railways in 1885 when they began services via Clifton Down . The station was enhanced numerous times in the early part of the twentieth century , and by 1913 employed 72 staff . Facilities included a goods yard , signal box and engine shed .

The Severn Beach Line declined over the latter half of the twentieth century , with passenger numbers falling significantly . Goods services at Avonmouth ended in 1966 , and all staff were withdrawn in 1967 . Services had decreased to 10 per day each direction by 2005 , but have since increased to 25 trains per day .

= = Description = =

The station is located in the Avonmouth district of Bristol , an area of mixed industrial and residential usage . The station sits to the south of the junction of Gloucester Road and Portview Road , the tracks running to parallel to Portview Road and crossing Gloucester Road at a level crossing . The station is on the Severn Beach Line from Bristol Temple Meads to Severn Beach , 9 miles 02 chains (14 @. @ 5 km) from Temple Meads and 4 miles 42 chains (7 @. @ 3 km) from Severn Beach . It is the eighth station from Temple Meads . The next station towards Temple Meads is Shirehampton ; the next towards Severn Beach is St Andrews Road .

The station is on a north @-@ west / south @-@ east alignment , with two platforms separated by two running lines . The southern " up " platform , adjacent to the " Up Main " line , is used for trains towards Severn Beach . The northern " down " platform , adjacent to the " Down Main " line , is bidirectionally signalled , allowing it to be used by terminating trains and those heading towards Bristol . Both platforms have significant portions of their length fenced off , giving usable lengths of 91 yards (83 m) for the southern platform and 70 yards (64 m) for the northern .

Facilities at the station are minimal ? there is a wooden canopy and bench seating on the northern platform , with a small metal shelter on the southern . Timetable information is provided ; help points show next train information and allow users to contact railway staff . There is no ticket office or other means for buying or collecting tickets . There is a car park with six spaces , as well as stands for four bicycles . The nearest bus stops are 150 metres (160 yd) away on Avonmouth Road .

The line through Avonmouth has a speed limit of 30 miles per hour (48 km / h) for locomotive @-@ hauled trains and 50 miles per hour (80 km / h) for diesel multiple units . The line , which is not electrified , handles less than 5 million train tonnes per year , has a loading gauge of W6 and a route availability of 7 . In the 2013 / 14 financial year , more than 110 @, @ 000 passengers used Avonmouth station , making it the 1,635th busiest station in the country and the sixth busiest within the Bristol unitary authority area . This was an increase of 175 % from the 2002 ? 03 financial year , and reflected a general rise in usage of the Severn Beach Line . The 2014 @-@ 15 estimates of station usage saw a further increase of 8 % to 120 @, @ 000 making it the 1,614th busiest station in the country .

= = Services = =

Services at Avonmouth are all operated by Great Western Railway , using mainly Class 150 Sprinter units . Avonmouth is the main terminus of the Severn Beach Line ; as of 2015 there are 25

trains to and from Bristol Temple Meads each day from Monday to Friday , a service of three trains every two hours , giving a train every 40 minutes on average . Of these , one train every two hours runs to and from Severn Beach . Most services start at Bristol , but one evening service to Avonmouth starts at Weston @-@ super @-@ Mare . On Saturdays there is a similar level of service , at 24 trains per day . Sunday sees a roughly hourly service to and from Bristol , ten trains per day , with only two services extending to Severn Beach , except during the May ? September timetable period when all services are extended . The first and last Sunday trains towards Bristol are extended to Taunton via Weston @-@ super @-@ Mare , and there are similar workings in the other direction .

Most trains from Avonmouth to Temple Meads call at all stations , but some services omit Lawrence Hill . Trains making the journey to and from Severn Beach call at St Andrews Road alternately on the outward or return leg . The typical journey time to Bristol Temple Meads is roughly 30 minutes , and 12 minutes to Severn Beach . In 2012 , the single fare to Clifton Down or Severn Beach was £ 1 @. @ 50 , and £ 3 return for the whole line .

= = History = =

= = Construction and early operations = =

The railways first came to Avonmouth in 1865 , when services began on the Bristol Port Railway and Pier (BPRP) , a self @-@ contained railway which ran along the north bank of the River Avon to a deep water pier on the Severn Estuary . The BPRP line ran through the site of the current station and 1 mile 72 chains (3 @. @ 1 km) beyond to a terminus at the first Avonmouth station . The BPRP ran into trouble by 1871 when the terminal pier at Avonmouth became difficult to use due to a build @-@ up of silt . With no prospect of a proper dock being funded without a connection to the national rail network , the Clifton Extension Railway (CER) was approved . This was a joint venture by the BPRP , Great Western Railway (GWR) and Midland Railway (MR) which ran from Sneyd Park Junction , south of Sea Mills , via Clifton Down , to join up with the national network at Narrowways Hill Junction . The link opened in 1877 , but initially only for goods trains . The route from Sneyd Park Junction to Clifton Down was subsequently cleared for passenger use on 3 August 1878 , but the Midland and Great Western Railways did not think the BPRP track was in a suitable condition and so refused to run any passenger trains beyond Clifton Down .

The station , originally known as Avonmouth Dock , was opened in 1877 , shortly after the opening of the Avonmouth Docks in February that year . It was built on , or very near to , the site of a halt built in 1868 for the Docks ' construction workers . The local area was still mostly rural ? there were a few buildings around the station area , as well as the docks , with the closest extent of the Bristol conurbation 1 mile (1 @. @ 6 km) away at Shirehampton . The station cost £ 275 to build , and was merely a platform on the south side of the single track , served by eight trains per day between Hotwells and the BPRP 's Avonmouth terminus , increasing to ten per day from 1887 . The Great Western and Midland Railways considered the station inadequate for the passenger numbers expected , and so purchased additional land to enhance the station with extra tracks . The new station comprised a wide island platform ? the northern face on the original through line , the southern face being for a new terminal line . The station , now known as Avonmouth Dock Joint , was constructed using mainly wood and corrugated iron . It was opened on 1 September 1885 , coinciding with the beginning of passenger services beyond Clifton Down . The Great Western initially offered six trains per day each direction between Avonmouth Dock and Bristol Temple Meads . Fearing competition , the BPRP did not allow passengers to use GWR services between its stations . The Midland Railway did not run any passenger services beyond Clifton Down , apart from a one @-@ month trial service in September 1885 . Despite the increased traffic the BPRP suffered financially , and was taken over by the CER in 1890 . The BPRP 's Avonmouth terminus closed to the public in 1902 , after which all trains terminated at Avonmouth Dock .

= = = Early twentieth century = = =

The station went through numerous enhancements in the first part of the twentieth century . A new platform canopy and urinal were provided in 1900 at a cost of £ 250 . Further improvements followed in 1902 at a cost of £ 80 ; and in August 1904 significant enhancements to the station buildings and an extension of the platform cost a total of £ 1 @, @ 570 . A 60 feet (18 m) turntable was constructed in December 1903 , with a signal box , known as Avonmouth Dock Passenger , installed at the end of the platform . Dedicated goods staff were employed from the start of 1904 , with that year also seeing the installation of a run @-@ around loop for the terminal platform . A small engine shed was added in January 1905 . In 1910 , some passenger trains once again began to run beyond Avonmouth Dock , continuing towards Henbury on the newly opened Henbury Loop Line , which allowed goods trains to the docks to avoid the steep Clifton Down Tunnel . Other trains arrived from London via the loop , connecting with steamer services to Canada and Jamaica . At this point there were 17 trains from Bristol to Avonmouth Dock and 15 back each day ; increasing to 21 and 19 respectively by 1920 . The station was well @-@ staffed , with 25 station staff and 47 goods staff in 1913 . Positions included stationmaster ; booking clerks ; posters ; and outdoor porters , who took goods to ships in the docks .

During the First World War , an Army Remount Service depot was located near Shirehampton . Over the course of the war , Avonmouth Dock Joint handled 35 @, @ 000 animals , mainly horses and mules , en route to the depot . July 1917 saw the introduction of platform tickets , to capitalise on people using the station to bid farewell to friends heading overseas , or to welcome those returning . The platform was lengthened to 330 feet (100 m) in December 1917 . A second through track was added in 1918 , and so a new cinder @-@ covered platform was built on the north side of the line . The two platforms were linked by a footbridge and a level crossing . The cost of the new platform and the lengthening works was £ 7 @, @ 420 .

After the war , construction of the Bristol Portway along the Avon Gorge necessitated the closure of the line from Sneyd Park Junction to Hotwells , with trains along it ceasing on 3 July 1922 . By this point there were nine trains per day from Hotwells , and eight return . To compensate for the loss of service , the Great Western provided an additional four trains daily from Avonmouth Dock to Bristol and six return . In 1923 , grouping resulted in the Midland Railway being absorbed into the London , Midland and Scottish Railway (LMS) , and the line continued in a joint arrangement between the Great Western and the LMS . The engine shed was closed in 1924 .

By the mid @-@ 1920s , the station was proving inadequate for the passenger numbers , and so work began on a comprehensive rebuild in 1926 . The new buildings were made of brick ; with a large , four @-@ chimneyed building containing most of the facilities ; as well as a separate parcels office . The northern platform had a wooden awning built , which is still in place today .

From 1928 many services to Avonmouth Dock were extended to Severn Beach . By 1947 , just before the railways were nationalised , there were 33 services each direction between Avonmouth Dock and Temple Meads , with 18 on Sundays . Some trains made circular trips to and from Temple Meads via Clifton Down and Henbury or Pilning .

= = = British Rail and privatisation = = =

When the railways were nationalised in 1948 , services at Avonmouth Dock came under the aegis of the Western Region of British Railways . By 1955 , service levels had decreased slightly to 28 trains per day from Bristol and 29 return , but the services were at regular intervals . Passenger numbers however dropped sharply in 1961 as the result of a fare increase , and so in 1962 a new reduced timetable was enacted , which lost more passengers . A year later in 1963 , the Beeching report suggested the complete withdrawal of services along the line , but ultimately only those beyond Severn Beach or via Henbury were withdrawn . Goods services from the station ended on 20 June 1966 , the same day that the station was renamed " Avonmouth " . The bay platform was taken out of use and the land later taken for industrial buildings . From 17 July 1967 all staffing was withdrawn from stations along the line , including Avonmouth , with tickets issued by the train guard .

The station buildings on the island platform survived into the 1970s , as did the footbridge , but with the exception of the parcels office , all were later demolished . The parcels office was in use in 2006 as a hairdressing salon . The signal box was closed in January 1969 , and in September 1973 the wooden level crossing gates were replaced by automatic lifting barriers . By 1974 , service had reduced to 19 trains per day in each direction , with no Sunday services to Severn Beach .

British Rail was split into business @-@ led sectors in the 1980s , at which time operations at Avonmouth passed to Regional Railways . At this time , all trains ran to Severn Beach , but the service pattern was irregular . This changed in 1995 when an hourly timetable was introduced for peak times , but northbound services were terminated at Avonmouth .

When the railway was privatised in 1997 , local services were franchised to Wales & West , which was succeeded by Wessex Trains , an arm of National Express , in 2001 . Following action by Friends of Severn Beach Railway and a string of protests , services had increased to 10 per day in each direction by 2005 , with Bristol City Council providing a subsidy to Wessex Trains . The Wessex franchise was amalgamated with the Great Western franchise into the Greater Western franchise from 2006 , and responsibility passed to First Great Western , a subsidiary company of FirstGroup , subsequently rebranded as Great Western Railway in 2015 . A minimum service requirement was written into the franchise agreement , ensuring an hourly service along the line , and this has since been increased to three trains every two hours (25 trains per day) . Sunday services to Severn Beach were restored in 2010 .

= = Future = =

The last remaining station building , the old parcels office , is threatened with demolition by Network Rail , which owns the station . Network Rail states that the building is beyond economic repair , but local rail campaigners , including Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways and MP Charlotte Leslie , have petitioned to prevent the demolition .

First Great Western declined a contractual option to continue the Greater Western passenger franchise (of which services at Avonmouth are a part) beyond 2013 , citing a desire for a longer @-@ term contract due to the impending upgrade to the Great Western Main Line . The franchise was put out to tender , but the process was halted and later scrapped due to the fallout from the collapse of the InterCity West Coast franchise competition . A two @-@ year franchise extension until September 2015 was agreed in October 2013 , and subsequently extended until March 2019 .

With the coming upgrade to the Great Western Main Line , the main line from London to Bristol is due to be electrified by 2016 . However , the electrification will not extend beyond the main lines , so Avonmouth will continue to be served by diesel trains , with the current " Sprinter " units expected to be replaced by Class 165 and 166 " Networker Turbo " units . Stephen Williams , MP for Bristol West ; and the group Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways support the electrification being extended to the Severn Beach Line .

Improved services at Avonmouth are called for as part of the Greater Bristol Metro scheme , a rail transport plan which aims to enhance transport capacity in the Bristol area . There is an aspiration for half @-@ hourly services , with trains towards Bristol terminating alternately at Portishead and Bath Spa , however due to the large sections of the Severn Beach Line which are single @-@ track , and to the congested main line from Temple Meads , such frequency is not currently feasible . The enhancement scheme was given the go @-@ ahead in July 2012 as part of the City Deal , whereby local councils would be given greater control over money by the government . There are also calls for the reopening of the Henbury Loop Line , which could allow a direct service from Avonmouth to Bristol Parkway . Plans for a loop were rejected by the West of England Joint Transport Board , however Bristol City Councillors voted to send the decision back to the board for further discussion .