

= Montpelier railway station =

Montpelier railway station is on the Severn Beach Line and serves the district of Montpelier in Bristol , England . It is 2 @. @ 85 miles (4 @. @ 59 km) from Bristol Temple Meads . Its three letter station code is MTP . The station has a single platform , serving trains in both directions . 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 in each direction between Bristol Temple Meads and Avonmouth .

The station was opened on 1 October 1874 as Montpellier (two ' L ' s) by the Great Western and Midland Railways as part of the Clifton Extension Railway , designed to connect the port of Avonmouth to the national rail network . In February 1888 the station 's name changed to Montpelier (one ' L ') . The station two platforms , with the main structures on the southern platform and smaller waiting rooms on the northern platform . In 1903 the station employed 19 staff . The station building was destroyed by bombing during the Second World War , and replaced with the current building .

The Severn Beach Line declined over the latter half of the twentieth century , with passenger numbers falling significantly . Goods services at Montpelier ended in 1965 , and all staff were withdrawn in 1967 . The line was largely reduced to single track in 1970 , with the northern platform abandoned and all trains using the remaining platform . The station building is no longer in railway use . Services had decreased to ten per day each direction by 2005 , but have since increased to twenty @- @ four trains per day .

= = Description = =

Montpelier railway station is located in the Bristol ward of Ashley , north of the city centre , serving the districts of Montpelier , Cotham , Ashley Down and St Andrews . The surrounding area is mostly residential , with shops on the nearby A38 Cheltenham Road . The station can be accessed step @- @ free from Station Road to the south , or by a footbridge and steps from Cromwell Road to the north . The station is on the Severn Beach Line from Bristol Temple Meads to Severn Beach , 2 miles 68 chains (4 @. @ 6 km) from Bristol Temple Meads , and 10 miles 55 chains (17 @. @ 2 km) from Severn Beach . It is the third station from Temple Meads , and first station of the branch part of the line (the first two stations , Lawrence Hill and Stapleton Road , are on the main line Cross Country Route) . The station is on a roughly east @- @ west alignment , curving to the north , with a single 144 @- @ yard (132 m) -long curved platform to the south of the track , serving trains in both directions . Directly to the east of the station is the 268 @- @ yard (245 m) -long Montpelier Tunnel , and to the west is The Arches bridge over the A38 . The station 's northern platform was abandoned in 1970 and is overgrown .

Facilities at the station are minimal ? there are a few chairs and timetable information is provided . There are help points on the platform , giving next train information and allowing passengers to contact staff . There is no ticket office , nor any self @- @ service ticket machines . The station building is used as a workshop and showroom for a company selling fireplaces , and is bricked up on the platform side . It is however colourfully decorated with a mural , painted as a collaborative effort between the Severnside Community Rail Partnership and Fairfield High School . The Severnside CRP also tend the station 's garden in conjunction with the nearby Colston 's Girls ' School . There is no car park or taxi rank , but there are bus stops on Cromwell Road , and more on the busy A38 Cheltenham Road roughly 400 yards (370 m) away . Cycle storage is available on the platform .

The line through Montpelier has a 30 miles per hour (48 km / h) speed limit for diesel multiple units , and 15 miles per hour (24 km / h) for other trains . The line , which is not electrified , has loading gauge W6A , and carries less than 5 million train tonnes per year . In the 2013 / 14 financial year , approximately 120 @, @ 000 passengers used Montpelier station , making it the 1592nd busiest station in the country and the fifth busiest within the Bristol unitary authority area . This was an increase of almost 100 % from the 2002 ? 03 financial year , and reflected a general rise in usage of

the Severn Beach Line .

= = Services = =

Services at Montpellier are all operated by Great Western Railway , mainly using diesel Class 150 Sprinter units , occasionally supplemented by Class 153 Super Sprinter and Class 158 Express Sprinter units . Monday to Friday there are 25 trains per day in each direction : three trains every two hours run from Bristol Temple Meads to Avonmouth , with one extended to St Andrews Road and Severn Beach , giving a service at Montpellier of one train in each direction every 40 minutes . Most services start at Bristol , but one evening service to Avonmouth begins at Weston @-@ super @-@ Mare . On Saturdays there is a similar level of service , at 24 trains per day , but more trains continue to Severn Beach . 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 .

There an interval of about ten minutes between services to Avonmouth and those to Bristol , due to the line 's main passing point , Clifton Down , being the next but one station . Most trains call at all stations but some services omit Lawrence Hill . The typical journey time to Bristol Temple Meads is roughly 13 minutes , and about 17 minutes to Avonmouth .

= = History = =

= = = Joint railway era = = =

Montpellier railway station was opened on 1 October 1874 when the Clifton Extension Railway began operations . The line , a joint venture between the Midland and Great Western Railways , was built to connect the Bristol Port Railway and Pier to the national network . It ran from Sneyd Park Junction in the Avon Gorge via Clifton Down station to Ashley Hill Junction , east of Montpellier , from which the Great Western and Midland lines diverged ? the Great Western heading south , joining the Bristol and South Wales Union Railway towards Bristol Temple Meads , the Midland heading east towards Mangotsfield . The line was built at 4 ft 8 1 ? 2 in (1 @, @ 435 mm) standard gauge , and was initially managed by the Clifton Extension Railway Joint Committee .

The station was built by Messrs Baker & Son of Canon 's Marsh , Bristol . There were two platforms , with the southern platform used by trains towards Clifton Down and the northern one by trains the other direction . The platforms were 405 feet (123 m) long and spacious , but open to the elements with little in the way of cover . An iron footbridge linked the two platforms , as well as carrying a pedestrian right of way between Cromwell Road to the north and Station Road to the south . The original station buildings were built from pennant stone , a common material in the Bristol area , and partly obtained from the digging of a cutting near Clifton Down . The station master had lodgings above the waiting rooms on the southern platform , which had separate ticket windows for Midland and Great Western services . The buildings on the northern platform were principally waiting rooms . A goods yard was provided on the south side of Station Road , mainly used for coal traffic , and accessible from the west via a bridge over the road . A signal box with 16 levers was located at the west end of the southern platform , controlling the yard and crossover points on the main line . There was some debate about whether the station should be called " Montpellier " or " Montpellier " , but the joint railway committee overseeing the line ruled in favour of the former in 1888 . In 1895 a petition was submitted to the joint railway committee , asking for better cover for the platforms , improved waiting rooms and a new booking office on the northern platform . The committee agreed to extend the canopy on the northern platform , and to improve the waiting rooms , but refused to build a new booking office . The work was completed in 1896 . Further building work took place during the First World War , when the southern platform was extended .

The initial Monday to Saturday service provided at Montpelier by the Midland Railway was 13 trains per day between Clifton Down , Fishponds and Mangotsfield , where passengers could change for services to Bath , Birmingham and other Midland destinations . The Great Western provided ten services per day between Clifton Down and Bristol Temple Meads , the city 's major station , where passengers could change for trains to London , Exeter and Wales , among others . The Great Western also provided occasional through services to Weston @-@ super @-@ Mare . On Sundays , there was no Midland service , but seven Great Western trains . The Clifton Down Tunnel , the final link to the Bristol Port Railway and Pier , was opened in 1877 , initially allowing freight trains to reach Avonmouth Docks . It was not until 1885 that it was cleared for passenger use , which allowed services to Avonmouth via Sea Mills and Shirehampton . There was a trial Midland service between Bristol St Philip 's and Avonmouth in September 1885 , but this was ended after a month . In 1886 , the daily Great Western service at Montpelier consisted of six trains to Avonmouth , 24 to Clifton Down and 32 to Temple Meads . The Midland provided 12 services from Clifton Down to Fishponds , and 11 back . In the first 20 years of the Montpelier 's use , the station handled large numbers of parcels , and was popular for day trips to Weston @-@ super @-@ Mare . The station 's management passed to the Great Western & Midland Railways Joint Committee on 1 November 1894 .

The station was initially well @-@ staffed : in 1903 there were 19 staff , although this had fallen to 15 by 1935 . Before the First World War , it was not unusual for extra porters to be sent to Montpelier to handle large quantities of goods ? the station was used by many commercial travellers who had large hampers full of clothes and samples , and the loading on Monday morning had the potential to cause delays . In 1910 , Montpelier saw 17 Great Western services from Avonmouth to Temple Meads and 15 the other way , a further 20 trains each day operating between Clifton and Temple Meads , and 13 Midland trains each way between Clifton and Fishponds or Mangotsfield . Midland services were suspended from 1 January 1917 to 15 May 1919 due to the War . The Hotwells section of the Bristol Port Railway and Pier closed in 1922 , so to compensate an additional six trains were provided to Avonmouth , with four back .

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 . From 1924 , many trains to Avonmouth were extended to Severn Beach , a growing seaside resort , and some on to Pilning , then back to Temple Meads via Patchway . The post of station master was withdrawn on 29 March 1926 , with responsibility passing to staff at Clifton Down . Redland had suffered a similar loss in 1909 . The main station building on the southern platform was bombed in the Bristol Blitz during the Second World War , and was replaced after the war by the current building . The war also saw the end of services to Fishponds and Mangotsfield , the last operating on 31 March 1941 . By 1947 , just before the start of the British Rail era , there were 33 services each direction between Avonmouth and Temple Meads , and 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 Montpelier came under the control of the Western Region of British Railways . Staff levels were reduced further , down to two booking clerks , four porters , a checker and a weighbridge operator by 1950 . Service levels had decreased slightly by 1955 to 28 towards Avonmouth and 29 towards Bristol , 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 . The goods yard at Montpelier closed on 18 November 1965 , with the signal box following on 10 May 1967 . Staff were completely withdrawn on 17 July 1967 with tickets issued by the train guard . The general reduction in passenger traffic , as well as the transfer of Avonmouth goods traffic to the Henbury Loop Line , allowed the removal of the northern track from 19 October 1970 , with all services using the

southern platform . The former goods yard is now a small industrial estate . By 1974 , service had reduced to 19 trains per day in each direction , with no Sunday services beyond Avonmouth .

British Rail was split into business @-@ led sectors in the 1980s , at which time operations at Montpelier 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 and West , which was succeeded by Wessex Trains , an arm of National Express , in 2001 . Following action by Friends of Severn Beach Railway (FOSBR) 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 , 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 (24 trains per day) . Sunday services to Severn Beach were restored in 2010 .

In 2004 , the Severnside Community Rail Partnership was formed , covering the Severn Beach Line and a network of routes radiating from Bristol . By 2008 , they had created a support group for the station , were helping with station upkeep , and had improved the provision of timetabling information through the use of simplified departure timetable posters . In 2007 , they repainted the mural on the old station building , but it was defaced by vandals the same year . First Great Western offered a £ 500 reward for identifying the persons responsible , and stated they planned to install CCTV cameras . Students from Fairfield High School repainted the mural with help from professional graffiti artist Richard Minchin . Artist Wei Ong repainted the mural in 2015 . Customer help points with next train information screens were installed during 2008 / 09 , paid for by money from the Department for Transport 's " Access for All " fund and local councils . The help points were stolen in early 2010 , but have since been replaced .

= = Future = =

First Great Western declined a contractual option to continue the Greater Western passenger franchise (of which services at Montpelier 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 Montpelier will continue to be served by diesel trains , with the current " Sprinter " units expected to be replaced by Class 165 and 166 " Turbo " units . Stephen Williams , MP for Bristol West , questioned whether electrification could continue to Montpelier and the rest of the Severn Beach Line . Then @-@ Secretary of State for Transport Philip Hammond replied that it would have to be looked at in the future . The group Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways supports the electrification of the entire Severn Beach Line .

Improved services at Montpelier 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 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 Montpelier to Bristol Parkway via Avonmouth . 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 .