



**Newsletter 134  
Winter 2006**

**FIRST GREAT WESTERN**

Finally, the December 2006 timetables have been issued, after much deliberation and consultation. It must be said that the effects on services through Maidenhead (and Twyford) especially at peak-times are more marked than for many other stations in our region. FGW was inundated with complaints and comments, which they considered and put forward modifications for the Network Rail team to consider. Many of these changes were rejected on performance grounds – services which included reintroduction of peak-time Slough to Paddington stopping-services (in an attempt to help reduce some overcrowding on trains going longer distances. In the event this service will not run,; result - some trains taking an additional 5 minutes in journey time.

Some of the branch-line connections have been improved slightly, but we remain critical of the peak-time connections to / from Reading. There is still discussion regarding evening connections into the branch at Maidenhead. With regard to weekend services, your Committee failed to receive advanced copy of weekend schedules and thus the first sight we had was when the published booklets were made available in mid-November. Saturday services seem to have good connectivity at Maidenhead, but the printed timetables for Sundays show acceptable connections in the outward direction, but there is a discrepancy in timing of connections returning from Reading – we hope this will be resolved and sensible connections will be available. .

We continue to advocate availability of printed schedules when engineering work is operative, but FGW declines to do this, relying on web information and local information to the staff. Sometimes the CIS systems are revised accordingly.

**Summary** - On weekdays, there are more than 80 trains in each direction stopping at Maidenhead, fewer than half of which take less than 40 minutes journey time to / from Paddington.

Peaktime trains to / from Paddington – there are now 5 services in each direction taking less than 30 minutes. Maximum available seats from Maidenhead in the morning peak to Paddington are c. 6800, return in the evening c.8100.

(Peaktime for this analysis - 0630 to 0900 departures from Maidenhead in the morning; evening trains departing Paddington 1700 to 1930).

**CHILTERN RAILWAYS**

Chiltern continues to make amendments to timetables. There are some changes to peak-time stopping patterns from High Wycombe and Beaconsfield, but as far as we can see the same number of peak-time services will run as in the previous timetable.

**FIRST GREAT WESTERN CUSTOMER PANEL**

The First Great Western Customer Panel receives regular input – some of the correspondence is dealt with as part of normal activity of FGW Customer Relations Department, whilst the remainder is referred to panel members for consideration and response. Clerical activity is coordinated through FGW Customer Relations office.

Contact - email : [customer.panel@firstgroup.com](mailto:customer.panel@firstgroup.com)

- postal : Customer Panel, c/o Customer Relations, FGW, Freepost SWB 40576, Plymouth PL4 6ZZ

The Customer Panel acts as an interface between FGW and its customers. Do you have an interest in rail travel – not necessarily as a daily user? Panel co-ordinators are still looking for local input into the Panel – it is now your chance to represent the interests of our area. If you would like to know more about the Customer Panel please contact Customer Services at Milford House, 1 Milford Street, Swindon SN1 1HL ([lesley.colman@firstgroup.com](mailto:lesley.colman@firstgroup.com)).

**CONTACTS WITH MMPA**

MMPA WEBSITE – [www.mmpa.org.uk](http://www.mmpa.org.uk)

## **MEMBERSHIP MATTERS**

Our Secretary is pleased to say that the vast majority of our members have now renewed for the current year. Regrettably, the few that did not renew on the final reminder have been deleted from the membership list. However, for those who have renewed, we would like to place on record the thanks of your committee for this continuing support, especially to those of you who added a donation to your subscription. We have also been pleased to welcome 8 new members this year, which is most encouraging. You will no doubt be pleased to learn that I shall not be pestering you again until the renewal date of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007!

It is important that we keep up the pressure on the railway industry. This is particularly so at the moment, as the new timetable is the biggest shake up for many a long year, both on our branch and on the commuter services to London and Reading from Maidenhead and Twyford. There are a lot of problem areas, which we will continually strive to correct, but it is not easy with the fragmentation that has taken place due to privatisation. First Great Western, as our Train Operating Company, gets most of the blame but Network Rail's attitude as track and signalling provider, often causes a lot of the difficulties. We will do our best to keep our fingers on the pulse and this is helped by a strong membership. At the risk of repeating myself, we must not, and will not, allow ourselves to become complacent.

You should have your new timetables in this issue of the newsletter, which will become effective on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2006.

## **TRAVEL INFORMATION**

**BBC RADIO BERKSHIRE - 104.1, 104.4 and 95.4 fm. (also 01189 – 311333 or [www.bbc.co.uk/berkshire](http://www.bbc.co.uk/berkshire))**

National Rail enquiries: 08457 - 484950 (24 hrs)  
Great Western Telesales : 08457 - 300700 (Mon - Sat) ([www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk](http://www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk))  
Chiltern Railways : 08456 - 005165 (0700 - 2000) ([www.chilternrailways.co.uk](http://www.chilternrailways.co.uk))  
Arriva Bus : 01494 - 520941 (0900 – 1730 Mon – Fri)  
Traveline : 0870 – 6082608 (0700 – 2100 daily)

Holidays - Chiltern Trains, Brunel House, 36 Station Road, Chinnor, Oxon OX39 4 GW (0870 – 8110150)

## **STATIONS**

Recent changes in ticketing have seen new machines installed in ticket-offices, with some stations also receiving new ticket-vending machines capable of receiving payment by credit-card as well as cash. Some staff also have new portable equipment, but the issuing of this kit is taking a little longer than anticipated. You may notice that the newer machines take a little longer to issue tickets than some older equipment – that is the advance of modern technology! We understand from FGW that they plan to install some form of ticket-issuing equipment at most stations – a few will be of the 'Permit to Travel' variety rather than a full ticket – permits must be exchanged for tickets at a convenient point of the journey.

*All that remains is for the members of MMPA committee to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year; we look forward to your continuing support in 2007.*