



**Newsletter 136  
Summer 2007**

**FIRST GREAT WESTERN**

Now that the December 2006 timetables, and subsequent amendments, have settled down – whether or not we like the current pattern of services - we can continue in our quest of trying to improve local services. Please note – there are revised timetables operative from 20<sup>th</sup> May – patterns of services appear to be unchanged for our area – BUT some timings have been revised by a minute or two – PLEASE CHECK TIMETABLES.

**Early risers for the branch** – please note that the current **0617 Marlow – Bourne End** and **0627 Bourne End - Maidenhead** trains are **retimed** to depart **0614 and 0624 respectively** – running 3 minutes earlier than now – arriving at Maidenhead 0635.

NOTE 1 – there is currently an **1833 fast service Padd – Mdh** (destined for Oxford). Contrary to some comments, **this train continues to run May to December** – in some versions of published timetables (notably book D) this train has been omitted in error from the schedules shown. We understand it is correctly shown in book C.

NOTE 2 – an extra train appears in the timetable Mdh – B/End in the early morning – we are unclear how this will work and are seeking clarification – please see local notices.

A number of issues remain to be sorted out. There are fewer fast services at peak-times Maidenhead to / from Paddington that use the fast tracks – most trains serving Maidenhead are shoe-horned onto the relief-lines – which often leads to delayed services. There are issues with connectivity – especially at peak-times for those travelling westwards from Maidenhead. We are also looking at the early morning timings to see if connections at Maidenhead can be improved from the branch-line.

All too often something happens to make a mockery of the timetable. At present services seem to be more reliable and punctual than just before the New Year, but there are still far too many instances of cancellations and late-running – also recognising that not all delays are down to FGW. We are also hoping that communications can be improved – often no explanation or apology for late running / cancellations. If those issues were resolved that would make commuting a bit more bearable – but remember that the guys on the ground are invariably only as good as the information provided to them.

**CHILTERN RAILWAYS**

Chiltern continues to make amendments to timetables. Some changes to peak-time stopping patterns from High Wycombe and Beaconsfield have been made – not to everyone's liking, but change never suits everyone. We advise you to recheck the timetables to see if you are affected by any of the revisions.

**CROSSRAIL**

Some reviews in recent press articles have suggested that at last commonsense maybe being applied to the Crossrail project. There are indications that Reading, not Maidenhead, is being considered as the western end of the project. Whilst agreeing to electrification, we have always pressed for Reading as a far more logical conclusion to the Thames Valley services than Maidenhead – if for no other reasons than the timetables will be more meaningful for customers using Maidenhead station in either direction. We would also hope that this proposal will eliminate the requirement for the proposed new branch-line platform at Maidenhead (remember that this would lead to entailed connection times of at least 7-8 minutes – compared to the current 3-5 minutes – as well as being further away from the town-centre). There is of course still the timetable proposal for all trains to stop at all stations!

**CONTACTS WITH MMPA**

MMPA WEBSITE – [www.mmpa.org.uk](http://www.mmpa.org.uk)  
SECRETARY – 15 Calder Close, Maidenhead, SL6 7RS

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

.At the AGM held last March the committee was elected for the coming year::

Chairman – Nigel Hunt      Secretary – Allan Machon      Treasurer – Mark Jameson      Webmaster – Richard Porter  
Committee Members – Georgina Wood, Ken Fulker and Stuart Howard

Subscriptions remain the same: Adult - £4      Family - £5      Concessions - £3  
A resume of the AGM will be circulated in due course

## **FIRST GREAT WESTERN CUSTOMER PANEL**

The First Great Western Customer Panel receives regular correspondence which is dealt with via FGW Customer Relations Department, with relevant responses being referred to panel members. 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 customers. Do you have an interest in rail travel – not necessarily as a daily user? Panel co-ordinators are looking to strengthen local input into the Panel. 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)).

## **A VIEW FROM DENMARK**

On a recent visit to Denmark the Chairman had a chance to see and experience the local rail services. Use varied from inter-city-type services to local and community / heritage routes.

All trains were clean and litter-free, with little or no signs of graffiti, and all services used ran on time – on 'Inter-City' services it was noted that some station dwell-times were extended to ensure the timetables were robust! Services varied between 'Inter-city' quality, dense Copenhagen suburban and Metro services and the more rural / heritage routes. Many lines seemed to have at least 2 train per hour – evenly timetabled.

On the Svendborg branch the slickness of the operation was noted – 4 or 6 movements per hour on predominantly single-line with passing loops. Virtually everywhere continuous welded rail was encountered – much smoother and quieter ride.

Copenhagen suburban network is a model of investment and efficiency. Train running at 2/3 minutes intervals – on time – clean and trouble-free on several routes all funnelling into a number of common stations

Customer information systems were models of what we should all be looking for, including colour-coding of information where the suburban services interchange – it is appreciated that technology changes rapidly but the data displayed was always accurate and responded quickly to train movements.

The general impression was one of cleanliness and efficiency.

## ANUUAL GENERAL MEETING

Resume to be issued at a later date

### Newsletter 136 – Additional Timetable Information

#### May 2007 - First Great Western Timetables Maidenhead – Marlow

Following previous comment, we have now received clarification of the information printed in timetable booklet 'D' for early services along the branch-line.

THERE IS A PRINTING ERROR in the timetable shown for the following service:-

**0857 Marlow to Maidenhead does NOT RUN** to the timetable shown.

#### REVISED timings

Marlow	-	dep 0837
Bourne End	-	dep 0848
Cookham	-	dep 0852
Furze Platt	-	dep 0855
Maidenhead	-	arr 0858

Connections arr London 0946 and Reading 0920

After 0837 – the next departure from Marlow is scheduled at 1006 as per published timetables.

Please note **ADDITIONAL TRAINS** -

Mdhd (dep) 0903	F/Plt 0907	Ckhn 0910	B/End (arr) 0914
B/End (dep) 0918	Ckhn 0922	F/Plt 0925	Mdhd (arr) 0929

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Many thanks to all members who have already renewed their subscriptions for the current year which runs from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008, and grateful thanks to those who added a donation to their subscription - it is very much appreciated by your Committee and helps to combat our ever rising costs. Postal rates have changed dramatically during the last year and letters are now graded by size as well as weight. This, plus stationery costs, are a major expenditure for your Association. However, by careful housekeeping, we are able to hold the subscription rates yet again for the current year, so that is one bit of good news!

If you have already renewed, then your membership card is attached to this Newsletter, unless you sent me a SAE, in which case you will have already had your card.

**If you have not yet got around to renewing**, you will find a **reminder form** with your newsletter. However, if you have renewed, please do not renew again - it confuses your secretary! **Remember**, you only need to renew if you have a **reminder form** with this issue of your newsletter!

Your membership continues to be very important to the Association. The stronger we are, the louder we can shout about local transport matters. Since First Group were awarded the franchise for the Greater Western area, things have not been going too well, culminating in the timetable changes made last December. We have, over the past two years, forged a good working relationship with the First Group management team, but we have to keep up the pressure to get a sensible working timetable for our local commuters and travellers. A strong membership is essential if we are to meet our aims to continue monitoring and improving the transport system.

So, **PLEASE**, if you have not renewed, **DON'T DELAY - RENEW TODAY!** Printing reminder forms and distributing them is an unnecessary and unwelcome expense for **YOUR** Association. Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to either 'MMPA' or '**Marlow-Maidenhead Passengers' Association**' and sent to:

**The Secretary, MMPA, 15 Calder Close, MAIDENHEAD, Berkshire, SL6 7RS.**

**One final plea!** If you do not wish to renew your membership or the addressee has moved away, do please let me know, either at the address above or via our website at [www.mmpa.org.uk](http://www.mmpa.org.uk). We don't want to trouble you if you do not wish to be involved. Equally, we do not want to waste the Association's funds by sending newsletters to old addresses, and to people who are no longer interested, for whatever reason. Many thanks in anticipation for your continued support. It really does make a difference!

## 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)

## CHILTERN TRAINS

Chiltern Trains has been operating rail-based trips and excursions for many years, but has now decided that this will be its last year of trading. Having supported MMPA over many years we thank Chiltern Trains staff for their advice and guidance and wish staff well for the future. A brochure is available covering this year's activities – contact

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