



**Newsletter 138
Winter 2007**

FIRST GREAT WESTERN

New timetables come into operation with effect from Sunday 9th December. **Please check your journey times.** First Great Western has tried to make improvements in response to many complaints, and the outcome (on paper) appears to be better than recent operations. Some of you will differ with this opinion but, the Committee believes revised services provide more peak-time capacity – we must await the reality of that, and also hope that better timekeeping will result from the extra work Network Rail is doing to the infrastructure. The performance of Network Rail in the Thames Valley has been noted as being significantly worse than for the average around the rest of the network, and this obviously has a negative impact of any improvements FGW might be able to arrange within the scope of its own controls.

We have seen printed timetables and leaflets produced for local services, and advised FGW of the things we were unhappy with, including some connections at Maidenhead and length of time the train can sit at Marlow and a need to catch earlier off-peak services from Paddington for branch-line connections. In response to comments from members we asked for extra connectional time to be allowed for trains arriving at platform 3 in Maidenhead, but believe that there is room for improvement by cutting train waiting time off-peak at Marlow and retiming branch-line trains at Maidenhead. We await further feed-back on these points.

We would remind early travellers on the branch-line that early trains have been retimed to run even earlier. Check the FGW website www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk for more information.

At the time of writing these notes, we have no information on fares increase but believe the average increase for most of us will be in the region of 4-5%.

In our last newsletter we advised of changes to the structure of Maidenhead station. Despite assurances that some work will be completed by the end of December it is patently obvious that nothing has yet started; we understand that no work will start until Spring 2008. We welcome Pat Reade as local Manager of our stations – he is based at Twyford.

CHILTERN RAILWAYS

High Wycombe station is now fully operational again following the lengthy period of temporary structures in place following the fire damage. We also welcome Paul Robb to the area as General Manager (South).

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

At the last AGM the Chairman signified that within the next 2 / 3 years several of the current committee members will have retired. Unforeseen circumstances, and potential conflict of interest, means that Chairman Nigel Hunt will be resigning before the end of January 2008 and will not be able to offer his services to MMPA. At the committee meeting in November we also learned that Cookham member Georgina Kilner will stand down with immediate effect due conflict with her other commitments. And finally it is also probable that the Membership Secretary will not be seeking re-election at the next AGM, which is scheduled for 14th March 2008. Please also remember that there is a vacancy for a representative of Bourne End travellers to join the committee.

It is therefore essential that for the committee to continue to function, and to support the membership and aims of the Association, for volunteers to come forward to meet the challenges – not only FGW and Chiltern but also Crossrail.

This is urgent appeal for help. Please consider how you might be able to assist. Yes, some of your time is needed, but it is not onerous. This is time well spent to support your community in a very positive way.

**MMPA WEBSITE – www.mmpa.org.uk
SECRETARY – 15 Calder Close, Maidenhead, SL6 7RS**

Finally, we wish our members a relaxing festive season and hope for a peaceful new year.