

MARLOW - MAIDENHEAD PASSENGERS' ASSOCIATION

Newsletter Number 144 Summer 2009



MMPA AGM

The Association AGM was held on 27th March in the Community Centre. The AGM was brief, the retiring Committee being re-elected and a volunteer representative for Furze Platt Station joining the team. After the AGM presentations were made by Christian Wolmar, railway journalist and author, Mark Hopwood, Managing Director First Great Western and Chad Collins, Regional Manager (South) Chiltern Trains. Christian Wolmar described the history of and his concerns about the ineffectiveness of the rail privatisation setup. In particular he noted that the arrangement that was intended to reduce the subsidy for operation of the rail network initially doubled the subsidy from £1 billion to £2 billion. Fifteen years later and the subsidy has risen to £5 billion.

The train companies' representatives outlined their progress over the year and their plans for service improvements. For FGW punctuality on the branch shows performance at better than 96% month after month with a few exceptions (eg February's snow episode).

A planning unit was established to try and get more frequency on branch lines. Additions were possible on the Windsor and Henley branches, but Marlow branch timing remains problematic. Automatic half barriers are to be installed at the Marina and Brooksby level crossings in Bourne End.

Chiltern Railways was named Public Transport Operator of the Year in 2008. Station car parks are being expanded and even more major development is planned for High Wycombe including improved access to the station and expanded parking. The company has purchased the historic Brunel broad gauge goods shed on the site to incorporate into their plans. Maps of the development plans are available for viewing on the websites of Bucks Free Press and Wycombe District Council. Evergreen Project 3 aims to improve Birmingham-London service and add services to Oxford. It's a complicated route investment which is planned for completion in 2012-2013.

New Committee Positions

At the first MMPA Committee following the AGM meeting roles for the next year were agreed. Maurice Oram remains as President. The roles for the year are:

Chairman	Susan Morrison
Secretary	Paul Murphy
Treasurer	Susan Morrison
Webmaster & Membership	Richard Porter
Newsletter Editor	Rob Latham
Bourne End Representative	Paul Murphy
Cookham Representative	Ken Fulker
Cookham Society	Trevor Kilner
Furze Platt Representative	John Smith
High Wycombe Representative	Mike Cooper
Maidenhead/Twyford Representative	Mark Jameson
Marlow Representative	Susan Morrison

First Great Western Timetables

With this newsletter we are distributing copies of First Great Western summer mini-timetable leaflets which come into force from 17th May and stay in effect until 12th December 2009. As reported in the previous newsletter the format has been changed significantly which we believe is not to branchline travellers' greatest convenience. From a quick review I find the changes to the timetable are generally minor but the early Saturday and Sunday morning services (00:11 and 00:06 from Marlow) have been removed. Local MP, Teresa May, has recently met with FGW to review the timetables.

Bourne End Bridge Refurbishment

The lack of any progress regarding an up date of the programme to refurbish the bridge is of concern to the Association. Enquiry of Network Rail received the response that they had not been allowed

access by the National Trust which prevented them from carrying out the work. The National Trust however advised me by phone that they have no objection in principle to the access but because Network Rail need to construct a compound to store tools and materials on common land they need to get a licence from DEFRA and that they have relayed this to Network Rail.

Bourne End Ticket Machine

The Bourne End ticket machine, damaged by criminal action over the festive season, has been repaired and reinstalled. The MMPA believes that if maximising revenue and minimising fare evasion is to be a priority for FGW, then every effort needs to be taken to ensure ticket machines are in place and working where planned.

Bourne End Marina level crossings

Work is now in hand to convert the Bourne End Marina level crossings to Automatic Half Barriers. This will hopefully discourage drivers from trying to 'beat the train'.

FGW Rolling Stock Refresh

FGW states that their London and Thames Valley Fleet "will be brought into line with new livery and will benefit from interior modifications to seating, lighting, toilets and carpet and include new passenger information displays that will be updated during the journey to provide a more comfortable and reliable service for our customers." But there will be no extra legroom.

Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy

The publication of the Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy has been postponed until the end of the summer in draft form with final document expected early 2010. The delay is due to the possible impact of a number proposed and approved projects including CrossRail.

Crossrail Safeguard

The Government has safeguarded a potential Crossrail route from Maidenhead to Reading. Whilst there is no current commitment to extend Crossrail out to Reading, safeguarding provides additional protection against future developments on the route. Serious construction work on Crossrail started 15 May at Canary Wharf.

Twyford footbridge

The construction of the new footbridge and lifts at Twyford Station continues with. It is hoped to have the bridge operational by the start of Henley week but without lifts - there is a delay on those. It is thought by the contractors that sporadically put in an appearance that they do not think the work including lifts will now be completed until September.

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TRAVEL INFORMATION

BBC Radio Berkshire: 95.4, 104.1 fm and DAB.
(also phone 08459 - 311333)

National Rail enquiries: 08457 - 484950 (24 hrs)
or www.nationalrail.co.uk

First Great Western: 08457 - 000125 (0700 - 2200 daily)
Chiltern Railways: 08456 - 005165 (08.30 - 17.30)
Arriva Bus: 0844 8004411 (0900 - 1700 Mon - Fri)
First Berks Buses: 01753 524144
Carousel Buses: 01494 533436
Traveline: 0871 - 2002233 (0700 - 2200 daily)

Also see our web site www.mmpa.org.uk for links.

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Contact MMPA

If you have any issues or comments regarding public transport in the area that you would like to raise please use the Contact Us links on the MMPA website www.mmpa.org.uk.

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