

# MARLOW - MAIDENHEAD PASSENGER ASSOCIATION

## Newsletter Number 146

### Spring 2010



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MMPA covers transport in Maidenhead - Marlow, High Wycombe and Twyford - Henley-on-Thames.

The Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held on Friday 26th March at 8pm in the Bourne End Community Centre. After the AGM there will be a presentation by Anthony Smith, Chief Executive of the independent passenger watchdog Passenger Focus, followed by your local managers from First Great Western and Chiltern Railways. The notice of the meeting together with the accounts for 2009 will be posted with this newsletter.

The agenda is in two parts with the strictly AGM related content being items 1 – 6, with supplementary items from 7 onwards

1. Welcome
2. Apologies for absence
3. Approval of 2009 AGM Minutes
4. Committee Reports - Chairman  
Treasurer  
Secretary
5. Election of Officers
6. Any other business
7. Guest Speaker Anthony Smith CEO Passenger Focus
8. Presentation by Matthew Golton (FGW Regional Manager, London & Thames Valley)
9. Presentation by Chad Collins (Chiltern Railways, Regional Manager, South)

#### Election of Officers

The current Committee comprises:

- Maurice Oram (President)
- Susan Morrison (Chair/ Treasurer/ Marlow Station Rep)
- Paul Murphy (Secretary/ Bourne End Station Rep)
- Richard Porter (Webmaster and Membership)
- Robert Latham (Newsletter Editor)
- Mike Cooper [High Wycombe Station Rep]
- Ken Fulker (Cookham Station Rep)
- Mark Jameson (/Maidenhead/ Twyford Station Rep)
- Trevor Kilner [Cookham Society Rep]
- John Smith [Furze Platt Station Rep]

If you wish to be considered for the next committee please contact our Chair at Randolph House, Riversdale, Bourne End, Bucks. SL8 5EA or use the MMPA website contact page - [www.mmpa.org.uk](http://www.mmpa.org.uk).

#### **Membership Matters**

Membership subscriptions expire on 31st March so once again it's time to ask for your continued support. I am pleased to say that there will be no increase in membership fees this year. Renewal letters will be enclosed with this newsletter for postal recipients (excluding life members and complimentary recipients). If you receive the newsletter by email details will be given in the covering message.

I shall of course be very happy to receive membership renewals at the AGM, and look forward to seeing you all then.

*Richard Porter* (Membership Secretary)

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#### **FGW Turbo Upgrade**

Refurbishment of the FGW Turbo fleet used for local services has commenced with unit 165109 going through the Reading works. The units have all to be refurbished by March 2012 to satisfy the remedial notice issued by the Government to FGW. The work includes new carpets, 'refreshed' seats (*sic*), upgraded toilets and air conditioning (presumably new in class 165 which is not currently fitted) overhead racks, repainted interior and a GPS linked passenger information displays and public address. The withdrawal of 2 units at a time has caused short formations to be used resulting in severe overcrowding and recently replacement of an Oxford – Paddington HST (caused by fire) by the loco hauled 'Night Riviera' rolling stock.

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#### **RBWM Local Transport Plan**

The Royal Borough is consulting local people and organisations on their proposed Local Transport Plan covering the period 2011 to 2026. A questionnaire has been issued for which responses have to be returned by 8<sup>th</sup> March. The questionnaire covers issues and challenges arising from climate change, the 2012 Olympic games, accessibility, crime and security and road conditions. This is a chance to make views known about how you want to see transport options develop over the next 15 years. To get a questionnaire to complete contact Gordon Oliver at RBWM on 01628 683 800 or Email: [mailto:transport.planning@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:mailto:transport.planning@rbwm.gov.uk)

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#### **Wokingham Area transport information**

Wokingham Council have produced new editions of the Twyford and Woodley Guide (Charvil, Hurst, Remenham, Ruscombe, Sonning and Wargrave), the Western Area (Arborfield, Shinfield and Swallowfield) and the Wokingham Borough Public Transport Map and Guide. The Council also produce the following guides/maps:

- Travelling to Wokingham - How to get to Wokingham - including civic office locations
- Travel Guide Western Area February 2010
- Wokingham Borough Public Transport Map and Guide Spring 2010
- Travel Guide Wokingham April 2009
- Travel Guide Twyford and Woodley Area January 2010

For information on public transport and the Borough including a map of services in the area, please visit the Wokingham Borough Council website: [www.wokingham.gov.uk/transport-roads-waste](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/transport-roads-waste).

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#### **Editor's Grovel**

Apologies for the extraneous text added to the last newsletter. This is always a risk when working on more than one document at a time and using the cut and paste function. I'll try very hard to avoid this in future!

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## Great Western Draft Route Utilisation Plan

As part of an ongoing planning process for Britain's railway network, Network Rail have issued a draft RUS (Route Utilisation Strategy) for the Great West Main Line (GWML). The MMPA has returned a response to this which is summarised below.

The MMPA believes that:

The deferment of the electrification of the Thames Valley branches is shortsighted and should be completed at the same time as the Great Western Main Line/Crossrail electrification so as to reduce costs and eliminate isolated diesel workings. The RUS does not consider the number of passengers on the Thames Valley branches who start or continue their journeys on services from or to the capital. MMPA believes this proportion is very high during the peak periods and significant during the rest of the day. The morning through services from the Branch to Paddington are well utilised and there will be considerable resistance to the proposal to eliminate them.

As expressed in the RUS in the wake of GWML electrification, Crossrail services will inevitably be extended to Reading. Maidenhead is not a sensible terminus as it is too far out for an all stations service and stops short of the major transport interchange at Reading. It will cause increased congestion at Maidenhead if the Crossrail proposal to build a separate platform 6 for the Branch goes ahead. It will create a gap rather than closing one and mean a much less convenient interchange for passengers who at present have a cross-platform change to and from the Up Relief line (platforms 5 and 4).

The existing Heathrow Connect service does not work well for passengers from the branches, although modest timetabling changes could improve it. Whilst the Airtrack scheme for western access to Heathrow will provide a valuable addition to the airport's transport connectivity, it completely by-passes the important towns of Slough and Maidenhead as well as the Marlow and Henley branches. MMPA has put forward specific proposals as to how this situation can be improved.

The reinstatement of the line between Bourne End and High Wycombe as a heavy rail reconnection would provide increased connectivity between the Chiltern Line and the Great Western lines, and in particular provide a route to Heathrow Airport avoiding London. We are aware of existing proposals for a light rail solution which would benefit local communities but which might not meet peak commuting demands or provide easy journeys between Heathrow, High Wycombe and beyond.

The roads in this area of Thames Valley and the Chilterns are heavily congested and the only way to improve this is to reinstate and improve the rail connections between local towns and villages and major conurbations. The Draft RUS addresses some of the improvements but only as long term objectives whereas the solutions are needed as a matter of priority and MMPA will continue to press for timely essential improvements in transport infrastructure across the area.

Network Rail has now set up a webpage for all the RUSs including the Great Western RUS on their website ([www.networkrail.co.uk](http://www.networkrail.co.uk)).

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### Evergreen 3

Chiltern Railways is proposing to construct a new railway (including the reconstruction of an existing railway) between Bicester and Oxford, together with the construction or reconstruction of stations at Bicester Town, Islip, Water Eaton and Oxford. These improvements will facilitate the operation of direct railway services between London Marylebone, High Wycombe, Bicester Town and Oxford. Following an extended period of public consultation, on 6th January 2010 Chiltern Railways applied to the Secretary of

State for the necessary powers to make this proposal a reality.

The new route will bring a wide variety of benefits, including:

- Extra trains to/from Oxford - the Chiltern service will complement the Great Western line to Paddington, and not replace it.
- An alternative to the existing route during disruption whilst Reading station is remodelled and the CrossRail project is built.
- The new Water Eaton station, adjacent to the existing Park and Ride facility, will give easy access to the railway for passengers from north and east Oxford, Kidlington and Yarnton, without having to drive through the historic city to reach the existing station. Direct bus links from Water Eaton will make travel to and from the city centre and the Radcliffe hospital even easier.
- A fast and frequent commuter service between Bicester and Oxford, giving a realistic alternative to the congested A34.
- Direct rail services between Oxford and High Wycombe, for the first time in over 40 years, and connections to Wembley Stadium.
- Direct rail service from London to the Bicester Village shopping centre, thus helping to take traffic off the M40.

Chiltern Railways' proposals for the Oxford to Bicester link form part of the Western Section of East West Rail Project working with the East West Rail Consortium. The route is divided into three distinct sections: Eastern (Ipswich/Norwich to Cambridge), Central (Cambridge to Bedford) and Western (Bedford to Oxford/Swindon).

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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 <a href="http://www.nationalrail.co.uk">www.nationalrail.co.uk</a> or text
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) 10p/min on BT landline
RBWM Transportation helpline	01628 796666

Also see our web site [www.mmpa.org.uk](http://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](http://www.mmpa.org.uk).

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### STOP PRESS

To celebrate the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Great Western Railway, First Great Western and Vintage Trains are running a special service on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2010 between London and Bristol. Travel from London to Bristol will be on a special charter HST and return after a 2 hour stop by 'The Bristolian', steam hauled all the way by former GW locomotive No.5043 *Earl of Mount Edgecombe*.

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