



**Newsletter 133  
Autumn 2006**

**FIRST GREAT WESTERN**

Many of you will recall that earlier in the year First Great Western offered a consultation period on the plans for timetable revisions to be introduced in December 2006. FGW was inundated with complaints and comments, which they considered in the light of a window of opportunity to reconfigure some parts of the timetable. The preliminary results of this consultation and further review by both Network Rail (with whom the agreement to run a timetable rests) and FGW were announced at the end of July, with little additional peak-hour change compared to the original offering.

We noted some small changes to the timetables but were, and are, still dissatisfied with the outcome. We had a meeting with FGW representatives – but have been advised that the plans for December 2006 will form the basis of the local trains services for the next 12 months. We pointed out that very little had been done to meet the major complaint from Maidenhead that there were fewer fast trains and less capacity than currently run, and that peak-time connections to Reading are mainly deplorable (Daytime off-peak connections to Reading are planned to be much as now).

From a branch-line perspective, the 2 through trains continue to run – albeit retimed later than at present. There are a number of peak-time connectional issues with which we are unhappy. We have asked FGW to review some of the connections at Maidenhead (and Twyford) as a few interchanges require passengers to acquire the agility of an Olympic athlete. Late evening connections at Maidenhead are awful – again we have asked for a review.

As we were putting these notes together we have heard that Network Rail has had a further re-evaluation of the draft schedules and is having second-thoughts about some services and stopping patterns – especially nearer to London. We suspect that the draft peak-time timetables for Maidenhead will be further reviewed, and we doubt that they will be to the benefit of local customers. Many commuters see fast trains as a priority over other requirements – this is not necessarily the view of all parties.

FGW and Network Rail have done very little to address the concerns and travel arrangements for the users of Maidenhead and Twyford stations. As far as your committee is concerned the shortfall in available capacity (compared with the current timetable) is a disservice to all who use the trains, and will be seen as a diminution of the service that has been developed over the past 10-15 years to cater for the needs of the ever growing population who regard these stations as their railhead. It will also be perceived as another form of 'hit' at commuters at a time when fares are already being regarded as expensive. Any reduction in service will not help foster better relations between the Company and its customers, which many in our area see to be already at rock-bottom. FGW may wish to announce that it sees the timetable changes as the way forward and provides better travel opportunities for its customers - but those commuting from Twyford and Maidenhead would profoundly disagree with these sentiments. Transforming travel is the FGW motto - not seen as a positive vision locally.

We have been advised that the bones of this timetable are 'the way forward' for the FGW franchise; we all need to look at the situation presented to us - and seek improvements for future timetables – June 07 and December 07.

**CHILTERN RAILWAYS**

Chiltern continues to make amendments to timetables – the provisional timetable for December 06 was given to stakeholders and Passenger Board for discussion - a number of ideas were put forward and some eventually incorporated into the schedules. 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 is the case today.

**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 some is referred to panel members for consideration and response. All clerical activity is coordinated through the FGW Customer Relations team.

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 - now's 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)  
SECRETARY – 15 Calder Close, Maidenhead, SL6 7RS

## 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 2006 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007, and grateful thanks to those who added a donation to their subscription - it is very much appreciated by your Committee and helps to combat the ever increasing costs.

**If you have not yet got around to renewing**, you will find a **final reminder form** with your newsletter. (If you have renewed, please do not renew again!). **Remember**, you only need to renew if you have a **final reminder form** with this issue of your newsletter! If you do not respond to this, I regret your name will be deleted from our circulation list. Your membership is very important to the Association. The stronger we are, the louder we can shout. First Great Western plans far-reaching changes for the December 2006 timetable; we must fight reductions in our services.

If you have not renewed, **DON'T DELAY - RENEW TODAY!** Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to either 'MMPA' or 'Marlow-Maidenhead Passengers' Association' and sent to:

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

**One final plea!** If you do not wish to renew your membership for whatever reason, do please let us 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. Many thanks in anticipation for your continued support - it really does make a difference.

## VISIT TO FAWLEY MUSEUM RAILWAY

The visit was blessed with fine weather, and all those who attended had an enjoyable day. Many thanks to our Secretary for organising and co-ordinating this visit.

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

## STATIONS

Bourne End - During recent weeks some of you will have been inconvenienced through renovation work on the station- house and platform-canopy. Work has been completed, albeit a little later than scheduled – we hope the ingress of water has now been stopped and all the brickwork sealed to prevent further damage.

FGW has, as part of its franchise, undergone reorganisation of staff. We say farewell to Simon Langley (who has looked after our area for the last couple of years) and welcome Alison Hanscombe to the local management team.