

# MARLOW - MAIDENHEAD PASSENGERS' ASSOCIATION

## Newsletter Number 145

### Autumn 2009



#### **Bourne End Bridge Refurbishment**

The MMPA campaign to spotlight the cancellation by Network Rail of the Bourne End bridge repainting has been reported in both Bucks Free Press and the Maidenhead Advertiser. The Bucks Free Press of 18<sup>th</sup> September carried photographs and an interview with MMPA Secretary Paul Murphy regarding the state of the bridge and the need for refurbishment. The article can be seen on the Bucks Free Press website at:

[http://www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/news/localnews/cookham/4634187.Money\\_for\\_rusty\\_Bourne\\_End\\_viaduct\\_expired/](http://www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/news/localnews/cookham/4634187.Money_for_rusty_Bourne_End_viaduct_expired/). The Network Rail programme had scheduled 32 bridges for repainting but they have carried out 31. Only Bourne End has been cancelled. MMPA Committee raised this with Network Rail representatives at the October meeting and the response was that the budget expired before the work was carried out and there is no budget for the work in NR's next 5 year Control Period. The Cookham Society is also campaigning for the refurbishment to be carried out sooner rather than later.

#### **Bourne End Marina level crossings**

The Bourne End Marina level crossings have been converted to Automatic Half Barriers and these are fully operational. This will hopefully discourage drivers from trying to 'beat the train'.

#### **Branch Line Cancellation 14 August**

As a result of transferring a driver from the 16.38 branch service to cover a main line service a rail replacement bus was ordered. The resulting chaos arose because the bus was not large enough for the number of passengers and failed to call at branch stations to collect waiting passengers. FGW has admitted to MMPA that this was not an example of good practice and that its procedures for calling up replacement buses does not take local requirements into account. FGW has said that it is examining the issue and plan to implement some changes to improve the procedure. A second incident involving FGW running on South West Trains track has been raised with FGW at the October meeting. FGW also agreed to review the co-ordination process between different Train Operating Companies for resolution of travel during an incident to try and prevent a repeat.

Another tragedy on October 26<sup>th</sup> when the body of a Slough man was found on the tracks near Taplow and Passengers can look forward to steam hauled trains on The Bunk Line this winter. caused more chaos for people trying to get to work. Several travellers reported delays of two hours with fast trains stopping at Maidenhead but not allowing passengers to board.

#### **Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy**

The Great West Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) has been issued by Network Rail for consultation. A summary is included overleaf. Note that under current CrossRail proposals there will be no through trains from either Henley or Marlow/ Bourne End onto the main line.

#### **Great Western electrification**

The Government has announced that the Great Western route from London to Swansea is to be electrified over the next eight years at a cost of £1bn. The electrification will include the lines to Oxford and to Newbury in Berkshire but at present none of the branches will be included. MMPA Committee raised this with Network Rail representatives at the October meeting who advised that the scope of the project has not been clarified.

#### **Chiltern Railways Evergreen 3 Project**

Plans by Chiltern Railways to develop a new Oxford to London Marylebone rail service are continuing to attract strong support in the

run up to a formal Transport & Works Act Order application this autumn. It is hoped to commence services by 2013. The new route will be created by upgrading the existing route between Oxford and Bicester Town and by building a short connecting line south east of Bicester linking the Oxford to Bicester and London Marylebone to Birmingham lines. Much of the double track that was removed in the 1970s will be restored and the bridges and earthworks brought up to modern standards as appropriate. A new line into Oxford will be built alongside the existing Oxford-Banbury line, using old trackbed. There will be a new station at Water Eaton Parkway serving North Oxford and Kidlington as well as providing additional park-and-ride facilities. The aim is to operate two Oxford to London Marylebone trains each hour throughout the day, calling at High Wycombe. Typical journey times will be less than one hour between Water Eaton and London and 15 minutes between Bicester and Oxford.

#### **Bourne End to High Wycombe Link**

The MMPA committee met representatives of the Wycombe Society, which is promoting the reinstatement of the Bourne End to High Wycombe rail link, to hear the organisation's proposals. According to the 2001 census 278,000 miles are driven every day between High Wycombe and Maidenhead Slough and Reading leading to considerable congestion on local roads particularly during the peak periods. The route has been examined in some detail and the organisation believes there are no significant obstacles to reinstatement. Some minor route diversions will be required where elements of the trackbed have been built on. An ultra light rail link is proposed which can be accommodated on a much lighter infrastructure than heavy rail (Turbos) or light rail (trams) and will require much simpler power supply arrangements. Local council support has been established but a great deal of work needs to be done before any construction can take place. Further details can be found on their web site at: <http://www.highwycombesociety.org.uk/hblreport.htm>

#### **High Wycombe Station Redevelopment**

At their meeting in June, MMPA Committee received a presentation on the proposed development of High Wycombe Station. The proposal includes the restoration of the Brunel Goods Shed in the station forecourt and its use as the ticket hall and retail area. Bus stands, a one way route for traffic in and out of the station and an enlarged multi-story car park all feature. The presentation has already been shown to Wycombe District Council and the scheme is being finalized prior to submission for planning approval.

#### **FGW Car Park Charges**

FGW have announced swingeing increases in car park charges at Maidenhead and Twyford stations. They blame this on the need to reduce the "subsidy for maintenance" of the car parks and to discourage non-station users from parking in the stations. MMPA believe the rises are not justified and sought a rethink by FGW at the October meeting. FGW stated that the charges had remained substantially the same for the last three years and the rises were therefore justified. MMPA asked if a discount could be offered to passengers purchasing rail tickets to minimise non rail user parking but this is not an option for FGW.

#### **FGW Rolling Stock Refresh**

The rolling stock refresh of the Turbos reported in the last issue is due to start in 2010 with completion scheduled by 2012.

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## Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy

Network Rail is developing a programme of RUSs, in conjunction with rail industry partners and wider stakeholders, which when complete, will cover the entire rail network in Great Britain. This Great Western RUS Draft for Consultation provides a further step towards achieving national coverage and has followed a now well-established process. The document consists of 192 pages so I have extracted what appears relevant to the Branch and surrounding area.

First an explanation of Route Utilisation Strategies (RUSs). These seek to establish the strategic direction of the railway from a systematic analysis of future requirements of the network. They seek to balance capacity, passenger and freight demand, operational performance and cost whilst addressing the requirements of funders and stakeholders. The Great Western RUS sets out the strategic vision for a particular part of the rail network. The scope of the RUS is extensive and diverse; the focal element being the Great Western Main Line (GWML) which operates over 320 miles and creates main line links from London to the West of England and South Wales. Extending from this are radial routes to Oxford, Birmingham, the South Coast and South West. Branch lines into the London suburbs, to the Devon and Cornish coast and dedicated freight only lines complete the mix of routes considered. The Great Western RUS primarily focuses on the next 10 years to 2019 but has also considered the implications of growth in demand over the next 30 years in the context of the Government's 2007 White Paper "Delivering a Sustainable Railway".

The starting point for the Great Western RUS has been to analyse the current base position of the network, combined with any committed schemes and known interventions. Demand analysis has been undertaken to ascertain the expected level of growth over the next 10 years taking into account the anticipated drivers of change. The combined analysis identifies where supply and demand is mismatched now, and where it is expected to be mismatched in the future. The identified gaps have been analysed to understand how best to address them, taking into account any schemes already proposed. In the course of this work, options have been developed on an interactive basis until feasible solutions have been identified with acceptable operational performance that meets whole-industry value-for-money criteria. In some cases there may be further work required to identify additional benefits in order to demonstrate a sufficiently strong economic return. The Great Western RUS Draft for Consultation has been developed as a result of considerable analysis and close collaboration between Network Rail, the Department for Transport, the passenger and freight operators, Transport for London, the Office of Rail Regulation, Welsh Assembly Government, Passenger Focus and London Travelwatch.

Although the branches are not specifically identified in the introduction above a number of issues are addressed within the body of the document. Although not directly included in the RUS the impact of Crossrail, electrification and the Intercity Express Programme are examined in relation to the requirements of the RUS.

The key themes that have emerged from the analysis of the current railway and what is required of it in the future is capacity (at stations, on trains and of the network), performance pinch-points and local connectivity. The following table presents the gaps identified that affect Maidenhead and the branches and taken forward for further analysis under the Great Western RUS process.

1. Paddington peak capacity
2. Inner suburban service pattern
3. Paddington to Reading all day capacity
4. Paddington to Reading performance

## 5. Slough to Windsor all day capacity

Note that Maidenhead is treated as the limit of the inner suburban services. In order to cater for Twyford an outer suburban service will be operated on the relief lines, integrated with Crossrail Maidenhead services, which will run between London Paddington and Oxford, calling at the local Thames Valley stations between Reading, Didcot and Oxford. With electrification of the GWML, it is envisaged that these services will be four-car electric trains (redeployed from the Thameslink programme, when the new Thameslink fleet is introduced) replacing the existing two and three-car diesel trains. It is planned that suburban services between Oxford, Reading and London Paddington will be operated with these vehicles by the end of 2016. *All Henley branch trains will operate to Twyford only in connection with these services and all Marlow/ Bourne End services will operate to Maidenhead only, both will remain as existing diesel trains.*

Electrification of the Thames Valley branch lines (Greenford, Windsor, Bourne End and Henley-on-Thames) could also provide additional benefits with through services to London Paddington but *under Crossrail proposals, these services operate only as branch line shuttles.*

Further west, development of the relief lines between London Paddington and Reading could enable greater utilisation to be achieved for a mix of stopping and semi-fast passenger trains alongside freight. Construction of a longer section of five track railway, between Slough and West Drayton, suitably fitted with reversible signalling, would enable peak hour semi-fast passenger services to overtake stopping services (whilst these called at Langley, Iver and West Drayton stations) and then remain on the relief lines, thus avoiding the necessity to switch the semi-fasts onto the main lines. At present this causes performance risks and uses scarce main line paths sub optimally. In the off-peak hours the additional relief line capacity provided could then be used to handle the expected freight growth once the Crossrail service pattern has been fully established. In this manner, such semi-fast services (for example Reading/Maidenhead/Slough) running through the Crossrail tunnel direct to the west end, city, and Canary Wharf would offer an attractive alternative to an underground interchange at London Paddington. The slightly longer relief line journey time between Reading and London Paddington, with the potential two intermediate calls, would be offset by the fact that passengers would no longer incur an interchange time penalty from a main line journey. It would also reduce the risk of the main lines becoming overloaded and reduce crowding on other London Underground services.

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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](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)

First Great Western: 08457 - 000125 (0700 – 2200 daily)

Chiltern Railways: 08456 - 005165 (08.30 – 17.30)

Arriva Bus: 08448004411 (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](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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