

MARLOW - MAIDENHEAD PASSENGER ASSOCIATION



Newsletter Number 150

May 2011

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

First Great Western Timetables

With this newsletter we are distributing copies of First Great Western summer mini-timetable leaflets that come into force from 22nd May and stay in effect until 10th December 2011. For members in the Bourne End area we also include Chiltern Railways timetables.

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Tell a Train company exactly what you think!

One of the region's local train companies, Chiltern Railways, is interested to hear from regular commuters to London from the Bourne End, Farnham Common and Flackwell Heath area to help them improve their service.

They want to know commuters' thoughts on all aspects of the journey by any rail company they use, including pricing, timetable, stations and trains to help influence the future development of their operation.

Where: Bourne End Community Centre

When: Saturday 21st May 10:30-11:30

If you wish to attend, please e-mail

commuter@chilternrailways.co.uk by Thursday 19th May with the following information:

- 1) Your name
- 2) Your normal rail journey
- 3) The main thing you think Rail companies should focus on to improve customer satisfaction.

Spaces are limited, and you will be contacted by e-mail on Friday 20th May to advise whether you have been selected to attend.

Tea, coffee will be provided

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Changes in Reading

From the 18 April 2011, buses in Reading will take a different route through the town centre and stop at different bus stops. This is because the roads in Reading Town Centre are being changed as part of the extensive programme to redevelop Reading Station. These new arrangements are designed to be permanent.

There are maps available to view the new layout of the town centre and to find out where your bus stops are moving to.

Maps of the changed routes and bus stops can be found at <http://www.reading-buses.co.uk/stationmaps>.

The changes also affect routes for private vehicles to the station and passenger drop off points.

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Branch facilities updates

- Funding has been established to provide CCTV at Marlow and Furze Platt stations.

- Local authority and train operator money has been allocated towards secure cycle storage facilities at Marlow Station. RBWM is funding cycle storage facilities at Cookham.

- Finance has been offered towards a bus shelter outside Bourne End Station. It is has been clarified that the land is owned by Bucks County Council Highways Department. Real time bus information will be provided in the shelter when it is installed.

- Bourne End Bridge is under scrutiny. Network Rail is going to carry out a structural assessment in the "early part of this year".

FGW has just advised that they intended the new customer information system for Maidenhead would be fully installed by the end of April. Due to some late negotiations between their

landlords and contractors this has slipped back. Work will now start on 12 May and should be finished by the end of the month.

FGW Franchise

FGW has announced they are not seeking to extend their current franchise after March 2013. This could be huge for the Branch to have the franchise rebid earlier than we expected. It could mean opportunities to change things we don't like but also risks the loss of service we do like - 2 direct trains at peak times not requiring change at Maidenhead for example. Those trains are required by the current agreement but might not be in a future one. Who knows if the franchise will even continue to be the behemoth of local, commuter and long distance routes that exist in the current franchise. It could mean lots of change for the branch which makes MMPA's role even more important over the next 24 months. More reasons to join

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AGM Report

A well attended AGM was held at the Bourne End Community Centre on 25th March. The attendees included a number of senior representatives of railway organisations including Network Rail, First Great Western, Chiltern Railways and Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP). The Committee was re-elected with the exception of the Secretary who stood down due to work commitments and the addition of one new member. The roles of the new Committee are:

Maurice Oram [President]

Susan Morrison [Chairman/Treasurer]

Mark Jameson [Maidenhead/Twyford Rep]

Richard Porter [Membership & Webmaster]

Mike Cooper [High Wycombe Rep]

Harriet Wilson [Marlow Society Rep]

Josephine Crabb [Cookham Society]

Robert Latham [Newsletter Editor]

Richard Ward [Committee]

The meeting was addressed in turn by the railway organisation managers followed by a period of questions from the floor.

Network Rail

Upgrade works are being undertaken across the FGW network including the Branch to remove weaknesses so as to improve reliability. Points are being monitored to detect onset of failures. A member reported hearing that there were plans to close pedestrian access over the Thames via the Bourne End rail bridge. The response was that no such plans were known and that some work on the bridge was planned to take place shortly.

A Powerpoint presentation reported on the drop in performance by FGW over the past year and gave details of the recovery plan in operation to improve the situation. Of particular importance to the Branch are measures to improve reliability of points and the token machines required to allow the passage of trains on the Branch.

The question was put whether any convictions for cable theft have occurred following the recent increases in this crime. NR reported a gang of cable thieves had recently been convicted.

First Great Western

FGW are working to get an increased revenue protection presence by employing and training more staff. FGW reported that the Reading blockade over the Christmas period was an organisational success and that the CEO for Passenger Focus had written to FGW passing on positive feedback. This was

based on a passenger survey which had taken place over the period. All of the planned bridge work necessitating the station closure had taken place on time and other Reading Station redevelopment work was on schedule.

The Turbo Fleet refresh program was on schedule with 89 165 class Turbos done so far and the first of the 166 class refreshed Turbos due back into service during April.

All of the planned improvements to the SISS (Information help points) should be complete for this area by the end of May.

There are plans to ease congestion on Thames Valley routes by bringing back some class 180 (Adelante) rolling stock (subject to DfT approval).

Chiltern Railways

Chiltern Railways vision of a '100 MPH Railway' associated with Project Evergreen was now due to be implemented in September 2011 and timetables will reflect this. Some of the associated redevelopment works that have taken place so far include changes at Princes Risborough, Gerrards Cross, South Ruislip and Neesdon Junction all aimed at improving the speed and flow of trains. The next timetable with the more significant changes is expected from 6th September.

New rolling stock is expected to arrive and the first Class 172 train has already been received at the Chiltern Railways depot. Ex Wrexham and Shropshire rolling stock was also being used by Chiltern Railways to aid with reducing congestion.

Marylebone station has undergone some improvement work and the redevelopment work at High Wycombe Station transport interchange was very close to being finished.

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Marlow Museum

There is now a small local history museum, Marlow Museum, which has been established for 2 years and is located at Court Garden, Marlow. It provides displays and exhibitions on various local topics covering Marlow Town, Little Marlow, Great Marlow, Marlow Bottom, Medmenham and Bisham.

A display about the Marlow Branch both in its GWR period and recent times is being planned and it is hoped to exhibit from June. The contact is Michael Hyde at michaelahyde@uwclub.net

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London and South East Route Utilisation Strategy

Passenger Focus's response to Network Rail's

London and South East Route Utilisation Strategy Draft for Consultation has been published and can be viewed in full at:

<http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/news-and-publications/document-search/document.asp?dsid=5034>

Some relevant are included below:

"Options in the Draft RUS to meet the capacity gap in Thames Valley services out to Reading are:

- § A1 extend Crossrail from Maidenhead to Reading
- § A2 increase peak IEP service from 15 to 16 trains per hour
- § A3 lengthen peak IEP trains
- § A4 4 per hour 12 car peak "shuttles" outer Thames Valley/Reading additional
- § A5 as A4, but HEX combined with Crossrail, still on main lines
- § A6 as A4, but HEX combined with Crossrail, using relief lines - at least in peaks.

There is considerable overlap between them, and option A1 is required for option A6 to be feasible, therefore we discuss them as a group. We understand that options A2 to 5 have been more or less discounted and that further development work during the consultation period is concentrating on options A1 and A6.

All the passenger survey results come from the latest National Passenger Survey (NPS), which was undertaken in the autumn of 2010. The survey shows that just over a third of passengers on Great Western's Thames Valley routes are not satisfied by the capacity currently provided.

We agree that the extension of Crossrail services to Reading makes good sense operationally and believe that it also would benefit passengers as well as being necessary as part of option A6. However, the final pattern of services must be developed in full consultation with passengers to recognise and, as far as possible, accommodate their aspirations. Over the past decade or so journey times and the number of station stops have

increased for stations whose off-peak service runs on the relief lines. One option not considered is that of increasing the very restricted function of Crossrail –an all-stations inner suburban service. This could be revised to transform it into a useful inter-regional through London link on the Thameslink model. Fast services from Reading and beyond on the Great Western lines proposed for electrification could be able to use the Crossrail route through London, which improves connectivity and reduces the number of passengers who have to interchange at Paddington.

Passenger Focus agrees that option A6 (including A1) is the best of those proposed to meet the gap in capacity on the Great Western Main Line (GWML), because it requires the least additional infrastructure and therefore can be achieved at lower cost and with the least disruption to passengers. The indicative peak main lines service specification offers a good pattern of services, bearing in mind our comments about matching services to markets. However:

- § there is no indication in the Draft RUS of how many additional seats would be provided
- § there is no definitive list of what must be considered during further development work
- § there is no indication of how the additional rolling stock will be used in the off-peak.

Passenger Focus suggests the possibilities of further interventions are explored:

- § Consider whether there are possibilities to adapt Crossrail to enhance value for the region and its economy and effectiveness for more passengers. This could include the potential to be achieved by adding inter-regional services from places such as Newbury and Oxford, bringing the benefits of through services to the City of London to more passengers. It may also permit more efficient use of Crossrail and of Paddington, by removing some interchanging passengers and freeing-up platform space.
- § Grade separated junctions between main, relief and Crossrail lines are likely to be a pre-requisite of transforming Crossrail. If the maximum use is to be made of existing rights of way, plans to meet demand twenty and more years into the future must be developed as part of this RUS.
- § The rolling stock required to operate a fully developed Crossrail suggests it may need to be designed to meet two discrete markets – short distance, high density metro flows, and inter-regional longer-distance flows. One size does not fit all, and the rolling stock should not be one-off designs, but rather generic types, to help keep production costs as low as possible by economies of scale, and avoiding additional design costs.

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TRAVEL INFORMATION

BBC Radio 95.4, 104.1 fm and DAB.
Berkshire: (also phone 08459 - 311333)
National Rail 08457 - 484950 (24 hrs)
enquiries: or www.nationalrail.co.uk 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 01628 796666

Transportation
helpline

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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