

MARLOW - MAIDENHEAD PASSENGER ASSOCIATION

Newsletter Number 156

December 2012



Newsletter Editor Robert Latham
Email: newsletter@mmpa.org.uk

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

December Timetables

Included with this newsletter are the appropriate December timetables for your area. At the meeting in October with FGW management they stated there are no major changes in the December timetables but there will be some reductions after 22:00 due to increased Network Rail possessions for Crossrail preparatory work and mainly affects Heathrow Connect. 22:27 (Monday - Friday) Paddington - Reading replaces 22:10 and 22:45 departures. A bigger change is planned for Easter 2013 when the tracks will be shifted to the new platforms at Reading.

* * *

Reading Station Redevelopment

For those who plan travel next Easter on FGW territory here is advance notice of rail closures; these are the key dates for next Easter:

From 2345, Thursday 28th March until 0400, Tuesday 2nd April:

Airport Junction/Slough and Maidenhead/Didcot	all lines closed
Slough/Maidenhead	all lines closed on Sunday only
Henley, Marlow and Windsor branches	Open
Reading – platform 2 (Basingstoke) and platforms 4/5 (Waterloo/Gatwick)	Open, all other platforms closed.

From 2300, Saturday 6th April until 0300, Monday 8th April:

Maidenhead/Didcot	all lines closed
-------------------	------------------

From 0400, 2nd April except as above:

Reading platforms 4/5 and 12-15	Available, all other platforms closed
---------------------------------	---------------------------------------

Where lines are closed, First Great Western will provide diverted trains or buses to enable customers to complete their journeys.

If you wish to keep up to date with the station redevelopment a newsletter is published at:

<http://www.networkrail.co.uk/asp/6339.aspx>

* * *

The Great Marlow Line

The Great Marlow Line leaflet has been reprinted. If you would like to see the content the leaflet can be downloaded from the MMPA site at http://www.mmpa.org.uk/forms/gml_v2.pdf.

* * *

Assistance needed

MMPA is aware that the approval process for planning applications is not always visible in time for the Association to respond particularly where such applications could impact on the possibility of reinstating a rail based link between Bourne End and High Wycombe. We are seeking people who can monitor planning applications in the area and advise MMPA of any that might impact the alignment of the line between Bourne End and High Wycombe.

Also the MMPA is seeking a General Secretary for the Association. Please contact us at secretary@mmpa.org.uk for more information if you are willing to help out in this way.

* * *

FGW Matters

At <http://www.firstgreatwestern.info/index.html> there is coffee shop forum. This is web site run by a First Great Western customer for First Great Western Customers.

MMPA Committee Meeting with FGW management

The October Committee meeting of MMPA was held in conjunction with a team from FGW management. A number of questions were sent to them in advance for their reply at the meeting.

- FGW can't proceed with new station signs indicating The Great Marlow Line interchange because of the current franchise position but will do what they can on promotion. The Great Marlow Line leaflet has been reprinted with the inclusion of a map and Day Ranger ticket details.
- As a possible move towards a Community Rail Partnership MMPA is concentrating on the station adoption plan at the moment. FGW is ready to go and has a 'best practice' guide. This should be progressed as a FGW/MMPA joint initiative. Marlow Town Council is providing flowers at Marlow station, but we need to get others involved.
- The franchise bid is on hold at present due to the problems with the West Coast franchise. FGW is talking to Department for Transport regarding an extension of the current franchise until the franchising chaos is sorted out. Long term investment plans are on hold but otherwise it's business as usual.
- A survey team has been reported examining the Bourne End bridge from a boat and it is believed an estimate is being prepared for the repainting of the bridge which may happen in 6 to 12 months.
- There are no working clocks at stations. FGW say it will be necessary to dig up some platforms to lay cables. FGW has asked contractors to quote for full digital information displays (with time and service information). Department for Transport has released some money for passenger improvements and FGW has bid for some of this to match its own funds.
- The Millennium Clock at Cookham is maintained by Cookham Council which is waiting to gain access in order to repair the clock.
- FGW stated the Maidenhead waiting rooms should be open from 05:30 to 23:00 daily and should not be closed in the afternoon. There have been some staffing issues which have led to the waiting rooms being locked early on some occasions.
- MMPA noted there are no signs advertising the connection for Marlow at Maidenhead. FGW replied the branding was handled by a third party and the omission was an oversight. FGW will add vinyls to the running-in boards and will see if they can attach additional signs below some of the new signs.
- MMPA are concerned that Shoppenhangers Road gates are often open and unmanned and raised the revenue protection consequences of not having the gates in operation. FGW replied there have been a

number of staffing issues regarding manning of the gates but they are working towards improving it. This is an unusual situation because it requires more staff than there are gates.

- Bourne End Station has a new booking clerk, Tony Gammond, who has a number of ideas for the station and is enthusiastic about the adopted station proposals.
- Painters are currently working at Bourne End. Furze Platt and Marlow will follow.
- MMPA said that FGW was under attack in the Maidenhead and Twyford Advertisers over the shortage of parking space at Maidenhead and Twyford and that FGW should look at improving the facilities once the franchise situation is resolved.
- Paddington – There are no plans to reinstate/replace the footbridge to restore a connection between platforms 13/14 and 15/16 (H&C). The new circuitous route can add five minutes to journey times, though FGW believe it might be just as quick in the peaks.
- Short platforms on down main line – MMPA reported rear unit of 22:59 Paddington - Reading on 12 October was locked out of use resulting in severe overcrowding in the front unit (both two cars). The driver announced that this was because we were going down the main line and some platforms weren't long enough. FGW will find out which if any platforms were too short for a 4-car train.
- Correspondence on ticket price anomalies was passed to FGW.
- In respect of Customer Service responses reported in relation to this FGW explained that there were fluctuations in the workload of Customer Service agents and they had targets for the number of enquiries dealt with. It is tempting to send out a stock response in the first instance. This then leads to a further complaint if the original one was not properly understood. MMPA is still waiting for a reply to the original complaint.
- Looking at revenue protection FGW has taken on additional inspectors and ticket examiners. They said that leave had been restricted over the Olympics period and as a consequence a lot of staff had taken their holidays following the Games, but things are getting back to normal now. The team is targeting 'revenue at risk' with the priority on higher price fares. FGW is also keen to protect first class travel and would be having a blitz on its abuse in the coming weeks. Inspectors' diagrams are being reviewed. Customers are asked to report cases of non collection of fares on the branch to FGW on the same day if possible so that the member of staff can be identified. There have been cases of tampering with ticket machines so that the conductor would be unable to issue tickets and collect fares.
- MMPA are concerned about the gap in Branch service between 17:07 and 18:21 from Marlow. FGW say there are no plans to change the timetable at present. This gap is caused by the changeover from the off-peak to the peak service pattern, the latter being governed by the through trains from Paddington.
- MMPA asked if anything was being done to resolve the issue of poor communication at times of service disruption. FGW has no resolution of this problem but

they consider getting information systems on the branch working will help.

- There have been a number of issues with the Customer Information System on the Class 165/ 166 trains. FGW say the contractor involved had delivered a defective product and modifications are in progress.
- Lead time for indication of departure platform at Paddington is still a problem which FGW staff have also experienced. Platform numbers are not shown in the public timetable booklet in case there are last minute changes, although they are in the working timetable available on Network Rail's web site (if you have a suitable internet connected computer with you while waiting for your train! - Ed)
- FGW could provide no information on the franchise and electrification Issues.
- FGW is aware of the problem of a missed connection from Oxford to Marlow at 17:46 which has been raised on several occasions. If a reliable connection were to be provided the branch train departure would need to be delayed to 17:50. MMPA believes there would be no knock-on consequences of such a change.
- There is inadequate service information when approaching main line platforms from the Paddington Canal entrance - just two sets of screens giving destinations or false destinations only, and no stopping points. FGW said they would use some Network Rail portable information screens to test whether additional information would reduce congestion.

* * *

MMPA on Facebook?

MMPA already has a Twitter account where you can follow us but the Committee is also considering whether to adopt social networking for the Association and agreed there may be merit in a Facebook account with scope for interaction with interested individuals including links to UTube and FGW. It has been agreed to set up a Facebook page on a pilot basis. MMPA is therefore seeking a volunteer to take this task on as the Committee recognises that the page would need to be kept up to date on a real time basis. Anyone interested should contact the Association through the website

* * *

TRAVEL INFORMATION

BBC Radio	95.4, 104.1 FM, DAB, or	08459 - 311333
Berkshire:		
National Rail enquiries:	08457 - 484950 (24 hrs)	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)	10p/min on BT landline
RBWM helpline	01628 796666	

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

* * *

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.

* * *



Seasons Greetings

The Committee wishes all members a peaceful Christmas and a happy and problem free travelling new year.

* * *