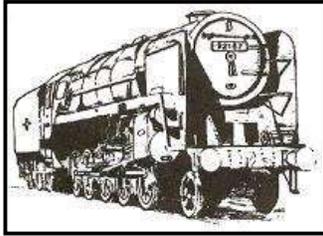
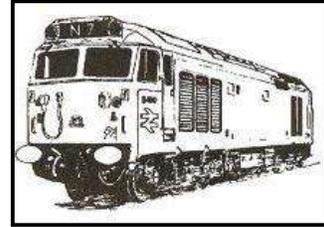


OXFORDSHIRE RAILWAY SOCIETY
12 SEPTEMBER 2018



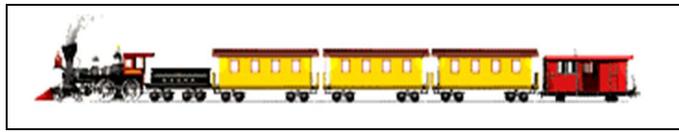
**Buffer
Stop**



Tonight we welcome **Peter Simmonds** to talk on “GWR Gauge Conversion – a forty year project”. It was 150 years ago next month that the Wycombe Railway’s Princes Risborough–Aylesbury branch became the first section of the Great Western wholly narrowed, a process that was to culminate in the last broad gauge train leaving Paddington in May 1892 (*above left*) and a frantic weekend of work in the westcountry (such as at Plymouth Millbay, *below right*). Incidentally, Princes Risborough is back in the news since on 16 August the line from Chinnor was opened back into the station there.

In May, Peter Harrison, speaking from personal experience, gave an illuminating talk on “The Construction of the Channel Tunnel” and in June we welcomed back Howard Quayle for “The Oxford to Worcester Line in the 1960s and 1970s” which stirred some memories. **Next month**, on October 10, Brian Stephenson returns to give a presentation on “European Steam prior to 1946”.





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LOCAL RAIL NEWS

Oxford Panel signal box (which opened on 14 October 1973) closed early on Saturday morning 7 July 2018 at the start of a three-week blockade of the station. The new signalling commissioned between 9 and 23 July is controlled from the Oxford Work Station in Thames Valley Signalling Centre at Didcot; signal numbers in the Oxford area now have OD rather than OX prefixes. Combined with the new track layout – which includes a scissors crossing at the north end – and bidirectional signalling on most routes through the area there is much improved flexibility for operations. Chiltern trains now have double track functional throughout between the two Oxford stations and should not conflict with other traffic. The Down Oxford Relief line (as it has been renamed) alongside Port Meadow is at last fully operational and in regular use by passenger trains (in fact, it gives them a slightly faster exit from the station, avoiding speed-restricted crossovers). The north end of Platform 3 has been rebuilt, removing the last visible vestiges of the 1910 platform and canopy here. Meanwhile, Oxford Science Park have unveiled an ambitious design for the station they would like to see on the Cowley branch.

At the end of July, a Transport & Works Act Order application was made for Phase 2 of the **East–West rail** scheme covering Bicester–Bletchley passenger reinstatement. This covers services from Oxford to Bedford and to Milton Keynes, and from Milton Keynes to Aylesbury.

On the **Great Western Main line** from 10 June Network Rail's Thames Valley Signalling Centre is using a digital Traffic Management System. From the beginning of the summer, wires have been up and live from Milton Junction (Didcot) to Wootton Bassett Junction and this is likely to be extended at least as far as Cocklebury Lane Bridge (east of Chippenham), perhaps in the next few weeks. However, at the start of August, Vale of White Horse District Council's planning committee refused Network Rail's application to demolish the contentious Steventon Bridge, so arrangements there remain to be decided. However, electrification of the **Berks & Hants** line seems to be proceeding well, with work to the limit at Newbury virtually complete by the end of August.



SOCIETY NOTICES

Sales Items – We are a little short of items to sell on our exhibition stand for Society funds, so your contributions of books, models or what have you would be welcome – please speak to a committee member.

81F – Peter Heath is seeking contributions to our magazine – deadline 16 December.

Easyfundraising – Total raised currently stands at £532.75.

COMING EVENTS

Saturday 22 September: Railway Touring Co: *Oxford Explorer* Three Bridges–Oxford (arr. 12.30): 60009

Wednesday 26 September: 19:45: Basingstoke & District Railway Society, Wote Street Club: Mike Fenton – *GWR Camping Coaches*

Sunday 14 October: Oxford & District Model Railway Club: *Oxrail 2018* exhibition, Abingdon & Witney College, Abingdon

“Buffer Stop” is edited by Matthew Searle <matthew904@btinternet.com> and published by the Oxfordshire Railway Society; the views therein are not necessarily those of the Society or the Editor. Society meetings are held at the Seacourt Day Centre, Seacourt Road, Botley, Oxford at 7.30pm on the second Wednesday in the month. Closing date for next issue: 1 October