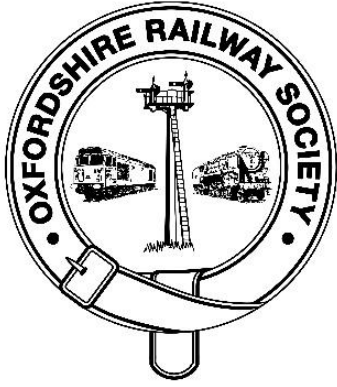




BUFFER STOP

14 SEPTEMBER 2026

This evening, **Richard Crane**, former Chair of the Bedford to Bletchley Rail Users Association, is giving us a presentation on the line.



Top left: Network SouthEast '117' L721 arrives at Millbrook on a Bedford–Bletchley service, June 1996



Top right: LNW Marston Vale branded 230 003 at Bletchley, July 2019, during the brief period of D-Train operation (the footbridge has since been extended to serve the new High Level station)



Right: LSL 20 118+132 at Woburn Sands leading an Oxford–Bedford St Johns–Euston private charter, September 2026 (see Local Rail News on page 2)

At our last meeting in June, life member Howard Quayle overcame a recalcitrant projector to give us an informed tour on lines broad and narrow from Ireland to Austria and back to Paris.

Next month on **October 12** Laurence Waters will give us a presentation on *Steam in the South West*.

OXFORDSHIRE RAILWAY SOCIETY

COMING EVENTS

Saturday 19 September: 13:16 arr/15:46 dep Oxford: Midland Pullman: *Dreaming Spires Pullman* ex Penzance: HST (ecs to/from Bicester).

Saturday 26 September:

10:00: Haddenham Village Hall: R&DMRC: Haddenham & Thame 2026 Model Railway Exhibition.

10:35/18:32 pass Oxford: Locomotive Services: private charter Whitchurch (Salop)–Weymouth.

18:18 pass Oxford: UK Railtours: *Worcester Pullman* London Victoria–Worcester SH, out via Kemble, return via Oxford: 35028.

Saturday 3 October: 10:30: Didcot Civic Hall, Britwell Road: A&DMRC: Didcot Model Railway Show.

Sunday 4 October: 11:00: Reading (Broad Street etc): Reading Buses 125th Anniversary.

Saturday–Sunday 17–18 October: daily 11:00 & 15:25 dep Didcot Parkway: Fox & Edwards: *Legendary Journeys* circulars via Newbury Racecourse: 60103.

LOCAL RAIL NEWS

Oxford–Milton Keynes passenger services are apparently written in to the December timetable, but at the start of last month RMT rejected Chiltern's scheme for Driver Only Operation of the route. On 4 September the first passenger trains (two private charters) since reinstatement of the line to Bletchley ran through from Oxford onto the Bletchley–Bedford section: a Locomotive Services 4-coach train topped and tailed by pairs of Class 20s, closely followed by a GWR '800'.

Sunday 20 September will be a notable date in local railway history. Chiltern Railways will pass from Arriva to public control under DfT Operator, the end of an era for perhaps the most enterprising of all the private train operators. From the December timetable change it will be introducing a daily return Marylebone–Stratford-upon-Avon service. Great Western enters the nationalised sphere in December and DB Cargo UK (which operates the freight yards at Hinksey and Didcot) has been put up for sale by its German owners. Also on 20 September, Botley Road should reopen to road traffic at the railway bridge. This was delayed for the umpteenth time in late July by the discovery of gas leaks, now fixed.

GWR is now offering through ticketing at Moreton-in-Marsh onto Go-Ahead subsidiary Pulhams Coaches Rail Link 801 coach service to and from Bourton-on-the-Water, Stow-on-the-Wold and Chipping Norton.

A car accident at the start of July which damaged the Wallingford by-pass level crossing apparatus caused suspension of Cholsey & Wallingford Railway operations. Network Rail engineers managed repairs by the end of August in time for BunkFest services to operate. On Tuesday 4 August trains south of Oxford were disrupted for much of the day following a fallen tree blocking the up main line at Redbridge.

Heavy Haul Rail locomotives used on the daily Whatley Quarry–Oxford Banbury Road aggregates trains are now appearing with HHR branding, which has been seen on ex-Freightliner green and orange Class 66s and on 59 001 *Yeoman Endeavour* recently returned to its original Yeoman silver livery. Europhoenix, together with its train operating licence, has been sold to DBI Holdings. Aggregates trains for DBI's subsidiary Land Recovery have occasionally worked through Oxford (one was noted on 21 August) with Colas locomotives, so there may be some change here too.

Oxfordshire County Council have produced a pre-feasibility study suggesting the addition of a new station at Ardley (on the Chiltern Main Line) to the *OxRail 2040* list of Cowley, Littlemore, Begbroke and Grove.

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

It doesn't seem possible to me, but this issue marks the 10th anniversary of my taking over *Buffer Stop*. In September 2016 I was reporting on the summer's closure of Banbury's signal boxes and the reconstruction of Oxford station's bay platforms to accommodate Chiltern Railways services.

"Buffer Stop" is edited by Matthew Searle <matthew904@btinternet.com> (who took the photographs) and published by the Oxfordshire Railway Society; the views therein are not necessarily those of the Society or the Editor; events may change. Society meetings are held at Kidlington Baptist Church hall, High Street, Kidlington, Oxford at 7.00pm on the second Monday in the month. Closing date for next issue: 5 October