
DVExpress

Issue 3 – June 2007

The newsletter of the Friends of the Derwent Valley Line

Summer Bus Replacement, June 10th – August 5th.

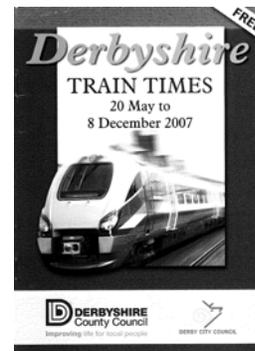
Services on the Matlock branch are to be disrupted between 10th June - 5th August. Some morning /evening commuter trains will run at slightly different times, although they will run as trains throughout and some off-peak services between Whatstandwell to Derby will be replaced by buses. Throughout the eight weeks many trains will run at slightly different times from the both the Matlock and Derby ends.

In summary, each weekday, the last morning train and first afternoon train from both Matlock and from Derby will be partly replaced by connecting buses between Whatstandwell and Derby and vice versa, with many other services running slightly earlier. Also, one pair of off-peak evening return trains will be replaced by buses between Whatstandwell and Derby, again operating earlier than usual.

On Saturdays the 12.23 from Matlock to Derby will not stop at Belper or Duffield and a replacement bus service will be available between Whatstandwell and Derby to enable journeys to and from Belper or Duffield. Again many other services are slightly retimed.

The bus replacement service will set down at points near, but not at, Ambergate, Belper and Duffield stations.

A full revised timetable is included in Table G of the Derbyshire Train Times booklet available from Derby station.



These alterations are due to improvements being carried out by Network Rail to renew all the signalling from London to Chesterfield - to be located in a new signalling centre now being built in Derby. The second phase of this scheme, which is being carried out in North Derbyshire on the Erewash Valley line will be finished and commissioned between the above dates and during this period, the train services over that line are to be diverted over the Derby - Ambergate - Clay-Cross section.

In order to make capacity available between Derby & Ambergate, some Matlock Branch stopping trains will be unable to run on the main line south of Ambergate and will be replaced by buses as described. These arrangements may be repeated during summer 2008 as the lines north of Derby (including the connection to the branch at Ambergate Junction) are re-signalled. However FDVL are urging for that resignalling to coincide with the renovation of two bridges on the branch itself, thus minimising disruption and providing branch-line passengers with a direct benefit. Once completed, this would reinstate the capability of the line for direct London services, as well as the return of charter trains for Haddon Hall and Chatsworth House that used to run regularly until the early 1990's.

A few words from our Chairman

FDVL is now 3 years old and continues to press for a service on the line that meets the needs of the community and visitors alike. The last twelve months have been a period of change for the organisation. Since the last newsletter, Rupert has stepped down as Chairman following two hectic years at the helm getting FDVL off the ground. I would like to thank Rupert for his hard work over that period establishing us as a respected body in the community rail world and enabling us to build positive relationships with those responsible for the line within Network Rail, Central Trains and the Department for Transport. Taking over with these foundations firmly in place has made my life a lot easier. We have also welcomed some new members to the Steering Group, Helen Crane, David Rayner Bob Pennyfather and Stewart Smith, while Allan Dare has stepped into the Vice Chairman's role and Geoff Errington has become our meeting's secretary. I'd like to both welcome the newcomers and thank the whole team for their tireless efforts for the Friends and supporting Alastair Morley at DVRTP.

The last year has seen the FDVL continue to develop strategies for improving the services on the line and raising its awareness in the wider community, holding a successful summit conference at Cromford Mill courtesy of the Arkwright Society in April. This was attended by representatives of local authorities, the railway industry users and local businesses and following lively, interactive discussion a set of priority projects were identified to improve the line, the timetable being top of the list. FDVL would also like to thank DVRTP, the Universal Improvement Company and Faber Maunsell for their assistance in making the day a success.

In July the line was officially designated a Community Rail service under the Community Rail strategy enabling us to have much more involvement in the decision making process for the line. Network Rail as a result of this have undertaken to restore the line to a state in which through trains to London can run once again by November 2008, just in time for the first major timetable change under the new franchisee. The station adoption programme is moving forward under the guidance of Robin Lumb and evidence can be seen at Whatstandwell and Duffield, of which more below. Other stations should follow soon.

Sometimes there are issues with the service, but we are grateful for the assistance of Paul Burnage, our route manager at Central Trains for working hard on our behalf to resolve them. Sometimes it feels like a losing battle, but we do see signs of hope.

The last few months has been taken up with the re-franchising process to ensure all the bidders understand the potential for growth on the line and plan their service offer accordingly. We will keep you updated on progress.

I'm continually excited by the success of innovative ideas to grow patronage on other community lines around the country. I look forward to continuing to work as a partnership with the DVRTP, Network Rail and the operator to implement exciting new initiatives to encourage more people to use the line.

Ian Ambrose

Station to Station

Whatstandwell

Whatstandwell Station has been adopted by FDVL. The waiting shelter has been replaced thanks to funding from The Derwent Valley Rural Transport Partnership and we continue to receive enthusiastic support and ideas from their Project Officer, Alastair Morley.

A border alongside the Station Car Park has been cleared and a hedge planted. During the next few weeks, garden planters will be installed on the platform to keep the Station looking attractive to our passengers. Network Rail have carried out some repairs to the footbridge and we are hopeful that next year some further refurbishment will take place.

Note: Due to the bus substitution outlined on page 1, parking at Whatstandwell will be very limited due to the placement of Portacabins and space for buses to turn and park.

Matlock.

David Barker, Matlock's Mayor, town councillor and member of Derbyshire Dales District Council (DDDC) is leading efforts to adopt the station with registration of the group currently under way. We hope to be able to announce the commencement of this adoption very soon.

Customer Information.

Alastair Morley and the DVRTP successfully installed a departure board at Matlock Bath station over the winter and cured a long standing fault on the screens at Belper, which have now worked consistently for several months.

Customer help and emergency points have been installed at all stations recently.

Refranchising process update

The current Central Trains franchise ends in November 2007 and the process to find a successor is well underway. From November, all Central Trains East Midlands area services combine with Midland Mainline services to form an East Midlands franchise. This offers a number of advantages, most importantly, management based in Derby rather than Birmingham and the opportunity to link up services and provide through trains to Nottingham or London. The Department for Transport has short-listed four bidders:

- Arriva Trains
- First Group
- National Express
- Stagecoach

They have now submitted their bids based on a specification drawn up by the DfT, our responses to the consultation process held over the summer (available on our website) and more recent comments and corrections provided to the documentation made public by ourselves, DVRTP and Derbyshire County Council among others.

We have been through a process of meeting with the bidders' representatives to press our requirements for the service levels and ideas for developing and marketing the service. They in turn share their understanding of the line's potential and we help them improve this through sharing our knowledge about local developments such as the housing and employment developments in the valley and our more detailed understanding of the service and its users.

They will have to distil this plus the input from all the other equally vociferous pressure groups across the region and prepare a bid. Although all those we have talked to so far recognise that there is much room for improvement in the current service, particularly for commuters and providing connections for passengers to Nottingham, London and elsewhere, at the end of the day DfT policy is usually to choose the cheapest bidder. However there is hope that the need for an additional Nottingham to Derby train each hour will offer a real opportunity to improve our services.

Indications are that all the bidders consider the current timetable inadequate. FDVL will continue to monitor the process closely and report back. A final decision is expected in August.

Matlock Developments

After ten years of planning and discussion, Sainsburys started developing the former Cawdor Quarry site adjacent to Matlock Station in December with an obvious visible presence from February. Work on building the new supermarket has progressed at a rapid pace and at the time of writing, the steel framework of the main building is looking largely complete, with a start made to fitting roof sections. The former large un-metalled free car park in the former goods yard has been replaced with the first half of the new A6 relief road and new tarmaced parking area. Adjacent the railway station the new bus station interchange is taking shape with the former parcels shed being converted into a refreshment facility and toilets.



Photo: New Sainburys building adj Matlock Sta

In terms of the dedicated station car parking, FDVL lodged a formal objection to Derbyshire Dales District Councils (DDDC) plans to start charging for car parking at Matlock station. Despite three other objections, the handover of the management of these spaces went through on the basis that they will be reviewed with the new franchisee from November.

FDVL has also written to the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) who is sympathetic to our complaint, recognising the loss of railway amenity for what is a long standing arrangement of free parking and continue to discuss the matter with Network Rail and Central Trains.

The final location for dedicated railway customer parking will be adjacent to the new bus station building in the area now being cleared for resurfacing and is planned to be available for use from during mid summer.

The supermarket and petrol station are due to be open for business from sometime in Autumn 2007 and will provide an ideal shopping facility for passengers and town folk alike.

How to Join

If you would like to join us, comment on the train services or be kept informed of FDVL activities, please complete the form below and send it to:

Membership Secretary, Robin Lumb at; membership@fdvl.org.uk

Or tear off this form and send it to: Friends of the Derwent Valley Line
The Projects Officer
Derwent Valley Rural Transport Partnership
C/o Amber Valley Borough Council
Town Hall
Ripley
DE45 3BT

Name:

Organisation (if appropriate):

Address:

.....

Email:

Telephone:

Local station:

Skills:

What skills could you offer the Friends of the Derwent Valley Line? (e.g. Knowledge of local history, ability to organise walks in the area, web skills, design skills, etc).

Our Website/contact

The best way to keep informed of the FDVL activities is through our website www.fdvl.org.uk Details of meetings, aims, activities as well as what is happening to the service is all available as well as all the newsletters. We also aim to use it as the main means of keeping members informed as to what is happening. We would also like to encourage anyone who has any news or pictures of the line to send them to our webmaster, membership@fdvl.org.uk

Comments on the site and what else you would like to see on it – real time train information? - are also welcome.

This newsletter has been funded by the Friends of the Derwent Valley.

MEET THE MANAGER.

The next meeting of the Friends of the Derwent Valley has Paul Burnage of Central Trains attending to give an update of current issues and answer questions and will take place at 17:30 on Tuesday 12th June at The Brunswick Inn, Derby

FDVL Strategy Update

In the run-up to the new franchise operator, FDVL are updating our Strategy document for the line (the 2005 version can be downloaded from our website at www.fdvl.org.uk), this will include a revised section on connecting services. If you have ideas or suggestions and wish to contribute to the document, please contact us via the DVRTP Project Officer address on this page.