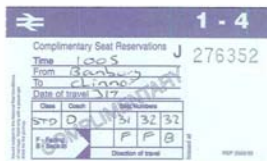


## A Grand Day Out.

On Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 201 the three 'Oldies' from the Maintenance team took time out to travel on a steam special arranged by Chiltern Railways from Banbury to Chinnor, this was in celebration of the centenary of the Bicester cut-off. The weather was ideal, a sunny and cloudless sky with a slight breeze. It was billed as a unique opportunity to travel directly to Chinnor over a temporary connection put in for the day only.



*Our tickets for the journey.*



Trevor & Ian arrived at Warwick Parkway just in time to see the empty stock working pass through with a West Coast Railways class 47 on the front, Jim Tipping (DMU Group President) was driving, with DMU Group members, Phil Alison and Ian Baxter working as guards. Trevor & Ian took a scheduled Chiltern Clubman service to Banbury, Brian H travelled down from Wolverhampton by Virgin & Cross Country trains, the later 15 minutes late at Banbury !.

The Class 47 was shunted off the front of the special and the GWR Pannier (in BR Black livery) No. 1600 was watered in the sidings behind the main platforms, while we awaited the special to move over to our platform there was a succession of passenger and freight services through.



*Class 47, 1600 & set in Back Road at Banbury*



*1600 and set arriving in the platform at Banbury Spot Brian H & Trevor looking on.*

An on-time departure from Banbury with 1600 putting up good times on the journey to Bicester, using the Down line as this was closed beyond Princes Risborough for maintenance work. To make up for the lack of a buffet car (due to train lengths), bottles of water were provided free of charge. At one point the Class 47 passed us on the main running line, at Bicester the loco was watered from a road tanker. On arrival at Princes Risborough the Class 47 had been stabled in the back loop and after the steam loco crew had been joined by the crew from the Chinnor Railway, 1600 was run round ready for the trip down the branch. The station was a mass of photographers, as had been most bridges on the route down from Banbury.



*DMU Group member and Chiltern Senior Manager, Ian Baxter on guards duties at Princes Risborough.*

The train set-off over the cross-over and by the redundant signalbox onto the old Thame branch, after about ¼ mile we were stopped at the location of the track slewing, Network Rail staff had slewed the remaining section of the Thame branch over to join with the preserved CPRR line, the train was then authorised the move over this link, and after a short stop at the official boundary between Network Rail and the CPRR, the train proceeded onto the Chinnor branch, the first such move since the early 1980's. All down the line there were photographers and locals looking on at this special.

Arrival at the tiny station of Chinnor, which only fitted about half of our train in to the platform, must have been some occasion as the station area thronged with onlookers. We left the train and retired to the buffet tent (for homemade cakes), 1600 was uncoupled and moved forward into the yard, as there is no run-round loop at Chinnor station. A class 37 was moved onto the coaches and these were drawn forward into a siding, 1600 returned to the station and was watered up.



*Class 37 in Mid-line livery collecting the stock*



*1600 watering up at Chinnor*

Due to construction work on a new housing development, we could not walk down the yard to see the Chinnor Railway's stock, so Trevor & Brian took a walk into Chinnor village, while Ian took some photos and chatted with some old contacts.

1600 was moved into the siding to collect the coaches and then these were drawn forward into the platform, an on-time departure was made for the trip up the branch back to Princes Risborough, where the CPRR crew left us and 1600 was run-round the stock, ready for departure back to Bicester, the class 47 left ahead of us for Banbury.



*Class 47 in back loop at Princes Risborough*



*1600 being checked over ready for return run*

The trip to Bicester was again at a lively speed and the line side had many photographers taking pictures and videos. On arrival at Bicester there was a short un-veiling of a plate marking the centenary of the Bicester cut-off by Adrian Shooter, chairman of Chiltern Railways.

The departure from Bicester was delayed by a late running Chiltern service !, and the trip to Banbury was punctuated with short signal stops to allow the Chiltern train to arrive at Banbury ahead of us. At Banbury the Class 47 was shunted onto the front of the train ready for the ECS run to Tyseley, Trevor & Ian swapped platforms to catch a Chiltern service back to Warwick Parkway, Brian waited for a return Cross Country service to Wolverhampton.

The trip certainly lived up to all expectations, and a big thank you must go to all those involved with the organisation for the day, Chiltern Railways, West Coast Railways, Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway, Vintage Trains and Network Rail.

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