



THE ABBEY FLYER NEWSLETTER

Silverlink Franchise: All Change Please.

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You may have seen in the news that the Silverlink Franchise is to be extended to 2007, but then merged with part of Central trains to create a West Midlands franchise, of which the Abbey line will be part. The current Silverlink Metro trains and inner London rail services look set to be taken over by Transport for London in 2007, and we understand that a separate new London Rail franchise is to be let. The Abbey line may revert to single voltage trains after 2007, although Silverlink have hinted at the idea of pur-

chasing their own fleet of 2-3 class 313s specifically for use on the Abbey line. This may help tip the balance for the passing loop as it will reduce the costs of leasing an extra train. However TfL are planning for new 3 car trains to replace the 29 year old 313s which are showing their age internally.

The December timetable change sees little alteration in Abbey line services, although previous timings of rush hour trains are now corrected so that these tie up with the National timetable. We understand there

will be some extra trains though for special events, which will be experimental. However there are a number of important changes to connecting services at Watford, with Silverlink gaining an 'extra' service stopping at Watford Junction each hour. Southern also have more trains running in service between Three Bridges and Gatwick, to go with the recent early morning service from the airport. This service is expected to go half hourly in time, like the Abbey line!

The Editor

Special points of interest:

- The Abbey Line is one of 6 pilot community rail projects to establish best practice and reduced costs of operation with increased usage.
- The Abbey Line is one of some 53 community rail partnerships nationwide as part of ACORP.
- The Sunday service is one of 2 in Herts supported by Herts County Council, the other being the Royston-Cambridge local service.

Park Street Rail Freight Terminal

Recent local press reports state that the long running proposal for a major rail-freight terminal adjacent the M25 will go to the Secretary of State for decision, due to its size and impact upon the Green Belt. The

terminal would not connect directly to the M25, but would have links to the A405 North Orbital Road and rail spur to the Midland mainline. A future link to the WCML via the Abbey line is possible.

This may guarantee the future of the line, which may be shared with freight traffic. Abfly's position is generally supportive, as freight is in the CRP initiative, but we need to consider all the implications if built.

News in Brief

*The level crossing at Watford North is finally due to be replaced in March 2006, following a year's preparation work. The existing half barriers date from 11th December 1966.

*The unofficial step free access to the Abbey line platform at Watford Junction, behind the buffer stops at the end of platform 10 and onto the redundant platform will become official in January 2006 with disabled access signage installed.

*Pedestrian and cycle route signage to both Watford North and Garston has appeared at strategic points within a mile radius of each station. Expect more small scale improvements like this in future.

*Passengers at Watford North are being asked to express their views on the proposed installation of cycle facilities at the station. Would you use them? Group station manager James Elliot would like to hear from you on 07768 833481 or e-mail

james.elliott@silverlink-trains.com

*Pay and display parking is being introduced at St. Albans Abbey which will cost £2 per day and will be installed by Vinci Park by December. Customers requiring season tickets will need to come to the car park office at Watford, although there will be someone on site initially to deal with season tickets/enquiries.

* The next newsletter will include a photospread and 'mystery shopper' survey.



**The Abbey Flyer
takes only 16
minutes from
Watford to St.
Albans
www.abfly.org.uk**

Southend Special

Community Rail Day 2006, will be Saturday May 20th held at York and sponsored by GNER. Our chairman in conjunction with Silverlink is to arrange a return day trip to Southend as Abfly's contribution. Promotional rate tickets will be available

shortly up to March 31st for Abfly members ONLY, after which tickets would go on sale to the general public at higher rates. We would need some idea of numbers fairly soon for planning purposes.

The train is likely to be a class 321 unit, although may

require doubling up if all of Abfly's members turn up.

The train will run from St. Albans Abbey to Southend Victoria probably via Willesden and Stratford. Travel time will be about 2 hours.

Late Night Service Feedback

It seems the most complained about aspect of the Abbey Line is not punctuality, frequency, cleanliness, fares or security, but the lack of a late night service. If you look at the advertised timetable, the last train leaves Watford Junction Weekdays at 21.31 but curiously later at 22.06 on Sundays. The late night service was cut back some

years ago, but late night activities in Watford and St. Albans have increased considerably since then, with many young people now out and about after closing time at 23.00. There are some late night bus services, including a 22.50 602 service from Watford to Hatfield via St. Albans most nights, but this goes via Radlett and London

Colney. The 320 finishes by 18.47 or 18.12 (Weekdays only), leaving Bricket Wood literally in the dark. There is a 356 contract service to How Wood and Park Street timed at 20.05/21.00 and 22.20/23.00 respectively, and the one-way W1 at 23.21 ex Watford Junction. Weekend taxis are doing very well out of it though!

Power Cuts and Litterbugs

The enclosed photograph shows a rare venture by a class 150 2 car diesel multiple unit named 'Community Forest', seen at St. Albans Abbey at 0922 on a misty Sunday 16th October 2005. This train normally works the Marston Vale line between Bletchley and Bedford. This resulted from engineering work to overhead power lines on October 16th, 23rd and 30th, and a power cut in St. Albans. Class 321 electric multiple units have been seen on the branch on various oc-

casions, as the branch is classified as a 'County' line by Silverlink, and therefore county rolling stock should be cleared for use on the line. This train had 12 passengers, the bus the previous week nil.

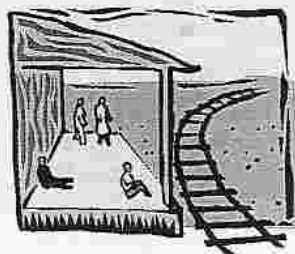


The line is part of the community rail partnership and should be a focal point for local communities. However I was horrified looking around St. Albans Abbey at the amount of rubbish and litter present. It looked as though there had been a party at the station the previous night. The CRP will therefore be setting up station adoption teams to help keep stations tidy and report any problems to Silverlink at Watford Junction so that they can be quickly remedied.

Station Adoption

The Community Rail Partnership are looking for people to become involved in station adoption on the line. If you wish to become involved, please contact Maria Cutler at Herts County Council or via links on our website, www.Abfly.org.uk, or by

phone 07770 993162 or email maria.cutler@hertscc.gov.uk. Station adoption groups have already started at Watford North, How Wood, Park Street with St. Albans Abbey in progress – Garston and Bricket Wood are still available.



The Abbey Flyer
serves 7 stations all
week up to every 45
minutes
www.abfly.org.uk

Christmas Shopping

After months of building works and roadworks, the new look extended Waitrose in St. Albans is now open and certainly worth a visit for your pre-Christmas shopping. The store is located approximately 3/4 mile from the Abbey station on foot or cycle either up St. Stephens Hill and King Harry lane or direct on foot through Veru-

lamium park. People seem to travel considerable distances to use this particular store.

In Watford the Harlequin centre is staying open later in December from 9am-9pm most days to make shopping out of hours easier and is located about 1/2 mile from Watford Junction in the town centre.

The St. Albans Marks and Spencer store has also been refurbished recently in time for Christmas, and there will be the usual German Christmas Market in the city in the run up to and around Christmas. These are located about half a mile from the Abbey Station. Don't leave it too late though!

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ST ALBANS BRANCH OF



THE LOCOMOTIVE CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN

The St. Albans branch of the Locomotive Club of Great Britain meet on the second Thursday of each month at 7.30 pm at the Chiswell Green United Reform Hall, Watford Road, St. Albans.

Their secretary is John Green;

telephone 01727-861839,

or online at; www.lcgb.net.

Christmas and New Year Services 2005

This year there will be a normal service except where indicated below. However you are well advised to check your travel arrangements and fares and connections before travelling, as late changes to services and ticket validity may occur.

Saturday 17th December; 'Santa Specials' run between 0922 and 1307 ex-St.Albans Abbey.

Saturday 24th December; Normal service but last train will be 20.31 ex-Watford and 20.52 ex-St. Albans Abbey.

Christmas Day and Boxing Day; NO SERVICE.



Tuesday 27th December; Saturday service. First train 06.46 ex-Watford.

Wednesday 28th December; Saturday service.

Thursday 29th December; Saturday service.

Friday 30th December; Saturday service.

New Years Eve; Normal Saturday service.

New Years Day; Sunday service. First train 10.06 ex-Watford.

Monday 2nd January; Saturday service. First train 07.31 ex-Watford.

Tuesday 3rd January; Normal Weekday service.

Wishing all our members a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year.

The Editor