

A better railway for the Cotswolds



February 2011 update

2011 has seen the new railway for the Cotswolds begin to take shape as engineers start laying double track on the line. With work taking place at night so as to minimise the impact on train services, five of the twenty miles of track required have now been laid.

Making tracks

The last two trains between Oxford and Worcester each weekday are being replaced by buses while the double track is laid. This arrangement will last until 22 May.

Once the new track is in place, two line closures will be required to make changes to signalling and stations, and connect the new track to the old:

- **28 May – 6 June:** Line closed between Oxford and Moreton-in-the-Marsh
- **6 – 22 August:** Line closed between Moreton-in-the-Marsh and Worcester

By the end of August this year the project will be complete, meaning a faster, more reliable railway for passengers on the Cotswold line.

Why redouble?

The Cotswold line is a single track railway along much of its length.

This limits the number of trains that can run on the line, and makes it less flexible to respond to delays.

We're converting 20 miles of the Cotswold line to double track railway to provide a better train service on the line.

The future for the line

With the completion of the redoubling in sight, Lord Faulkner of Worcester, President of the Cotswold Line Promotion Group, looks ahead to the future for the route.



Lord Faulkner of Worcester
President of the Cotswold Line Promotion Group

"Once Network Rail's redoubling project is finished in August, there will be the opportunity to achieve not just a more frequent timetable, but a more efficient one too. I look forward to seeing the end of delays at Evesham, Moreton-in-Marsh,

and Ascott-under-Wychwood, as trains wait to let each other pass.

"We in the CLPG want to see an hourly service in each direction from London to Worcester and Great Malvern, along with better connections at Worcester to the west of England via Bristol and the north via Birmingham.

"As a Worcester resident, I am particularly keen to see faster services on the Cotswold line. Too many Worcester people prefer to drive to Warwick Parkway or Birmingham International to pick up trains, or travel through Birmingham New Street. Eventually I would like to see not just one train an hour in each direction on the Cotswold Line, but two, with the second running fast or semi-fast between Oxford and Worcester.

"But as Confucius said, 'A journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step'. The first step on the Cotswold line is finishing the double tracking this year, and I wish everyone concerned with this vital work every success."



Theresa Ceesay
Station Manager, First Great Western

Station Manager's perspective

Anyone who travels regularly on the Cotswold line is likely to recognise Theresa Ceesay. Station Manager for First Great Western, Theresa has been involved in the redoubling scheme since the beginning, and says that teamwork has been the secret to its success.

"From planning the six-week blockade that kick-started the project, to getting out on the stations to do the Meet the Manager sessions, to supporting "Soundtracks", the musical to celebrate the redoubling, the whole thing has been a great team effort.

"During the two blockades planed this year (28th May to 6th June and 6th August to 22nd August) volunteers from Network Rail and First Great Western, along with the Cotswold Line Promotion Group, will be out and about gardening and painting on the stations along the line.

"We all have a role to play in the lead up to the completion of the project and I know that the team work that has been tried and tested up to now will deliver a positive result."



Steven Walker
Campden BRI Institute Director

The Cotswolds rely on rail

The railway is vital to the economy of the Cotswolds, providing an important link to the West Midlands, the Thames Valley and London. Campden BRI, the food research institute based in Chipping Campden, employs 300 people and has clients all over the world. The institute's director, Steven Walker, discusses why they rely on the railway.

"Campden BRI gets around 12,000 business visitors per year - many by train. We help food and drinks companies with the science and technology that goes into the food you buy at your local supermarket.

"We have processing equipment to help develop new products and laboratories to check that raw materials are as good as they should be. Our consumer panels test new products, our technologists advise on production methods and our food law specialists on the legality of labels. We even advise on the design of food factories.

"The line improvements will make it easier for our visitors to reach us by train - which will be even better for them, our business, and the many local hotels and shops that they use while here."

If you want to know more about Campden BRI and the work it does, visit: www.campden.co.uk



Extending the reach of the railway

Improved train services will mean more people wanting to get to stations. Mike Obst from Gloucestershire Council discusses how to get them there:

"The redoubling of the North Cotswolds Line represents a major improvement to rail infrastructure. The next challenge is to ensure that prospective rail passengers can easily access the new and improved services.

"Within the context of 'Big Society' thinking this could be achieved through transport partnerships involving the local community.

"In the case of the Cotswolds these could include the tourist industry as well as the Cotswolds AONB. County and District Councils may still have a limited role to play here, but to be truly effective such partnerships will need to be led by the private sector.

"Completion of redoubling can become the starting point for finding new ways to extend the reach of the railway, and making rail stations a hub within their local community rather than simply being somewhere to catch a train."

Summer
2009

Double track
laid in Chipping
Camden Tunnel

Summer
2010

Preparatory
work on track

Autumn
2010

Honeybourne
bridge replaced

Dec 2010 –
May 2011

New double track
laid, work carried
out at night to
minimise disruption

28 May –
6 June

Stage 1 complete –
Charlbury to Ascott-
under-Wychwood

6 – 22
August

Stage 2 complete –
Moreton-in-Marsh
to Evesham

Contact Details

For more information on our plans for the Cotswolds visit: networkrail.co.uk/cotswolds

For more information on how your trains are affected visit: firstgreatwestern.co.uk/northcotswolds

You can call the Network Rail helpline 24/7 on 08457 11 41 41