

All this came to an end however with an accident in December 1935. The Finmere slip had taken place uneventfully, but on the approach to Woodford, after the detached slip coach dropped back as intended under the control of its guard, the brakes on the main train, which should have steamed non-stop through Woodford into the distance, became defective and brought the train to an unscheduled halt. Escaping steam obscured the guard's view ahead and the solitary carriage, in a sequence worthy almost of Buster Keaton, 'overtook' the main train, striking the rear at about 20 m.p.h. and telescoping into it. Both the main train's and the slip coach's guards were badly hurt and eleven passengers received minor injuries – one being (according to a press report) the servant of a local M.P. The Inspecting Officer subsequently blamed the company for using inadequate equipment.

From February 1936 the two slips on the 6.20 p.m. down were replaced by brief stops at Finmere and Woodford. In passing, it is hardly necessary to add that among the pre-nationalisation companies the most enthusiastic exponent of slipping was the Great Western, particularly at Bicester and Banbury on its Paddington-Birmingham-Wolverhampton expresses using the new 1910 line. Indeed the last slip in the British Isles took place at Bicester from a down express in September 1960. The writer recalls that two Banburians (the late Dr. Pat Hewlings and Mr. John Cheney) in giving separate reminiscences of pre-war Banbury both began by describing the detachment of a slip carriage south of Banbury Station from a north-bound Great Western express and its collection and pulling into the platform by the station's pilot engine. It was obviously a major event in the daily life of the town.

For Banburians the most useful train, using the G.C.'s London extension, was the Ports-to-Ports express, which from 1907 until the outbreak of the Second World War ran from Newcastle to Barry (later extended to Swansea) on weekdays only, using the Woodford-Banbury link. On alternate days carriages of the North Eastern Railway and the G.W.R were employed. At Banbury locomotives were changed and the south-bound train then set off mid-afternoon via 'our' branch line from King's Sutton Junction to Adderbury and thence along the single line through Bloxham, Hook Norton and Chipping Norton (where the train paused to pick up passengers only) past Kingham (crossing the Worcester line by a girder bridge) and thence over the Cotswolds to Cheltenham and its final destination. The whole journey took some eleven hours, and the only travellers who regularly went from end to end were ships' pilots.