

The Bicester cut-off was reduced to a single line in 1968 and services were drastically reduced. In 1971 the route was used by six trains to Birmingham and three that terminated at Banbury. In 1973-74 most through services from Birmingham were diverted to run via Reading to Paddington and intermediate stations were served by diesel multiple units running between Banbury and Marylebone.

Stopping Trains.

A photograph of a GWR class 517 locomotive waiting to leave Banbury for Bicester, supposedly on 1 July 1910, has been reproduced in many publications, most recently in Hugh Jones's new book, *The Chiltern Railways Story* (p.29). However, for a short time after the opening of the new line, two 7 ft 8 in 4-2-2 locomotives based at Banbury worked stopping trains to and from London. One of these, No 3007 *Dragon*, was said to play with a load of only three coaches. New stations or halts were opened when the line opened, at Aynho Park, Ardley, Bicester North, Blackthorn and Brill & Ludgershall. A halt at Dorton was added in 1937, and trains also served Haddenham and Ilmer on the joint line. Some local trains terminated at Princes Risborough, and participated in workings to and from Aylesbury, and one or two continued to High Wycombe.

By 1919 autocars, or push-and-pull trains, worked almost all the local services. An autocar is a carriage with a compartment at one end from which the locomotive coupled to the other end can be driven, by rodding on the Great Western but by other means on other railways. One preserved example regularly provides rides for visitors to the Great Western Society centre at Didcot. The autocars stationed at Banbury also participated until 1951 in workings to and from Kingham through Chipping Norton. It was proposed in 1936 to operate the services to both Kingham and Princes Risborough with two of the GWR's streamlined diesel railcars, but the project never materialised. During the 1950s the local services, five in each direction, were worked by three autocars. One of these was replaced in April 1961 by a British Railways 'bubble car' of the kind retained by Chiltern Railways for use between Aylesbury and Princes Risborough. When the summer timetable was introduced in June 1962 a reduced service was worked entirely by the 'bubble car', but it continued only until the first week of 1963 when the locals were withdrawn and the stations at Aynho Park, Ardley, Brill & Ludgershall, Haddenham and Ilmer closed, Blackthorn having been closed ten years earlier.