

the milk tanks on a separate train, the empties departing Marylebone at 14.09 reaching Banbury at 16.50, and the full tanks arriving at Marylebone at 20.20. After the disappearance of the 'big four' companies it was logical to work the tanks directly between Banbury and Marylebone. Enthusiasts would await the arrival from the south at about 21.30 of a Neasden locomotive which would place the tanks in the down bay platform. It was usually a 2-6-4T, an ex-LNER L1 in the early 1950s, then an ex-LMS Fairburn engine, and subsequently a British Railways standard machine of similar type, but sometimes tender engines were used. The locomotive then went to the up side of the station to await the arrival of the train conveying the full tanks at 23.00. In the mid-1950s Councillor Harry Price of Banbury Town Council, himself a railwayman, persuaded the management to attach a pair of passenger coaches to the up milk train at Birmingham (Snow Hill), which, departing at 22.00, carried passengers to Leamington and Banbury. Passengers could travel further south by waiting for just over an hour until the arrival of the overnight train from York to Swindon two minutes after midnight. The Dorrington train was still running in the summer of 1965 but ceased soon afterwards.

### **Chiltern Railways.**

The more recent history of the line opened in 1910 is chronicled in our member Hugh Jones's excellent book, *The Chiltern Railways Story*. Services from Marylebone were pitifully bad by the 1980s, and government in 1986 proposed to convert the terminus into a coach station, diverting rail passengers to other routes. The critical point from which improvement can be traced was the formation of the Cherwell Rail Users Group in 1989. A Total Route Modernisation project was inaugurated by Network SouthEast, then part of the nationalised British Rail, and in 1992 serious consideration began of rail services in the M40 Corridor. As the railway system was privatised, Chiltern Railways under the leadership of Adrian Shooter, previously director of engineering performance for British Railway, emerged first as a separate train operating unit in 1994, then as the private company with the franchise to operate the lines from Marylebone in 1996. Members of this Society were privileged to hear Adrian Shooter's own account of these developments in December 2009. The new company has transformed the system, restoring double track where lines had been singled, introducing new trains, opening new stations at Haddenham & Thame Parkway and Warwick Parkway, and above all increasing speeds and frequencies so