

### Postscript, by Alan Donaldson

Indeed Chiltern Railways' proposals, already being implemented, include the construction of a chord line from Bicester Town station (on the old Oxford-Bletchley-Cambridge line) currently the terminus of Oxford-Islip-Bicester services. This will lead up to the 1910 line just south-east of Bicester North station and enable through-running from Oxford to Marylebone, in direct competition to First Great Western services on the original nineteenth century route through Didcot and Reading. A new station will be built at Water Eaton close to the existing Park-and-Ride to facilitate use of the new service by residents of North Oxford, Kidlington and the hinterland north-west of Oxford. Islip station will be rebuilt and the line re-doubled. So Oxford people bound for London will have the luxury of choosing between trains leaving their station to the capital in either a northerly or southerly direction. Of more interest to Banburians, their fastest train to the capital will be speeded-up from the present creditable few minutes over the hour (itself faster than timings achieved by the old Great Western and British Railways) to a mere 50 minutes, which will entail speeds of up to 100 m.p.h. in places. One name considered some years ago, but ultimately rejected, for Chiltern's latest '168' units was the "Chiltern Hundreds".

Nor did Chiltern Railways allow the centenary of the Bicester cut-off to go uncommemorated. Felicitously this event coincided with 175th anniversary of the G.W.R. itself, its Act of incorporation having been passed in 1835. For the occasion on 3rd July 2010 the "Centenary Special", a steam-hauled seven-coach train operated by Vintage Trains and based at Tyseley, Birmingham, ran from Banbury to Chinnor, calling at Bicester and Princes Risborough stations *en route*, exactly one hundred years and two days after the first train along the new line. The publicity leaflets for the train displayed the 1910 photograph mentioned above. At Princes Risborough the locomotive ran round its train and then hauled it over a specially-laid connection to Chinnor, an intermediate station on the long-closed branch to Watlington. This line is entirely volunteer run by the Chinnor and Princes Risborough Railway although as yet it stops short a half-mile from the latter station. Negotiations are well-advanced with Network Rail to bridge this final gap.