

ONCE UPON A TIME ...

- **55 years ago.** It was a bad start to the year for station closures. On 4 January, Uttoxeter to Leek closed. Two weeks later, Walsall lost its trains over the Chase to Rugeley, to Wolverhampton via Willenhall, through Lichfield to Burton and its trains through Sutton Park to Birmingham - all on the same day. Also on 18 January 1965, Nuneaton to Leamington Spa via Coventry lost its passenger trains, along with the direct line from Berkswell to Kenilworth.
- The number of commuters from stations south of Lichfield City was too much for the dmus available, so a loco hauled set ran at 07.34, returning from New Street at 17.45, usually hauled by a Type 2 diesel, but sometimes a steam engine.
- **30 years ago** Just south of Rugby, the West Coast Main Line had to closed for a week in February when an embankment at Hillmorton failed. The main cause was rabbits.
- Bournville station was first painted in Cadbury's purple.
- The monorail at Merry Hill shopping centre near Brierley Hill was declared to be a railway and so had to meet all the criteria of the Railway Inspectorate before passengers could be carried.
- A new station opened on 2 October 1990 called Bloxwich North.
- The Summer Timetable included a 22.50 Euston to Pwllheli on Friday nights. It was booked to wait on Abbey Foregate curve at Shrewsbury for 2 hours 50 minutes!
- Before work began to reinstate The Jewellery Line (estimated cost of £20 million), the public was allowed to walk from Birmingham Snow Hill to Handsworth along the old GWR trackbed on Sunday 21 October 1990. From Handsworth, there was a half hourly dmu shuttle to New Street, which reversed in the platform at Smethwick West. A charity donation of 'at least £1.50' was expected.
- There was a plan to buy 5 miles of old railway north of Nuneaton towards Ashby de la Zouch to create a road for testing new cars at up to 200 mph.
- The Cannock Chase Rail Promotion Group asked why trains on their newly reopened line needed two drivers, one who appeared just to sit in the cab as a passenger. Could this member of staff perhaps help passengers and collect fares? British Rail replied that he *[sic]* has to stand by the handbrake when the train stops at Hednesford because of the gradient. Therefore it has to be a driver as he must know how to operate the equipment [turn a wheel clockwise]. As for collecting fares, 'drivers are not trained.'

'Oldtimer'