

ONCE UPON A TIME

- **30 years ago** On 8 January, a tree on the line near Wem held a Manchester to Cardiff train there for about 90 minutes. It was reported that the driver invited all the passengers to come to a pub called The Albion where he offered them free drinks. His bosses were said to be pleased with his initiative and paid the bill.
- Coton Hill North signal box at Shrewsbury was bought by a local man to turn into a home. The council was reluctant to give planning permission as there appeared to be no road access, but he won on appeal.
- A carriage washing plant was installed at Worcester. It came second hand from Bristol.
- The Clansman, a daily through train from Inverness to Euston, was delayed by 21 minutes, just after departure from Birmingham New Street for a new tail lamp to be found. The original had been stolen by a member of the public.
- The linking together of local services to produce through trains created a train from Wolverhampton to Shrewsbury continuing to Wakefield Westgate.
- Sunday mornings saw Birmingham to Oxford services diverted through Worcester and along the Cotswold line.
- Merry Hill monorail opened on 31 May. [*WMRU's editor had been involved in its construction.*] For 30p, it linked the shops to Waterfront commercial and leisure development on the site of Round Oak steelworks at Brierley Hill, crossing above Level Street, for which permission had not been asked.
- Plans were discussed for a monorail by the same company as at Merry Hill from Birmingham New Street station to the International Convention Centre (close to where Monument Lane engine shed used to be). One option would be a loop through the Jewellery Quarter.
- Platforms at Yorton, between Shrewsbury and Crewe, were rebuilt higher. Rather than closing the station to do it, temporary platforms of scaffolding were provided.
- Plans had been drawn up to single the line between Worcester Shrub Hill and Norton Junction, but no money could be found to do it (*fortunately*).
- Dudley Council banned Thomas the Tank Engine books in schools on grounds of sexism. With Thomas's carriages being called Annie and Clarabel, it was asked, 'Should impressionable children be reading books in which the principal male character spends most of his time pulling females and coupling with them?'