

## VIEWPOINT by Roger Davis

On Saturday 17 September, SLUG Officer Keith Flinders uncovered two additional services operated by Chiltern Railways. This was a return Silver Set journey from Stourbridge Junction to London Marylebone and back, leaving Stourbridge Junction at 0645 and returning from Marylebone at 1910. The Class 168 Turbo services that normally departed at these times were retimed to run a few minutes later. When SLUG asked Chiltern about the extra services, it was told that this was because of the Cricket One Day Cup Final between Warwickshire and Surrey at Lords. In addition, a landslip on the West Coast Main Line near Watford Junction had reduced Virgin services by a third. The additional services operated to and from Stourbridge Junction rather than Birmingham because the Silver Set was based at Stourbridge Depot giving cricket fans in the Stourbridge area through services to and from Lords. This possibly ignored the fact that Stourbridge is historically in the county of Worcestershire and the majority of cricket fans in the area are “Pears” rather than “Bears”. Unfortunately, the match finished 30 overs early just before 4 pm so it turned out that the return service to Stourbridge was a bit late for most cricket fans.



Saturday morning services

SLUG has long campaigned for through services from Marylebone on Saturday evenings, and for return services on Sundays, given that Chiltern trains are stabled at Stourbridge throughout the weekend and operate out of service between Stourbridge and Birmingham. The actions on that Saturday prove that Chiltern are willing to operate through services under certain circumstances, although no attempt was made to advertise them along the Stourbridge line. The four Saturday morning services from Kidderminster to Marylebone are always well patronised at Stourbridge line stations despite passengers having to change at Birmingham on the return journey, sometimes having to wait up to 57 minutes for a connecting service to Kidderminster on Saturdays and up to 74 minutes on Sunday evenings. Therefore, SLUG believes that Stourbridge line passengers who travel on direct services to London on Saturday mornings deserve through return services in the evening and would support them. SLUG also believes that Stourbridge line passengers would also fully support through Sunday services to and from London.



Saturday evening and Sunday services

Three Saturday evening services that terminate at Birmingham then continue out of service to Stourbridge Depot, while two return out of service journeys operate on Sundays. SLUG believes that some, if not all, of these journeys should operate in service and will continue to press Chiltern Railways to provide these services.