

BROMSGROVE'S MISSING TRAINS

The extension of CrossCity to Bromsgrove last year gave the town three electric trains an hour to Birmingham to add to the hourly train from Hereford - or did it? Not quite. Missing are the 09.51 to Lichfield Trent Valley and the 11.12 and 13.12 to Four Oaks. These continue to start from Longbridge.

Why? Freight has already claimed its timetable slots up Lickey. In the case of the 13.12, the Newport Docks to Wolverhampton Steel Terminal is booked to leave Bromsgrove at 13.03. Even with a banker pushing at the back of the train, 2,000 tonnes of steel doesn't reach Barnt Green until 13.17, the same time as the 13.12 CrossCity would have been there. North from here is four track and the steel train takes the not yet electrified slow line to Longbridge where it is booked to sit for 31 minutes, awaiting a path along the main line. It would not have been difficult to have transferred some of that 31 minutes to Bromsgrove and allowed the 13.12 CrossCity to run but the risk is that the Cardiff to Nottingham train, due through Bromsgrove at 13.25, might catch it up. The steel train, incidentally, is only booked to run on Tuesdays and Thursdays - and never does!



A similar story explains the lack of an 11.12 departure from Bromsgrove. This time, it's the Margam to Corby train, which is due to set off up Lickey at 11.04. It's only booked on Fridays but the CrossCity service with which it would conflict is dropped from the timetable every day. The 09.51 is a bit of a mystery, there being no freight working that would prevent it running. The service from Hereford however runs 10 minutes later than usual in this hour.

Campaign for Rail hopes to see more freight on the rails but we don't want more CrossCity trains cut from the timetable for it. Routing freight via the Stourbridge - Walsall line would make a lot of sense, but Network Rail has no plans to reopen this route until the 2040s.

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