

Some Other Local Might Have Beens

While searching old newspaper archives, I found a number of other railways that were proposed, but never built. Here is a selection for anyone seeking inspiration. These were reported in the Reading Mercury

Wallingford to Watlington

The original proposal for a line to Watlington was for a continuation of the Wallingford branch across the Thames. The Wallingford branch opened on July 2nd 1866, shortly after the failure of Overend & Gurney.. It would have been expensive to cross the Thames, and there was no money to consider the extension to Watlington, although the proposal was revived several times.

Didcot to Watlington

This one actually got a Light Railway Order – in fact, two! I know nothing more about this line; it would have faced the same problem of requiring an expensive bridge across the Thames as the line from Wallingford. The Light Railway orders are held in the National Archives at Kew, but are not available online. The documents are ‘Didcot and Watlington Light Railway, 1898’, ref MT 58/35, and ‘Didcot and Watlington Light Railway Extensions, 1899’, ref MT 58/59.

Windsor and Maidenhead Light Railway

This proposal seems to have surfaced in 1901, and there was a meeting of the Light Railway Commissioners at Windsor to consider it. It seems to have been intended as a roadside tramway, possibly electrically powered. It would have run from Maidenhead station to a site near Windsor (GWR). A map of the proposed scheme is in the National Library of Scotland at

https://sl6.org.uk/mapviewer.php?page=20556&max_zoom=5

Highclere, Kingsclere and Basingstoke Light Railway

A proposal of 1900, a prospectus was issued and some land purchased. Correspondence and plans are held in the Hampshire Records Office. This scheme is detailed in Wikipedia article

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Highclere,_Kingsclere_and_Basingstoke_Light_Railway