

## Under the Floorboards

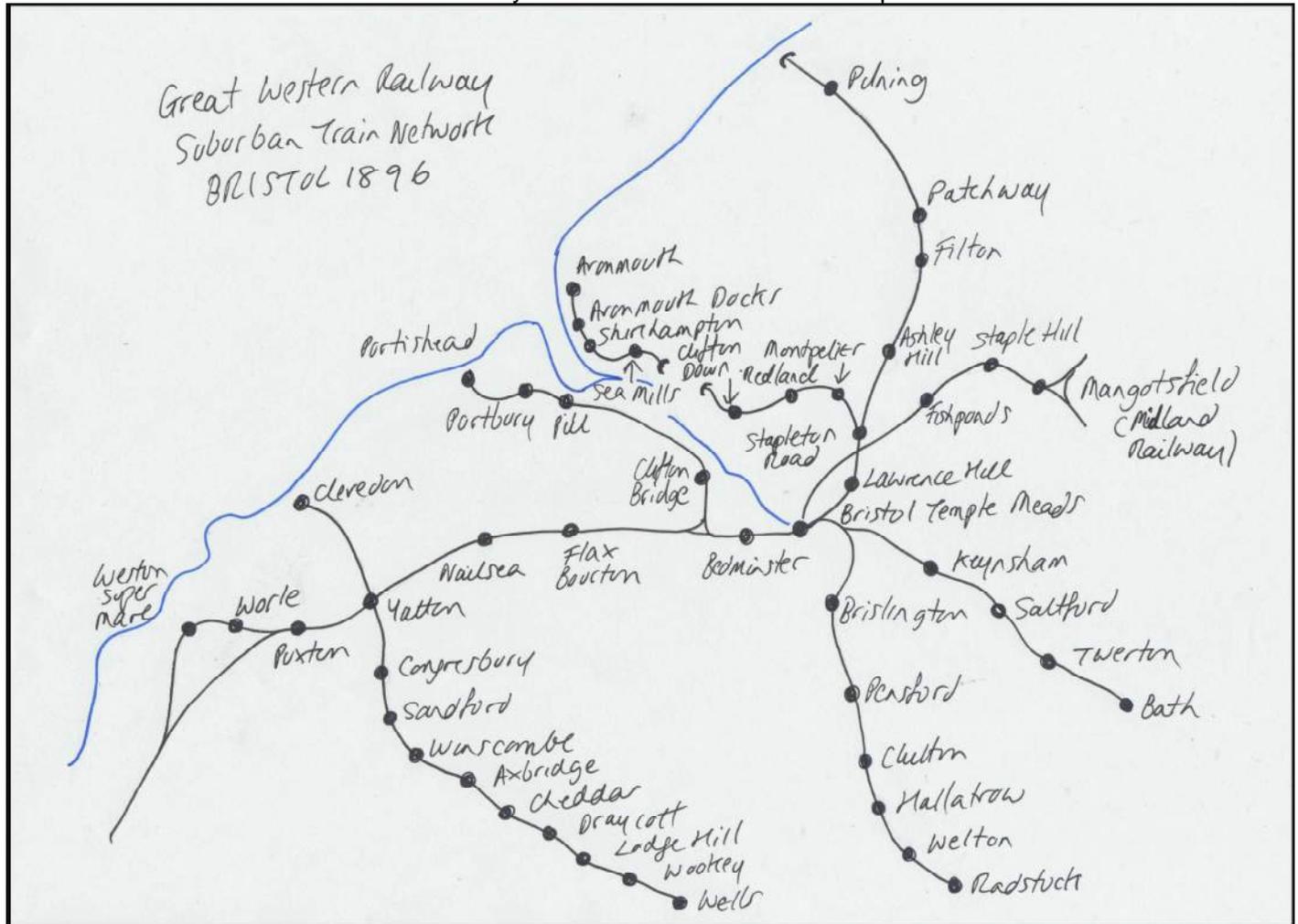
Whilst repairing the floor in our house in Montpelier, we found an old railway timetable in the void under the boards.

The timetable dates from 1896 and bears the title:  
Great Western Railway  
Suburban Train Service  
to and from BRISTOL  
October, November & December 1896



The paper is yellow and frayed but the keen reader can still decipher the schedules for various suburban and intercity services. It is interesting to note the stations served at that time, and to compare the journey times to the modern equivalent where a similar service is still in operation.

A sketch of the 1896 Bristol rail network may be useful to the reader at this point:



### **Bristol Temple Meads and Clifton Down**

Bristol (Temple Meads), Lawrence Hill, Stapleton Road, Montpelier, Clifton Down

The 1896 journey time from Bristol TM to Clifton Down was between 15-18 minutes

The 2014 journey time for this route is 12-15 minutes, with the same intermediate stops.

### **Clifton Down, Hotwells and Avonmouth**

From Clifton Down, via Sea Mills, Shirehampton, Avonmouth Dock to Avonmouth

From Hotwells, via Sea Mills, Shirehampton, Avonmouth Dock to Avonmouth

The 1896 journey time from Clifton Down to Avonmouth was between 20-23 minutes.

The 2014 journey time for this route is 11-15 minutes, the modern day Avonmouth station being known as Avonmouth Dock in 1896. The railway did not reach Severn Beach until 1900.

The Bristol Port & Pier Railway from Hotwells to Sea Mills closed in 1921 when the A4 Portway was widened

### **Bristol and Bath**

Bristol (Temple Meads), Keynsham, Salford, Twerton, Bath

The 1896 journey time from Bristol TM to Bath was 18-27 minutes.

The 2014 journey time is 11-17 minutes, today's service either being direct or stopping at Keynsham and Oldfield Park. Salford station closed in 1970. Twerton-on-Avon station closed in 1917 (renamed from Twerton to spare confusion with Tiverton!). Oldfield Park opened in 1929 close to the site of Twerton-on-Avon.

### **Bristol, Chepstow, Newport and Cardiff**

From Bristol (Temple Meads), via Lawrence Hill, Stapleton Road, Ashley Hill, Filton, Patchway and Stoke Gifford, Pilning, to Severn Tunnel Junction

Connections are listed for Chepstow, Newport and Cardiff

Note: this part of the timetable is so blackened I cannot decipher which services were direct, and which were via connection.

The 1896 journey time from Bristol TM to Severn Tunnel Junction was 41-47 minutes.

The 2014 journey time is 19-29 minutes, the trains stopping at Lawrence Hill (some services), Stapleton Road (some services), Filton Abbey Wood and Patchway.

Ashley Hill station closed in 1964 (Horfield station not featuring on this timetable as it was only open between 1927-1964). Filton station closed in 1903, but was superseded by Filton Junction and then Filton Abbey Wood from 1996. Pilning station is still open but is only served by two trains a week!

### **Bristol, Clevedon and Weston-super-Mare**

Bristol (Temple Meads), Bedminster, Flax Bourton, Nailsea, Yatton, Clevedon, Puxton, Worle, Weston-super-Mare

The 1896 journey time from Bristol TM to Weston super Mare was 38-52 minutes.

The 2014 journey time is 17-34 minutes, the fast trains running direct and the slower trains stopping at Bedminster (some services), Parson Street (some services), Nailsea & Backwell, Yatton, Worle and Weston Milton (opened 1933).

Flax Bourton station closed in 1964 (Long Ashton station not featuring on this timetable as it was only open between 1841 & 1856 and then 1929 & 1941). Puxton station closed in 1964. From 1884 to 1922 Worle station was on the Weston Loop line to Weston super Mare. The modern Worle station opened on the main line close to the site of Puxton station in 1990.

Until 1966 a shuttle service ran on the Clevedon branch line between Yatton and Clevedon which linked with the main line services.

### **Yatton, Cheddar and Wells**

Yatton, Congresbury, Sandford and Banwell, Winscombe, Axbridge, Cheddar, Draycott, Lodge Hill, Wookey, Wells

(with connecting services from Bristol (Temple Meads), Clevedon or Weston-super-Mare)

The 1896 journey time from Yatton to Wells was 50-55 minutes

Passenger traffic on the Cheddar Valley line ceased in 1963.

Part of the old railway line is now used as the Strawberry Line Cycle Path.

### **Bristol and Radstock**

Bristol (Temple Meads), Brislington, Pensford, Clutton, Hallatrow, Welton (for Midsomer Norton), Radstock

The 1896 journey time from Bristol TM to Radstock was between 47-50 minutes.

Passenger traffic on the Bristol and North Somerset line ceased in 1959.

Today the Bristol to Radstock car journey takes 40-50 minutes.

Part of the old railway line is now used as the Whitchurch Cycle Path.

### **Bristol and Portishead**

Bristol (Temple Meads), Bedminster, Clifton Bridge, Pill, Portbury, Portishead

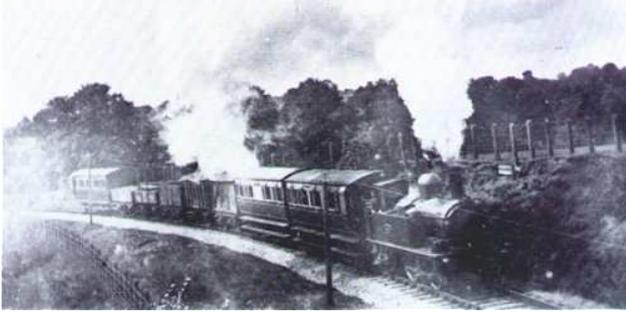
The 1896 journey time Bristol TM to Portishead was between 35-45 minutes.

Passenger traffic on the Portishead Railway ceased in 1964.

The journey from Bristol to Portishead can take 30-60 minutes by car.

MetroWest Phase 1 will re-open the line to passengers from 2019 with a proposed journey time of 17 minutes (assuming Pill is the only intermediate station).

### Photo GWR 517 class – late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Credit: Wiki)



### Midland Railway

This 1896 Great Western timetable does not include the Midland Railway services to Mangotsfield via Fishponds and Staple Hill. Passenger traffic on this line ceased in 1966. Part of the old railway line is now used as the Bristol Bath Cycle Path.

### Maps

The National Library of Scotland website has some nicely interactive maps from this era:

Sheet 250 - Chepstow (Outline) Publication date: 1897

<http://maps.nls.uk/view/101168573>

Sheet 264 - Bristol (Outline) Publication date: 1898

<http://maps.nls.uk/view/101168660>

Sheet 265 - Bath (Outline) Publication date: 1898

<http://maps.nls.uk/view/101168663>

Sheet 279 - Weston Super Mare (Outline) Publication date: 1898

<http://maps.nls.uk/view/101168756>

### Bristol's Rail Network in 2014

The timetable shows that the Bristol of 1896 was well connected by rail. The South Wales Main Line from Swindon via Badminton did not reach Patchway until 1903 and the Henbury Loop from Filton to Avonmouth did not open until 1910 so these are absent from the timetable.

The city of Bristol in 2014 relies on a road network including radial routes M5 (north and south), A38 (north and south), M4 (east and west), A420 (to Chippenham), A4 (to Bath), A37 (to Shepton Mallet), A370 (to Weston super Mare). Bristol even has half a ring road. Unfortunately the road network is congested at rush hour and also suffers from seasonal holiday traffic, especially on summer weekends (as the radio traffic bulletins are currently bewailing).

Bristol still benefits from good train links, but there is much potential for improvement to take the strain off the road network. Long-closed stations now find themselves in areas of high population density, eg, Ashley Hill, Horfield/Lockleaze, Ashton Gate. The re-opening to passengers of the freight only lines such as Portishead (MetroWest Phase 1 in 2019) and Henbury Loop (MetroWest Phase 2 in 2021) needs to be confirmed and expedited.

This timetable either slipped down the crack in the floorboards 118 years ago, or someone deliberately hid it as a time capsule. Either way, I was pleased to find it!

Carol D

August 2014

The timetable (complete with holes) can be found below.

BRISTOL CLIFF		W. NEWTON		CLIFF		SUNDAYS	
Bristol (Tem. Mt.) dep.	6:30	7:15	8:00	8:45	9:30	10:15	11:00
Lawrence Hill	6:45	7:30	8:15	9:00	9:45	10:30	11:15
Stapleton Road	7:00	7:45	8:30	9:15	10:00	10:45	11:30
Montpelier	7:15	8:00	8:45	9:30	10:15	11:00	11:45
CLIFFON D'WN arr.	7:30	8:15	9:00	9:45	10:30	11:15	12:00
CLIFFON D'WN dep.	7:45	8:30	9:15	10:00	10:45	11:30	12:15
Montpelier	8:00	8:45	9:30	10:15	11:00	11:45	12:30
Stapleton Road	8:15	9:00	9:45	10:30	11:15	12:00	12:45
Lawrence Hill	8:30	9:15	10:00	10:45	11:30	12:15	13:00
Bristol (Tem. Mt.) arr.	8:45	9:30	10:15	11:00	11:45	12:30	13:15

Passengers from or to these Stations change at Stapleton Road. Not on Bank Holidays.  
Calls at Ashley Hill and Pillons on Down Passenger Trains. Notices to be given at Stapleton Road.

## GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY.

### SUBURBAN TRAIN SERVICE TO AND FROM BRISTOL.

The Directors give notice that the Company do not undertake that the Trains shall start or arrive at the time specified in the Tables; nor will they be accountable for any loss, inconvenience, or injury which may arise from delays or detention, unless upon proof that such loss, inconvenience, injury, delay, or detention arose in consequence of the wilful misconduct of the Company's Servants.

**OCTOBER, NOVEMBER & DECEMBER, 1896**

J. L. WILKINSON,  
General Manager.

No. 34. WYMAN & SONS, LTD., Printers, 63, Carter Lane, Docton, Cornwall, ENGL. (1896)

### BRISTOL (TEMPLE MEADS) AND CLIFTON DOWN.

BRISTOL (T.M.) dep.		Lawrence Hill		Stapleton Road		Montpelier		CLIFTON D'WN arr.	
6:30	7:15	7:30	8:15	8:30	9:15	9:30	10:15	10:30	11:15
7:15	8:00	8:15	9:00	9:15	10:00	10:15	11:00	11:15	12:00
8:00	8:45	9:00	9:45	10:00	10:45	11:00	11:45	12:00	12:45
8:45	9:30	9:45	10:30	10:45	11:30	11:45	12:30	12:45	13:30
9:30	10:15	10:30	11:15	11:30	12:15	12:30	13:15	13:30	14:15
10:15	11:00	11:15	12:00	12:15	13:00	13:15	14:00	14:15	15:00
11:00	11:45	12:00	12:45	13:00	13:45	14:00	14:45	15:00	15:45
11:45	12:30	12:45	13:30	13:45	14:30	14:45	15:30	15:45	16:30
12:30	13:15	13:30	14:15	14:30	15:15	15:30	16:15	16:30	17:15
13:15	14:00	14:15	15:00	15:15	16:00	16:15	17:00	17:15	18:00
14:00	14:45	15:00	15:45	16:00	16:45	17:00	17:45	18:00	18:45
14:45	15:30	15:45	16:30	16:45	17:30	17:45	18:30	18:45	19:30
15:30	16:15	16:30	17:15	17:30	18:15	18:30	19:15	19:30	20:15
16:15	17:00	17:15	18:00	18:15	19:00	19:15	20:00	20:15	21:00
17:00	17:45	18:00	18:45	19:00	19:45	20:00	20:45	21:00	21:45
17:45	18:30	18:45	19:30	19:45	20:30	20:45	21:30	21:45	22:30
18:30	19:15	19:30	20:15	20:30	21:15	21:30	22:15	22:30	23:15
19:15	20:00	20:15	21:00	21:15	22:00	22:15	23:00	23:15	24:00
20:00	20:45	21:00	21:45	22:00	22:45	23:00	23:45	24:00	24:45
20:45	21:30	21:45	22:30	22:45	23:30	23:45	24:30	24:45	25:30
21:30	22:15	22:30	23:15	23:30	24:15	24:30	25:15	25:30	26:15
22:15	23:00	23:15	24:00	24:15	25:00	25:15	26:00	26:15	27:00
23:00	23:45	24:00	24:45	25:00	25:45	26:00	26:45	27:00	27:45
23:45	24:30	24:45	25:30	25:45	26:30	26:45	27:30	27:45	28:30
24:30	25:15	25:30	26:15	26:30	27:15	27:30	28:15	28:30	29:15
25:15	26:00	26:15	27:00	27:15	28:00	28:15	29:00	29:15	30:00
26:00	26:45	27:00	27:45	28:00	28:45	29:00	29:45	30:00	30:45
26:45	27:30	27:45	28:30	28:45	29:30	29:45	30:30	30:45	31:30
27:30	28:15	28:30	29:15	29:30	30:15	30:30	31:15	31:30	32:15
28:15	29:00	29:15	30:00	30:15	31:00	31:15	32:00	32:15	33:00
29:00	29:45	29:60	30:45	31:00	31:45	32:00	32:45	33:00	33:45
29:45	30:30	30:45	31:30	31:45	32:30	32:45	33:30	33:45	34:30
30:30	31:15	31:30	32:15	32:30	33:15	33:30	34:15	34:30	35:15
31:15	32:00	32:15	33:00	33:15	34:00	34:15	35:00	35:15	36:00
32:00	32:45	33:00	33:45	34:00	34:45	35:00	35:45	36:00	36:45
32:45	33:30	33:45	34:30	34:45	35:30	35:45	36:30	36:45	37:30
33:30	34:15	34:30	35:15	35:30	36:15	36:30	37:15	37:30	38:15
34:15	35:00	35:15	36:00	36:15	37:00	37:15	38:00	38:15	39:00
35:00	35:45	36:00	36:45	37:00	37:45	38:00	38:45	39:00	39:45
35:45	36:30	36:45	37:30	37:45	38:30	38:45	39:30	39:45	40:30
36:30	37:15	37:30	38:15	38:30	39:15	39:30	40:15	40:30	41:15
37:15	38:00	38:15	39:00	39:15	40:00	40:15	41:00	41:15	42:00
38:00	38:45	39:00	39:45	40:00	40:45	41:00	41:45	42:00	42:45
38:45	39:30	39:45	40:30	40:45	41:30	41:45	42:30	42:45	43:30
39:30	40:15	40:30	41:15	41:30	42:15	42:30	43:15	43:30	44:15
40:15	41:00	41:15	42:00	42:15	43:00	43:15	44:00	44:15	45:00
41:00	41:45	42:00	42:45	43:00	43:45	44:00	44:45	45:00	45:45
41:45	42:30	42:45	43:30	43:45	44:30	44:45	45:30	45:45	46:30
42:30	43:15	43:30	44:15	44:30	45:15	45:30	46:15	46:30	47:15
43:15	44:00	44:15	45:00	45:15	46:00	46:15	47:00	47:15	48:00
44:00	44:45	45:00	45:45	46:00	46:45	47:00	47:45	48:00	48:45
44:45	45:30	45:45	46:30	46:45	47:30	47:45	48:30	48:45	49:30
45:30	46:15	46:30	47:15	47:30	48:15	48:30	49:15	49:30	50:15
46:15	47:00	47:15	48:00	48:15	49:00	49:15	50:00	50:15	51:00
47:00	47:45	48:00	48:45	49:00	49:45	50:00	50:45	51:00	51:45
47:45	48:30	48:45	49:30	49:45	50:30	50:45	51:30	51:45	52:30
48:30	49:15	49:30	50:15	50:30	51:15	51:30	52:15	52:30	53:15
49:15	50:00	50:15	51:00	51:15	52:00	52:15	53:00	53:15	54:00
50:00	50:45	51:00	51:45	52:00	52:45	53:00	53:45	54:00	54:45
50:45	51:30	51:45	52:30	52:45	53:30	53:45	54:30	54:45	55:30
51:30	52:15	52:30	53:15	53:30	54:15	54:30	55:15	55:30	56:15
52:15	53:00	53:15	54:00	54:15	55:00	55:15	56:00	56:15	57:00
53:00	53:45	54:00	54:45	55:00	55:45	56:00	56:45	57:00	57:45
53:45	54:30	54:45	55:30	55:45	56:30	56:45	57:30	57:45	58:30
54:30	55:15	55:30	56:15	56:30	57:15	57:30	58:15	58:30	59:15
55:15	56:00	56:15	57:00	57:15	58:00	58:15	59:00	59:15	60:00
56:00	56:45	57:00	57:45	58:00	58:45	59:00	59:45	60:00	60:45
56:45	57:30	57:45	58:30	58:45	59:30	59:45	60:30	60:45	61:30
57:30	58:15	58:30	59:15	59:30	60:15	60:30	61:15	61:30	62:15
58:15	59:00	59:15	60:00	60:15	61:00	61:15	62:00	62:15	63:00
59:00	59:45	59:60	60:45	61:00	61:45	62:00	62:45	63:00	63:45
59:45	60:30	60:45	61:30	61:45	62:30	62:45	63:30	63:45	64:30
60:30	61:15	61:30	62:15	62:30	63:15	63:30	64:15	64:30	65:15
61:15	62:00	62:15	63:00	63:15	64:00	64:15	65:00	65:15	66:00
62:00	62:45	63:00	63:45	64:00	64:45	65:00	65:45	66:00	66:45
62:45	63:30	63:45	64:30	64:45	65:30	65:45	66:30	66:45	67:30
63:30	64:15	64:30	65:15	65:30	66:15	66:30	67:15	67:30	68:15
64:15	65:00	65:15	66:00	66:15	67:00	67:15	68:00	68:15	69:00
65:00	65:45	66:00	66:45	67:00	67:45	68:00	68:45	69:00	69:45
65:45	66:30	66:45	67:30	67:45	68:30	68:45	69:30	69:45	70:30
66:30	67:15	67:30	68:15	68:30	69:15	69:30	70:15	70:30	71:15
67:15	68:00	68:15	69:00	69:15	70:00	70:15	71:00	71:15	72:00
68:00	68:45	69:00	69:45	70:00	70:45	71:00	71:45	72:00	72:45
68:45	69:30	69:45	70:30	70:45	71:30	71:45	72:30	72:45	73:30
69:30	70:15	70:30	71:15	71:30	72:15	72:30	73:15	73:30	74:15
70:15	71:00	71:15	72:00	72:15	73:00	73:15	74:00	74:15	75:00
71:00	71:45	72:00	72:45	73:00	73:45	74:00	74:45	75:00	75:45
71:45	72:30	72:45	73:30	73:45	74:30	74:45	75:30	75:45	76:30
72:30	73:15	73:30	74:15	74:30	75:15	75:30	76:15	76:30	77:15
73:15	74:00	74:15	75:00	75:15	76:00	76:15	77:00	77:15	78:00
74:00	74:45	75:00	75:45	76:00	76:45	77:00	77:45	78:00	78:45
74:45	75:30	75:45	76:30	76:45	77:30				

