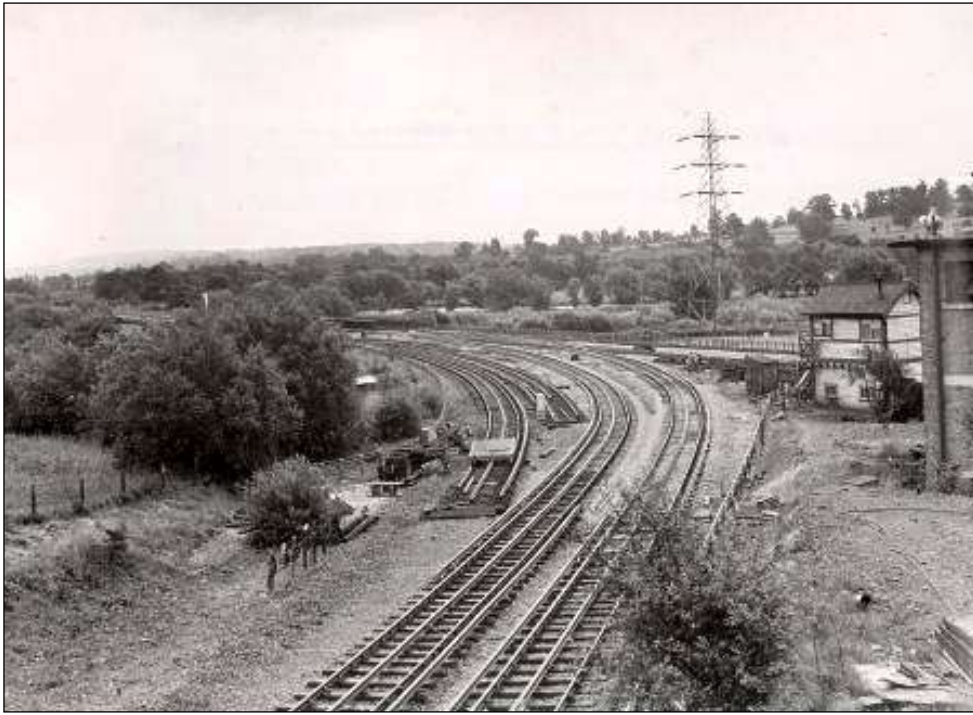


50 YEARS AGO – A POSTSCRIPT

METROPOLITAN MODERNISATION

Whilst some of us will recall the late-1950s and early 1960s as the period “when it all happened”, there was a lot going on much earlier. Here is a selection of what happened, details being obtained from the Traffic Circulars of the time. Some items may not be directly relevant but nevertheless are included for interest, if only that London Transport were bringing the Metropolitan Line up to date and ‘in line’ with the rest of the network.

Date	Brief details
02.01.50	“Stop-and-Proceed” abolished north of Harrow-on-the-Hill and all signals, semi-automatic and automatic, provided with signal post telephones. All trains to receive authority from relevant signaller before passing any signal at danger. Signal boxes affected were Watford Station (JL), Croxley (B), Watford Junction (C), Northwood (E), Pinner (G) and Harrow Station (JB).
01.50	Telephones provided on Chesham line (to signallers at Chalfont & Latimer and Chesham) at One Mile Post, Two Mile Post and Three Mile Post.
04.06.50	Track slewed on a new alignment 30ft west of present from 1,000ft north of Watford South Junction to 1,500ft south of Watford South Junction, to allow bridges MR78, MR80 and MR81 to be taken out of use.
17.06.50	From midnight, maintenance responsibility for track, works & buildings and signalling between 28½ mile post (Mantles Wood) and 37 miles 195 yards, about ¾ mile south of Aylesbury South Junction, will be transferred from Railway Executive to London Transport.
25.06.50	London Transport to take over responsibility for management of ex-Joint Line from Harrow to Aylesbury South Junction including Watford and Chesham branches.
10.09.51	Nomenclature of tracks Aylesbury – Amersham and Watford branch changed from ‘up’ and ‘down’ to ‘southbound’ and ‘northbound’. Watford roads renumbered: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 21 road – ex-Watford No.2 siding (Down).• 22 road – ex-Watford Platform 2.• 23 road – ex-Watford Platform 1.• 24 road – ex-Watford No.1 siding (Up).• Platform 1 – ex-platform No.2.• Platform 2 – ex-platform No.1.
16.09.51	Trainstops provided at signals Harrow North – Northwood Hills.
14.10.51	Trainstops provided at signals Northwood Hills – Northwood.
11.11.51	Trainstops provided at signals Moor Park – Rickmansworth.
15.06.52	Semaphore signals replaced by colour light signals Great Missenden – Amersham: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distant R5 southbound road.• Intermediate stop signal No.5 southbound road, with auxiliary red aspect.• Distant R24 northbound road.• Intermediate stop signal No.24 northbound road, with auxiliary red aspect.
10.11.52	3-car A.C.V. lightweight diesel to Chesham branch for trial runs, then passenger service Mondays to Fridays for two weeks from 13.10.52.



Left: As noted above, in June 1950 the track at Watford South Junction (from the 'main line' to and from Watford and Rickmansworth) was slewed on a new alignment some 30ft west of the then present alignment, from 1,000ft north of Watford South Junction to 1,500ft south of Watford South Junction, to allow bridges MR78, MR80 and MR81 to be taken out of use. This looks towards the 'main line' with redundant track on the left. The former Metropolitan Railway Watford Junction signal box can be seen on the right, as can the corner of Croxleyhall substation.

Below: Taken on the 'main line' and looking north towards the Rickmansworth direction can be seen the south end of the new junction with the former alignment and redundant track on the right. Both photos were taken on 23 June 1950. Access to the 'Tip' sidings would be provided at lower left from September 1955.

Both photos: London Transport Museum



Date	Brief details
19.04.53	Trainstops provided at Croxley and Watford (Junction)
26.04.53	Trainstops provided at Watford.
Date	Brief details
06.12.53	New signalling commissioned at Rickmansworth from new cabin north end of northbound platform. Signalling aspects standardised. Old Metropolitan Railway box closed.
13.12.53	Engineer's siding on southbound line at Northwood substation between Northwood and Northwood Hills removed and replaced by plain track. Northwood Hills home signal F2 converted to automatic and renumbered A2.
18.04.54	Handworked facing turnout points installed Watford East – South Junctions south of signal C22 for future Tip sidings – not yet commissioned.
07.11.54	Auxiliary red aspects provided at signals Watford Junction – Northwood.
14.11.54	Auxiliary red aspects provided at signals Northwood Hills – North Harrow.
05.12.54	Semaphore signals converted to colour light (with miniature red lights on stop signals) at Chorleywood.
16.05.55	Colour light shunt signals JL3 and JL4 at Watford converted to disc shunt signals.
27.07.55	Shunt signal JL36 at Watford converted from “a wire operated signal” to standard e.p. disc shunt.
25.09.55	Watford Junction box closed and signalling control to Rickmansworth. All colour light running signals provided with auxiliary red aspect. Access to Watford Tip sidings commissioned.
20.11.55	Colour light signals with red auxiliary lights replaced semaphore signals at Chalfont & Latimer.
01.02.58	Marylebone – Harrow South Junction and north of Aylesbury South Junction transferred from Eastern Region to London Midland Region.
28.09.58	Mechanical frame at Watford abolished and signalling controlled by push button from Rickmansworth in a new IMR at Watford.
05.04.59	Signalling alterations Chalfont & Latimer – Rickmansworth southbound prior to electric train introduction. (Three-aspect main running signals with auxiliary red lights, disc shunt signals and running signals fitted with trainstops),
10.05.59	Signalling alterations Rickmansworth – Chalfont & Latimer northbound prior to electric train

introduction. (Three-aspect main running signals with auxiliary red lights, disc shunt signals and running signals fitted with trainstops),

- 10.09.59 No.20 trailing crossover between goods yard reception road and southbound main south of Amersham out of use and replaced by new crossover 759ft south.
- 12.10.59 Resumption of widening Harrow – Rickmansworth following postponement in WW2.
- 25.10.59 Mechanical box at Chalfont & Latimer abolished. New IMR commissioned at Chalfont & Latimer. Control of area from temporary panel in existing box.
- 08.03.60 Southbound starting signal at Wendover moved 183ft south because of platform lengthening.
- 20.03.60 New signal cabin commissioned at Amersham and MR mechanical lever frame de-commissioned. Layout remains at two platforms.
- 03.04.60 No.8 trailing crossover from Down line to Goods Yard at Pinner de-commissioned.
- 27.04.60 Northbound refuge siding abolished at Northwood.
- 22.05.60 Third platform commissioned at Amersham and signalling at Chalfont & Latimer transferred to new cabin at Amersham. New northbound goods loop outside of new platform. Platforms renumbered –
- Platform 1 – Northbound through.
 - Platform 2 – Northbound middle.
 - Platform 3 – Southbound.
- 12.06.60 Signals at Chesham converted to long range colour light and provision made for signalling for future bay platform:
- Chesham Distant out of use and replaced with single yellow fixed distant 190ft south of previous signal. Also fitted with auxiliary yellow light in the event of failure.
 - Outer home No.2 signal replaced by 3-aspect 480ft north of previous signal.
 - Junction inner home signals Nos. 3 & 5 replaced by 2-aspect (red and yellow) 80ft north of previous signal. Fitted with junction route indicator for when bay platform commissioned.
 - Starting signal No.18 replaced by 3-aspect in same location. Platform repeater showing 'on' or 'off' provided
 - 2-aspect short-range repeater signal R17 134ft south of starting signal decommissioned.
 - Fog repeaters provided 400ft in rear of JV2, JV3 and JV17.
 - Auxiliary red light provided at signals JV2, JV3 and JV18 in the event of failure.
- 18.06.60 Two new reversing sidings Nos.31 & 32 north of Amersham commissioned.
- 03.07.60 Chesham bay platform commissioned.
- Date** **Brief details**
- 10.07.60 "Next train to London" indicator provided on southbound platform 3 at Amersham.
- 17.07.60 Track circuits provided between Amersham and Mantles Wood.
- 14.08.60 North of Rickmansworth – Amersham/Chesham, electrified from 12.00. Trial running commences 15.08.60.
- 11.09.60 Last day of push-pull steam passenger service on Chesham branch. Branch worked by 1x3T from following day.
- 15.01.61 Signals repositioned at Rickmansworth –
- | | | |
|------|---------------------------------------------|---|
| JP2 | Southbound starter relocated on gantry | |
| JP11 | Shunt from southbound platform |) |
| JP3 | Southbound starter from northbound platform |) |
| JP13 | Shunt from northbound platform |) |
- Repositioned 30ft southwards
- 23.01.61 Introduction of DMUs on 08.50 Marylebone – Aylesbury and 10.57 Aylesbury – Marylebone. *Traffic Circular states that these workings to be replaced by steam trains in the event of foggy weather!*
- 05.02.61 Stage I of 4-tracking Harrow – Watford South Junction. New north- and southbound main tracks commissioned just north of Northwood Hills – just south of Northwood to allow demolition and reconstruction of original bridge over Rickmansworth Road. Temporary signal box provided at Northwood Hills, code 'JE' but not yet commissioned. Points at Northwood Hills secured for through running. First span of new bridge across Rickmansworth Road in use.
- 23.04.61 Stage II of 4-tracking Harrow – Watford South Junction. New north- and southbound main tracks commissioned Watford South Junction – Northwood with new island platform at Moor Park. Original tracks Watford South Junction – north of Northwood out of use to allow demolition of original platforms at Moor Park and construction of second island platform.
- 14.05.61 Temporary trailing crossover south of Pinner connecting northbound line with future southbound 'main', operated by No.12 lever in Pinner box.

- 28.05.61 Two new electrified (south) sidings (31/32) commissioned at Rickmansworth.
- 11.06.61 New electrified South sidings 33-35 commissioned Rickmansworth. New train crew accommodation provided at south end of northbound platform.
- 02.07.61 No.11 crossover Pinner abolished. No.16 crossover south of Pinner electrified and available for use to reverse electric trains if required.
- 31.07.61 4-car unit of A60 Stock to commence working Chesham shuttle. Works 12.12 empty ex-Neasden depot and picks up 12.55 Chalfont – Chesham with other stock returning to Neasden depot.
- 20.08.61 Temporary trailing crossover south of Pinner connecting northbound line with future southbound 'main' abolished.



Above: One of the several major civil engineering projects on the Metropolitan Line was the provision of two girder bridges on an angle across the Rickmansworth Road. Metropolitan electric locomotive No.8 "Sherlock Holmes" heads a southbound train of Dreadnought coaches over the first completed new spans some 50 years ago (*Left*). Some 50 years later, both bridges are shrouded completely, presumably for repairs and repainting, seen on 24 August 2011 (*Right*).

Photos: London Transport Museum (Left), Brian Hardy (Right)

- | Date | Brief details |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10.09.61 | Stage III of 4-tracking Harrow – Watford South Junction. New north- and southbound 'main' tracks commissioned Harrow North Junction – north of Northwood Hills. Temporary signal cabin at Northwood Hills 'JE' commissioned. Short section of former southbound road retained as north-south reversing siding. Signalling alterations at Harrow North Junction commissioned 11.09.61 with trains being hand-signalled on 10.09.61. Northwood Hills reversers introduced in peaks, eight morning MF, six evening MF and one Saturday midday. |
| 11.09.61 | LMR takes responsibility of track from Mantles Wood (1,000ft north of Up distant north of Amersham) to Aylesbury South Junction. Civil engineering maintenance (except signals) remains responsibility of LT. Goods and parcels from Great Missenden northwards to BR (LMR). No LT passenger trains north of Amersham but LT Ballast trains continue to operate. |
| 17.09.61 | Steam loco sidings 21/22 north of Rickmansworth (northbound side) and electric loco siding 26 south of Rickmansworth abolished. |
| 17.12.61 | Coupling facilities commissioned at Watford. Calling-on signal JP133 located beneath home signal JP134. |
| 28.01.62 | Stage IV of 4-tracking Harrow – Watford South Junction. Resignalling North Harrow – Northwood Hills 'local' lines. New IMR commissioned at Pinner and Pinner signal box out of commission and subsequently demolished. Signal JD20 on No.21 road in goods yard "approach-lit". |
| 15.04.62 | Resignalling Watford South Junction – Watford. Croxley southbound home (B2) and northbound starter (B19) converted from 3- to 2-aspect signals. Distant signals provided for freight trains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Croxley NB distant – 500ft in rear of signal BX796. • Watford NB distant – at Croxley northbound platform, north end. |

- Watford South Junction SB distant – below signal B2.
- 16.06.62 Last day of steam trains Marylebone – Aylesbury via Met., and last day of BR trains to call at Northwood.
- 17.06.62 Stage V (final) of 4-tracking Harrow – Watford South Junction. New local roads commissioned Watford South Junction – Northwood Hills. New platforms commissioned at Moor Park and Northwood for all-stations trains. New IMR commissioned at Northwood with control from Harrow-on-the-Hill cabin. Northwood signal box closed and subsequently demolished. Signals “approach lit” –
 JF20 on No.21 road southbound exit from yard.
 JF21 south end of NB local platform – SB wrong road starter.
 New train description system Harrow – Rickmansworth and new “light box” indicators at Harrow-on-the-Hill.
 Signal E3 renumbered A3 – southbound ‘main’ at Northwood adjacent to wrong road starter JF21.
 Signal E25 renumbered A25 – northbound main at Northwood by Green Lane bridge.
- 22.07.62 Signals A3 and A25 at Northwood decommissioned and removed.
- 18.08.62 Demolition commences of disused platforms at Northwood.
- 07.11.62 Work commences to remove train starting wires and equipment on Metropolitan Line (to be completed by 21.02.63).
- 30.11.62 Emergency crossover commissioned just south of Moor Park on ‘main’ lines, operated by key switch. Operation of key switch maintains signals JGX868 (NB ‘main’ home), JGX871 (SB ‘main’ home) and JGX 869 (SB ‘main’ starter) at danger.