

ONCE UPON A TIME

- **30 years ago** Half of New Street station [platforms 7 to 12] to be demolished and sold off! This was a year of planning massive changes. British Rail and Birmingham City Council planned to finance most of a new £50m. seven platform intercity station at Saltley, where the Derby line goes under the Stechford to Aston link as part of redeveloping Heartlands. With slip roads from the M6 and parking for 4,000 cars, it would replace New Street for long distance travel and was an acknowledgement that New Street, with tunnels each end, could not be adapted for long trains from Europe through the Channel Tunnel. Local trains and a new Metro route would connect the new station to the city centre. A new 1 km. long spur from south to west was needed for Bristol to Manchester trains from Washwood Heath towards Aston. To reduce platform occupancy, few trains would terminate in Birmingham, Stansted Airport to Pwllheli being mentioned as an example!
- Regional Railways pressed on with advocating the Jewellery Line and the new station at Smethwick Galton Bridge, the service initially to be provided by Sprinters, with 'electrification as soon as possible'. Part of the £23m. funding was to come from the sale of the West Midlands bus company.
- Another new spur was proposed, to join the Soho Loop with the Jewellery Line so that Walsall trains could run into Snow Hill. It would also allow some Chiltern services to be extended to Shrewsbury and Aberystwyth.
- A new three platform station was planned for the International Convention Centre, by the tunnel mouth at Monument Lane. Stourbridge trains running via Snow Hill would release track capacity for it.
- Sandwell and Dudley would no longer be the intercity station for the Black Country, replaced by another new station near Bescot at M6 Junction 9. This is where the Walsall - Dudley - Stourbridge line crosses overhead and it was also hoped to have a platform alongside it and reopen the route. One option considered was to create parallel single lines, one for passenger, the other railfreight, keeping the cost down with single platform stations. However some sections were already planned to be Metro.
- The residents of Earlswood put forward so many objections to plans for a 100 space car park and ride site that the idea was dropped.
- The first Class 323 for the CrossCity line was built by Hunslet in Leeds. After testing and staff training, they would not be in public service for another year. The electrified line to Lichfield was energised on 18 October.
- Intercity planned to divert one of its Hereford - Paddington services to run from Kidderminster instead. Meanwhile Regional Railways and NSE were planning trains from Snow Hill to Paddington via Kidderminster and Oxford.
- Twelve steel horses were added alongside the rail journey from Birmingham to Wolverhampton by artist, Kevin Atherton. He complained that communities had not engaged enough with them, such as with graffiti.