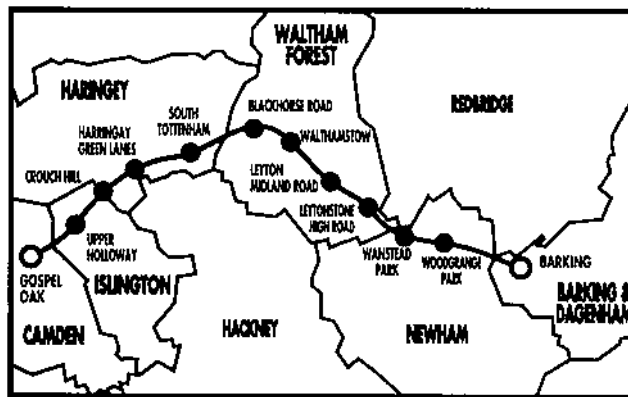


BARKING-GOSPEL OAK LINE USER GROUP

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NEWS RELEASE

15th February 2010

MISERY ALL ROUND ON LONDON OVERGROUND!

Less trains in 20th February timetable

Rail user group condemns Transport for London for prolonging chronic overcrowding by quietly cutting trains from new timetable

PASSENGERS URGED TO CHECK THE CUTS IN NEW 20TH FEBRUARY TIMETABLE

The Barking-Gospel Oak Line User Group (BGOLUG)¹ has criticised Transport for London (TfL) for making a late decision to cancel extra trains from a new timetable that would have eased the line's chronic overcrowding. BGOLUG is angry that the worsening overcrowding which passengers have been suffering for the last two years will now continue for the rest of this year.

When Network Rail published the December 2009-May 2010 National Timetable², trains on the Barking-Gospel Oak Line were shown as being stepped up from the current 20-minute frequency to every 15 minutes during the busiest times from Monday 22nd February. But TfL Rail's recently published timetable, effective from 20th February³, make no mention of the more frequent peak service and even reveals that some trains in the current timetable will be axed. London Overground has yet to respond to a BGOLUG request for an explanation.

BGOLUG Secretary Richard Pout said, "We started pressing TfL Rail and their operator London Overground for additional trains to relieve overcrowding over two years ago. We even produced our own timetable showing how the peak 20-minute train frequency could be stepped up to every 15 minutes during the busiest periods. TfL Rail has done nothing but make empty 'jam tomorrow' promises while the overcrowding has now reached chronic levels. We finally thought our proposals had been adopted only to find them dropped by TfL Rail at the last minute."

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MISERY ALL ROUND ON LONDON OVERGROUND
Less trains 20th February Timetable

Some existing passengers may also find that their current trains have disappeared as well. From 22nd February the daytime off-peak 30-minute interval service will start earlier and finish later, especially affecting home-going school children from **Gospel Oak**.

“There will be misery enough with the three month closure of the Stratford-Gospel Oak section of the North London Line⁴ starting the same weekend, without cutting trains between Barking and Gospel Oak”, said Richard Pout. “Trains are becoming dangerously overcrowded now, with many would-be passengers being left behind while others are doubling back in the opposite direction to stations where they have a chance of getting on a train to work.”

BGOLUG have been told of passengers at **Leyton Midland Road** travelling to **Gospel Oak** in the morning being unable to board trains and having to travel in the opposite direction to **Barking** to get a seat. Evening eastbound trains are now so full passengers are being left behind at **Blackhorse Road** and some are travelling back to **South Tottenham** in order to be able to get on a train.

“TfL promised an all day 15-minute service from last September, when re-signalling by Network Rail, part of a government funded £18.5m⁵ investment to increase capacity for more trains was completed. Network Rail finished the work late in mid November, yet trains are now being cut from the timetable, instead of being added,” said Richard Pout. “If government and TfL could end their petty squabbling and agree to electrify the line we could be having 3-carriage electric trains instead of the inadequate 2-carriage diesels⁶.”

PEAK SERVICE

From Barking between 06:25 and 10:40:	From Gospel Oak between 06:25 and 10:00:
Current timetable: 13 trains	Current timetable: 11 trains
New Timetable: 11 trains	New Timetable: 10 trains

From Barking between 15:30 and 19:00:	From Gospel Oak between 15:00 and 19:00:
Current timetable: 11 trains	Current timetable: 12 trains
New timetable: 10 trains	New timetable: 11 Trains

DAYTIME OFF-PEAK 30-MINUTE FREQUENCY SERVICE

From Barking:	From Gospel Oak
Current timetable: 11:08 until 15:08	Current timetable: 10:25 until 14:55
New Timetable: 09:53* until 15:53	New Timetable: 09:42 until 15:42†
*following a 33 minute gap after 09:20	†followed by a 33 minute gap until 16:15

- ENDS -

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NOTES FOR EDITORS FOLLOW ON PAGE 3



NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. Formed as the Barking – Kentish Town Line Committee to fight Dr. Beeching’s closure proposals in the 1960s, the Barking – Gospel Oak Line User Group has continued to represent the line’s passengers and campaign for improved services and station facilities, and also for the overdue electrification of the only non-electrified railway in North East London.
2. See www.networkrail.co.uk for the December 2009 Great Britain Timetable, Table 62.
3. See www.tfl.gov.uk for TfL’s London Overground timetables.
4. As part of a £326m scheme to improve services before the 2012 Olympics funded by TfL, Network Rail and the Olympic Delivery Authority, the Stratford to Willesden section of the North London Line will be re-signalled, with lengthened platforms, while the Dalston to Camden Road (exclusive) section will be rebuilt to accommodate the East London Line extension from Dalston Junction to Highbury & Islington and extra tracks for freight trains between Highbury & Islington and Camden Road. The existing freight tracks between Dalston Junction and Camden Road were closed for the rebuilding work in April 2009 and the *entire railway* between Stratford and Camden Road will be closed from 20th February until 31st May 2010. This means the high number of freight trains, many hauled by electric locomotives, using the North London Line will have to be diverted to the Barking – Gospel Oak Line and hauled by diesels. North London Line passengers will have to use substitute buses which will only run every 20 minutes.
5. In 2007 the Department for Transport awarded a grant of £18.5m from its Transport Innovation Fund, match funded by Network Rail’s Discretionary Investment Fund for a £37m scheme to increase the clearances (W10 loading gauge) between Woodgrange Park and Willesden to allow an alternative route to the North London Line for the passage of the largest international shipping containers from the current and planned Essex and Suffolk ports. The scheme also funded re-signalling between Wanstead Park and Upper Holloway which was to double the number of trains that could be run, allowing TfL Rail to run a 15-minute interval passenger service and more freight to be carried. The clearance work for W10 loading gauge was carried out during autumn 2008, but the re-signalling work overran and was not commissioned until 14th November 2009. There have been numerous ‘teething problems’ with the new signalling, some causing delays to trains and remedial work is continuing showing, BGOLUG believes, short-sighted economies during design.
6. As part of the London Rail Concession contract let by TfL Rail to London Overground Rail Operations Limited (LOROL), LOROL undertook to deliver, 8x2-car Class 172 *Turbostar* diesel multiple units from the former British Rail Engineering plant at Derby, now owned by Bombardier Transportation. Originally to be delivered in late 2009, expected delivery has now slipped back to mid 2010.

