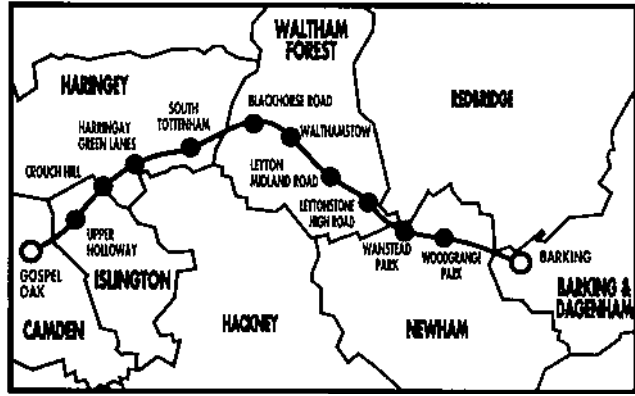


BARKING-GOSPEL OAK LINE USER GROUP

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NEWS RELEASE 18th October 2010



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FIRST NEW TRAINS FOR 50 YEARS ARE WELL WORTH THE WAIT!

**Arriving from the factory a year late,
London Overground operator gets new trains into service fast!**

A rail users group congratulated the managing director of a train company on Friday (15th October) when the last of 8 new trains for the Barking-Gospel Oak Line entered service two weeks *earlier* than he had predicted.

Steve Murphy, Managing Director of London Overground Rail Operations Limited (LOROL), thanked the Barking-Gospel Oak Line User Group¹ for their, “*Kind words about our efforts today*”, adding, “*It’s been hard work but we’re pretty much there.*”

PRODUCTION DELAYS

LOROL had ordered the 8 trains, 2-carriage diesel Class 172/0 *Turbostars* from manufacturer Bombardier after winning the London Rail Concession contract from Transport for London (TfL) in 2007. The trains are owned by Angel Trains Ltd and leased to LOROL. The trains were expected to be in service at the end of last year but production delays at the Derby factory meant that the first of the new trains did not emerge for extensive testing until February this year. LOROL was not able to put a train into public service until 17th July. Deliveries only really picked up in September. These are the first new trains to be introduced onto this line since 1960, a mere 50 years ago!



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TOUGH DEADLINE

BGOLUG Secretary Richard Pout commented, "On 9th September Steve Murphy said that he was aiming to get all 8 trains into service by the end of October but admitted that it would be a tough deadline to meet. In the end Bombardier and LOROL managed it with two weeks to spare. We thought that warranted congratulations."

NEW TRAINS COMPLICATED

Richard Pout warned passengers that service reliability might dip for a few months as the new trains were "run in" and staff became familiar with them, "These *Turbostars* are far more complicated than the 25-year old British Rail *Sprinters* they replace. They have a lot of electronic systems including full air-conditioning, dot matrix information displays inside and out as well as an automated public address system. The only drawback seems to be time it takes the guard to open and close the doors at stations. This seems to be contributing to late running. The doors do automatically close after 30 seconds, which will help keep the trains warm when waiting at terminal stations in winter".

MORE STANDING ROOM

The trains only have 124 seats, but have wide aisles and standing areas with 'perch' seats by the entrance doors. BGOLUG has always insisted that the new trains should have been built with 3 coaches² instead of 2 because the outgoing trains were always crush loaded during the rush hours.

"The new trains do have generous standing room and the seats are far more comfortable than the new trains on the North London Line – and you can at least see out of the windows!" Richard Pout added, "But in spite of the new coaches being longer, the new trains will soon be as seriously crowded at peak times as the old ones were, especially when the all day 15-minute frequency starts next January."

NEW TIMETABLES IN 2011

BGOLUG is currently negotiating with LOROL over the 2011 timetables with a view to improving the early morning and late evening services LOROL are planning to run. Apart from early mornings and late evenings trains will run every 15 minutes Monday to Saturday from 4th January and every 15 minutes on Sundays from June although still starting at 9am and finishing just after 11pm.

NO SPACE FOR BIKES

There is no designated space for bicycles on the new trains and BGOLUG believes this to be a retrograde step. BGOLUG advises cyclists to board the new trains near the middle where they see the wheelchair sign on coach 'B' and put their bike in one of the two wheelchair spaces. Obviously should a person in a wheelchair require the space the bike should be moved. LOROL were asked at a meeting on 9th September to designate the wheelchair spaces as available for bike stowage.

ELECTRIFICATION CASE STILL STRONG

The arrival of these brand new diesel trains does not weaken the case for electrifying the Barking-Gospel Oak Line³. There is national shortage of diesel trains like these and a new operator for the trains would soon be found. The outgoing 25-year old British Rail built *Sprinter* diesels are being redeployed for further service in Bristol and the West Country with First Great Western.

- ENDS -

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT
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DG58897: 172005 calls at Blackhorse Rd on its first day in service.
19th July 2010



DG58625: 172004 arrived at Crouch Hill to pick up passengers on its second trip in revenue earning service.
17th July 2010



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DG58629: Passengers get to try out 172004 on the first day the class has been in public service
17th July 2010



DG58889: Old and new at Blackhorse Rd. 150123 passes 172005.
19th July 2010

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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 electrification of the only non-electrified railway in North-East London.

2. See Library page on our website www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk:

BGOLUG leaflet:	September 2007	<i>A new era is dawning</i>
BGOLUG reports:	2 nd November 2007	<i>Another overcrowding crisis</i>
	29 th February 2008	<i>Relief of Overcrowding - meeting with LOROL</i>
	May 2010	<i>Evidence to GLA Transport Scrutiny Committee</i>
Press releases:	13 th March 2008	<i>Fewer seats on London Overground</i>
	12 th February 2009	<i>Overground misery set to continue</i>
	3 rd March 2009	<i>Caroline ventures where Boris feared to tread!</i>

Caroline Pidgeon AM is Vice-Chair of the London Assembly's Transport Committee and the spokesperson for the London Assembly Liberal Democrats on transport matters. She was elected from the Londonwide List. On 27th February 2009, Caroline toured the line with BGOLUG members to see the overcrowding and give her support to the electrification scheme and has asked many questions of the Mayor regarding the line.

Jennette Arnold AM is Deputy Chair of the London Assembly and a Labour Assembly Member for the North East Constituency (Hackney, Islington & Waltham Forest). In 2008, along with BGOLUG, she asked London Mayor and Chair of the Transport for London Board, Boris Johnson, to accompany her on a visit to the Barking – Gospel Oak Line to see the overcrowding at first hand. Mayor Boris declined, yet since has been only too pleased to visit and sing the praises of the modernized East London Line. Both Jennette and fellow Labour Assembly Member for the City & East London, John Biggs, regularly question the Mayor on overcrowding and electrification of the Barking-Gospel Oak Line.

15th February 2010 *Misery all round on London Overground!*

3. See Library page on our website www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk:

Joint briefing:	September 2007	<i>The case for electrifying the Gospel Oak-Barking Railway</i>
Joint response	July 2009	<i>Network Rail's Draft RUS Electrification Strategy</i>
Modern Railways	July 2009	<i>Two extracts from the July 2009 edition</i>
BGOLUG report	May 2010	<i>Evidence to GLA Transport Scrutiny Committee</i>
Press releases	27 th July 2009	<i>Network Rail Electrification Strategy</i>
	3 rd March 2009	<i>Caroline ventures where Boris feared to tread!</i>
		<i>See note No. 2 above</i>
	24 th September 2010	<i>Don't forget us Boris!</i>

