

BARKING – GOSPEL OAK LINE USER GROUP e-BULLETIN 11 MAY 2011

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My 88 year old father is now out of hospital but I am not yet out of the woods! My operation did not go ahead last Friday due to last minute doubts about the growth to be removed from my right hand and a biopsy was done instead. While awaiting further developments I will try to restore some 'normal service' for members and supporters.

LONDON OVERGROUND ENGINEERING WORK CONTINUES

In spite of claims that "It would all be over by May", weekend engineering work on the North and West London Lines continues. The summary for this weekend (attached to this e-bulletin) shows that in spite of the commissioning of the new signalling a couple of months ago both lines are still subject to Sunday closures. On the Barking-Gospel Oak Line we are luckier with only one Sunday closure throughout on the TfL website, slated for 26 June.

22ND MAY SUMMER TIMETABLE – SWINGS AND ROUNDABOUTS

Although I understand that the new timetable booklets are available, LOROL has yet to respond to my requests for copies. However the new timetables are on the Network Rail website <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/browse%20documents/eNRT/May11/timetables/table62.pdf>

Monday – Saturday

From Barking: First train: **06:17**. Then every **15** minutes until **22:17** and every **30** minutes until **23:47**. As promised by LOROL MD Steve Murphy last November, the last train is half an hour later than now, the latest last train for more than 20 years.

From Gospel Oak: First train: **06:20**. Then every **15** minutes until **22:05** and every **30** minutes until **23:35**. Here there are gains and losses. Last November Steve Murphy promised an earlier first train and while not the 06:05 he had hoped for, this is the earliest first train for more than 20 years. However while the last train is now the latest for more than 20 years, the late evening 30-minute frequency starts half an hour earlier at **22:05** with departures following at **22:35**, **23:05**, with the last train now at **23:35**. BGOLUG's view remains that the late evening service frequency should start at around 21:00 and be every 20 minutes to close of service.

Sunday

From Barking: First train: **08:53**. Then every **15** minutes until **22:08** and every **30** minutes until **23:38**.

From Gospel Oak: First train: **08:55**. Then every **15** minutes until **22:10** and every **30** minutes until **23:10**. While of course this is the first 15 minute interval Sunday service since the summer timetables of 50 years ago and demonstrates TfL's continuing development of the service, BGOLUG continues to prefer that the extra funding for Sunday trains be used to give an earlier start to the service and a 20-minute interval throughout the day until the last train. It is disappointing that Steve Murphy has been unable to keep to his undertaking last November that the last Sunday train from Gospel Oak would continue to be at 23:20. In fact it will be 10 minutes earlier at 23:10.

MINISTER QUIZZED IN PARLIAMENT OVER ELECTRIFICATION

Islington North MP Jeremy Corbyn, a long time BGOLUG supporter, asked Transport Minister Theresa Villiers what consideration her government had given to electrifying the Barking – Gospel Oak Line at Transport Questions in the House of Commons on Thursday, 5th May. He was joined by Walthamstow MP Stella Creasy who revealed herself to be a member of the "secret group" of MPs who supported the line and asked the Minister to meet the group on the line itself. The full exchange can be read here:-

<http://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=2011-05-05a.770.4&s=stella+creasy#g771.0>

I was asked by the *Waltham Forest Guardian* if BGOLUG had any comments and gave the paper the following statement:-

I would like to say that BGOLUG has enjoyed the welcome support of Jeremy Corbyn MP for many years and we are very grateful to him for raising the electrification issue again in Parliament. We are also grateful for the support that Stella Creasy has given to rail users in Waltham Forest.

*Minister of State for Transport (Rail and Aviation), **Theresa Villiers** has perhaps not been fully briefed by her civil servants. Network Rail identified Barking – Gospel Oak as the highest priority infill electrification scheme in the country in 2009 with national benefits. A preliminary business case carried out for Transport for London back in 2006 showed a good rate of return on investment in electrifying the line.*

There are two freight routes across North London, the main route being the electrified North London Line (Stratford – Dalston – Camden - Willesden), while the un-electrified Barking – Gospel Oak Line acts as a relief and diversionary route. Freight operators have to use diesel locomotives on nearly all trains across North London in case they are routed over the Barking – Gospel Oak Line. Only a few international container trains from Felixstowe and Tilbury to the North of England and Scotland are guaranteed routing via the North London Line and so are electrically hauled throughout. British freight operators are buying new American diesel locomotives and selling modern electric locomotives built by British Rail to Eastern Europe because they cannot use them efficiently in this country.

*While **Theresa Villiers**' civil servants have been at loggerheads with London Mayor Boris Johnson for more than two years over electrifying Barking – Gospel Oak, London's air quality worsens. The new 2-coach diesel trains are already running with capacity loads and more during the peak hours and need replacing. This would be by 3 or 4 coach electric trains but cannot proceed until the line is electrified.*

The Waltham Forest Guardian story may be read here:-

[http://www.guardian-](http://www.guardian-series.co.uk/news/wfnews/9015967.WALTHAM_FOREST_Railway_line_electrification_not_a_priority/)

[series.co.uk/news/wfnews/9015967.WALTHAM_FOREST_Railway_line_electrification_not_a_priority_/](http://www.guardian-series.co.uk/news/wfnews/9015967.WALTHAM_FOREST_Railway_line_electrification_not_a_priority/)

Whether Stella and Jeremy have better luck in persuading Theresa Villiers to visit the line than Jennette Arnold AM had with London Mayor Boris Johnson remains to be seen. Tory politicians used to be made of sterner stuff as I am sure those who remember the former Transport Minister Steve Norris's long wait for a train at Harringay Green Lanes station in 1996 will agree! BGOLUG will be getting in touch with Jeremy Corbyn and Stella Creasy with a view to forming closer links with the "secret group" of supporter MPs. I will also try to issue a general press release on the Commons exchange and produce an updated briefing paper on electrification for our political friends.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY FEARS ON LEYTONSTONE FOOTBRIDGE

BGOLUG was recently contacted by a distraught father whose daughter was viciously raped on the footbridge over the A12 (M11 Link Road) between Dyers Hall Road and Norman Road, near Leytonstone High Road station several months ago. Her attacker escaped without her getting a look at his face and both father and daughter were shocked to learn that there was no CCTV on this footbridge. The father was advised by Waltham Forest Council that Transport for London is responsible for the footbridge. He has made several attempts to contact TfL about the provision of CCTV on the bridge but all his letters, emails and telephone calls to that august organisation have been ignored.

I am about to advise the father that contact should be made with Jennette Arnold AM, recently re-elected Chair of the London Assembly (to whom we offer our congratulations) and/or Leyton and Wanstead MP John Cryer. I do not believe that this is an issue that BGOLUG can take up as I believe few of our passengers would use that bridge to reach our trains. Of course, you may be able to prove me wrong?

Glenn Wallis
Assistant Secretary
Barking – Gospel Oak Line User Group