

BARKING-GOSPEL OAK LINE USER GROUP

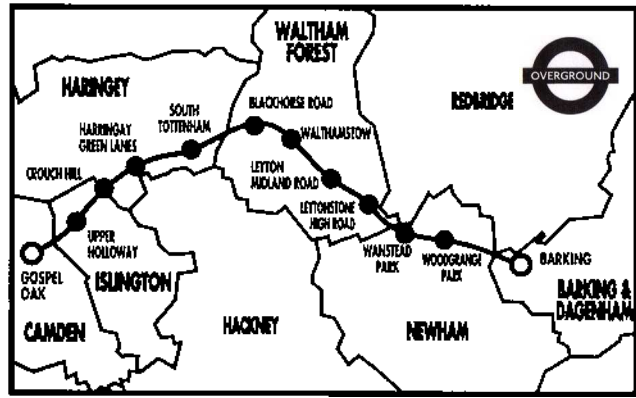
Chairman: Alderman Frederick Jones,
Barking & Dagenham Council

Secretary: Richard H Pout B.Sc. Econ.
MILT,

(020) 8348 5064; 07920 722991

Assistant Secretary: Glenn Wallis

(020) 8529 2361; 07789 791224



Photographs © Paul Bigland



NEWS RELEASE

1st November 2011

SMALL RESPITE FOR CRUSHED COMMUTERS!

Overground operator provides extra train to relieve the very worst overcrowding on Barking – Gospel Oak Line

London Overground confirms that a trial extra train will continue to provide some extra seats at the height of the morning rush.

Members of the Barking – Gospel Oak Line User Group (BGOLUG)¹ have welcomed the efforts of London Overground Rail Operations Ltd (LOROL)², the operator of Transport for London's *London Overground* network to try and provide some relief to the endemic peak period overcrowding on the Barking – Gospel Oak service.

Since mid September LOROL have been running an extra, unadvertised service, from Woodgrange Park to Upper Holloway. This is so that passengers boarding after Barking have a chance of getting a seat or at least standing in some comfort. Operating constraints prevent the train from starting from Barking or terminating at Gospel Oak. BGOLUG members have leafleted passengers telling them of the new train, as it is not in timetables.

Once LOROL confirmed to BGOLUG that the train was being operated as a 'trial', the user group began to look at ways of ensuring the train continued, not just as a 'trial' but a permanent addition to the timetable. What was the possibility of retiming the peak service to run every 10 minutes using the extra train?

LOROL's 8 new 2-carriage diesel trains³, now one year old, are more reliable, but they were reluctant to retime peak services or guarantee that the seventh train would always be available. After discussions with Transport for London (TfL), it was agreed that the extra train should be in the timetable from 11th December. It would



SMALL RESPITE FOR CRUSHED COMMUTERS!

be the most likely train to be cancelled should two trains be out of service at any one time.

LOROL has adopted BGOLUG's suggestion that as the train cannot call at Gospel Oak it will terminate at Hampstead Heath from 11th December⁴ to allow passengers direct interchange with the North London Line (Stratford – Clapham Junction/Richmond) trains.

BGOLUG Secretary Richard Pout said, "We are pleased that LOROL and TfL are finally realising what we predicted. A 15-minute frequency service with only 2-coach trains would not cope with the growing numbers wanting to travel at the busiest times."

"The problem is, other than putting on this one additional train, there is nothing LOROL or TfL can do to alleviate overcrowding. We need more coaches, preferably longer electric trains⁵."

"At the moment, although Bombardier's Derby train plant is running out of orders and the whole rail industry is calling for Barking – Gospel Oak electrification⁶, none of this crucial investment is coming."

Because the Barking – Gospel Oak Line is the only diesel line on the London Overground network, there are only 8 diesel 2-coach trains in the LOROL fleet, enough to run only the current 15-minute frequency service with one train spare and one undergoing maintenance. What is needed are more coaches to either lengthen the existing diesel trains or replace them with longer electric trains. If the line had been electrified when TfL had re equipped the Overground fleet with new trains, the similar electric trains would have been running the Barking – Gospel Oak service as run on the rest of the Overground network.

Electrification would allow one standard train to operate the London Overground network, and benefit freight operators too. Network Rail, the Association of Train Operating Companies, the Rail Freight Operators Association and the Railway Industry Association all support early electrification of the Barking – Gospel Oak Line. The new London Gateway Port (Shell Haven), is expected to generate 30 trains a day within two years. The fast growing use of the High Speed 1 for freight from the Channel Tunnel to Barking will also generate more freight trains over the Barking – Gospel Oak route. If these trains are diesel hauled exhaust and noise emissions will have a detrimental effect on the environment along the line.

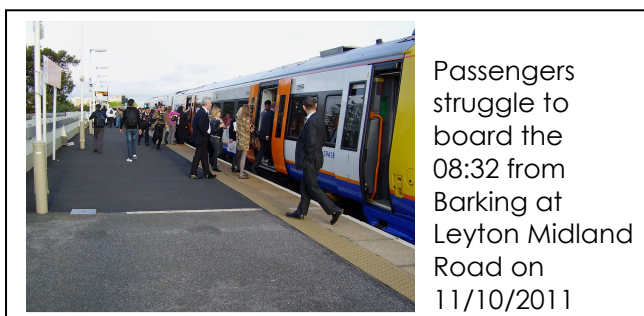


Passengers board the 07:59 from Woodgrange Park relief train at Leytonstone High Road on 18/10/2011



The following 08:02 from Barking is packed at Leytonstone High Road on 18/10/2011

SMALL RESPITE FOR CRUSHED COMMUTERS!



- ENDS -

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT RICHARD POUT ON 07970 722991,
GLENN WALLIS ON (020) 8529 2361
OR E-MAIL info@barking-gospel oak.org.uk

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. Following the transfer of responsibility for the former Silverlink Metro services from the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2006, Transport for London, let the London Rail Concession to London Overground Rail Operations Ltd (LOROL), a joint Hong Kong/German owned venture, to operate the London Overground network from November 2007 until March 2014, with the option of an extension to early March 2016.
3. As part of the London Rail Concession contract let by TfL, LOROL undertook to order, in conjunction with rail leasing company Angel Trains, 8x2-car Class 172 *Turbostar* diesel multiple units from the former British Rail Engineering plant at Derby, now owned by Bombardier Transportation. Delivery of these trains took place in mid 2010.
4. The additional train is intended to relieve the very crowded 07:47 and 08:02 trains from Barking and runs in the following times, subject to a train being available.

From 12 th September 2011		From 11 th December 2011	
Woodgrange Park	07:59	07:59	
Wanstead Park	08:02	08:02	
Leytonstone High Road	08:06	08:05	
Leyton Midland Road	08:08	08:08	
Walthamstow Queen's Road	08:11	08:11	
Blackhorse Road	08:14	08:14	
South Tottenham	08:18	08:18	
Harringay Green Lanes	08:21	08:21	
Crouch Hill	08:24	08:24	



SMALL RESPITE FOR CRUSHED COMMUTERS!

Upper Holloway
Hampstead Heath

08:26

08:27

08:34

See also TfL press release PN 306 dated 26th October 2011,
www.tfl.gov.uk/corporate/media//newscentre/21427.aspx

5. The current 8 diesel 2-coach trains could be lengthened by at least one new coach built by Bombardier at Derby. Some work to adapt platforms would be required, especially at South Tottenham. Even if the line was subsequently electrified and electric trains introduced, many of the country's train operating companies would welcome the displaced diesel trains.
6. The rail industry reaffirmed the urgent need to electrify the Barking – Gospel Oak route this year with the publication of Network Rail's second *London & South East Route Utilisation Strategy*, TfL's submission to the DfT for the second High Level Output Specification and the *Initial Industry Plan 2011*, initiated by the recent McNulty report. There has been no progress on electrification since negotiations on funding between the Mayor and the then Secretary of State broke down in 2008.

