

BARKING – GOSPEL OAK LINE USER GROUP eBULLETIN 24 FEBRUARY 2012

- **WEEKEND/MONDAY ENGINEERING WORK – FINAL REMINDER AND BUS DETAILS**
- **WALTHAMSTOW STATIONS FOOTPATH LINK – MORE DELAYS**
- **HDL THAMES TIDAL RAILTOUR LATEST**
- **THREE STEAM CATHEDRALS EXPRESSES FROM SOUTHEND**
- **THREE-CAR UNITS AT LAST!**
- **LONDON MAYOR AND ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS**
- **WEBSITE UPDATED**

I would like to produce a 'proper' paper newsletter at least once or twice a year but time/health issues never seem to allow this, so here is another ebulletin with some urgent and some not so urgent news. As some find these 'scrambled' when they open their email, this bulletin continues in an attached MS Word file which also allows photographs to be included.

FINAL REMINDER FOR THIS WEEKEND'S & MONDAY'S ENGINEERING WORK

Also attached is a copy of this weekend's engineering summary as posted on our website www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk. Walthamstow's Selborne Road will have a lot of buses on it on Sunday. Not just the usual buses serving the bus station but **three** rail replacement bus services serving the rail replacement bus stops (**KB & LB**)! Not only the Barking – Gospel Oak replacement buses but also two London Underground bus services serving Central Line stations to Newbury Park and Woodford. The Central Line rail service is withdrawn between Liverpool Street and Newbury Park/Woodford. There are further connecting buses from Stratford to Leytonstone and Snaresbrook. Other stations local to the Barking – Gospel Oak Line, namely Archway, Forest Gate and Haringay are also affected by engineering work this weekend.

Regarding this weekend's Network Rail works at Stratford, I quote part of my reply to an enquiry from a journalist in the railway press following the press release I issued on 21st February, "As I understand it, there will be local signalling disconnections and the actual track works around Platforms 11 & 12 and along the Cambridge Lines to Copper Mill Junction will take place on the Saturday (25th Feb), while the signal engineers want both Sunday and Monday (26th & 27th Feb) to install, test and commission the revised signalling. I believe that although both platforms are reversible now, the track layout is being changed, I assume to increase capacity and reliability during the Olympics. This means that the SSI has to be updated right back to Liverpool Street IECC, including the software for the signaller's displays on the Temple Mills Workstation. To do this the Temple Mills Workstation has to be "switched off". This is a new workstation, installed about a year ago to relieve pressure on the signaller on the main Stratford workstation, which was claimed to be the busiest in the country. In addition to the Lea Valley Lines, it also controls the Tottenham & Hampstead Line from Leytonstone to just short of Barking Station Junction and that is why the Barking - Gospel Oak passenger service is being cut back to South Tottenham. Network Rail are putting in Temporary Block Working (hand signalmen and ticket working) on the T&H from Leyton Midland Road to Barking (probably only on the Monday) to keep North Thameside freight traffic moving. At this stage I do not know whether all freight will run via the T&H or whether some will go via Forest Gate Junction.

I now see from their website that Abellio Greater Anglia are diverting Stratford services to Liverpool Street on Saturday and Sunday and are only terminating at Tottenham Hale on Monday, passengers having to join Liverpool Street bound services. Also c2c are diverting their few Liverpool Street services to Fenchurch Street on Monday."

BARKING – GOSPEL OAK REPLACEMENT BUS SERVICES SUNDAY/ MONDAY

Also posted on the website is an abbreviated version of the multi-page 'Working Timetable' for the bus services on Sunday and Monday kindly supplied by LOROL. Although 4 buses per hour, it is not always every 15 minutes as running times are adjusted to cope with the prevailing traffic conditions during the day, so intermediate times should be taken as approximate as a particular bus may be timed to run a few minutes earlier or later but will still connect with a train at South Tottenham.

WALTHAMSTOW STATIONS PEDESTRIAN LINK SAGA GOES ON AND ON....

According to Waltham Forest Council this was supposed to be constructed in two parts. Firstly the link between Edison Close and the Walthamstow Queen's Road station footbridge was supposed to be finished by the end of 2011 and the footpath along the Priory Avenue side of the redeveloped Walthamstow Central car park feeding into the "dead end" footpath to Edison Close is supposed to be finished when the hotel development is completed "before the start of the Olympics."

Well, as you can guess, stage one has yet to materialise! Former BGOLUG Secretary Graham Larkbey has been in regular contact with the Council to monitor progress, or the lack of it. When there was no sign of action at the end of last year he asked why and was told that due to the slow speed Network Rail were progressing matters, it was expected that work would start in February and would be completed by May. The latest news is that due to another Network Rail redesign, work won't now start until April! So completion "before the start of the Olympics" probably now applies to both stages of the link works.

NOW YOU SEE IT, NOW YOU DON'T! Although the service is run by LOROL for TfL, neither actually owns anything, the station being leased by LOROL from "landlord" Network Rail. Obviously LOROL and TfL were as much in the dark as the rest of us last December as these photographs taken at the Edison Close end of the station footbridge by Keith Foster show!



1st December 2011



6th December 2011



7th December 2011

HDL THAMES TIDAL 31ST MARCH RAILTOUR LATEST

All four of the free tickets HDL offered us are now spoken for. An update on their website (www.hastingsdiesels.co.uk) dated today at 20:30 hours stated that there were 3 Club Class and 26 standard tickets left. A revised tour map and final timings are also on the website. As I will be travelling on the train, I appeal for anyone photographing the train on the Barking – Gospel Oak line to submit their photos to me for our records and possible publication.

Southend Pier has recently been struck again by a fishing boat and while the pier is expected to be open, it is unlikely that the pier railway will be operational by the time of the railtour.

THREE STEAM CATHEDRALS EXPRESSES FROM SOUTHEND THIS YEAR

Steam Dreams (www.steamdreams.co.uk) have published their railtour programme for this year and it contains three trains from Southend on 16th June with streamlined A4 pacific *Union of South Africa*, 6th October with new build pacific *Tornado* and 8th December, which doesn't have a loco allocated as yet. There is every reason to expect these trains to continue to be routed over the Barking - Gospel Oak Line.

THREE-CAR UNITS AT LAST!

As the latest editions of *Modern Railways* and *RAIL* magazines show, two Barking – Gospel Oak Line units have now become 3-car units! Unfortunately the units involved are former LOROL Class 150 *Sprinter* sets 150 121 (This was the 2005 TfL funded *PIXC-buster* set) and 150 127 have both had spare through gangway fitted Class 150/2 cars added by their new operator, First Great Western. Ironically, this would have happened in 2008 if the Class 150s had been retained by LOROL and today's overcrowding would be merely a nuisance and not a crisis.

Back in 2007, TfL's plans for the Barking – Gospel Oak Line were to refurbish the 8x2-car *Sprinters* and obtain and refurbish 8xClass 150/2 coaches, which have gangways at both ends, and put one of these between the two cars of each of the original 8xClass 150/1 sets.



Old and new meet: 150 123 passes
172 005 at Blackhorse Road on 19th July
2010. Photo © Paul Bigland,

So by 2009, all Barking – Gospel Oak Line services would have been operated by refurbished 3-car trains. However, when bidding for the London Rail Concession contract, MTR/Laing (as LOROL was then known) offered to obtain 8x2-car new Class 172 *Turbostar* units and the rest, as they say, was history! Faced with the opportunity to save the cost of leasing eight additional Class 150/2 vehicles, not having to have all 24 coaches refurbished *and* being able to offer the public new trains, TfL awarded the contract to MTR/Laing giving rise to the situation we are in today with seriously overcrowded peak services.

LONDON MAYOR AND ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

BGOLUG intends to invite the four main Mayoral and relevant assembly candidates to see the line's problems at first hand in the run-up to these elections and invitations are already being issued. On a related matter, thanks to Leyton & Wanstead Constituency Labour Party for inviting me to speak to their AGM tonight about the work of BGOLUG.

WEBSITE www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk UPDATED

The news and library sections have been updated and the links page has had a revamp. The main aim of the links page from now on will be to carry links to relevant official bodies such as LOROL, Transport for London, our local British Transport Police team, London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus. We also have a link to *Save Our Railways*, an on line resource centre of railway related websites, Epping – Ongar Railway, which is our nearest preserved railway and Jennette Arnold AM's *North East London Talkshop*.

We also try to carry links to destinations reached from the Barking – Gospel Oak Line, currently these are: Hampstead Heath, Lee Valley Park, Walthamstow Reservoirs, Walthamstow Wetlands, Waltham Forest Council Big 6 free events, Walthamstow Market, Brook's City Farm, Wanstead Flats and Visit Southend-on-Sea.

Glenn Wallis
Assistant Secretary
Barking – Gospel Oak Line User Group