



BARKING – GOSPEL OAK LINE USER GROUP

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BARKING – GOSPEL OAK LINE USER GROUP eBULLETIN 23 MAY 2012

- ❖ **BUSES AGAIN BETWEEN BARKING & SOUTH TOTTENHAM THIS SUNDAY ON SOUTHEND AIR FESTIVAL WEEKEND! – C2C & GREATER ANGLIA LAY ON EXTRA TRAINS BUT NO OVERGROUND TRAINS TO WANSTEAD PARK OR BARKING ON SUNDAY! PLUS THE REGULAR WEEKEND ENGINEERING WORKS SUMMARY**
- ❖ **OVERGROUND HAVE TO SCRAP OLYMPIC TIMETABLE TRIAL!**
- ❖ **OVERGROUND TO HIRE IN EXTRA TRAIN FROM CHILTERN!**
- ❖ **TfL START PROCUREMENT PROCESS FOR 3-CAR DIESELS!**

WEEKEND ENGINEERING WORKS 26 – 27 MAY 2012

- **NO BARKING – SOUTH TOTTENHAM TRAINS SUNDAY**
- **NO EAST LONDON LINE TO CRYSTAL PALACE/WEST CROYDON SUNDAY**
- **NO GREATER ANGLIA SERVICES THROUGH HACKNEY DOWNS AGAIN**
- **BOTH C2C & GREATER ANGLIA PUT ON EXTRA TRAINS FOR SOUTHEND AIR FESTIVAL**

Attached is the regular weekly engineering works and replacement bus summary for this weekend which is also posted on www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk.

I have received the Working Timetables for the Barking – South Tottenham rail replacement bus services (RRBS) for Sunday 27th May, Diamond Jubilee Weekend 3 - 5 June and Sunday 10th June and expect to have this Sunday's timetable on the website by Saturday. Traffic is always an unknown on RRBS operations but one trouble spot is likely to be around Leyton Midland Road station. Work has started there to refurbish the railway bridge over Leyton High Road, with the road closed under the half of the bridge being worked on and temporary traffic lights to control the traffic. Network Rail (NR) expects the work to last several weeks. Meanwhile, on three days over the Jubilee Holiday Weekend, NR will be renewing the railway bridge over Hainault Road, at the opposite end of Leyton Midland Road station which is almost certain to require the closure of Hainault Road, thereby adding to the general traffic disruption. NR have also been working on track quality, with several recent nights spent ballasting and tamping at various locations along the line.



When work on the Leyton High Road bridge is finished it should look like recently repainted Leytonstone High Road bridge seen above, complete with Overground roundel.

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While NR have been doggedly working to rectify the years of neglect under cash strapped British Railways, a spanner has been dropped into the works of their maintenance and renewals programme in Walthamstow. Two weeks ago the bridge carrying Palmerston Road over the line was declared as “weakened” and the W11 and W15 buses promptly diverted away from the bridge. It was believed locally that the bus diversions were to last a few months, but the writer fears that it may well be much, much longer than that before NR get around to doing anything about the bridge!



A W11 bus crosses Palmerston Road bridge on 8 May 2012, a few days before the bus ban, which also includes the W15 came into effect.
[Photo Keith Foster]

SOUTHEND AIR FESTIVAL

If memory serves, this is normally held over the Spring Bank Holiday Sunday and Monday but as the bank holiday has been merged with the Diamond Jubilee weekend it is taking place on the Saturday and Sunday of this weekend. Back in the late 80s/early 90s when the Crouch Hill – Barking section was administered by the London, Tilbury & Southend Division of NSE¹ at Southend Central, an attempt was always made to keep the line open to allow users to travel to the Air Show, which in its early days was sponsored by NSE. Once the line was transferred to Network North at Watford in 1992 and later to the North London Railways Train Operating Unit any interest in keeping the line free of engineering works so that rail travel to the Air Show was possible soon waned. Such is the situation this year, when Saturday is the only day it is possible to travel from stations between Gospel Oak and Barking to Southend Central for the Air Show. Information about the Southend Air Festival is available from www.visitsouthend.co.uk or use the link from www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk or telephone 01702 618747.



WALTHAMSTOW QUEEN'S ROAD Surprise! Surprise! Network Rail has yet to sign off a final design for the new Edison Close entrance to the station. Waltham Forest Council now estimates that the entrance will be completed at the same time as the footpath from Walthamstow Central, in the autumn.

OVERGROUND FORCED TO SCRAP OLYMPIC TIMETABLE TRAIL

In the last e-bulletin (27th April, available on www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk), it was reported that LOROL² was going to test its Olympic timetable during the week 28th May to 2nd June. The test had to be cancelled because Network Rail could not clear all the Overground timetable paths of freight trains in time! It will be recalled that freight traffic on the North London Line was to be diverted from Ipswich across country to Peterborough and Nuneaton or over the Barking – Gospel Oak Line. Network Rail has assured LOROL that remaining timetable conflicts will be resolved before the main event! LOROL now intend to test the Olympic timetable over the weekend of 23-24 June when BBC Radio 1 stage a concert on Hackney Marshes, when, incidentally, there are far fewer freight trains running!

¹ Network SouthEast (a business sector of British Rail)

² London Overground Rail Operations Limited

OVERGROUND TO HIRE IN DIESEL TRAIN FROM CHILTERN RAILWAYS

In the last e-bulletin, the full utilisation of the LOROL Class 172 DMU³ fleet was discussed regarding the operator's inability to provide more *PIXC-buster*⁴ trains. BGOLUG had concluded that LOROL would have to sub lease a 2-car diesel train from another train operating company if there were to be any quick relief of peak period overcrowding, citing LOROL's sister company, Chiltern Railways as the most likely candidate. LOROL's response was that Chiltern's fleet was fully committed and their long term hiring of a unit to LOROL was out of the question.

Now comes news that LOROL is "borrowing" a train from Chiltern, so that a one of LOROL's Class 172s can return to Bombardier at Derby for rectification to faults in the saloon floors. Questioned if the floor faults were caused by the strain of regularly carrying peak period crush passenger loads, LOROL insisted that there was no damage to the carriage floors, merely that the floor coverings were not performing as advertised!

Incidentally, Chiltern's Class 172s have more seats than LOROL's *and* have a toilet (which is bound to be kept locked out of use while the train is being operated by LOROL), which means there is less standing room. I think LOROL will try and keep the Chiltern set in reserve as much as possible. It may well become the regular unit for the 07:59 Woodgrange Park – Hampstead Heath *PIXC-buster*.

After several false starts, LOROL think that they have cracked the problem of the deafening public address systems on the Class 172 trains. A software fix that seems successful has been uploaded to 172 003, so perhaps members will look out for this particular unit (car numbers XXX13) and let us know if your ear drums notice the difference!

TfL BEGIN PROCUREMENT PROCESS FOR 3-CAR DIESEL TRAINS

TfL⁵ have issued a notice (dated 16th May 2012 <http://ted.europa.eu/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:158022-2012:TEXT:EN:HTML>) in the Journal of the European States inviting suppliers to register with them expressions of interest in tendering for the supply of "approximately" eight 3-car DMUs, suitable for operation on the Gospel Oak to Barking railway, although 4-car trains "may be considered". "TfL has an aspiration to introduce longer trains from 2013." TfL says that the notice is for information and to help TfL gauge market interest.

BGOLUG was soon contacted by *RAIL* magazine for comment. The statement supplied to them is reprinted below and will form the basis of a fuller press release to be issued in the next few days.

STATEMENT ISSUED TO RAIL MAGAZINE

- BGOLUG welcomes the fact that Transport for London (TfL) has finally accepted that overcrowding of the 2-car DMUs delivered only two years ago has reached unacceptable levels as we predicted it would.
- While BGOLUG welcomes this move, unless it is to be merely a short term measure, pending imminent electrification during Control Period 5 (2014-2019), we believe it to be short sighted and not in users' best interests.
- The main rail industry players, Network Rail, TfL, DBS⁶ and Freightliner, agree Barking – Gospel Oak is the absolute priority "infill" electrification scheme. Only the Department for Transport (DfT) fails to see this blindingly obvious fact and furthermore appears to believe that government has little responsibility towards enhancing the national rail freight network.

³ Diesel Multiple Unit

⁴ Department for Transport (DfT) acronym – Passengers In eXcess of Capacity

⁵ Transport for London

⁶ BD Schenker (formally English, Welsh & Scottish Railway)

- The fact that TfL has chosen this time to start the procurement process for DMUs raises concerns that its recommendations for electrification and 4-car trains to be included in the forthcoming HLOS⁷ have been rejected yet again by the DfT.
- During the Olympics, to make way for the intensive London Overground service between Stratford and Camden Road, Freightliner will yet again have to muster a pool of diesel locomotives to drag their container trains, complete with dead electric locomotives, from Felixstowe or Tilbury, over the Barking – Gospel Oak Line, en route to the West Coast Main Line at Willesden and on to the Midlands, North-West and Scotland.
All of this inconvenience for a gap of less than 12 miles in the electrified rail network.
- Meanwhile, Mayor of London and Chair of TfL, Boris Johnson refuses to commit any TfL funds to electrification of the route because he wrongly believes it would only benefit rail freight. He also seems oblivious to the fact that electrification would free London Overground of the onerous burden of maintaining a small, dedicated diesel train fleet. He also fails to understand benefits an all-electric fleet would bring to London Overground's operations.
- The Mayor is also failing to act on a TfL Report on rail freight from 2007 which recommended electrification in view of the increase in rail freight from the ports now being constructed near Felixstowe (Bathside Bay) and Thames Haven (London Gateway – expected to generate 20,000 jobs and more than 30 trains a day). The TfL report also recommended a new freight terminal at Barking to receive electric international trains off HSI⁸. These trains are now starting to run with services from Valencia and Poland, but have to change to a diesel locomotive at the Barking exchange sidings. Does the Mayor now repudiate that TfL report from 2007?
- If the DfT and TfL remain obdurate in refusing to fund this important electrification, BGOLUG has suggested⁹ ways of spreading the cost, bringing benefits to commuters not just on London Overground but to those using Southern services into London and along the south coast.
 - Network Rail¹⁰ funds the electrification of the remaining gaps on the Barking – Gospel Oak route [Woodgrange Park – South Tottenham East Junction and South Tottenham West Junction – Gospel Oak including links to ECML¹¹ at Harringay and MML¹² at Carlton Road (these links are already planned as part of the Thameslink scheme)]
 - The DfT authorises the recently placed order with Bombardier, Derby for 27x5-car Class 377 trains for Southern to be increased by a further 11 sets to expand and improve crowded commuter services in South London
 - 19x3-car Class 377/3 trains to be returned from London to Southern's Coastway services, where their toilet facilities are much missed by passengers
 - 19 former London Overground dual-voltage Class 313 units to return to London, 10 for Barking – Gospel Oak and 9 to boost Great Northern inner suburban services between Moorgate/King's Cross and Hertford North/Welwyn Garden City. These trains were refurbished by Southern and would provide sufficient passenger capacity on the Barking – Gospel Oak Line for several years. Using these 3-car units would keep necessary platform lengthening works to a minimum, reducing initial infrastructure costs.

⁷ High Level Output Specification

⁸ High Speed 1, formerly known as Channel Tunnel Rail Link

⁹ See pages 2 & 3 of BGOLUG e-bulletin 27 April, now posted at www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk

¹⁰ Financed by short-term borrowing and adding the project cost to the Regulatory Asset Base (RAB) to enable Network Rail to levy higher Track Access Charges to recoup the outlay, this also being known as *using the Network Rail Credit Card*, an expression credited to Roger Ford, Industry & Technology Editor of *Modern Railways* magazine.

¹¹ East Coast Main Line (King's Cross – Peterborough/Kings Lynn)

¹² Midland Main Line (Farringdon/St. Pancras – Bedford)

The 7th April BGOLUG e-bulletin (see www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk) contained the answers that Mayor Boris Johnson gave Transport Committee Chair, Caroline Pidgeon AM, after the last Mayor's Question Time before his recent re-election and reproduced below.

Barking to Gospel Oak line (1)

Question No: 837 / 2012

[Caroline Pidgeon](#)

Aside from presenting the business case for electrification of the Barking to Gospel Oak Line in your Rail Vision, what actual discussions have you or your officers held with the Department for Transport to argue the case? Please list any meetings which have been held with this aim since 2008.

Written response from the Mayor

TfL officers meet Department for Transport officials extremely regularly, and electrification of the Gospel Oak – Barking line has been discussed many times since 2008, alongside other agenda items.

The outstanding issues with electrification of the line are cost and funding, rather than the socio-economic business case (the 'benefit-cost ratio'). We are awaiting the outcome of a feasibility study undertaken by Network Rail in advance of the DfT's High Level Output Specification expected in July 2012.

TfL is also considering other options to provide more capacity, such as lengthening the existing diesel trains, should electrification not go ahead in the next Control Period (2014 to 2019), or if it happens towards the end of the Control Period.

Barking to Gospel Oak line (2)

Question No: 838 / 2012

[Caroline Pidgeon](#)

Further to your answer to MQs 448/2012 and 449/2012, what discussions have been held with train manufacturers and train leasing companies about the prospective supply of electric trains for the Barking to Gospel Oak Line?

Written response from the Mayor

TfL has discussed indicative prices and programmes with a train manufacturer for additional electric trains that could be used across the Overground network, including the Barking to Gospel Oak line, subject to electrification. The details of these discussions are commercially sensitive

The Mayor's answers would seem to indicate that while he was opposed to TfL funding electrification because he believed the 2010 delivery of the diesel Class 172s meant that electrification would only benefit freight. However, TfL *did* recognise the benefits and was doing its utmost to see that electrification happened. Also Network Rail was carrying out the delayed GRIP 3 study at their own expense, to feed into DfT considerations for the July HLOS decision. Judging from comments in recent reports to the TfL Rail and Underground Panel, TfL considers active investigations by NR as a positive factor in DfT deliberations. TfL had also had a preliminary "chat" with a train manufacturer about more electric trains – obviously Bombardier supplying more Class 378s for Barking – Gospel Oak as well as additional Class 378 carriages for lengthening the existing Overground fleet to 5-cars for the orbital services¹³.

So how does "TfL is also considering other options to provide more capacity, such as lengthening the existing diesel trains, should electrification not go ahead in the next Control Period (2014 to 2019), or if it happens towards the end of the Control Period" fit in with the issuing of the notice in the European Journal?

TfL's subsidiary, RfL¹⁴, will soon be starting negotiations with LOROL to decide whether to allow their *London Rail Concession* contract to lapse in March 2014 or to grant an extension to March 2016. The existing Class 172 fleet would be part of those negotiations since they are leased to LOROL,

¹³ East London Line, North London Line & West London Line

¹⁴ Rail for London Limited

not TfL and owned by Angel Trains ROSCO¹⁵. The 2-car Class 172s could go off lease back to Angel, before 2014 and be replaced with new 3-car (or 4-car) DMUs leased directly by TfL, just like the Class 378 fleet. Angel trains would have no problem finding a new home for the 2-car Class 172s. Likewise, should the line be electrified later, there would be no trouble finding takers for 3 or 4-car second-hand DMUs either.

However, the loose wording of the European Notice does not preclude LOROL and Angel Trains offering to supply eight new Bombardier Class 172 coaches to insert between the two driving vehicles of the existing fleet. 3-car Class 172s would require little work to station platforms apart from the lengthening of the down side (Eastbound) platform at South Tottenham. TfL has won Access for All funding for this station and will shortly be shoe-horning passenger lifts into the constricted station site and the platform could be lengthened at the same time. It would seem that we are living in “interesting times”!



The case for electrification

- **COST: Electric trains are cheaper:**
 - Maintenance costs approximately 33% lower
 - Fuel costs up to 50% lower
 - Lower lease / purchase costs (lease costs 20% lower)
 - Reduced track maintenance costs
- **CARBON: Lower carbon emissions** (by approx 20-30%)
 - Fuel price volatility and security of supply

Electrification: wider benefits

Improved train performance

Electric trains have higher availability and are more reliable.

More seats and faster journeys

Electric trains have better acceleration with the opportunity for reduced journey times.

Capacity

Electric trains typically have more seats per vehicle.

Better journey experience

Electric trains are quieter and have offer smoother journeys. Also no emissions at point of use

These are two slides from a Network Rail presentation on electrification at the recent *Infrarail 2012* Exhibition at the NEC, Birmingham, now available on the *Infrarail* website and also attached with this e-bulletin along with a presentation at the same exhibition from TfL.

Glenn Wallis
Assistant Secretary
Barking – Gospel Oak Line User Group

¹⁵ Rolling Stock Leasing Company