

BARKING – GOSPEL OAK LINE USER GROUP

Chairman: Alderman Frederick Jones, Barking & Dagenham Council
Secretary: Richard H Pout B.Sc. Econ. MILT, (020) 8348 5064, 07970 722991
Assistant Secretary: Glenn Wallis, (020) 8529 2361, 07789 791224

www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk
info@barking-gospeloak.org.uk



BARKING – GOSPEL OAK LINE USER GROUP NEWS eBULLETIN | NOVEMBER 2012

WEEKEND RAIL ENGINEERING WORKS & SERVICES 3 - 4 NOVEMBER

LONDON OVERGROUND HEADLINES

- * **NO OVERGROUND ENGINEERING WORKS THIS WEEKEND!**

OTHER RAIL SERVICES HEADLINES

- * **WEEKEND CLOSURES ON MUCH OF LUL NORTHERN LINE**
- * **WEEKEND CLOSURE ON CENTRAL LINE LEYTONSTONE - WOODFORD VIA HAINAULT**
- * **NO ABELLIO GREATER ANGLIA TRAINS BROXBOURNE - HERTFORD EAST**
- * **FIRST CAPITAL CONNECT TRAINS VIA HERTFORD NORTH DISRUPTED ON SUNDAY**

For the full weekly summary of weekend engineering works affecting all of London Overground and London Underground and national rail services connecting at or within walking distance of Barking - Gospel Oak Line stations click on the *WEBSITE* file attached to this email for more information.

ELECTRIFICATION: ANOTHER FALSE DAWN!

An article in the October edition of *The Rail Engineer* www.therailengineer.com/2012/10/09/an-electrifying-conference/ sent spirits soaring. The article reported a conference “held recently” at the Network Rail (NR) Westwood management training centre in Coventry and convened by NR’s newly constituted Infrastructure Projects division and attended by 120 delegates from the rail industry supply chain to discuss forthcoming electrification schemes during the 2014-2019 Control Period (CP5). One of the NR Infrastructure Directors referred to Barking – Gospel Oak as one of the projects to get under way in 2014 and even put a £50m price tag on it! This was heady stuff!

However, before the champagne corks were popped, it was thought that since this earth shattering news had only appeared in a relatively small circulation journal, some confirmation should be sought. A form of “shadow boxing by email” then took place with the NR Anglia Route Enhancement Team. It was then discovered that the “recently held” conference had in fact taken place back in June, *before* Justine Greening’s £9bn HLOS announcement to Parliament on 16th July which specifically *excluded* Barking –Gospel Oak electrification and was intended just to give the railway supply industry a taste of what contracts *could* be on offer post HLOS announcement.

NR was very cagey about confirming much else, but it does seem to imply that the exclusion of Barking – Gospel Oak electrification was as much a shock to them as it was to us. NR confirmed that it, along with many of their stakeholders (TfL, DB Schenker, Freightliner etc), supported the electrification of Barking – Gospel Oak and the Thames Haven Branch to the new London Gateway container port and logistics park east of Tilbury, citing the 2009 NR Electrification Route Utilisation Strategy and last year’s Initial Industry Plan as confirmation. NR confirmed that the project was currently unfunded but would not comment upon ongoing discussions with stakeholders and funders prior to the publication of NR’s Strategic Business Plan in January. If the project were to be funded by adding the cost to NR’s Regulated Asset Base and then recouping the cost through Track Access

Charges both Department for Transport (DfT) and Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) approval would be required.

DfT Rail, or DafT, which is fast becoming its default name, following the Inter City West Coast (ICWC) franchising fiasco is now widely recognised as “broken” and some of its other crazier decisions, such as the Intercity Express Programme (IEP) are now possibly about to be exposed to wider public gaze with the news in the latest *Rail Business Intelligence* (with thanks to *Railway Eye* blogspot) that the DafT designed train will cost **twice** as much as an equivalent *Pendolino* train. The interim Laidlaw Report has not been able to lay to rest the widely held belief of a “anyone but Branson” attitude in DafT and one wonders if there was also a “anyone but Boris and TfL” attitude around the time of finalising the HLOS statement as well? Included in the email is this month’s *Informed Sources Preview* by the Industry & Technical Editor of *Modern Railways*, Roger Ford and the latest Rail.Co weekly round-up with more on the West Coast debacle. Also hot off the press from Siemens comes news that the company has still not been able to sign the contract for the new Thameslink rolling stock with DafT, but hope to do so, “in the new year”. It is fast looking likely that there will be precious few electric trains available to run under the overhead wires now being erected in the *North West Triangle* scheme until the new Thameslink stock arrives to release trains in London to move north.

DafT now seems to be retreating from Justine Greening’s 16th July line, “....*That [Barking – Gospel Oak electrification] is not part of the electrification plans that we have announced today. Ultimately it is for Transport for London to fund it if it wants to do so, but I am sure that it will take on board the points that the hon. Gentleman has made and, if the business case stacks up, might consider it.*”

The November edition of *Modern Railways* reports the department responded to queries by the respected industry journal by claiming that it didn’t fund Barking – Gospel Oak electrification because it would cost £90m and would be difficult to carry out due to viaducts, cuttings and the intensive service the line carried. It made much more sense, the department argued, to convert the Basingstoke – Southampton line from third rail 750v DC to 25kv AC overhead current collection and to electrify the Oxford – Bletchley route, part of which is currently disused. Readers will have already noted that while Network Rail claims not have done a GRIP 3 study, it has priced Barking – Gospel Oak at £50m, £40m less than DafT! It is vital that someone urgently funds a GRIP 3 study so that the actual cost of electrification can be nailed down once and for all. Perhaps either DfT Rail or NR should ask the Mayor if he is still willing to fund half the cost of a GRIP 3 report.

With the amount of support there is throughout the rail industry for Barking – Gospel Oak electrification, it is imperative that political pressure is maintained upon government and the Mayor and it was pleasing to note that Green London Assembly Member, Jenny Jones has joined the fray:

Mayor answers to London

Diesel trains

Question number 2942/2012

Meeting date 17/10/2012

Question by Jenny Jones

What are you doing to ensure electrification of the remaining diesel services on TfL’s Overground Network and what are you doing more widely to ensure there are clear plans to electrify all remaining Network Rail lines in London?

Answer by Boris Johnson

*As explained in my response to **MQ 2554 | 2012**, I wrote to the former Secretary of State in August to again seek a way forward on electrification of the Gospel Oak – Barking Line. In her response, she committed her officials to support work with TfL, Network Rail, train operators and*

other industry parties to see if a viable way can be found to bridge the funding gap. These discussions are under way.

The other significant train services in London still using diesel traction are longer distance services on the Midland Main Line (MML), Great Western Main Line (GWML) and Chiltern line. The Government has committed to electrifying both the MML and GWML over the next few years.

My Transport Strategy supports the electrification of all rail services in London. Nonetheless, electrification of the Chiltern line and other sections of route distant from London (which would allow electric long distance services such as Exeter – Waterloo and Aberdeen/Inverness – King’s Cross) will inevitably be a lower priority for the Government because of the high costs involved, and limited benefits.

So it appears that the Mayor has yet to make contact with the current Secretary of State, Patrick McLoughlin, but that his predecessor did task DfT Rail staff to work with stakeholders to try and progress the scheme. It seems that we will have to wait for Network Rail’s Strategic Business Plan in January to find out if they have been successful.

BLACKHORSE ROAD MEETING

The Overground platforms at Blackhorse Road are managed by London Underground Limited (LUL). Following an exchange of emails, Richard Pout and I met with Mike Donnithorne, LUL Victoria Line Group Station Manager North and Sam Russell, LOROL Stakeholder Manager at the station on 16th October. It was disappointing to learn that the reason the planned Overground station refurbishment had been so reduced in scope was due to a lack of funds. Walls and shelters had been repainted, most signage renewed and the footbridge steps had received non slip surfaces and new handrails. It was noted with some amusement that the National Rail “arrows of indecision” had been replaced with the Overground roundel on the illuminated signs high on the outside of the LUL station building, although according to the Overground design manual the Underground roundel should appear *above* the Overground one as it is an LUL station.

Mike Donnithorne explained that there was insufficient funds even to replace the old Silverlink help-points on the platforms with standard TfL ones. Blackhorse Road must be the only ex Silverlink station on the Overground network still fitted with Silverlink help-points. While the red ‘Emergency’ buttons do connect with the LOROL’s Swiss Cottage control room, the blue ‘Information’ buttons do not, instead playing the last message to be recorded at the long abandoned Willesden control room and advising “that all services were running to the advertised timetable”. As no one knows how to switch this seriously out of date message off, Mike agreed to cover the blue buttons up with yellow and black striped tape and this was indeed done within 24 hours of our meeting.

Mike was also unaware that the original TfL specification had included a summary of departures display in the station ticket hall. He thought that he could arrange to provide such a display, driven from the station control room display from his own budget and promised to investigate this solution.

Since there were no funds available there was little else that could be agreed. The Overground station at Blackhorse Road has received DfT “Access for All” funding for a ramp to the Barking bound platform and a lift to the Gospel Oak bound one next year and BGOLUG will have to lobby TfL and London Assembly members to try and get some funds allocated to improving passenger accommodation on the platforms as part of this scheme.

It is surprising that when agreeing the station improvement programme with LOROL, TfL failed to agree, and fund, a similar programme with LUL, resulting in Overground platforms at LUL stations becoming the “poor relations” on the Overground network. Indeed, the decision of TfL to hand the former Silverlink platforms at Underground stations over to LUL on 11th November 2007 is now looking questionable.

MEETING OF THE LOROL PASSENGER GROUP 17TH OCTOBER

It is worth mentioning that 11th November will mark five years since TfL assumed responsibility for managing the *North London Metro* routes from the DfT and let the London Rail Concession to operate those services and the rebuilt and extended East London Line under the London Overground banner to London Overground Rail Operations Limited (LOROL), originally jointly owned by MTR Corporation of Hong Kong and Laing, but since then Deutsche Bahn AG of Germany has acquired Laing's rail interests.

Attached to the email is a poster LOROL had on display at the 17th October meeting showing recently completed and planned station improvements.

Mark Eaton, LOROL's Concession Director, outlined the changes being made in the Winter Timetable which is due to start on 9th December. The East London Line will see a big increase in trains with the extension of services over the Surrey Quays – Clapham Junction section, replacing the current South London Line service. There will also be a morning PIXC-buster from Crystal Palace. Southern Railway will also be providing additional services over the West London Line, between Clapham Junction and Shepherd's Bush. The North London Line will also see additional services after 22:00. There will be no change to services on the Barking – Gospel Oak Line because LOROL is already utilising its diesel train fleet to the maximum. LOROL had no information regarding TfL's procurement exercise for 3-car diesel trains last May.

Richard Pout circulated details on the train service improvements he felt were necessary in the early mornings and late evenings and these are reproduced below:

LATE SERVICES ON THE OVERGROUND

BGOLUG and some other users would like to see the issue of early morning and late evening services discussed with an appropriate representative from TfL, to take this forward. Apparently there are to be changes from December, but there has been no consultation on this issue to date; why not?

ELLX North

There are a number of ELL trips (at least 4?) from H&I after 2215 that run ECS, when these trains could be 'livened up' to operate in service, providing a full 10 minute service, with even a few 5 minute gaps, at least to Surrey Quays.

This could also give a decent 15 or 20 minute service to New Cross and in due course Clapham Jct, also eliminating the unsatisfactory 20 minute service gaps between H&I and Dalston Jct after 22.30.

Service intervals in South London might be more of a problem, as services operate within a 30 minute framework. By liaising more closely with Southern, a 4-tph service is possible by taking the first train to Sydenham, LOROL running about every 15 minutes, and changing to Southern trains so that no gap to Crystal Palace or West Croydon is longer than 20 minutes. Some may have to change on a few journeys at Norwood Junction, but that also opens access to East Croydon on Southern. This involves closer liaison and timetable co-operation between LOROL and Southern and the future operator as and when that franchise is reviewed.

North London Line

The NLL is more of a problem, having only livened up a few short workings from Stratford to Camden Road, but there are to be further changes from 9 December. Simply services are too infrequent on the core sections from Stratford to Camden Road and Willesden Jct.

The infrequent post 22.00 hrs service defeats the whole object of the NLL, to provide linkages between different routes. Was the problem at TfL the minimal marketing and train operating experience of certain personnel there, and a seeming unwillingness to enter into any meaningful dialogue with users?

The Passenger Group needs to know who is dealing with Overground network development now?

Now that LO is basically complete, its marketing as a full 18+ hrs All-Day operation is crucial. Who is ultimately responsible for these issues at TfL - Geoff Hobbs, Howard Smith or?

It would be useful to have an outline of what the December 2012 timetable will be, and then when Network Rail has finally finished its major upgrade work, what discuss what can be delivered from May 2013.

BGOLUG's suggested 20-minute core service post 21.00 - 21.30 gives an acceptable late evening service for Willesden to Richmond and Clapham Jct, and also Gospel Oak - Barking, bringing at least 3 x 378s and 1 or 2 172s into depot up to an hour earlier for attention.

However like the ELL, it provides a 10 minute core service from Stratford to Willesden, a powerful promotional feature. 'Overground North London is every 10 minutes' is a good marketing tool for the Stratford to Willesden section.

BGOLUG understands that Watford RUG would like to see restoration of their 20 minute service through to midnight, with an additional late train from Euston.

On the occasion of the Sunday rehearsal for the Olympic timetable, the NLL was carrying by 06.15 hrs many passengers who were just normal punters, and who had no connection with Olympic events. I appreciate it may not be practical to start on Sunday's before about 07.30, but on weekdays a half-hour earlier start should be on the agenda.

Lastly Stakeholders do hope TfL will extend the courtesy of inviting them to a early trial run on the SLL. We are all looking forward to completing the 'Outer Circle'

Richard H Pout
Secretary BGOLUG

TALK BY JIM CONNOR AT THE RAILWAY FIELDS, HARRINGAY

Some of our members will remember Jim Connor as the author of two books about the Barking – Gospel Oak Line:-

- The Tottenham Joint Lines, published by Connor & Butler in 1993 and
- St. Pancras to Barking, published by Middleton Press in 2005.

Jim has also been involved in the production of many books and videos about London's lost railways and railway stations and he founded and edited *The London Railway Record* until this year and still contributes to the magazine.

Jim will be giving a talk about the origins and history of the Barking – Gospel Oak Line on Saturday, 10th November at 14:30 hours at the Railway Fields Local Nature Reserve, across the road from the entrance to Harringay Green Lanes station. The nature reserve has been in existence for some years and is on the site of the former Harringay Stadium goods yard which closed on 3rd February 1964. A poster, advertising the talk is attached to this email.

It is appropriate to record here the loss of another part of the line's heritage. St. Anne's Road station opened on 2nd October 1882 and was closed on 9th August 1942. While the wooden platforms and buildings had disappeared by the late 1940s, the brick booking office, at street level on Seven Sisters Road remained, in use as a shop. Word has reached me that this 130 year old building has recently been demolished.

Glenn Wallis
Assistant Secretary
Barking – Gospel Oak Line User Group

Station Improvements

Recent Improvements Made

Newly opened renovated Victorian booking hall at Crystal Palace with updated customer information system and toilets (a major TfL-led project)

Lifts installed making Camden Road, Gospel Oak and Hackney Central (whose gateline has been extended) fully accessible (DfT-funded Access for All works)

Remodelling of Kensal Rise ticket office with accessible ticket office counter

Cycle storage installed and tenancies implemented at various locations

Retail unit installation at Canonbury and Gospel Oak

Ticket office relocation at Kensington (Olympia) and Caledonian Road & Barnsbury

New DDA compliant ticket office windows at Hackney Wick, Kilburn High Road and Sydenham

Revamped information centre at West Croydon (on platform 3)

Subway refurbishment at Norwood Junction

Accessibility improvements to stairway at Willesden Junction (Harrow Road) footpath

Additional gateline on Platform 4 at West Croydon providing interchange with bus station and Tramlink (TfL project)

Additional gateline on Platform 2 at Brockley providing step-free access to southbound services (TfL project)

Access for All Works

Lift schemes agreed for Brockley, Hampstead Heath and Honor Oak Park (completion expected December 2013) and also at Crystal Palace (to all platforms), Blackhorse Road, Kensal Rise, New Cross Gate (to all platforms) South Tottenham and West Hampstead

Other Planned Improvements

Installation of automatic doors in the waiting room between platforms 4 and 5 at Willesden Junction

Redevelopment of Hackney Wick (as part of a London 2012 Games legacy project)

Interchange between Hackney Central and Hackney Downs

Installation of permanent staff accommodation at Clapham High Street and Wandsworth Road (scheduled February 2013)

Gateline installation at Kilburn High Road with revamped ticket hall

New DDA compliant ticket office window at New Cross Gate

Subway refurbishment at Acton Central

Platform resurfacing at Gospel Oak

Installation of ramped second entrance to Walthamstow Queen's Road

Repairs and refurbishment of Station Approach at Willesden Junction

Camden Road gateline extension and ticket office refurbishment

Installation of additional London Midland CIS screens at Bushey

Platform repairs and new waiting shelter at South Hampstead upon completion of retaining wall stabilisation works

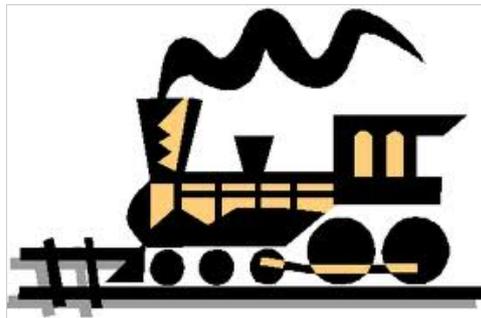
Platform extensions on West London Line by late 2013

Kensington (Olympia) – LUL installation of new DOO equipment for new District Line rolling stock

Sydenham – Station Approach refurbishment by local council

Friends of Railway Fields

History of the Barking to Gospel Oak Line



Saturday 10 November 2012

2.30pm

- Come and hear eminent railway historian and author, Jim Connor, talk about the history of our local line.
- Learn about the now-closed stations and railway links in the area.
- See photographs and maps showing the stations as they were in earlier times.

Entry free (donations welcome)

Refreshments will be available

**At: Railway Fields Local Nature Reserve, Off Green Lanes,
Harringay, N4 1ES**

For more information or queries contact: friendsofrailwayfields@gmail.com

