

BULLETIN 11TH JANUARY 2018

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



**REOPENING
ON
TARGET**



It appears that all is well for the resumption of passenger train services between Barking and Gospel Oak on Monday 15th January 2018. Electrification work is still not 100% complete and work is still in progress as the deadline approaches for Network Rail's project team to hand the line back to the operators on Sunday 14th January. Any work remaining will have to be completed overnight during the period passenger services do not operate, providing freight trains can be diverted via Stratford. It has been a difficult task for the project team to plan for all the outstanding work to be completed at relatively short notice in two multi-week line closures, (17th September – 22nd October & 18th November – 14th January) especially when freight operators had extra trains to operate in the run-up to Christmas and diversionary routes already had engineering closures booked, such as those at Highbury & Islington and Hackney Wick on the North London Line (NLL). This meant that the line had to be opened on several weekends to run freight trains.

BGORUG officers met with Transport for London (TfL) in early September and the Network Rail (NR) project team (GOBE) at the end of November. At that time the NR GOBE team were hopeful that work would be finished on time and that overnight testing of the energised overhead line equipment (OHLE), using a hired in electric multiple unit (EMU) – not necessarily a London Overground one – would start soon after*. They were also hopeful of getting approval from the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) for the OHLE to be used by ordinary, timetabled electric traffic as early as February.

They also said that while they were planning for preparatory works for the raising of the road bridge at Crouch Hill station to start in January, this would not stop electric trains from running in the meantime. While there would be serious, prolonged disruption to road traffic, the railway would only need to be closed, probably over Easter, for the actual jacking up of the bridge.

Luckily we will be meeting NR GOBE team members on 19th January and again on 22nd February to hear how these plans are progressing. It should not be underestimated that the June 2016 – February 2017 blockade was almost a waste of time as far as actual electrification work was concerned. The new team brought in by NR to take over the GOBE project in spring 2017 had to more or less start from scratch and find time and resources for their work when other important NR projects on the NLL and Great Eastern Main Line had already booked their line closures and resources, leaving GOBE to manage as best it could. In the circumstances they have done very well. * See page 4.



DRS 66 423 leads an empty Daventry – Purfleet "Tesco Express" through the down platform at South Tottenham on 28.02.2017 [CJ]



Work has started on preparing Bridge 14 at Crouch Hill for jacking 30cm higher to provide the required clearances for the overhead line equipment. Both 10.01.2018 [KF]





STILL WAITING AT BLACKHORSE ROAD!

It is hard to believe that funding for the *Access for All* scheme at Blackhorse Road was announced by the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2012, and *six years later*, the works are **still** not complete! After seemingly endless delays, it looked as if the lifts would be ready for use when the line reopened after the first electrification closure on 27th February 2017. But no, the two lifts remained barricaded off, as they still are. BGORUG and Waltham Forest Council were then assured that the lifts would be working on 14th April 2017, but that date came and went.

The reason the lifts are not working is that the scheme was designed by Network Rail to their standards and installed by their contractor because the Overground platforms are NR property. However, the Overground platforms are managed by London Underground (LUL) and the main station building is *their* property. The new standard LUL style platform help points and the alarms in the lifts are all standard NR designs that are incompatible with the LUL alarm systems installed in the Underground station! NR has given BGORUG assurances that the lifts will be operating on 15th January, but this has now slipped to 19th February. NR has apologised and pledged to do all it can to bring this date forward.

BGORUG CAMPAIGN FOR PASSENGER REFUNDS & COMPENSATION

Since the first electrification blockade was announced two years ago, BGORUG has been lobbying a reluctant TfL to provide refunds and compensation to *all* regular passengers who have been left out of pocket by having to pay extra fares due to the three long term closures of the line since June 2016. At the beginning, TfL would only refund passengers who had to travel through the Zone 1 fare zone.

Now, thanks to the dogged support BGORUG has received from Jennette Arnold OBE, London Assembly member for Hackney, Islington and Waltham Forest, along with London TravelWatch looking favourably upon appeals from passengers, TfL has said that it will consider refunds to ANY passenger disadvantaged by the closures.

BGORUG will be making a further announcement about this next week.

REFUNDING OF ADDITIONAL FARES PAID DURING RAIL CLOSURE

If you wish to claim back additional fares paid while the train service is withdrawn, complete the online complaints form at tfl.gov.uk or write to:
TfL Customer Service, 4th Floor, 14 Pier Walk, London SE10 0ES

If TfL are unable to resolve the matter to your satisfaction, you can appeal to London TravelWatch by using the online complaints form at londontravelwatch.org.uk or write to: **London TravelWatch, 169 Union Street, London, SE1 0LL**



Jennette Arnold OBE AM receives a update on the travails of the Barking – Gospel Oak line electrification project and many other issues from BGORUG Secretary, Glenn Wallis, at Walthamstow Queen’s Road station on 20th July 2017. [JA]

WANSTEAD PARK – ALIGHT HERE FOR FOREST GATE

At a meeting with TfL last September BGORUG secured agreement for the platform signs giving the station’s name at Wanstead Park to receive *straplines* reading *alight here for Forest Gate*. This follows on from a similar success in 2015 when TfL agreed to add *Alight here for Walthamstow Town Centre* to the name boards at Walthamstow Queen’s Road. This station is not even very close to the road it is named after!



BGORUG consulted with the Forest Gate North councillors, meeting with Cllr. Rachel Tripp, who was very supportive of the idea.

It is true that the names of many stations on the Barking – Gospel Oak line do not really reflect their true location. Wanstead Park station is closer to Wanstead Flats than the park it is named after and only a matter of a few minutes walk from Forest Gate station.

FIRST OF THE NEW ELECTRIC TRAINS EXPECTED IN LONDON SOON



The first of 54 new trains for London Overground on the test track at Bombardier’s Derby Litchurch Lane works on 7/11/2017

The first of 54 new trains for TfL’s London Overground service took to the works test track at the Derby plant of Bombardier Transportation on 7th November 2017. The new electric *Aventra* type trains are a development of the *Capitalstars* that have been operating London Overground’s orbital services for several years and, like those trains, the new ones will have all longitudinal seating and walk-through connections between carriages.



Left: *Capitalstar* 378 223 approaches the new link between platforms 2 & 3 at Gospel Oak on 28.02.2017 [KF]



Right: One of the first Class 710 *Aventras* to be built, seen in Melton Mowbray up loop while being towed to the Old Dalby test track on 21.12.2017 [CarlWestwood]

The first train is expected to be delivered to London Overground for route testing early this year and the full fleet will comprise:

- 18 four-car trains for the Barking – Gospel Oak and Euston – Watford Junction services. This will relieve overcrowding, allow the Barking – Gospel Oak service to be extended to Barking Riverside in 2021 and the Euston – Watford Junction service to be increased from 3 trains per hour (tph) to 4tph in December 2018.
- 30 four-car trains to take over Liverpool Street – Cheshunt (via Seven Sisters), Chingford and Enfield Town services.
- 6 five-car trains to help provide improved service frequencies on the orbital routes (Stratford – Richmond/Clapham Junction and Highbury & Islington – New Cross/Clapham Junction/Crystal Palace/West Croydon).

As soon as London Overground receives clearance to start running the new electric trains over the Barking – Gospel Oak route, there will be a short period of driver training and then the trains will enter passenger service. TfL has told BGORUG that the new electric trains will start carrying passengers as soon as possible and there may be a period with both 2-car diesel and 4-car electric trains in service together until all the new trains are available.

One immediate piece of good news is that TfL have granted our long standing request that the Barking – Gospel Oak late evening timetable be improved from 15th January, with trains running 3 times per hour after 22:00 instead of every half hour as previously. However, it is intended to withdraw the peak period relief trains from May 2018, leaving a 15-minute interval daytime service until 22:00.

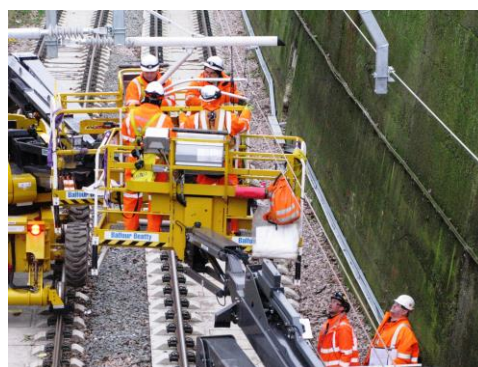
MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

The 2017 AGM confirmed a change in BGORUG's membership renewals policy. Memberships will now always last 12 months from payment and the previous policy of setting the AGM date as the date all should renew has been discontinued. A membership audit has been long outstanding, but in the meantime, many members are now due at least a 1-year renewal which is still only £5.00!

Whichever way you choose to renew (see website for membership form and details), I am sure the Treasurer will be delighted to receive your suscriptions!

MEANWHILE, THE WORK GOES ON!

NR engineers and contractors' staff were busy in Walthamstow on Monday 8th January. They were installing the myriad small fittings required to keep the catenary (upper) and contact (lower) wires and the droppers that keep them apart in place, fastened by *noddy clips*! This group was photographed by bridge 69 (Albert Road). [KF]



STOP PRESS!

London Overground's *Capitalstar* 378 211, on hire to Network Rail, became the first EMU to operate under its own power on the Barking – Gospel Oak line on 11th January. [Photo: DPE Rail]

