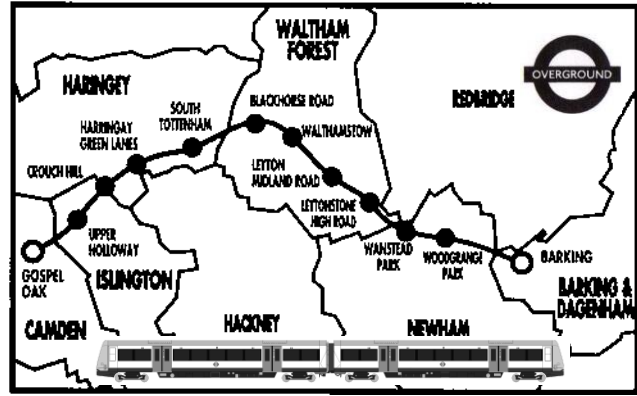


**BARKING – GOSPEL OAK
RAIL USER GROUP**
FOUNDED 1964

Chair: Graham Larkbey
Secretary: Glenn Wallis
(020) 8529 2361; 07789 791224

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



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**NEWS
RELEASE**

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**NEW OVERGROUND TRAINS –
THE WAIT GOES ON!
DUE IN SPRING, NOW IT'S NOVEMBER!**

**AS NEW TRAIN IS RETURNED TO BUILDER, RAIL USERS
ASK WHAT WAS THE POINT OF TfL 'LAUNCH' EVENT?**

Transport for London (TfL) staged a 'launch event' for a new train last week, but no sooner was the event over than the train was sent back to its maker, dashing commuters' hopes of overcrowding relief.

TfL has ordered a total of 54 new Class 710 trains from Derby train builder, Bombardier^[1]. The first of these new trains was supposed to be delivered to TfL back in January, but Bombardier has so far been unable to get the trains approved to operate on Network Rail tracks. With around 30 of the trains completed, Bombardier has had to slow production as it runs out of space to store the new trains.

One of the trains was towed from Derby to London Overground's^[2] Willesden Depot on 13th June for a TfL 'launch event' which took place on 20th June. Hopes that passengers would soon benefit from the new trains were dashed when TfL could only announce that the trains would be in service "by November". The next day, the new train was towed back to Bombardier's Derby works.





NEW OVERGROUND TRAINS – THE WAIT GOES ON!

The first Class 710 off the production line was delivered to the Network Rail test centre at Asfordby in Leicestershire last December. It had to pass Network Rail’s acceptance tests before it could be allowed onto the national network. The train is still at Asfordby and has yet to gain Network Rail approval. It is said that there are problems with the software in the train management system.

“This is a major embarrassment for TfL”, said Glenn Wallis, Secretary of the Barking – Gospel Oak Rail User Group (BGORUG)^[3]. “Up until now the problems with the Class 710 have been masked by the delays to the completion of the Barking – Gospel Oak electrification.”

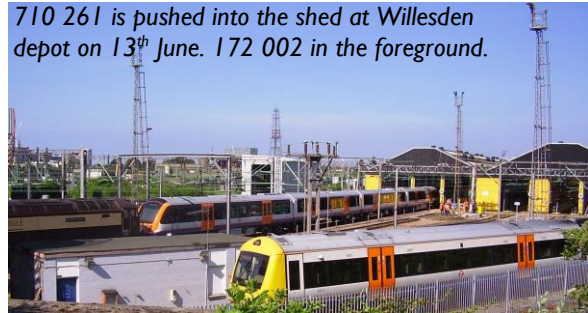
Network Rail’s electrification of the Barking – Gospel Oak line was finally approved for use by the Rail Regulator (ORR) in early June, a full year later than originally planned.

“BGORUG is fully aware that the existing Barking – Gospel Oak fleet of eight diesel trains has to move to West Midlands Railway by November”, said Glenn Wallis. “It is therefore deeply disappointing that TfL is unable to provide a firm schedule for the introduction of the Class 710 into passenger service. Considering that testing started last December, it is also concerning that Bombardier has yet to obtain Network Rail approval for the Class 710 to operate on the national network.”

The Chair of BGORUG, Graham Larkbey, said, “What was the point of TfL staging the Willesden event when the only new announcement turned out to be the colour of the train’s upholstery?”



710 261 at Bombardier Derby in March



710 261 is pushed into the shed at Willesden depot on 13th June. 172 002 in the foreground.



Interior of 710 261 at Willesden with new seat moquette design on 20th June [Modern Railways]



USB charging points at the inter vehicle gangways [Modern Railways]

- ENDS -

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT
GLENN WALLIS ON (020) 8529 2361
OR E-MAIL secretary@barking-gospeloak.org.uk





NEW OVERGROUND TRAINS – THE WAIT GOES ON!

NOTES FOR EDITORS

- The first of 54 new Class 710 trains for Transport for London's London Overground service took to the works' test track at the Derby plant of Bombardier Transportation of 7th November 2017. These new electric *Aventra* type trains are a development of the *Capitalstar* trains 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.

When delivered, the full Class 710 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-carriage 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).

The delivery of the fleet to London Overground has been held up due to the delay in getting Network Rail (NR) *type approval* which would allow the trains to run on NR tracks. The first new Class 710 train, 710256 was delivered to the NR testing facility at Asfordby in Leicestershire just before Christmas 2017. The centre was already testing new automatic cab signalling equipment on London Underground S7/8 trains and type testing Class 345 *Aventra* trains for the Elizabeth Line and Class 800 series Inter City Express Programme trains. This meant that Class 710 testing got off to a slow start.

The Class 345 is the first *Aventra* type to be built, although its Train Management System (TMS) is a development of that used on the previous *Electrostar/Capitalstar* model. Class 345 has much more sophisticated signalling equipment for operating over several different types of NR signalled tracks, the Elizabeth Line tunnel and the Heathrow tunnel. It is the software for the latter that is causing the delay to Class 345s reaching Heathrow. The urgent need for the Class 345s to be ready for the Elizabeth Line opening this December means that testing the numerous software upgrades required as testing continues may well have priority over testing the Class 710. Class 710 is the first *Aventra* to have a completely new TMS designed for the type and it is said that is part of the problems delaying Network Rail approval.

It is now hoped that Class 710 will receive type approval soon, allowing deliveries to London Overground to start, in turn allowing NR route approvals to be obtained and driver training to start with a view to the trains entering service in the late autumn of this year.



710 256 on test at NR's Leicestershire test track on 15/02/2018 [Carl Westwood]



710 256 stabled at NR's Asfordby test centre on 26/04/2018 [@RiggerMortiss]

- The transfer of responsibility for the former *Silverlink Metro* services from the Department for Transport (DfT) to Transport for London (TfL) in 2006, led to creation of the *London Overground* network on 11th November 2007. Operation of the *London Rail Concession* is currently carried out by Arriva Rail London Ltd. (Deutsche Bahn) for TfL.
- Formed in 1964 as the Barking – Kentish Town Line Committee to fight Dr. Beeching's proposed closure of the line, the Barking – Gospel Oak Rail 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 part of the London Overground network, approved by the Government on 26th June 2013. The completed project was signed off by the Rail Regulator (ORR) in June 2018, some 12 months late. It is hoped that electric passenger trains will have commenced operation by the end of 2018.

