

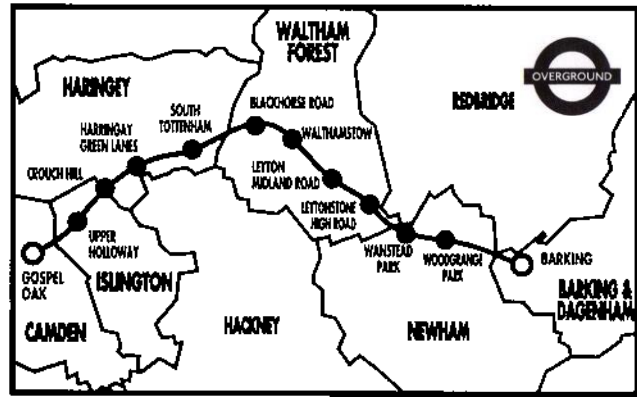
BARKING – GOSPEL OAK RAIL USER GROUP

FOUNDED 1964

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Time	Destination	Platform	Expected	TOC
12:39	Woodgrange Park	2	12:58	
12:49	Gospel Oak	1	On time	
12:55	Barking	2	On time	
13:04	Gospel Oak	1	On time	
13:07	Barking	1	Cancelled	
13:19	Gospel Oak	1	On time	
13:22	Barking	1	Cancelled	
13:33	Gospel Oak	1	On time	
13:37	Barking	2	On time	

Time now: 12:44:04



NEWS RELEASE ISSUED 8TH FEBRUARY 2019

- **TRAIN CRISIS: TfL FINALLY ACTS!**
- **3 BORROWED TRAINS BROUGHT IN**
- **BUT TfL JUST KICKS CAN DOWN THE ROAD**
- **TRAIN SERVICE COLLAPSE NOW DUE BY MARCH**



10-year old borrowed train



1-year late & counting new train

Transport for London (TfL) narrowly averted multiple cancellations on a branch of the London Overground last week. An adapted electric train, normally used on London Overground's orbital routes, was hurriedly drafted in to replace a diesel train being transferred to a West Midlands train company. But the line's User Group warns that a service melt-down is still only weeks away.



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TRAIN CRISIS: TFL FINALLY ACTS!

IN BRIEF

Members of the **Barking – Gospel Oak Rail User Group**^[1] this week warned commuters that their crisis ridden train service was just a few weeks away from multiple, planned cancellations due to a shortage of trains as the new replacements, ordered in 2015 and expected a year ago, have still not been delivered!

As the result of a leasing contract signed last June, the entire present fleet of 2-car diesel trains will have all moved to a **West Midlands** train operator by mid-March, leaving none of them to operate the **Barking – Gospel Oak Overground**^[2] service.

At the last minute, Tfl has decided to draft in three 4-car electric trains from other **Overground** services, but these will only be able to operate half of the line's timetable. **Already reduced weekend services may be withdrawn and weekday services will run every half hour, with no back-up should a train break down. Tfl have yet to announce the exact arrangements that will apply after 15th March.**



One out: diesel unit 172 003, devoid of *Overground* roundels, passes Camden Road on its way to Bombardier's Ilford works on 28th January 2019.



One In: A star is born! The driver of the first electric passenger train on the Barking – Gospel Oak line poses with 378 232 at Barking. 28th January 2019. [KF]

“BGORUG has been urging Tfl to do something to head off this situation for nearly a year, said Secretary, Glenn Wallis.

“We believe there are plenty of off-lease electric trains that could have been hired in and staff trained to operate them had Tfl moved six months ago, thus avoiding this disaster.”

“All Tfl have managed to do is kick the can down the road to mid-March, when passengers will find completely unacceptable levels of service and overcrowding every bit as bad as usual, with no end in sight.”

“We have no idea when these new trains will be fit for public service.”



378 232 received an internal make over before entering service on the Barking – Gospel Oak Line. [KF/JG]



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IN DETAIL

Transport for London (TfL) ordered 45 (later increased to 54) new electric Class 710 *Aventra* 4-car trains from Bombardier Transportation's Derby plant in 2015^[3], with the contract specifying early 2018 for the delivery of the first trains. One year later, not one train has been delivered.

The new trains have been bedevilled by endless problems with the software used to manage the many sub-systems on the train, some of these being safety critical. There still seems to be no prospect of the trains entering service in the next few months.

Eight of the new electric trains were intended to replace eight 2-carriage diesel trains, dating from 2010, on the Barking – Gospel Oak Line. These diesel trains were leased from Angel Trains leasing company, the lease expiring in June 2018. TfL assumed that the new electric trains would be in service by June 2018 and made no attempt to extend the lease on the eight diesel trains. When it became clear that the new trains would not be available in time, TfL discovered that Angel Trains had already leased the eight diesel trains to West Midlands Trains.

West Midlands Trains (WMT) has done all it can to assist by subleasing seven of the diesel trains back to TfL, but it has franchise commitment to the Department for Transport (DfT) to provide a new Leamington – Coventry – Nuneaton service from May and needs to give the diesel trains an already deferred heavy general overhaul and install a toilet in each of the trains to prepare them for the new service. Since last November, WMT has taken back another two diesel trains, another two are due to go anytime now and the final three depart on 15th March.

When TfL finally accepted there was no way that the new Class 710 trains could be in service before the diesel trains left the Overground fleet, it took up a BGORUG suggestion to see if some of its 5-car electric trains used on other Overground services could be shortened to 4-car and used on the Barking – Gospel Oak Line. A trial with unit 378 232 proved successful and it entered passenger service on the line on Monday 28th January, replacing diesel 172 003 which left the fleet the same day.

TfL has decided to convert another two such units (378 206/209) in order to provide a skeleton service on the line following the departure of the last diesels on 15th March. The three trains will only be able to maintain a half-hourly interval service on weekdays and the weekend service, already reduced since mid-November, is also under review. TfL cannot spare any further Class 378 trains without cutting other Overground services and so any breakdowns will reduce the Barking – Gospel Oak service to hourly.

BGORUG can see no end in sight for this intolerable situation. In spite of going through 27 versions of the Train Control Management System software, there is no sign that the Class 710 reliability is approaching anywhere near what is required for public service.

Meanwhile, with six units available for the full timetable and no spare trains, performance, while good, is not always exactly sparkling. On Sunday 3rd February, there were six separate hour-long gaps in service in each direction!

Sunday 3 rd February 2019 Performance	
Trains scheduled in 9 th December 2018 timetable	116
Planned cancellations	41
Planned part cancellations	0
Unplanned cancellations	10
Unplanned part cancellations	0
Trains 3 minutes & over late	9
Trains 10 minutes & over late	0

Monday 4 th February 2019 Performance	
Trains scheduled in 9 th December 2018 timetable	140
Planned cancellations	1
Planned part cancellations	0
Unplanned cancellations	14
Unplanned part cancellations	5
Trains 3 minutes & over late	31
Trains 10 minutes & over late	3



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710 263 on test at Walthamstow 30th January [CJ]



Electric freight trains have been running since last July
90 040 with a Ford's train at Walthamstow 4th January [KF]

- ENDS -

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT
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NOTES FOR EDITORS

BGORUG can make photographs available if required.

1. Formed in 1964 as the Barking – Kentish Town Line Committee to fight the proposed closure of the line, as part of the infamous *Beeching cuts*, 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 what was the only non-electrified part of the London Overground network. Electrification was 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 new electric passenger trains will have commenced operation by late 2019.
2. 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 the 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.
3. 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 on 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 since 2010 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.
- 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).

