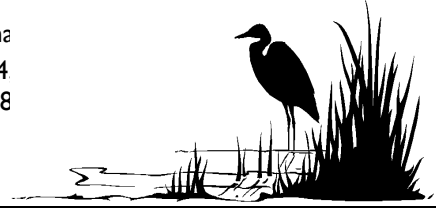


# BARKING-GOSPEL OAK LINE USER GROUP

Chairman: Alderman Frederick Jones, Barking & Dagenham  
Secretary: Richard H Pout B.Sc. Econ. MILT, (020) 8348 5064  
Assistant Secretary: Glenn Wallis, (020) 529 2361, 0778

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## SATURDAY, 20TH NOVEMBER 2010

### Back to the Future?

At the third anniversary of the transfer of services from Silverlink Metro to London Overground, remarks that things are slipping back towards the Silverlink era are on the increase. There has not been time to produce a full update but here are the burning issues of the moment!

### New Train Unreliability

There was severe disruption on Friday 5th, Monday 8th and Tuesday 9th November due to failures of the new trains. Of course there was no back up from the old fleet as this had been transferred to First Great Western's Bristol depot at the end of October. Secretary Richard Pout was witness to the unfolding chaos on 8th November while former Secretary Graham Larkbey was involved on 9th November.

As ever the first casualty of disruption is real time information and no one in London Overground seemed to have any idea what was going on. As Graham Larkbey sent me regular text updates of his exile at Woodgrange Park as at least three trains were cancelled, the TfL website blithely assured all who consulted it that Overground was providing a "Good Service"! Among the reports of members emailed to me was the comment that "It feels like it's going back to the bad old days of the Silverlink-turn- up -and hope-a- train -arrives -at- some -point- service..."

LOROL initially were very apologetic and promised to supply "a full & acceptable picture of things", but then seemed to change their minds saying, "it's not practicable, appropriate or desirable for any company to have to debate every operational minutiae in this public manner." What we have learned from LOROL and the TfL London Rail representative at a recent Waltham Forest Council meeting was that there have been both design and construction problems with the new trains and staff were having problems with the self diagnostic systems that had been fitted. It appears that the main cause for all the disruption was a series of engine failures caused by a bacterial growth in the fuel tanks which blocked fuel filters. This was traced back to contaminated fuel from Bombardier's Derby Works. All the units' fuel systems have been cleaned and treated with a biocide and one (172007) was given a new fuel tank.

### "Stealth" Timetable Cuts

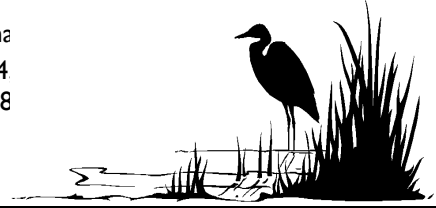
Last January the 06:25 from Gospel Oak was retimed to 06:35 on Mondays to Fridays and the last train from Gospel Oak was withdrawn, with a new earlier last train at 23:05 (23:10 on Saturdays). Along with the peak service reductions, we wrongly assumed that this was related to the North London Line engineering works. Similar late evening service cuts were made in May on the North London Line with half-hourly frequencies and an earlier last train from Richmond which did not connect with the last Barking train from Gospel Oak. This was not the kind of service we were led to expect from TfL.

Since the LOROL Passenger Group meeting on 9th September we have been trying to discover the timetables that would apply at the 12th December 2010 national timetable change and at the completion of the NLL Christmas engineering works on 4th January 2011. We were able to get some information, which did not fill us with joy and our subsequent questions have remained unanswered. When TfL announced they were taking over management of the North London Metro element of the NLR franchise they promised "tube style services" with services starting earlier and finishing "after midnight" by December 2010.

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[Network Rail](#) published the 12th December 2010 to 21st May 2011 Great Britain Timetable online last week and the missing pieces fell into place.

## From 12th December 2010

**Mondays to Saturdays** New earlier first train from Barking at 06:17.

**Saturdays** Monday-Friday times to apply on Saturdays, so first train from Gospel Oak will be 06:35 instead of 06:25 as now, EXCEPT the penultimate train from Barking departs 8 minutes earlier on Saturdays (22:39) than during the week (22:47).

**Sundays** 23:20 Gospel Oak to Barking train WITHDRAWN.

## From 3rd January 2011

**Mondays to Saturdays** Trains every 15 minutes from Barking until 22:17, then 22:47 (Saturdays 22:39) and 23:17.

Trains every 15 minutes from Gospel Oak until 22:05, then 22:35 and 23:05.

Similar “stealth” cuts are occurring on the Euston-Watford local services, with later first trains, earlier last trains and an existing 20-minute frequency cut to half-hourly after 22:00. Yet the East London Line gains two extra late night Monday-Saturday trains from Dalston Junction at 00:01 and 00:15.

BGOLUG Secretary Richard Pout said. “It is very disappointing that TfL London Rail has reneged on a commitment to running an ‘Underground style’ service all day, with trains starting about 06:00 and continuing through until around midnight every day”.

TfL London Rail has not consulted any rail user groups or other passenger representatives about this steady reduction of late evening services. Is this a policy of cuts by stealth hoping that passengers won’t notice?

Richard Pout continued, “We were told to expect an all weekday 15-minute service on the Barking-Gospel Oak Line from January. Passengers travelling after 22:00 should not have to wait a full half hour for their train home. Late night trains are heavily used, TfL don’t seem to have heard of London’s third rush-hour!”

“These reductions appear to be all about cutting costs. We have suggested a reasonable compromise of running every 20 minutes from around 21:00 until 23:25 from Gospel Oak and 23:32 from Barking on Mondays to Saturdays. TfL say they are going to run trains every 15 minutes on Sundays from 22nd May next year. We have suggested running every 20 minutes from 08:00 until 23:20 instead, but so far our proposals have been ignored. We are asking for an urgent meeting with TfL to argue for adequate early morning and late evening services for all Overground passengers.”

Glenn Wallis

Assistant Secretary