



NEWS FROM THE BARKING – GOSPEL OAK RAIL USER GROUP

23rd December 2014

DRIVER ONLY OPERATION (DOO)

Following the report in the 17th October News, LOROL issued the following statement and it was agreed with them that it would be reproduced in the next edition.

“DOO was introduced on the route following over a year of detailed preparations that culminated in a detailed safety assessment of the new method of working. This assessment was undertaken in accordance with LOROL’s Safety Certificate and Authorisation and was supported by an external independent assessor. Industry statistics show that DOO working is a safer method of train despatch than conductor despatch and LOROL is confident that the preparations made to support the introduction of DOO on the Gospel Oak – Barking Line mean that the new arrangements are safe and robust.”

LOROL also asked that should any incidents occur that cause concern to members or other passengers, they should be reported to LOROL so that a full investigation can be carried out. BGORUG would be interested to hear too.

DOO equipment failures are still causing disruption, the latest known incident was the failure of the new evening PIXC-buster unit while working the 17:37 from Gospel Oak on Friday 19th December, the train being terminated at South Tottenham and returning to Willesden Depot, causing the knock-on cancellation of the new 18:58 Barking to Upper Holloway service as well.

WINTER 2014/15 TIMETABLE

This commenced on 14th December and as forecast in the 17th October News featured several additional/amended Monday to Friday services:

- **06:08SX Barking – Gospel Oak** This is formed by starting a Willesden set earlier and running it empty to Barking. This will hopefully lighten the loading on the previously packed 06:18 from Barking. The Barking – Gospel Oak route has the earliest starting morning peak on the whole London Overground network.
- **17:19SX South Tottenham – Gospel Oak** This is formed by utilising the ‘spare set’ for its first evening outing following its deployment for the morning PIXC-buster back in 2011 and with an earlier short South Tottenham trip added last December. This service is a positioning move to allow it to form the 17:37SX from Gospel Oak.
- **17:28SX Gospel Oak – Barking** A PIXC-buster working formed off the 16:48 from Barking, this train arrives at Platform 7 at Barking and forms the 18:18 departure from Platforms 7/8.
- **17:37SX Gospel Oak – Barking** This, formally the 17:35 departure is worked by the spare unit and also runs into Platform 7 at Barking. The unit then forms the...
- **18:58SX Barking – Upper Holloway** again from Platform 7/8 at Barking. After terminating at Upper Holloway the set returns empty to Willesden Depot.

While any additional services are welcome, the 06:08SX ex Barking and the 17:28SX ex Gospel Oak are very welcome indeed and we are very grateful to TfL for sanctioning these and to LOROL for putting them on.

Of course, we would like to see the 06:08 run on Saturdays too and a corresponding 06:05 from Gospel Oak. Also we have long advocated the ending of the 30 minute post 22:00 service interval and earlier Sunday

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starts. We also think that now that LOROL has bitten the bullet and diagrammed the spare unit for evening duties, it should go the extra mile and integrate the spare unit into the high morning and evening peaks timetable to give a 10-minute frequency service. LOROL are very reluctant to do this. By keeping the spare unit's duties separate from the basic 15-minute frequency, this is preserved should a unit fail and be replaced by the spare. In that eventuality only the *PIXC-buster* trains are cancelled. Since the *Modern Railways* "Golden Spanner Awards" (January 2015 edition) show LOROL's Class 172s diesels as the least reliable of the class nationally, perhaps the company's caution is justified.

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR SERVICES 2014-15

This year, the Barking – Gospel Oak route features in Network Rail's Christmas work programme. Two bridges are being replaced, Bridge 2012 over Tottenham High Road at South Tottenham and Bridge 35 over the River Lea, the latter causing a scare when it was suddenly blocked to traffic for several days due to cracks in one of the abutments back in 1996.

- **Christmas Eve, 24th December** Last trains are from Barking is 21:33 & Gospel Oak at 21:35.
- **Christmas Day & Boxing Day 25/26 December** No Service.
- **Saturday 27th December** No rail service. Two replacement bus services will operate: 1) between Barking Station Bus stop K and Seven Sisters Road bus stop A & 2) Between Gospel Oak Mansfield Road bus stop and Seven Sisters Road bus stop B. Passengers changing between services at Seven Sisters should note that their onward bus will depart from the stop that they arrived at. Tottenham High Road will be closed at South Tottenham from 23rd December to 10:00 on Sunday 28th December.
- **Sunday 28th December** A normal rail service will operate between Gospel Oak and South Tottenham while buses will continue to operate between Barking and Seven Sisters until 10:00 when they will return to the stops outside South Tottenham.
- **Monday-Wednesday 29-31 December** A Saturday timetable will be operated.
- **New Year's Day 1st January** The first trains will be 08:48 from Barking and 08:50 from Gospel Oak.
- **Sunday 4th January** Buses will replace trains between Barking and South Tottenham until 12:00.

OVERCROWDING CRISIS

As stated above the additional *PIXC-buster* services are welcome but will hardly dent the problem of chronic peak overcrowding. Completion of electrification has now slipped from late 2016 to mid 2018. Also industry commentators have suggested that with increasing delays and burgeoning cost overruns on the current electrification projects in the North West and on the Great Western, it is likely other schemes could well be pushed back into Control Period 6 (2019-2024). TfL's only plan is to supply 4-car electric trains after electrification is completed and has no 'Plan B'. It appears that BGORUG will have to come up with an alternative plan quickly! The *Waltham Forest Guardian* recently ran a story on the appalling conditions our passengers are enduring, and this can be viewed here bit.ly/IGZpVup.



Glenn Wallis, Secretary