

*LMS "3P" 2-6-2 tank No. 114 (Derby, 1935) at Kentish Town on August 23, 1947, with a train for Barking. Photo: H. C. Casserley*

# KENTISH TOWN TO BARKING

**EDWARD TREBY, MIL, MTG, EXAMINES A PASSENGER BYWAY THAT IS ALSO AN IMPORTANT CROSS-LONDON FREIGHT LINK**

**T**WO schemes formed the Kentish Town to Barking line, 13 miles long: the Tottenham & Hampstead Junction Railway, authorised 1862, and the Tottenham & Forest Gate Railway, sanctioned 1890. Nearer Barking, part of the original 1854 route of the London, Tilbury & Southend Railway is used. Although passenger traffic has declined it is a vital freight link. The T&HJR was planned to run from Tottenham Hale on the Great Eastern Railway to Gospel Oak on the Hampstead Junction section of the London & North Western Railway. The HJR was worked by the North London Railway from opening in 1860 and in 1864 came under NLR control. On July 21, 1868, the new line opened from Tottenham Hale to Highgate Road with intermediate stations at Crouch Hill and Upper Holloway. Initially the GER worked the line, running seven trains each way, six from Fenchurch Street and one from Stratford to Highgate Road. Because

of poor patronage the service was gradually reduced to two trains each way, including Sundays, from Bishopsgate to Highgate Road. Reversal was necessary at Tottenham Hale Station. In 1870 the GER withdrew the service.

The T&HJR was in financial difficulty and the final quarter-mile section from Highgate Road to Gospel Oak had been only partly completed. As the original Act authorised a running junction with the HJR at Gospel Oak, the T&HJR approached the GER, LNWR and NLR for a loan but all refused. The latter wanted all cross-London traffic routed via the connection with the GER at Victoria Park. In 1887 the LNWR and NLR agreed to a passenger exchange at Gospel Oak but not a junction.

The Midland Railway reached St. Pancras in 1868. An Act of 1864 empowered the MR to make a connection with the T&HJR near Kentish Town. Opened in 1870 this spur

enabled Midland goods traffic for the London Docks to avoid the heavy tolls imposed by the NLR. A new connection, Tottenham South Curve, linking the T&HJR to the GE main line was laid in, the original link being designated Tottenham North Curve. In return for the facilities which the Midland had been afforded by the GER for freight traffic, the latter was permitted to run passenger trains into St. Pancras. On October 1, 1870, a Midland passenger service from Moorgate Street to Crouch Hill started. It was extended to South Tottenham, which was opened on May 1, 1871. In 1872 new stations opened at Hornsey Road and Junction Road and in 1880 at Green Lanes, later called Harringay Park, Green Lanes, and now Harringay Stadium. St. Anns Road Station opened in 1882.

Proposed links with the GNR and with the Hackney Downs to Edmon-ton line of the GER were started but abandoned. On August 1, 1885, the



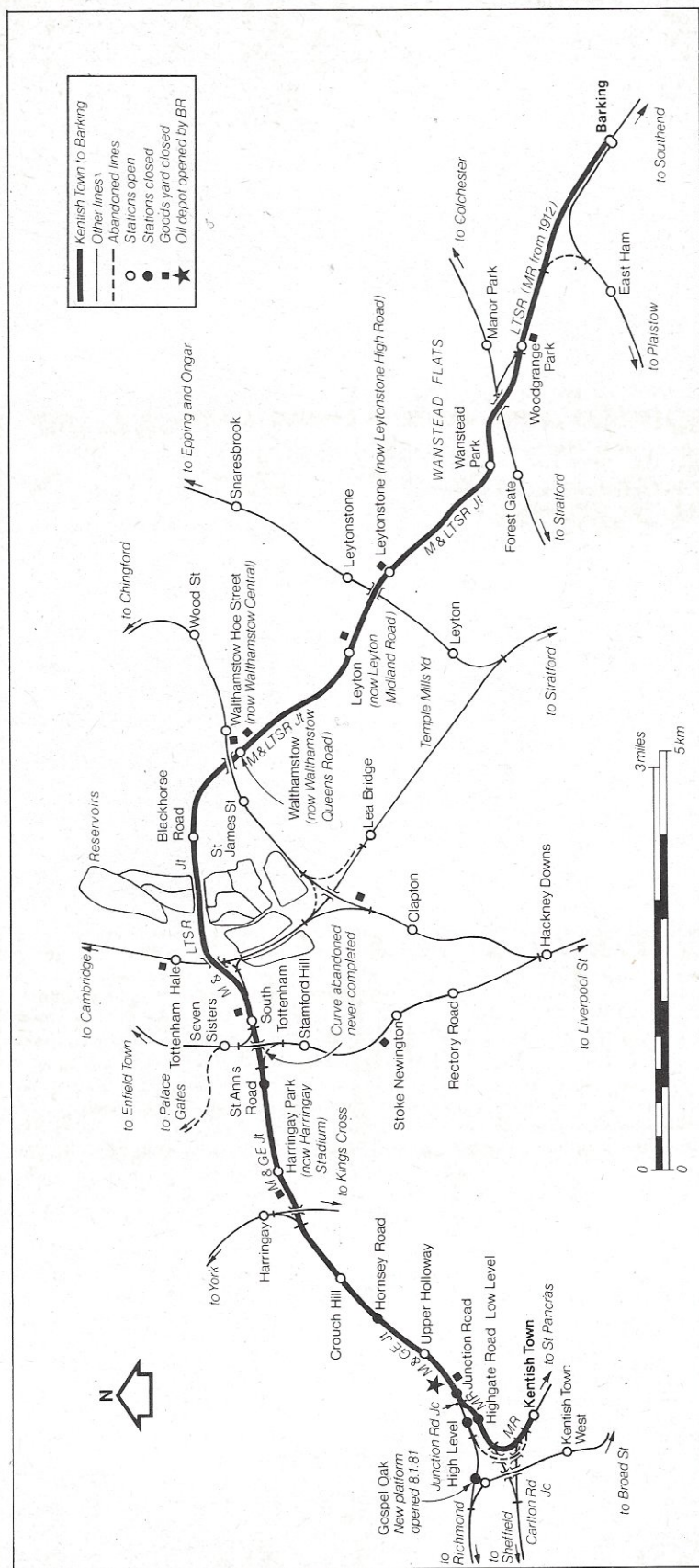
Chingford to Highgate Road service of the GER commenced and on completion of the section to Gospel Oak, these trains started running to that station on June 4, 1888. To reach the Midland main line the Carlton Road Junction - Junction Road Junction link was opened on April 2, 1883. This line passed in tunnel under the Kentish Town - Highgate Road line of 1870. In 1900 a new spur from Kentish Town to join the 1883 line was opened. With the opening of the Midland station known as Highgate Road (Low Level) in 1901 the original T&HJR station became Highgate Road (High Level).

Although hitherto just worked by the MR and GER, the T&HJR in 1902 became a joint undertaking of the Midland and the Great Eastern Railways known as the Tottenham & Hampstead Joint Committee. By July 9, 1894, the Tottenham & Forest Gate Railway was opened for through goods and passenger trains. Although jointly promoted by the Midland and the London, Tilbury & Southend Railways, it became wholly Midland in 1912. It had stations at Black Horse Road, Walthamstow, Leyton, Leytonstone and Wanstead Park. The scheme was completed by a new station at Woodgrange Park and a curve to East Ham, both of which were made by the Tilbury company. Beyond Walthamstow there is a 1 in 64 gradient and for the next three miles the line is on a brick viaduct of 386 arches.

With the opening of the new line the Midland extended some of the South Tottenham trains to East Ham. Through services from St. Pancras to Southend and boat trains to and from Tilbury were running by 1895. A GER service between Liverpool Street and Barking via Forest Gate Junction was withdrawn on and from May 1, 1918. Royal specials ran from St. Pancras to Wolferton Station on the Sandringham Estate via the T&HJR. The GER also ran trains from St. Pancras to Hertford, Norwich, Yarmouth and Lowestoft.

Between 1891 and 1909 the GER ran through trains from Gospel Oak to Southend via Tottenham South Curve and Stratford. Besides GER and MR services, South Tottenham Station was also served by Great Eastern trains between North Woolwich and Palace Gates. They climbed the 1 in 110 gradient to reach Seven Sisters Junction on the Hackney Downs to Edmonton line previously mentioned. This service was withdrawn by BR in 1963.

In the early days, Johnson 4-4-0



Kentish Town to Barking line, showing pre-grouping ownerships, stations, freight installations and present and former connections, but not London Transport lines





Upper Holloway Station, Tottenham & Hampstead Junction Railway, on November 8, 1958. This part of the line, from Tottenham Hale to Highgate Road, was opened on July 21, 1868. Photo: H. C. Casserley



Signalbox and platforms of South Tottenham Station on July 2, 1960; this station was opened on October 1, 1870, when a Midland Railway passenger service from Moorgate to Crouch Hill was extended to it. Photo: H. C. Casserley

and Worsdell 4-4-0 engines hauled GER main-line trains into and out of St. Pancras. In GER and LNER days 0-6-0 tank engines worked the Gospel Oak to Chingford trains. Initially, Midland goods trains were hauled by Kirtley's double-framed tender engines. In 1871 0-6-0 side tanks delivered by Beyer, Peacock & Company were introduced. To open the Moorgate to Crouch Hill service in 1870 0-4-4 tank engines from Dübs of Glasgow were introduced. For working through to Moorgate engines were fitted with condensing gear. Two notable engines associated with the line were the Midland 4-4-0 No. 1757, *Beatrice*, and the GER oil-fired 2-4-0 No. 760, *Petrolea*.

On the T&HJR the goods yards were Midland only except the Tufnell Park goods and cattle depot opened by the GER in 1886. The junction

between the T&HJR and the NLR at Gospel Oak was installed in 1916, out of use in 1920, removed in 1922 and reinstated in 1940. The connection with the GNR at Harringay was brought into use in 1916, closed in 1920 and reinstated in 1940. GER passenger trains to St. Pancras were withdrawn in 1917. Highgate Road (High Level) Station closed in 1915 and the Low Level station in 1918. The LNER withdrew the regular Gospel Oak to Chingford service in 1926 but a service on summer bank holidays only lasted until August 1939. The LMS ran passenger services from St. Pancras (or Kentish Town) to East Ham, Barking and Southend. Through trains to Moorgate ceased in 1931. St. Anns Road Station closed in 1942 followed by Junction Road and Hornsey Road in 1943.

From Kentish Town to Crouch Hill the line is now in the London Midland Region of British Railways and from there to Barking in the Eastern Region. Diesel operation commenced in 1960. The class "116" d.m.us provided by the LMR are maintained and stabled at Cricklewood. The journey time between Kentish Town and Barking is 35 minutes. Boat trains ceased running from St. Pancras to Tilbury with the introduction of electric services from Fenchurch Street in 1962.

Some 55-60 freight trains per day each way use the line. Some originate from the Tilbury line beyond Barking, while others from Temple Mills Yard join the T&HJR at South Tottenham. Up to 20 trains per day each way traverse the Woodgrange Park Junction - Forest Gate Junction connection. Beyond Upper Holloway, trains destined for LMR Midland lines take the low-level line at Junction Road Junction while those for the LNW section take the high-level line via Gospel Oak and Willesden. Trains for the WR go via Gospel Oak, Willesden High Level and Acton Wells. For the SR Central and Eastern Divisions, trains go via Gospel Oak, Willesden High Level and Mitre Bridge Junction, and those for the Western Division are routed via Gospel Oak, Willesden H.L. and Kew East Junction. One or two trains per day to and from the GN use the Harringay Curve.

From a British Railways siding at Dagenham Dock, trains carrying Ford cars use the line to reach distribution compounds in England and Scotland. Southbound car-transporter trains come from Halewood to the Dagenham distribution compound. Most of these cars are destined for South-East dealerships although there are some export models which are taken on to Harwich, Felixstowe, Newhaven and Southampton. Closed wagon trains known as "blue trains" also use the line. They carry production components between the Ford plants at Dagenham, Halewood and Swansea. Two trains a day run to and from Halewood and one a day to and from Swansea. On the Dagenham estate, trains are made up by Ford diesel shunting locomotives. Once completed the train is taken to an exchange siding for collection by a BR locomotive.

Near Kentish Town the remains of the original 1870 connection to the T&HJR are evident. Only slight traces of Highgate Road (H.L. and L.L.), Junction Road, Hornsey Road and St. Anns Road Stations remain. Tufnell Park yard was



closed in 1968. Opposite, an oil depot has been opened by BR. All of the Midland goods yards have been closed. At South Tottenham the abandoned formation of Tottenham North Curve can be discerned.

From Forest Gate Junction through to Barking the line is electrified and a booked service of electric passenger trains runs at night to and from Liverpool Street by this connection. It is also used for exchange of stock and Tilbury line trains can take this route regaining the Fenchurch Street line, via Gas Factory Junction, at Bow. The double-track curve from Woodgrange Park to East Ham, last used in 1958, has been lifted. At East Ham the bay track used by these trains has been filled-in and made into an attractive station garden. The Barking flyovers opened in 1959 enable freight trains from the Tilbury line to pass over BR and London Transport passenger lines to reach the line to Woodgrange Park Junction and beyond. At Barking the Kentish Town trains use Platform No. 1, now a terminal line and the only non-electrified track in the station.

As a prelude to completion of electrification from Bedford to St. Pancras and Moorgate, it was intended to divert the Barking-Kentish Town service to Gospel Oak. As the Minister for Transport gave consent for the withdrawal of passenger train services from Junction Road Junction to Kentish Town Engine Shed Junction, trains from Barking were diverted from Kentish Town to Gospel Oak as from January 5, 1981, the former weekday hourly service being increased to half-hourly. At the latter station trains use the new Platform No. 3 adjoining the up North London line platform (Broad Street direction). Of sufficient



One of the many through freight services which now use the Kentish Town to Barking line is the Southampton to Ripple Lane Freightliner, seen here behind class "47/0" No. 47 159 on December 12, 1980, passing Woodgrange Park Station. Photo: Brian Morrison



Derby-built d.m.u., forming the 12.42 Barking to Kentish Town service on February 2, 1980, arriving at Woodgrange Park Station. Photo: Brian Morrison

length to take a four-car d.m.u., the new platform is on a terminal stub alongside the freight lines. "Crosstown Linklines" pocket timetables are available showing the Barking to Gospel Oak line with connecting services to and from Richmond.

Overhead electrification from Woodgrange Park Junction to Gospel Oak and on to Willesden, including the link from Junction Road Junction to the Midland Main

Line could be undertaken. Besides increasing the line's freight carrying capacity, an electric local service could be introduced. For the Broad Street - Richmond service, the third rail would have to be retained between Gospel Oak and Willesden.

In conclusion, the author acknowledges the assistance given by the Public Record Office; British Railways, Eastern and London Midland Regions; the Ford Motor Co. Ltd.; and Mr. H. V. Borley.

Four-car d.m.u., the 13.26 Kentish Town to Barking, passing Barking flyover on February 11, 1980. Photo: Brian Morrison

