

New link in the line that will orbit London



UP AND RUNNING: Transport for London's new Overground ticket wallet and, inset, a traditional souvenir ticket from 23 May

Railfuture campaigners were jubilant when the East London Line opened several weeks early after more than 20 years of work by planners and engineers.

Using the former Underground line from Shoreditch to New Cross and New Cross Gate which includes Brunel's 1843 tunnel under the Thames, the disused Broad Street viaduct and incorporating existing lines, the first phase of the Overground railway provides a new cross-London route from Dalston in the north to Croydon in the south.

With more work spread over the next two years, it will also provide London orbital rail services.

The Overground came into being in 2007 from National Rail lines when the former Silverlink Metro network of four routes, including the North London and West London lines, were handed over to be directly controlled by Transport for London.

The £1.4 billion cross-river ELL is the first major expansion of that network and we hope that others will follow.

Campaigners are looking ahead to 2012 when the Overground services will be extended from Surrey



PREVIEW: Students on the first day of the preview service with journalist Emily Jupp, right, wearing a Go to ELL T-shirt

Quays to Clapham Junction, along the existing South London line via Peckham and Denmark Hill.

The Overground will then have an orbital network, taking in the former North, South, East and West London lines.

But campaigners also want to see a new station at Surrey Canal Road in North Lewisham and a high-level station at Brixton, both of which await funding commitments – and progress on creating another



strategic link, the Chelsea-Hackney line with its planned interchange with the ELL at Dalston Junction.

Enabling work for the new ELL began in 1996 when Hackney Council refurbished the Broad Street viaduct, ensuring that trains could be reinstated. Hackney also rebuilt two bridges over the line in the Dalston area.

The history of the project has involved London Underground, Railtrack, the Strategic Rail

Authority and TfL. Progress was held up for nearly two years by a row over the historic importance of the Braithwaite viaduct in the former Bishopsgate Goods Depot.

The project finally got the go-ahead in 2003 when Ken Livingstone was Mayor of London.

His Conservative successor Boris Johnson was accused of trying to claim credit for the project, and of trying to bring forward the opening of the line to influence voters in the general election.

At the official opening, Mr Johnson praised TfL for completing the project early and on budget and added: "We are united in celebrating a titanic achievement by TfL."

He described the line as "a fantastic addition to the London transport system". Linking two major employment areas in Croydon and east London, it will form "part of our vision of creating an orbital Overground network".

A limited weekday service of eight trains an hour started running on 27 April between New Cross/New Cross Gate and Dalston Junction.

It meant that passengers from Whitechapel, Shadwell, Wapping, Rotherhithe and Surrey Quays saw



Hoxton station with the City of London in the background

their trains return after a break of more than two years. An expanded service of 12 trains per hour, which also serves West Croydon for links to the Croydon tram system and Crystal Palace, began on 23 May.

A Railfuture team was at Rotherhithe station on the day to welcome passengers and to offer our new book, *Britain's Growing Railway*, for sale.

A Dalston Junction to Highbury & Islington service of eight trains an hour is expected next year, followed by a four-trains-per-hour Surrey Quays to Clapham Junction service the following year, adding up to sixteen trains per hour on the core route between Surrey Quays and Dalston Junction.

The line provides a convenient river crossing in a part of the capital where the Thames presents a formidable obstacle.

TfL expects 33.2 million passengers to use the ELR next year compared to 9 million for the last year of the old Underground line.

Four new stations, Shoreditch High Street, Hoxton, Haggerston and Dalston Junction were built.

The former London Underground line from Shoreditch to New Cross

has been renewed to National Rail standards, and a new depot built at New Cross Gate.

The final section of the northern route from Dalston to Highbury & Islington, with an intermediate station at Canonbury, is expected to open next year.

The trackbed of the long-closed east-facing curve from Dalston Junction to the North London line – which would allow trains to run from south London to Stratford – has been protected for future re-use.

Passenger numbers are expected to reach a whopping 38.9 million by 2016, the year before the Crossrail interchange at Whitechapel should open.

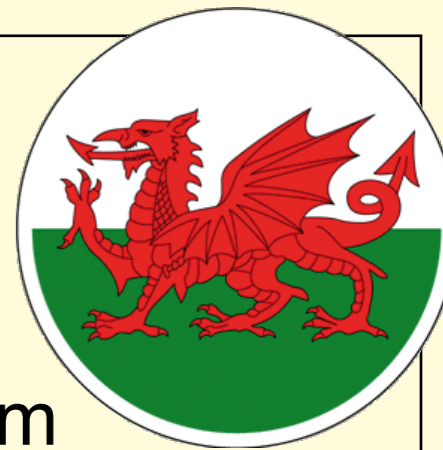
The line is worked by a fleet of 20 air-conditioned Class 378 electric multiple units which have no problems on the steeply graded sections, 1 in 42 southbound from Dalston Junction up to Haggerston, and 1 in 86 northbound from Shoreditch High Street.

An exhibition celebrating the East London Line Overground Uncovered opened in May at London Transport Museum in Covent Garden and runs until March next year. www.ltmuseum.co.uk

AGM

2010

Wrexham



Railfuture's 2010 AGM took place at Wrexham, just two days after the general election when both the country's political future and the future of rail development were uncertain.

But Andrew Franklin from the Welsh Assembly Government said that rail was so popular in Wales that six-car trains were planned for the Valley lines to cope with peak-hour demand while the Aberystwyth to Shrewsbury service is to be upgraded to run every hour.

Asked about freight to Ireland, Mr Franklin said Anglo-Irish rail freight had withered away but is slowly coming back, following official talks in Dublin.

Michael Whittaker, chief executive of Taith, the North East Wales Transport Consortium, which covers the Wrexham area, said his organisation had adopted a system to assess the potential for new stations, with consideration being given to Towyn, Greenfield and Deeside Park. Although car parks were important at stations, Taith was developing 12 stations to improve non-car access.

Ben Davies of Arriva Trains Wales said that two thirds of all train travel in Wales is on the Cardiff Valley lines.

But in the north, Merseyrail planned to introduce trains every 15 minutes on the line to Chester.

He said ATW had introduced new train and bus tickets to ensure that people could get to many of the places not served directly by train. The £7 North Wales Rover also included buses and trains as did the £155 All Wales Rover ticket.

But he said ATW was short of spare rolling stock, although it did maintain loco-hauled trains for rugby matches and other events.

Railfuture president Peter Lawrence warned that after the election, there could well be cuts in rail investment and a period of little progress even though continued expansion of the rail system is essential as demand for rail travel continues to grow. He said: "The Association of Train Operators has produced an excellent report on connect-

ing communities and expanding the network and the making of use of former railway lines. Some fourteen routes were identified and already one meeting has been held in Guildford by the Railfuture London and Home Counties branch to look at the possibility of reopening the Guildford to Cranleigh former branch. I trust that other Railfuture branches will be looking at the suggested former rail routes in their area. Certainly every reopening to date has far exceeded projected passenger numbers."

He urged branches to do all they could to publicise Railfuture, even by leaving a copy of *Railwatch* at the dentist's or doctor's waiting rooms.

He added: "Better still get your branch to start a recruitment campaign to let people know about Railfuture in your area. Funds are available from the Railfuture publicity committee to help with advertising costs."

Railfuture chairman Mike Crowhurst praised Network Rail and Northern for stepping into the breach after the Cumbria floods, by building a new station at Workington in barely more than a week. It was apparently a local Network Rail manager who took the initiative and suggested the solution.

Rail also came to the rescue when airlines were grounded after the volcanic eruption in Iceland although many airline passengers were stranded because they did not know about the many excellent rail alternatives.

In response to the threat of rail investment cuts, Mike appealed for people to remember John Maynard Keynes who pointed out that the state should spend during a recession and tax during a boom.

Railfuture's vice-presidents were reappointed: George Boyle, Steve Wilkinson, Michael Caton, Lord Deben (John Gummer), Lord Tyler, Jim Beale, David Bertram, Chris Irwin, Ron Cotton, Peter Rayner, Lord (Tony) Berkeley, Stanley Hall, Lew Adams, Professor David Begg, Rhodri Clarke, Ann Cryer, Dr Winifred Ewing, Brian Simpson, Peter Snape, Tony Speller, Caroline Lucas and Norman Baker.



Balloons welcome passengers at the new Hoxton station, one of four new stations on the ELL northern extension



Driver Ivor Eke in his cab at New Cross Gate



Robert Stevens and the Railfuture sales stand at Rotherhithe station



END OF THE LINE: A train at Dalston Junction on 27 April. Next year they will go beyond Dalston to Highbury and Islington