



# West London Line Group



## NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2007

(Updated edition)

### AT LAST – SUCCESS !

After five years of fighting, the West London Line Group has finally secured major improvements to the West London Line (WLL) weekday morning peak service. These take effect from Monday 21 May 2007.

First among these improvements is the restoration of a through cross-Clapham northbound service from East Croydon to Kensington Olympia. This train will comprise a 4-car Electrostar unit similar to those used on the present Southern West London Line service. It will leave East Croydon at 0747, stop at Selhurst at 0750, Streatham Common at 0758 and Balham at 0802, call at Clapham Junction on Platform 16 (NOT 17) at 0810 and arrive at West Brompton at 0815 and Kensington Olympia at 0819.

This Southern train will then run as an additional shuttle between Kensington Olympia and Clapham Junction with three southbound journeys from Kensington Olympia at 0824, 0858 and 0929 and two more northbound journeys from Clapham Junction (Platform 17) at 0843 and 0914.

All existing Southern and Silverlink West London Line morning peak services will continue to operate as at present.

### BENEFITS TO WEST LONDON LINE PASSENGERS

#### Easing the pressure on Platform 17

The biggest benefit should be a reduction of passenger congestion and contraflows on Platform 17 and its accesses at Clapham Junction upon the 0752 arrival from Watford, as those boarding the same train to travel northwards at 0757 will have an additional train only 13 minutes later from Platform 16 to West Brompton and Kensington Olympia (see above).

#### A direct train every weekday morning

The next group of passengers to benefit will be those travelling from East Croydon (departing 0747) and the intermediate calling points to Clapham Junction, with a direct service to West Brompton and Kensington Olympia – and greater likelihood of a seat throughout! Pathing constraints mean that the train can only call between East Croydon and Clapham Junction at Selhurst, Streatham Common and Balham.

Those on the train before Clapham Junction will be joined by others who may change at Balham (for the Northern Line) or Clapham Junction (for Victoria, Waterloo or other destinations). Those alighting at Clapham Junction will be doing so on Platform 16, where others joining the train will be waiting to travel to West Brompton or Kensington Olympia. Space on Platform 16 at Clapham Junction is also restricted and passengers should take care if joining or alighting the train here.

#### New Shuttles – more seats, more choice

Although Platform 17 will still be used for all the other Southern WLL trains terminating and starting from Clapham Junction, the new shuttles will provide more travel choices (and seats!) in both directions throughout the weekday morning peak. This should ease congestion on Platform 17 and its stairways at Clapham Junction.

#### Filling the gap in service

Finally, the 0843 departure of the shuttle from Platform 17 at Clapham Junction will fill the gap in the northbound Silverlink service on Platform 2 at Clapham Junction between 0835 and 0905 – this has been of particular concern to many forced into the crush on the 0905 departure from Clapham Junction.

Details will shortly be on our website [www.westlondonlinegroup.org.uk](http://www.westlondonlinegroup.org.uk). Please use the website to comment on these or any other aspect of the services on the West London Line.

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### CONNECTIONS VIA WATFORD JUNCTION

The present connections on Mondays to Fridays between the Southern West London Line service and the West Coast Main Line services to the Midlands, North West and Scotland will shortly be shown on our website [www.westlondonlinegroup.org.uk](http://www.westlondonlinegroup.org.uk). Using these services avoids changing on to and from the crowded Victoria Line, higher fares and stress involved in travelling via Victoria and Euston. Other times apply at weekends. Passengers are advised to check these details before travelling.

## FURTHER PROPOSALS FOR THE SOUTHERN WEST LONDON LINE (WLL) SERVICE

The Group continues to press for further improvements to this service. The first of these would be a review of the timetable to achieve:-

- better timekeeping on northbound services, especially upon departure from East Croydon
- more trains calling at Wembley Central and/or Shepherd's Bush and some calling at Imperial Wharf (see below);
- half-hourly frequency between Gatwick Airport/East Croydon and Kensington Olympia/Shepherd's Bush/Wembley Central;
- good connections at Watford Junction with key West Coast Main Line services, e.g., to/from Birmingham, Manchester, etc.;
- elimination of scheduled southbound waiting times at Kensington Olympia and Clapham Junction.

With fewer West Coast Main Line (WCML) services calling at Watford Junction as from December 2008/January 2009, the Group is also asking the Department for Transport (DfT) for the Southern West London Line service to be restored to Milton Keynes by that time. We have also asked Network Rail to investigate improving the crossovers at Balham and Clapham Junction to allow the trains on this service to traverse them at a higher speed and, if feasible, to effect this by Christmas 2008.

## NEW WEST LONDON LINE STATIONS – SHEPHERD'S BUSH AND IMPERIAL WHARF

Shepherd's Bush West London Line station is well underway, with construction expected to be completed later this year. When open, it will provide connections with the Central Line, local buses and, slightly further away, the Hammersmith & City Line. It will be served by all trains on the present Silverlink Metro service between Clapham Junction and Willesden Junction (and beyond) and by two northbound trains in the morning and two southbound trains in the evening on weekdays and all trains on Sundays on the Southern WLL service. Pathing restrictions mean that none of the other weekday trains can stop here and nor can any stop on Saturdays. The Group is asking Southern and Network Rail to revise the timetabling as soon as possible to let more trains call at Shepherd's Bush.

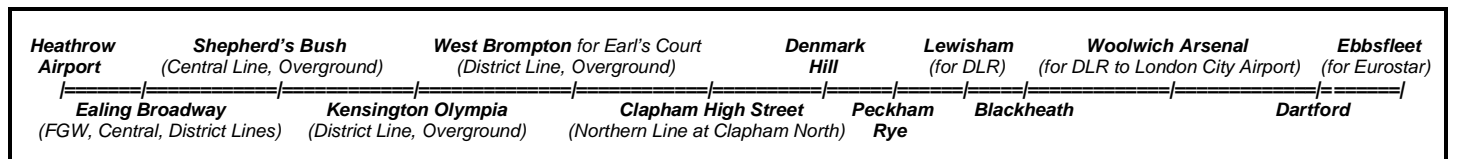
With regard to the station at Imperial Wharf (just north of Cremorne Bridge that takes the WLL over the river), discussions are underway between Network Rail, Transport for London (TfL), local Councils and local developers to bring forward its construction and opening.

## NEW TRANSPORT *for* LONDON CONCESSION

It is planned that the Silverlink Metro services will, from November, be operated under the auspices of TfL who will let to a new concessionaire all four lines within the North London Railways network - Clapham-Willesden; Euston-Watford; Richmond-Stratford; and Gospel Oak-Barking - all to be branded as the Overground. While the Group welcomes the planned investment in new electric trains and service frequency (the Clapham-Willesden service may increase to four trains an hour), we have made clear to TfL our concerns about plans to introduce Class 150 diesels on the West London Line. While these might allow frequencies to be doubled, they will be two-car diesels, not three-car electric units, and may be life-expired already. The Group continues to press TfL to seek other options.

## THE WLLG PROPOSES A NEW SERVICE - WITH LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL LINKS !

The Group has given proposals to DfT, Network Rail and the GLA for a new overground rail service between Heathrow and Ebbsfleet.



This would directly link many key centres in West, South and South East London and the UK's two most important international transport facilities. The service would parallel the proposed route for Crossrail – and may help prove the case for it – but, by using mainly existing rail lines needing little new investment, it could keep costs down while providing new orbital links across south London. Following the closure of Waterloo International, it would allow many in south west London to reach Eurostar services at Ebbsfleet rather than have to trek across London to St Pancras or Stratford.

It would also provide direct links between South East and South London and the major event venues at Earl's Court and Olympia. Connecting Heathrow with South and South East London would remove the need for those travelling from these areas to change twice via the tube to reach the UK's principal airport. The link would also connect south and west London with London City Airport, via the DLR from Woolwich Arsenal. Same-platform interchange at Kensington Olympia or West Brompton would allow easy transfer by rail between Gatwick and Heathrow and aid many cross-London trips. Changing at Shepherd's Bush would ease access between both airports and the North London Line.

## TICKETING ISSUES AND THE WEST LONDON LINE

In January this year TfL introduced a new zonal fare structure on National Rail services in London following the Department for Transport's announcement on 19 October 2006 for a new, simple zonal fares structure within London. The Group expected that fares on the WLL would be in line with this structure but we were dismayed to learn that some fares introduced at West Brompton were not so and that, as a result, for example, single and return fares from East Croydon to Harrow & Wealdstone via the West London Line are now less than those between West Brompton and Harrow & Wealdstone, despite the latter being significantly closer together.

TfL has now indicated that it will be reviewing the situation, but we understand from them that it is unlikely there will be any change before May. The Group will pursue this issue as we consider it extremely important that National Rail passengers at West Brompton (i) are charged appropriate zonal fares, (ii) can buy overnight/long-stay return tickets, and (iii) are able to access the full range of discount ticketing facilities.

## ...AND, FINALLY, VERY MANY THANKS TO YOU ALL FOR YOUR SUPPORT...

...in our campaign over the past five years to keep and restore your Southern WLL service. I hope that you will agree that the changes to the morning peak services are a major step forward and that you are able to benefit from these, whether you are travelling north or south on the WLL. There is still more to do and we would very much welcome your input at [comments@westlondonlinegroup.org.uk](mailto:comments@westlondonlinegroup.org.uk), especially on the new trains, our proposed Heathrow – Ebbsfleet service, plus further improvements that you would like to see.

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March 2007