



## SOUTHERN WEST LONDON LINE SERVICES REVISED

### Watford – Gatwick and Brighton becomes Milton Keynes – East Croydon

**From 13 December 2008, despite strong objections by the West London Line Group, six London local authorities and others, the direct Southern services between the West London Line (WLL), Gatwick Airport and Brighton have been withdrawn.**

Instead, the hourly Southern WLL Monday to Saturday service now continues south of Clapham Junction via the slow lines to call at all stations to East Croydon only, with the exception of a new 1750 departure from Shepherd's Bush on Mondays to Fridays which runs beyond East Croydon non-stop to Purley.

Despite the above curtailment to the service, the Group welcomes its restoration to Milton Keynes and that it now serves most intermediate stations between Watford Junction and Milton Keynes. Most importantly, following strong passenger representations, we are delighted that the threat to terminate all Southern WLL services at Clapham Junction has been withdrawn under the new timetable.

Gatwick and Brighton passengers should change at either Clapham Junction (steep, narrow stairs) or East Croydon (step-free subway or overbridge). Gatwick passengers with luggage are advised to change at East Croydon.

All trains on this service now call at Shepherd's Bush and nearly all call at Wembley Central (until 2100). However, there will be no direct cross-Clapham Junction service

after 1930, save the 2211 Milton Keynes – Selhurst on Mondays to Fridays, **but this train will not operate until 26 January 2009** (see below).

The last southbound WLL train now departs Watford Junction at 2329 on Mondays to Fridays and 2325 on Saturdays. The last Southern WLL train northbound now leaves Clapham Junction on Mondays to Saturdays at 2238.

On Sundays, the Southern WLL service remains hourly between Watford Junction and Clapham Junction, with the last northbound train departing Clapham Junction at 2215. This train returns from Watford Junction at 2317 to Clapham Junction and runs on non-stop to East Croydon.

**From 26 January 2009, the Monday to Saturday service will be restored after a gap of over six years to Milton Keynes.** Nearly all trains will call at all of Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted, Tring, Leighton Buzzard and Bletchley. Links to the West Coast Main Line network will be available at Watford Junction or Milton Keynes.

Station calls will be as above, with no cross-Clapham service after 1930, save the 2211 Milton Keynes – Selhurst on Mondays to Fridays.

**Please check the new timetables for detailed timings.**

### Progress and benefits for Southern West London Line passengers from December 2008

#### Changes to Peak Services

The new timetable has brought some improvements to the Southern WLL peak service, although some trains are retimed up to 20 minutes earlier. However, because no new trains have been allocated, despite the route's significant extension, there is also a major double degradation in the service.

Improvements include extension of the peak morning cross-Clapham Junction service (the 0747 East Croydon – Kensington Olympia) to Shepherd's Bush. The two later shuttles have, in line with Group requests, also been extended to serve Shepherd's Bush. A new 1750 Shepherd's Bush to Purley evening peak train also runs.

The double degradation arises from (a) the 73-minute gap in the weekday southbound service between the 0738 and 0851 departures from Watford Junction and (b) the fact that these trains are likely to suffer further pressure due to their starting from 26 January 2009 from Milton Keynes and calling at five more stations before Watford Junction, Harrow & Wealdstone and Wembley Central.

The Group hopes that there will be satisfactory outcomes in relation to these issues and opportunities by the May 2009 timetable.

#### Expanded Travel Options

Travel options have increased dramatically with the revised Southern WLL service as it will now call at six more centres on both its new north and south sections. It will also have interchanges at (i) Balham with the Northern Line, (ii) Shepherd's Bush with the Central Line and (iii) Watford or Milton Keynes with the West Coast Main Line (WCML) network to Northampton, the West Midlands, the North West, North Wales and Scotland.

#### Direct services between Milton Keynes, Watford Junction, the WLL, Gatwick Airport and Brighton

The Group is urging Southern, the DfT and the bidders for the new South Central franchise to restore direct trains to link the WLL with Gatwick and Brighton. The Group believes that this will provide a popular new facility between Gatwick, west London, Hertfordshire, the South Midlands and beyond (via the WCML network), along one of the most affluent corridors in Western Europe.

#### Timetable Changes on London Overground from 14 December 2008

There are few changes to the London Overground West London Line service, where trains continue to provide a basic 2 trains-per-hour service between Clapham Junction and Willesden Junction. The cross-Willesden Junction weekday peak service between Clapham Junction and Stratford via the North London Line resumed on 17 November 2008. An improvement from this December is the introduction of the 2 trains-per-hour service throughout the day on Sundays.

## Withdrawal of West London Line Cross-Country service

The West London Line's Arriva Cross-Country service between Brighton, Gatwick Airport, East Croydon, Kensington Olympia, Reading and stations to Birmingham and Manchester was withdrawn on 13 December 2008.

## Openings of new and refurbished stations at Shepherd's Bush



Mark Balaam, Chairman of the West London Line Group with Vic Mitchell of the Middleton Press and the Deputy Mayor and Mayoress of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham at the opening of Shepherd's Bush West London Line station. Photo by Nick Woolven

The Group was delighted to host the only event to celebrate the re-opening of Shepherd's Bush railway station after a gap of 68 years. The Deputy Mayor and Mayoress of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham and Vic Mitchell, author of *The West London Line*, were guests at the Group's breakfast on Sunday 28 September 2008 to greet the arrival of the first train. The station is the fourth to be built on the line in the Shepherd's Bush area; the first opened in May 1844 and the last closed in September 1940 following war damage.

To mark the opening of the new station, the Group has produced a brochure on the history of the West London Line and its

Shepherd's Bush stations. This is intended to be available soon at [www.westlondonlinegroup.org.uk](http://www.westlondonlinegroup.org.uk)

A week later Shepherd's Bush Central Line station re-opened on 5 October 2008 after refurbishment. These two stations, 100 metres apart across the southern bus station just south of one of the main entrances to Westfield London, now provide a key rail/tube crossroads in inner West London, which now offers up to 26 rail-based routes through the interchange.

These two stations were joined a week later on 12 October 2008 by a third, named Wood Lane, on the Hammersmith & City Line near its overbridge across the WLL at the northern end of the Westfield site. This station is also close enough to offer interchange with White City station on the Central Line.

The next station on the Hammersmith & City Line towards Hammersmith is now renamed Shepherd's Bush Market – in an effort to avoid confusion between the four!

All these openings were stipulated before the new Westfield London complex could open, surrounded by all four stations. Westfield opened on 30 October 2008 as the UK's third-largest shopping centre.

Westfield recorded two million visitors in its first three weeks' trading and during its first weekend 60% of its visitors used public transport to travel to and from the centre.

## New Intelligence

The Group has produced a summary of major developments proposed within the WLL corridor. We are producing this to inform rail industry partners and others of the location, size and timing of new demands for WLL services. The May 2008 edition is at [www.westlondonlinegroup.org.uk](http://www.westlondonlinegroup.org.uk) and is to be revised shortly.

## A new franchise for the South Central area

The Group has hosted visits to the WLL for all four bidders for the South Central franchise, viz., Govia, National Express, NedRail and Stagecoach. The present franchise is held by Southern (part of the Govia Group) and covers most of South London, Surrey, Sussex and parts of Kent and Hampshire as well as the WLL to Milton Keynes. The new franchise holder will be announced in spring 2009, with the franchise starting in September 2009 to run until 2015. The Group continues to liaise with the bidders to inform them of future developments on the WLL.

## New trains for London Overground



First example of a Class 378 train — © TfL.

The first of the new Class 378 three-car electric trains are due to be in service by Spring 2009. They will have more capacity overall (but fewer seats) and are due on the WLL in mid-2009. The units will be four-car once Willesden

Junction's platforms are extended; this should be in 2010.

In December 2010 the service will be doubled to four trains per hour between Clapham Junction and Willesden Junction, with every other train travelling to or from Stratford via key centres on

the North London Line. These include West Hampstead (interchange with Thameslink and Jubilee Line), Hampstead Heath, Gospel Oak (for South Tottenham, Walthamstow and Barking), Camden Road, Highbury & Islington and Hackney Central.

## Imperial Wharf Station



Imperial Wharf station (computer generated image for illustrative purposes only) — © St George plc

The Group has recently met St George, the developers of this second new station for the West London Line. We are encouraging full co-ordination between them, the planning authorities and rail industry partners to ensure that the station can open as soon as possible (expected by January 2010) to provide an attractive facility for its catchments and that the additional demand along the WLL expected to arise following this station's opening can be fully accommodated.

## West Brompton Station

The Group continues to call for action in relation to ticketing, increased passenger shelter and management of this station. Regrettably, none of these aspects has improved since London Underground took responsibility for the whole station a year ago.

Please visit our website at [www.westlondonlinegroup.org.uk](http://www.westlondonlinegroup.org.uk) for details of all our activities and feel free to comment on these. We look forward to hearing from you. With all best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

## Mark Balaam Chairman

The West London Line Group, in producing this newsletter, has included guidance on rail services operated by London Overground and Southern and developments by these and other parties. The Group cannot be held liable for any errors or omissions in this information or for any inconvenience that may be caused by the alteration, delay or other disruption of these or any other services or developments. We advise all passengers to check journey details before travelling. The West London Line Group acknowledges the generous support received from the Earls Court and Olympia Group for its initiatives.