

SHOREDITCH STATION TO CLOSE THIS JUNE

by John Thomason

The first indication seen was the Quad-Royal (poster size) tube map displayed at stations with text adjacent to Shoreditch stating that the station would be closed permanently in June 2006. A poster and a leaflet were first noted in late April at East London Line (ELL) stations giving advance notification of the closure on 9 June to facilitate ELL extension works. *Metro* for 2 May gave further details and announced a 'Meet the Manager' event on 4 May where we were to learn more about the closure, the East London Line Extension Project and details of the replacement bus service. This event was a low-key affair with a display about the project, supplies of the leaflet mentioned above and two new brochures. These brochures cover the project and the bus replacement service; they can be viewed at: [http://ellp.tfl.gov.uk/UserFiles/File/Documents/ELLP%20brochure%20Spring%2007%20\(Final\)](http://ellp.tfl.gov.uk/UserFiles/File/Documents/ELLP%20brochure%20Spring%2007%20(Final))

Several representatives were in attendance including General Manager, Lance Ramsay and Project Manager, Peter Boxall. Questioning about the future closure of the remainder of the East London Line, in about 18-months time, revealed that current thinking is to extend the replacement bus service from Shoreditch to Wapping and to have a second service between Rotherhithe and New Cross/New Cross Gate. Customers wishing to travel between these two services would be expected to travel from Canada Water to Canary Wharf by Jubilee Line changing to the DLR for Shadwell. There were no plans to use either the Rotherhithe Tunnel or Tower Bridge. It also came to light that the new rolling stock would be identical to and (presumably) could inter-work with that to be built for the North London Railway (to be taken over by TfL from autumn 2007). It also emerged that there was a possibility that there might be pedestrian access to the new Shoreditch High Street station from Brick Lane but this was heavily dependant on retail development taking place in the area beneath the new station viaduct.

Study of the bus replacement details show that a 10-minute interval service will operate between Whitechapel and Shoreditch at broadly similar times to those of the withdrawn train service. Questioning revealed that the service was expected to be operated by midi buses from outside Whitechapel station (stop B) setting down at stop SB near the junction of Brick Lane and Bethnal Green Road and returning from stop SA near the junction of Club Row and Bethnal Green Road. It was unclear as to what tickets if any would be needed for travel and what information would be provided at Pedley Street (the location of Shoreditch station) after closure. There was also a suggestion that Aldgate East followed by the short walk along Osborne Street and Brick Lane is a viable alternative – however, a zone 1 valid ticket would be needed. Your writer is aware of a significant number of commuters to the area north of Liverpool Street station, who use Shoreditch and then foot to save themselves purchasing zone 1 validity. A booklet issued in connection with District and Piccadilly Line engineering work during June, shows Shoreditch to Whitechapel greyed-out and advice that Shoreditch station is permanently closed from 10 June.

At a TfL briefing meeting on 25 May it became apparent that the ELL was to become part of the North London Railway (NLR) concession and that the long term aspiration was that the stock would be interchangeable. Indeed it was specified that the new stock was to be capable of working as 3 or 4 or 5 or 6-car rakes. It was anticipated that 4 trains per hour would work from possibly New Cross to a NLR destination yet to be agreed but Queen's Park via South Hampstead seemed possible. It also emerged that there are aspirations to cascade Victoria Line stock to the Bakerloo and take over the DC service to Watford. Queen's Park to Euston would be abandoned and replaced by Silverlink County services calling at Queen's Park. There was a possibility that Primrose Hill and Junction Road stations might be reinstated but that this is unlikely to happen for many years.

Metro for 2 June gives details of travel options following the closure of Shoreditch and refers to a leaflet available at ELL stations from 5 June. This leaflet was first seen at Canada Water on 3 June and incorporates a street map giving suggested walking routes from Aldgate East and Liverpool Street stations and advises us that the bus replacement service is ELS. Alternatives of Old Street and Bethnal Green are advanced as well as use of buses 8 and 388. Details of Ticket Stop outlets in the Shoreditch area are listed and passengers are encouraged to use Oyster. The June 2006 pocket Tube map shows the replacement bus service between Whitechapel and Shoreditch and gives hours of operation.

Metro for 8 June reports that Transport for London (TfL) had announced that four companies – Govia, MTR Laing, National Express Group and Nedrail – have been shortlisted to proceed to the next phase of the bidding process for the London Rail Concession. The concession comprises the operation of the NLR and the extended East London Line, which is currently under construction and due for completion in 2010. These organisations have been selected on TfL's assessment of how their experience could be applied to deliver TfL's objectives for the London Rail Concession. TfL now intends to issue these bidders with an Invitation to Tender later this year, which will conclude with the selection of a successful bidder in Spring 2007.

Friday 9 June arrived and we were greeted with a points-failure (q.v.) causing the suspension of services between Whitechapel and Shoreditch during part of the morning peak. During the day timetable sheets were replaced throughout the ELL to reflect the new service from 11 June. Moderate numbers of enthusiasts were observed travelling from mid-afternoon building up to the expected crowds for the last public train. Platform 5 at Whitechapel was full and then came the announcement that the last public train had been delayed by 6-minutes because of passenger action at New Cross. When the train arrived (unit 5066) a home-made poster was noticed in the window of the front saloon of the train, "Shoreditch gone but not forgotten".

After the last public train had left, special train 776 (unit 5234) arrived for invited guests who were only admitted on presentation of a commemorative ticket, a

pastiche of an Underground – London Electric Railways ticket of the pre-LPTB era.

This was duly punched with the New Cross Maltese Cross.

The special arrived at Shoreditch and this was followed by speeches in the booking hall before the ceremonial closing of the station for the last time. A boarding-up gang were present ready to secure the station once the guests had dispersed. Many of the guests (along with a few interlopers) travelled back to Whitechapel by train 776 and so ended Shoreditch station.

During the course of the next few days blue decals were affixed to the line diagrams displayed at ELL stations advising that Shoreditch station was now closed and that a bus replacement service was in operation. A member reports that during the first few days of closure two staff were present in Pedley Street, wearing blue hi-vis, giving out information to intending travellers.



Photo: (Above) Shoreditch station looking south from the former overbridge on 2 June 2006, showing the disused southbound platform on the left. Although disused since 1928 the platform retained its diamond station name signs at least into the 1950s. Goods services through the East London Line ceased in 1966 and the track through the southbound platform was removed soon after. The overgrown section of the remaining track is because the stopping mark was moved further south some time after the Moorgate collision of February 1975, to provide a greater overrun distance at dead-end terminal stations.

Photo: Kim Rennie



Photo: (Above) A platform-level view of Shoreditch on 2 June 2006, looking northwest to the erstwhile connection to the main line into Liverpool Street. The buffer and red light were provided when the link was severed in 1966.

Photo: Kim Rennie



The single-line terminus at Shoreditch showing a four-car unit of 1938 Tube Stock that worked services between 1974 and 1977. The train is an EHO unit on loan from the Bakerloo Line and DM 11193 is leading.

This was taken in 1976 before *Moorgate* signalling was installed – when trains stopped closer towards the buffer stops shown above.

Photo: Brian Hardy