



We walked out through the bus station onto the main drag and found Copperfields café - very nice poached eggs on toast. It would have been quicker to have walked to Queens Road station on the Overground, but for some reason we tubed back to Blackhorse Road, and just missed an Overground train to Barking Riverside. I photoed the black horse on the underground platform, but didn't go outside to find the original mural.



I remember when this line, the GOBLIN line (Gospel Oak to Barking) was decrepit. Open in 1894 as the Tottenham and Forest Gate Railway, it was a joint line of the MR and LTSR. When I first did it, it had an hourly dmu service and semaphore signals - now there should be an electric train every 15 minutes. However we faced delays as c2c services are using it as the link between Stratford and Barking today, so our Overground train was terminated in the northbound bay platform at Barking and we had to walk across to catch the next one onto Riverside from platform 7. (We could have had a same platform change at Woodgrange Park, but we weren't told of the change before then).

I hadn't done the extension to Barking Riverside as this was only opened last summer.



It has been built to serve the huge housing developments that are going in. Part of me is impressed we have the foresight to build in advance, another part of me is furious that

London gets all the investment! It will be fascinating to come back in 10 years time. For now we stayed the shortest time possible!



We changed at Barking for a loo, and then for Stratford (a useful connection we hadn't planned for), then started to attack the Central Line. All the way to Epping, out into darkest Essex (though, sadly, no more as far as Ongar). Most of the main line (as far as Loughton) was open by the Eastern Counties Railway in 1856, and this was extended to Ongar in 1865. Epping to Ongar was closed in 1994 (unbelievable that that is almost 30 years ago), although much of it has been preserved - they were running a connecting Routemaster today. There is an excellent refreshment "van" outside Epping station - superb bacon butty.



Back to Woodford for Hainault. The Hainault shuttle runs every 20 minutes, and we missed one while buying tea. It was part of my plan so I could rest on a GER bench. This bit of the line was the Fairlop loop, open from Ilford to Woodford by the GER in 1903. If I remember right, the automatic train control for the Victoria Line was tested here.



A change at Hainault, then we settled down to ride through London as far as one of the western termini at Ealing Broadway. Fairlop loop to Newbury Park, then the tunnels constructed pre-War, used as factories, open for the tube in 1947. Back through Stratford and onto the 1946 line to Liverpool Street. Central London Railway (mainly 1900) on to Shepherd's Bush, link on to Ealing 1911. I think I stayed awake as we made the journey.

Time for a Starbucks at Ealing Broadway, which meant we just missed the 1611 direct to Stratford. We caught the next one, an Abbey Wood train, and changed at Liverpool Street. Hundreds of trains, all full and standing. Build it and they will use it. In an ideal world we would have stopped and explored and photographed - in reality, it was a long, hot day. The Elizabeth Line is a lot quicker through Central London than the Central Line! This jaunt means I have now done it all - including the links from the GWR onto the central London section, and from the new section out onto the GE main line. Back from Stratford to Farringdon. It is a long walk from the Liz Line platform to the Underground, and you have to go out and in between the two halves of the station. Onto Kings Cross, and back to the BL. J finished at 5.30 - she was buzzing after a superb day.

Michael went north to travel back to Richmond via the old North London Line. We managed to extract the car and hit the motorway. A Macdonalds at Watford Gap, and home about 9.30. I slept well!