

UNDERGROUND DIARY

DECEMBER 2016

SUMMARY

December began with rolling stock problems continuing on the Piccadilly Line, although a handful of extra trains were in service, but not enough to operate through services on the Rayners Lane branch. Because of that, the bus service between Acton Town and Rayners Lane complemented the shuttle train service (and latterly the reinstated through service with cancellations) and continued through until the end of traffic on Friday 16 December, although towards the end the buses were little used and took much longer to make the journey between Acton Town and Rayners Lane, especially in rush hours. During some of the time, vintage buses were employed, making it a Piccadilly Line vintage bus rally on occasions! Moreover, with ten trains of D Stock remaining on the District Line, consideration was also given to using these on the Rayners Lane branch, but following a night-time platform gauging run, this was discounted as a short-term 'fix' because of platform-train interface issues, as was the possibility of using 1972 MkII Tube Stock borrowed from the Bakerloo Line. We also hear rumours that a three-car set of 1973 Tube Stock is to be converted into a Rail Adhesion Train (RAT) for the Piccadilly Line for next year's leaf fall season! Also continuing unabated were the number of station closures, caused by the RMT union's ban on overtime.

On **Thursday 1 December**, points failing at West Kensington from the start of traffic prevented the west end of the District Line from starting up until 05.40. A small track fire on the southbound approach to Archway suspended the Northern Line's Barnet branch from 06.55 to 07.35. At 12.35, points failing at Gloucester Road suspended the outer rail Circle Line from 12.35 to 13.45. Three Circle Line trains were stalled between stations which in turn caused delays for the District Line service. North Acton station closed at 19.20 because of a serious assault close to the station, reopening at 21.25. During this period, North Acton reversers were detrained at White City and worked empty to and from North Acton. Points failing at Embankment from 21.40 suspended the Circle Line and the District Line between Earl's Court and Aldgate East until 22.15. Two trains were stalled between stations for the duration. Finally, Earl's Court station closed from 22.25 until 23.40 because of insufficient staff numbers.

Friday 2 December began with the Richmond branch of the District Line being suspended from the start of traffic because of a multiple signal failure on the branch. Services began at 07.15. Also, a lack of staff kept Kilburn Park station closed until 06.05. A track defect on the eastbound between North Acton and East Acton from 12.20 resulted in a number of negative shoes becoming detached from trains. Trains continued to run but with a reduced service and 11 trains cancelled in consequence until clear at 15.30. Regent's Park station closed from 23.20 to 23.50 because of passenger action.

Piccadilly Line issues apart, the only operational problem on **Saturday 3 December** was a signal failure northbound at Maida Vale from 16.15, causing delays while trains worked through the area under failure conditions and eight cancelled trains until fixed at 17.30. Stations, however, were to feature, as follows:

- Bow Road closed 13.10 to 14.15 and St. James's Park closed 18.50 to 21.35 – both for insufficient staff.
- Caledonian Road closed 19.20 to 21.15 – lift defects.
- Bond Street closed at 22.20 and right through Night Tube hours – insufficient staff.

A body on the track just north of Colindale suspended the Northern Line north of Golders Green from 06.35 until 09.30 on **Sunday 4 December**. The District Line had a 30-minute late start at the west end of the line because of a late finish to work on points at Triangle Sidings. A signal failure at North Acton from 11.15 caused a 30-minute suspension of the Central Line through the area. The Northern Line was in trouble again later with points failing at Morden from 12.40, suspending the service south of Tooting Broadway until 13.25 and yet again at 16.20 with a defective train at Waterloo, suspending the northbound Charing Cross branch until 17.05. Station closures because of staffing issues continued to feature, with Bond Street reopening at 07.15, Earl's Court closing from 19.20 to 20.00 and Temple from 22.30 until the end of traffic.

On **Monday 5 December**, the Piccadilly Line continued with the status quo with 32 trains cancelled during the peak and an average of 19 off-peak, an Acton Town – Rayners Lane shuttle and the

duplicate bus service. Staying with the Piccadilly Line, a train exiting Cockfosters depot at 06.55 became gapped off current, initially suspending the service east of Oakwood. However, with one train stalled approaching Cockfosters with passengers, the service was suspended east of Arnos Grove from 07.25 so that the stalled train could return to Oakwood, where it arrived at 07.35. With gap jumper leads deployed, the offending train was moved back into depot and the service resumed at 09.00. Goadge Street and Temple stations remained closed until 06.40 and 07.00 respectively, while Borough station closed from 06.45 to 07.20, all for lack of staff. Moreover, Temple was to close again at 22.25 until the end of traffic for the same reason. A signal failure on the westbound approach to Hammersmith at 19.50 set the District Line into 'severe delays' mode. Westbound trains were either worked through the area under failure conditions or were diverted via the westbound Piccadilly Line until clear at 20.40. The Jubilee Line was suspended north of Wembley Park from 19.55 because of a defective southbound train at Queensbury. It moved off in restricted manual mode, taking some 15 minutes to reach Kingsbury, a further 15 minutes to Wembley Park, reaching Neasden depot at 20.40, from when services resumed. Meanwhile, in the afternoon at 15.00, a power blip in the Wimbledon area, affecting LU Bulk Supply Points, caused a number of problems around the network, summarised thus:

- Loss of signalling control to the Central Line control centre at Wood Lane.
- Stalled lifts at Southfields, Kennington and Elephant & Castle (Northern Line side).
- Bond Street, Colliers Wood, South Wimbledon, Clapham North and Tooting Bec stations closed until 15.20. Balham, Tottenham Court Road and Oval stations closed until 15.30, 16.00 and 16.35 respectively – all for escalator problems.
- Victoria Line suspended south of Victoria until 15.50 – loss of lifts, escalators and CCTV.

Station closures on **Tuesday 6 December** included Kentish Town (start to 06.10) and Temple (start until 07.05). The only operational incident was a person trackside at East Ham at 23.55, bringing the eastbound to a stand and delaying the last two westbound trains. Apart from four trains stalled between stations for the duration, other trains were held in platforms until clear at 00.35. However, the late running last westbound District Line train had to non-stop six stations in the central area because of no staff available at that late hour.

District and Piccadilly Line services at the west end started up almost an hour late on **Wednesday 7 December** because of a missing overnight track worker. The Piccadilly Line was still suffering with wheel flats, with 35 trains cancelled for the morning peak – just four short of half the service. During the afternoon and evening peak, the Circle Line suffered from cancellations because of a lack of Train Operators. A SPAD by a departing Metropolitan Line train at Aldgate at 23.00 suspended the Metropolitan and Hammersmith & City lines east of Moorgate and the Circle Line in its entirety. Three trains were stalled between stations varying between 35 and 50 minutes. Selected trains were also reversed east to west at King's Cross. Services resumed at 23.55.

On **Thursday 8 December**, Blackhorse Road station closed from 05.50 to 06.35 because of a local power failure and closed again from 09.55 for 20 minutes because of a fire alarm activation. A signal failure at Woodside Park from 08.55 effectively suspended the Barnet branch of the Northern Line. A discarded pick-up shoe from a train was discovered trackside which had severed a signal cable. Services resumed at 09.45. A signal failure on the southbound at Warwick Avenue set the Bakerloo Line into 'delay' mode at 10.10 which resulted in eight trains cancelled. Clear signals were obtained at 11.55. Station closures because of staff shortage were Highbury & Islington until 06.15 and Chancery Lane until 06.20. At the end of the day these were Holland Park from 22.00 and Temple from 23.00, both to the end of traffic.

Friday 9 December was uneventful until 07.55 when a signal failure at Bank suspended the Waterloo & City Line. Two eastbound trains were stalled approaching Bank, which were authorised to return to Waterloo, arriving at 08.10 and 08.20. The service resumed at 08.55. A person ill on an eastbound Metropolitan Line train at Euston Square at 14.50 suspended services through the area, including the District Line east of High Street Kensington because of blocking back of trains at Edgware Road. Services resumed at 15.25. The Victoria Line had a 25-minute stand at Warren Street from 23.35 when a passenger fell onto the northbound track. No trains were stalled, other than the one stalled approaching Warren Street for the duration. A passenger assault on a Down (northbound) Chiltern Railways train at Rickmansworth at 00.25 resulted in a 30-minute delay while the police attended.

On **Saturday 10 December**, a passenger altercation at Moorgate just after 06.30, which also involved an outer rail Circle Line train, suspended SSR services until at 07.00. From the same time, two signals

were failing on the southbound local line at Northwood Hills, which continued intermittently until the late-afternoon, along with a separate failure on the northbound approach to Pinner. As a result, selected Amersham and Chesham trains were diverted to run via the north- and southbound main lines until clear. Station closures because of staffing issues continued to dominate and included Tottenham Hale (01.50 to 03.50), Southwark (02.05 to 03.05), St. James's Park (15.35 to 17.00) and Bow Road (22.30 until the end of traffic).

Two separate signal failures disrupted the District and C&H lines on **Sunday 11 December**. First was at Whitechapel at 12.45 with the Hammersmith & City Line being suspended east of Moorgate (until 16.15) and the District Line continuing through the area under failure conditions, but only one train in the failure section at a time. Before this problem was resolved, a signal failure at High Street Kensington suspended the Circle Line from 14.35 and the District Line between Earl's Court and Edgware Road. One stalled outer rail Circle Line train was authorised to return to Gloucester Road via the emergency crossover. However, a fix at 15.05 was short-lived, and in consequence a second Circle Line train had to be returned to Gloucester Road. The District Line resumed at 16.50 and the Circle Line at 18.30 but both problems resulted in 28 trains being cancelled – 14 each on the C&H and District. Points failing at Morden at 18.50 suspended the Northern Line south of Tooting Broadway until 19.25. Stations closed included Blackhorse Road (04.00 to 05.15), Bermondsey (19.35 to 21.10) and Bow Road (22.20 until the end of traffic).

The Northern Line had a 25-minute late start through Camden Town on **Monday 12 December** because of a signalling problem following overnight re-railing. In consequence, all trains from the Edgware branch had to run via Charing Cross and all trains from the Barnet branch had to run via the City for the whole of the traffic day. Stations-wise, Holland Park station closed from 22.30 and Aldgate East from 00.15, both until the end of traffic for continuing staffing issues. The Piccadilly Line improved a little with 'only' 22 trains cancelled. On that basis, the normal timetable was operated (with cancellations) which meant that some through services were able to run through to Rayners Lane and Uxbridge. The shuttle trains remained, filling gaps created by cancelled through trains. The Central Line, however, had ten trains cancelled for the morning peak because of stock defects.

Holland Park and Leicester Square stations remained closed, both until 06.30 on **Tuesday 13 December** because of insufficient staff. Points failing at Brixton from 06.10 initially restricted Victoria Line services to using one platform until 07.15 when the service was suspended south of Victoria until 07.45 for investigation of the problem and again from 09.45 until 10.00 to achieve a fix. Some 14 trains were cancelled for the morning peak. A signalling issue at West Kensington at 06.20 brought the District Line to a stand until 06.50 – the queried route and lay of points was confirmed to be correct. Blackhorse Road station closed from 13.55 to 16.05 because of water ingress on the southbound platform. More staffing problems caused Mansion House to close from 23.00 and Temple from 23.45, both until the end of traffic.

On **Wednesday 14 December**, the Piccadilly Line side of Leicester Square station remained closed until 06.30 (lack of staff). A further small improvement had been noted on the Piccadilly Line, with cancellations now down to 19 in the evening peak. The report of a person brandishing a knife brought the westbound Central Line to a stand from 17.05, initially approaching Liverpool Street, then approaching Bank on the following train. Services resumed at 18.05. At 18.05, Goadge Street station closed because of three lifts stalled at the lower landing, reopening at 20.10. Finally, staffing issues saw Temple station close from 20.40 to 00.15 and Goadge Street from 22.55 until 23.50.

The number of peak hour cancellations on the Piccadilly Line had reduced to 14 on **Thursday 15 December**. Blackhorse Road station remained closed at the start of traffic until 06.50 because of insufficient staff. There were three other station closures for the same reason during the day, but none for any lengthy duration. Southwark station closed at 06.45 because of fire alarms activated, caused by street-level cooking fumes being drawn into station air vents. A report of arcing on the track near Kew Gardens saw a suspension of the District Line to and from Richmond at 15.30 for an hour.

Friday 16 December was as follows:

- Pimlico, Bethnal Green, Holland Park and Queensway closed from the start of traffic until 05.55, 06.20, 07.10 and 07.35 respectively (insufficient staff). For the same reason, Temple station closed from 20.30 until the end of traffic.
- Points failure at Brixton from 09.55. Various levels of 'delays' with suspension south of Victoria from 10.50 to 11.50 and 12.35 to 12.55.

- Tottenham Hale closed from 14.55 to 15.25 (lack of staff).
- Further arcing on a power cable at Kew Gardens (q.v.) from 16.00 with District Line suspended to Richmond until 16.55.
- Green Park station closed from 19.15 – fire alarm activation. With the problem found to be on the Jubilee Line side, Piccadilly and Victoria Line platforms reopened at 20.55 with the Jubilee Line following suit at 22.00.
- Metropolitan Line suspended Harrow – Uxbridge and Piccadilly suspended west of Rayners Lane from 21.55– person under a westbound train at Ruislip Manor. The Metropolitan Line resumed at 23.05, the Piccadilly Line at 23.45. Ruislip Manor station remained closed until 23.35.
- In Night Tube hours, Oxford Circus closed from 01.25 to 01.55 because of a fire alarm activation.

On **Saturday 17 December**, a person went walkabout at Waterloo on the Waterloo & City Line at 14.20, suspending the service until 15.10. One eastbound train was stalled between Waterloo and Bank for the duration. Just after 20.00 a passenger slipped between the platform and train on the westbound at Debden, suspending the service east of Woodford for 30 minutes. Notable station closures for lack of staff were Holland Park from 18.30 and Chancery Lane from 23.30 (both into Night Tube hours), Goodge Street (07.10 to 07.45), Temple (12.25 until the end of traffic), along with Southwark and Hyde Park Corner (both 18.00 to 18.45).

The only serious incident on **Sunday 18 December** was a person under a Down (northbound) London Overground train at Kenton, suspending also the Bakerloo Line north of Stonebridge Park from 13.35 to 15.25. Stations and lack of staff-wise, Chancery Lane and Holland Park both reopened at 07.30 (both being closed from the previous evening), while Temple remained closed until 08.35 and closed again from 20.40. Northern Line trains non-stopped Leicester Square from 07.55 to 08.30. Other stations closed until the end of traffic included Blackhorse Road (from 18.05), Bermondsey and Holland Park (from 22.30) and Stepney Green (from 23.00).

On **Monday 19 December**, the westbound Piccadilly Line had a 20-minute late start from Cockfosters because of a broken rail discovered overnight between Bounds Green and Wood Green. The stock situation had improved somewhat with nine trains cancelled on the Piccadilly Line for the morning peak. The Central Line was brought to a stand on the westbound at Notting Hill Gate at 18.00 with a train unable to obtain full speed. It moved off in restricted manual mode, arriving at White City at 18.20. Five stations were closed for various times during the day because of staff shortages.

The Piccadilly Line continued with nine cancellations in the peaks on **Tuesday 20 December**, despite a TfL statement through the Evening Standard saying “All 79 trains back in action after almost a month of delays and disruption Every one of the line’s 79 trains is now functioning”. (*With nine trains cancelled and a fleet of 86 trains, giving seven spares, this surely makes 16 trains that were still unavailable?*). A power supply problem on Network Rail near Gunnersbury suspended the District Line’s Richmond branch from 17.45 to 18.25. A northbound Bakerloo Line train stalled on the approach to Queen’s Park at 21.20, suspending the service on the LU section of line until 21.50. Two trains were stalled between stations for the duration.

The only problems on **Wednesday 21 December** involved stations, with several closures because of insufficient staff:

- Holland Park – start to 07.15 and 22.30 until the end of traffic.
- Bounds Green – start until 07.15.
- Manor House – start until 07.15 and 22.20 until the end of traffic.
- Queensway – 20.55 to 23.55.
- St. Paul’s and Goodge Street (from 22.30), Bow Road (from 23.00) and Kentish Town (from 23.10), all until the end of traffic.

Apart from a points failure at Wembley Park at 20.10, causing a 25-minute delay to the Metropolitan Line and the continuing station staffing problems, **Thursday 22 December** was otherwise uneventful.

On **Friday 23 December**, the last full service day before the Christmas break, the Piccadilly Line remained at a maximum of nine trains cancelled at peak times. The day may be summarised thus:

- 25-minute delay Gloucester Road from 06.30 – signal failure on the eastbound District Line.
- Tufnell Park, Manor House, Goodge Street, Bounds Green, Holland Park, Bow Road and Queensway stations closed from start to 07.00, 07.10, 07.15, 07.25, 07.30, 07.50 and 12.15 respectively.

- Northbound Bakerloo Line train 'gapped' off current northbound at Queen's Park – 25-minute delay from 13.30.
- District Line suspended Earl's Court – Ealing Broadway and Richmond 18.20 to 18.50 – person on westbound track.

Although there were no operational incidents on **Saturday 24 December**, station closures continued to feature – there were nine at various periods throughout the day, of which three featured twice.

Even with the Underground closed on Christmas Day, **Sunday 25 December**, it didn't escape visits by graffiti hooligans, the results of which (on trains) were seen being moved back to depots for cleaning on Boxing Day, **Monday 26 December**. There were no notable incidents as such, but with the demands on the Piccadilly Line service because of the District Line closure for engineering work, and because of a number of minor delays, late running soon set in, with late and missed crew reliefs at Acton Town and Arnos Grove. Compounding the situation was the fact that terminating District Line trains at Acton Town had to cross in front of the eastbound Piccadilly to get to the sidings and then cross in front of the westbound Piccadilly Line to return to Ealing Broadway, adding to the delays. The net result was late running up to an hour with late last trains in consequence – and Finsbury Park, Turnpike Lane, Bounds Green and Southgate stations having to close before the last trains ran.

Earl's Court station remained closed until 05.40 on **Tuesday 27 December** because of a power supply problem. Two signals failing on the northbound at Chorleywood from the start of traffic caused delays for the Metropolitan and Chiltern services, escalating to 'severe delays' within an hour. The problem continued until lunch time, by which time a long section of defective cable had been replaced. A person under an eastbound train at Tottenham Court Road at 07.05 suspended the Central Line between Marble Arch and Liverpool Street until 07.40.

Station closures continued unabated on **Wednesday 28 December** and at 12.40 a 15-minute delay occurred at Ickenham when an eastbound Piccadilly Line train required an assisted dispatch because of sunlight obscuring the OPO monitors. With Ickenham station unmanned at the time, a member of staff had to travel from Ruislip 'to do the honours'. Oxford Circus station closed to incoming passengers from 16.45 to 18.50 because of escalator defects. Exit and interchange continued throughout. One of the four District Line west end shuttle trains was cancelled from mid-evening to ease train working on the Piccadilly Line (q.v.) in the Acton Town area, which continued with late running and missed crew reliefs.

The only operational incident on **Thursday 29 December** was a signal failure westbound at Turnham Green from 10.40 which delayed the Piccadilly Line and caused 12 cancelled trains. A replacement trainstop was fitted by 13.15 which gave clear signals.

On **Friday 30 December**, a person ill on a northbound train at Finchley Central suspended the Barnet branch of the Northern Line north of Archway from 06.15 until 06.45. Two signals failing westbound west of Turnpike Lane from 07.15 turned out to be a broken rail and thus from 08.25 the service was suspended between Arnos Grove and King's Cross for repairs to be effected, resuming at 10.45 but with almost half of the service cancelled. The repercussions of the disruption were felt until the early hours, when Night Tube kicked in. A fire alarm activated in the staff messroom at Golders Green necessitated the station's closure from 21.05 to 21.50. Social media reported the problem to have been caused by an apple pie being burnt! East Ham station closed at 23.25 until the end of traffic because of a local power failure.

Following the Christmas holiday engineering work on the District Line, the Wimbledon branch was unable to start up west of Parsons Green on **Saturday 31 December** because of signaling issues at Wimbledon. At 07.45 it was possible to begin services as far as Wimbledon Park (by extending trains from Edgware Road – Tower Hill trains continued to reverse at Parsons Green) with a through service to Wimbledon at 12.45. Other events of the day included the closure of Blackhorse Road station from 20.05 until 23.20 because of a fire in an adjacent car service centre, and a suspension of the Piccadilly Line between Arnos Grove and King's Cross from 22.35 until 23.10 because of a passenger altercation on a westbound train at Holloway Road. The network then passed into all-night running, of which more in the next issue.