

## FROM THE PAPERS

Items for "From the Papers" should be sent to Ian McKenzie at 24 Thamespoint, Fairways, Teddington, TW11 9PP (or E-Mail [secretary@lurs.org.uk](mailto:secretary@lurs.org.uk)), and not to the Editor of this journal. Please ensure that contributions are identified by date and source publication.

**22.09.16 METRO** – *Note by K.T. Tunstall* – "Would you want to go back to busking? I'm incredibly glad I don't have to do it anymore. Maybe I'd do it on the sly to see if I'd make any money. My worst day busking was in Dundee when I made 75p – the best was in Vermont where I made \$90. Outside Underground stations in London used to be good, but you aren't allowed to do that anymore".

**23.09.16 WATFORD OBSERVER** – Queensbridge House is an outstanding new development of one and two bedroom apartments located between metropolitan Watford and trendy Rickmansworth. They will also be conveniently situated close to the new planned Cassiobridge Underground station with access to central London in approximately 21 (?) minutes.

**24.09.16 THE TIMES** – *By Columnist Rose Wild* – "Editors of the Oxford English Dictionary point out that the "-ee" suffix to nouns "typically refer to an action or event, or who lack control over that event". They give "standee" as an example, which has a precise meaning in the world of public transport. If I can't be bothered to sit down in a half-empty Underground train because I'm only going one stop, then I could be described as a "stander". If the carriage is full and I do want a seat, but none of the man-spreading occupants playing football on their mobile phones think my advanced age merits one, then I'm a "standee"."

**29.09.16 EVENING STANDARD** – *Post by Chris Key* – "Last weekend, I spent a day showing friends from abroad, around our fantastic capital city. We had a great day but trying to move around our Underground network with a buggy took the shine off it. Our friends were surprised that even at Leicester Square station there were no lifts. Indeed, according to the TfL website, only 25% of all Underground stations and 50% of Overground stations have step-free access. If we want to show the world we are a world-class city, why not start by making sure every station has these facilities".

**30.09.16 WATFORD OBSERVER** – *Letter by Dave Degen* – "It's all very well for Network Rail to assure us trees are being removed from the embankment along the section where an avalanche (?) derailed and nearly caused a catastrophic collision between main line trains (*north of Watford tunnel – IDM*). Of course Network Rail's policy (as has also been LU's) in recent years has been to remove trees up and down the line in the firm belief that it will avert rail disruption. But if they had any idea of the part trees have to play, they would know that, rather than cause the avalanche (?), tree roots anchored in the soil act to secure against ground shift. Not only that, but with trees consuming copious amounts of water, the roots would 'sink' the excess water in flood prone extreme weather. Obviously high winds and gales are another problem, but here it would be better to pollard the trees always instead of removing them completely. As it is, the next time there is a monsoon, there will be nowhere for the water to go but to run off onto the track, impregnating already drenched ground".

**30.09.16 THE TIMES** – Are you reading this on a crowded train carriage? Could the person crammed up against you, with their elbow in your eye, be a future best friend, soul-mate or lover? Why don't you strike up a conversation and find out? If this scenario, or any form of human contact on public transport, is your idea of a nightmare, you probably will not want a new badge designed for the Underground, emblazoned with the words "Tube Chat?". TfL distanced itself yesterday from a project designed to spark exchanges between strangers on the Underground with a badge bearing the LU roundel and a solicitation to strike up a conversation. It provoked a negative reaction on social media. The badge is modelled on the "Baby on Board" badges produced by TfL and is the brainchild of American Jonathan Dunne. Some 500 badges were produced and handed out across the Underground network. Mr. Dunne said he wanted to make Londoners feel less isolated from one another, and spent £100 on the badges. A TfL spokesman described the badge as an "interesting idea".

**01.10.16 CORNISH GUARDIAN** – Under the heading of 'Network Rail's Looe to Liskeard train service affected after lightning strike', which seems totally irrelevant to us, the photo accompanying the article is of an Underground 1995 or 1996 Tube Stock train in the dark! We are told that services had been suspended with taxis replacing trains .....

**03.10.16 THE TIMES** – *By columnist Matthew Syed* – "Jonathan Dunn, an American living in London, has been trying to encourage more socialising on the Underground by handing out badges saying

“Tube Chat”. It hasn’t worked terribly well. As one Twitter wag put it: “The day I willingly talk to anyone on the Underground will be the day I have to tell someone that their hat is on fire”.

**04.10.16 – 10.10.16 TIME OUT** – We asked what’s the weirdest thing you have seen on the Underground? – “(1) A woman chopping onions on a wooden board on her lap. (2) A man on the phone to his wife while ripping a newspaper into strips, crumpling them up and eating them. (3) Father Christmas gave me a bag of weed. (4) A man sharpening a hunting knife on the Northern Line. (5) A guy snorting cocaine off a sleeping man’s bald head. (6) A bride in her wedding dress, completely alone and crying. (7) A lady feeding her pet rat with Vaseline.”

**05.10.16 THE TIMES** – Among the five proposed new Thames river crossings in East London, are a possible extension of the DLR from Gallions Reach on the north bank to Thamesmead on the south bank; and a possible further extension to the Overground extension, from Barking Riverside under the river to Abbey Wood Crossrail station.

**06.10.16 EVENING STANDARD** – Underground ticket staff say they have been bitten, assaulted, spat and sworn at by passengers since their offices were closed and they were moved to work on station concourses and platforms. A six-month survey by the TSSA union has logged more than 2,000 incidents with some staff now “afraid” to go to work. Mayor Sadiq Khan last month ordered an enquiry into the closures, which were instigated by Boris Johnson. Underground chief executive Steve Griffiths said: “Any assault on staff will be fully investigated and we work closely with BT Police to bring perpetrators to justice”.

**07.10.16 EVENING STANDARD** – Londoners were quick to dismiss the idea of “Tube Chat?” badges – what could be more terrifying than talking to strangers on public transport? But good things can come of chatting to your fellow travellers, as Naomie Harris tells Condé Nast Traveller. “Once on a flight to Northern Ireland for work, I struck up a conversation with the man next to me, and he invited me to his home for lunch with his wife”. What happened next was very Miss Money Penny. “My hosts turned out to be the Viscount and Viscountess of Brookeborough, and their home is Colebrooke Estate”. Now a regular guest of “Alan and Janet” it’s got more Jane Austin than James Bond. “I wake up in a four-poster to no sounds except the bleating of lambs and totally believe that I’m Elizabeth Bennet!”.

**07.10.16 EVENING STANDARD** – *Post by Les and Linda Champion* – “My wife and I have just returned from a very enjoyable weekend in London. The best experience was the kindness of strangers on the Underground. I am in my early 70s and my wife will soon be 70. On almost every journey we were offered seats by young people, even though both of us are hale and hearty. We were also given advice be a rail employee to use our contactless bank cards for cheaper travelling. Thank you London and the younger generation; you made us proud to be British”.

**10.10.16 METRO** – *Night Tube* services will launch on the Northern Line next month. The Mayor has confirmed the new service will run from High Barnet and Edgware via Charing Cross branch to Morden on Fridays and Saturdays from 18 November. This will help even more Londoners travel to and from work, making trips easier for those enjoying a night out in the capital. The services are playing a vital role in opening up London’s night-time economy, boosting it by £77M a year and supporting around 2,000 permanent jobs.

**10.10.16 METRO** – “Don’t forget, *Night Tube* journeys are classed as off-peak. Daily Travelcards cover journeys made until 04.29 the next day. If you touch in before 04.30 then your travel will fall within the previous day’s cap. Paper tickets are still valid but you’ll need a member of staff to let you out via the ticket barriers”.

**11.10.16 – 17.10.16 TIME OUT** – Phil Roe worked on the Underground for 42 years. A proud London transport geek, he collected old transit maps and also drew his own maps. He even reckons he accidentally invented the first version of the TfL’s zone system. Phil features in a film by artist Zineb Sedira as part of “Collecting Lines”, the latest *Art on the Underground* commission, which includes a series of images now being displayed on the Victoria Line. He asks in Sedira’s film: “Why would anyone want a load of maps? Maps tell a story. Maps give you history. They tell me more about London than most books do”.

**13.10.16 METRO** – Visitors sometimes have trouble navigating the Underground, but an artificial intelligence trained by Google’s *DeepMind* has learned to plot the best route. A mass of traditional computers and neural networks, *DeepMind* tackles tasks that require it to handle sequences, while

remembering and reusing what it learns as it goes. That lets it find the shortest route from A to B through London's tangle of stations.

**13.10.16 METRO** – A public enquiry opens next week into plans to extend the Overground to Barking Riverside. The proposals would provide a vital new link and support the creation of more than 10,000 new homes within the next 15 years. The 4km extension of the Gospel Oak to Barking line to Barking Riverside would offer an alternative to car travel and link Barking Riverside to London's transport network. The new Overground service would operate along the existing Tilbury rail line, then via a new section of railway, built as a viaduct, ending in Barking Riverside. A station would be built at the heart of the new district centre. Without the rail link, no more than 1,500 homes could be built as part of this new development.

**14.10.16 EVENING STANDARD** – The threat of Christmas strike chaos on the Underground increased today as 1,600 ticket staff prepared to ballot for industrial action in protest over assaults by passengers (see 06.10.16 above). TSSA spokesman said: "ticket machines either breakdown or cannot cope with demand during peak periods, with frustrated passengers then taking their anger out on staff. Staff have been assaulted and robbed as they stand at the unprotected gate lines. Ticket machines are completely useless multi-taskers. They don't give change, replace lost or broken Oyster cards, speak slowly to tourists or other people in need of human assistance".

**18.10.16 METRO** – For the past 10 years, London's biggest regeneration story has been about the creation of a new neighbourhood at Nine Elms and Battersea. The next ten years will be all about Thamesmead. And it couldn't come soon enough – built in the 1960s – it looks tired, dilapidated and a little bit dangerous. Despite being home to 45,000 people, it has no railway station (and no bank), but that's all set to change. Crossrail will terminate at Abbey Wood station (to the south of the town) and now the Mayor has announced that the DLR will be extended to Thamesmead, putting it on a direct line with Canary Wharf, Bank and Bond Street.

**18.10.16 EVENING STANDARD** – A strike ballot is to be held by the RMT union among Piccadilly Line drivers. They will join 4,000 station staff already set to vote on a walkout in separate dispute over staff cuts. Both ballots are expected to start later on October, with walkouts threatened in the run-up to Christmas after union leaders forecast overwhelming support for the strike calls. The TSSA union are claiming LU has failed to act and protect staff from physical and verbal assault. Ticket offices were closed and staff moved out onto station concourses and platforms, under former mayor Boris Johnson's regime with claims it would improve service for passengers.

**19.10.16 EVENING STANDARD** – A man attacks an Underground passenger and then is chased by a woman as he flees the scene. The incident happens after the train comes to a stop at Upton Park about 15.40 on Monday. A white man approaches a commuter of Asian appearance, seeming to say something to him before suddenly striking him with his fist. The suspect then flees the scene but a woman next to the victim leaps from her seat, dropping her belongings to the floor, and pursues the thug down the platform shouting at him to stop. The attack, which was filmed and shared on social media, is now being investigated by BT Police, who confirmed a man has been arrested. The force said: "We are investigating an assault after a video was brought to our attention. A 33-year old man has been arrested on suspicion of assault occasioning ABH and using threatening abusive words, behaviour likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress".

**20.10.16 EVENING STANDARD** – *By columnist Rosamund Urwin* – A groper on the Underground acts just like a pickpocket. They're both driven, recidivists. They hunt up and down the network, sniffing out the vulnerable, then home in on a victim. The BT Police has just set out new proposals for combating sexual offences on the underground and trains. This is just the consultation stage, but proposals look promising: extra officers investigating these crimes, a higher priority now given to sexual assault than to "volume crimes" (cycle and property theft) and officers on call around the clock. Impressively, officers can now go out with victims immediately after an assault to find the perpetrator. And in future, recordings from body-worn cameras on police will mean some victims won't need to go to court to get a prosecution. This is a welcome volte-face from the BT Police. In March, I revealed that the force was to disband the unit that specialises in tackling sexual assault. An outcry followed. The BT Police listened. And it should have, because sexual assault must never be shrugged off as an evil that women just have to endure. It can leave deep scars.

**21.10.16 THE TIMES** – Anti-terrorism police blew up a "suspicious item" that was found on an Underground train. North Greenwich station was evacuated and the Jubilee Line was closed for three

hours. The Met. Police had not ruled out terrorism last night and would not comment on the nature of the item. It said: "While we are keeping an open mind, the Met's Counter-terrorism Command is leading the investigation because it has the expertise to deal with incidents of this kind".

**22.10.16 THE TIMES** – A suspected lone-wolf terrorist has been arrested after what is feared to be the first credible bombing attempt on the London transport network in more than ten years. Armed counter-terrorism officers swooped on the 19-year-old suspect as he walked under a railway bridge opposite an Underground station, 24 hours after the discovery of what was described as a crude explosive device on an LU train at North Greenwich station two days ago, that was destroyed in a controlled explosion. Sources said that the plot was unsophisticated and involved a crude, amateur device that nonetheless contained enough explosives to pose a serious threat to life, particularly in such a confined space.

**22.10.16 THE TIMES** – The dream to become a train driver is still very much alive. Virgin advertised for 78 jobs and received 15,000 applications. Abellio ScotRail received 22,000 applications for 100 jobs. In London, 7,000 people applied for 212 part time jobs driving *Night Tube's* trains at weekends, and 15,000 people put their name forward for 400 driving positions with Crossrail. Tens of thousands of people up and down the country are clearly dreaming about driving trains. ASLEF union estimates that the number of drivers needs to increase by 5% a year to cope with rising demand, fuelled by increased passenger numbers and new lines such as Crossrail.

**25.10.16 THE TIMES** – *By columnist Hugo Rifkind* – "The UKIP 2010 election manifesto included pledges to paint trains in traditional colours, ensure proper dress in the theatre, and (I am not making this up) make the Underground Circle Line, circular again. This was a programme that Nigel Farage derided as 'drivel', even though he wrote the forward".

**25.10.16 EVENING STANDARD** – A tiny PC is being billed as the "world's smallest" computer for work while on the Underground. The *Sirius A*, about the size of a large smartphone, runs a full *Windows 10* operating system and features ports missing from many handheld devices. The computer's inventor, the Hague-based *Ockel*, said it lets commuters "carry their complete office" in their back pocket. The wedge-shaped *Sirius A* which has a 6-inch HD screen, proved so popular it raised its entire \$100,000/£81,534 crowd-funding target in one day. *Ockel* said the *Sirius A* is "small enough to fit in the palm of your hand and just as powerful as a desktop PC". The future retail price will be \$699/£570 when it is launched in May. The full *Windows 10 Home* 64-bit operating system allows it to run all compatible Windows programs.

**26.10.16 EVENING STANDARD** – Armed police are to travel on Underground trains following a bomb alert at North Greenwich station. Firearms patrols which are routinely deployed on mainline railway stations in the capital are to use the Underground to travel between jobs for the first time in a move to counter the terror threat and to reassure the public. BT Police say they are not deploying armed patrols on the Underground but the firearms officers will use the Underground instead of cars to get round the city in future. Police believe the move will raise the profile of officers on the Underground. In a further move, police dog units will also use Underground trains to travel around the capital rather than using cars or vans as they do now.

**27.10.16 EVENING STANDARD** – The threat of major Underground disruption in the run-up to Christmas rose today as union leaders ordered a strike ballot among 400 Piccadilly Line drivers. The result of the ballot – forecast heavily to back industrial action – has been deliberately timed for 15 November, the same day as a ballot result is due from 3,500 station staff, who are also expected to endorse the strike call, in a separate dispute over job cuts. The RMT union, which has ordered the Piccadilly Line ballot claiming a "wholesale breakdown in industrial relations", must by law give seven days' notice of any industrial action, meaning walkouts across the network could take place from the end of November. The RMT claims grievances including safety issues with the trains, which have been subject to repeated problems. It claims accords in which the driver has final say whether the train is safe to operate have been ignored and alleges: "continued breaches and misuse" of agreement by LU.

**28.10.16 METRO** – A teenager has appeared in court charged with intent to endanger life after a device was found on an Underground train at North Greenwich. He entered no plea, but his defence lawyer indicated his client, who has a form of autism, would plead not guilty on the grounds that it was a prank.

**28.10.16 METRO** – Vauxhall is the latest LU station to offer step-free access, with two new lifts now serving both Victoria Line platforms. Nearby Vauxhall bus station, the second busiest in London, is also step-free which means passengers can now change from buses to the Underground, opening up many more journeys across the capital to those who need level access. There are now 70 LU stations with step-free access across the network.