

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), and not to the Editor of this journal. Please ensure that contributions are identified by date and source publication.

03.11.16 HENDON & FINCHLEY TIMES – Barnet could become better connected than ever, if ideas for “small changes” to London’s public transport from a travel watchdog are followed through. The report released by *London TravelWatch* suggests the city’s existing infrastructure can be repurposed or regenerated in subtle ways to improve the service for all travellers. One of the key suggestions looks at the “significant potential” of an old rail route connecting Mill Hill East and Edgware Underground stations, which currently sit on different branches of the Northern line. This route could be revived to increase Northern Line connectivity or repurposed into a specialised cycle route away from busy roads and pedestrians. Mill Hill commuters could see improved train services as a result, with trains passing through more frequently as part of an improved, connected Northern Line. It would be a useful change in order to “increase the accessibility of development and regeneration of the former Mill Hill barracks site and areas of Colindale closing. The *TravelWatch* chairman said: “Our infrastructure report contains a number of small scale projects that could be started relatively quickly and can be completed in years rather than decades. At this stage, these are ideas, not costed proposals, but we hope that will provide a thoughtful contribution to the fast moving, and extremely important, debate on how London’s future needs can be met”. Taking the suggestion a step further, they also said the newly-connected stations could be part of a longer route from Canary Wharf to Harrow-on-the-Hill. Other suggestions would see small changes to Barnet’s transport, including a new station at Junction Road, near Tufnell Park, allowing the borough easier connections to Walthamstow and Barking. The report also suggests improved pedestrian walkways between retail parks such as the Friern Bridge retail park near Arnos Grove, and Oyster ticket barriers being installed at Finchley Central station.

23.11.16 METRO – The London-based collective, and Turner Prize winner, *Assemble’s* upcoming commission for Seven Sisters Underground station will see them open a disused shop at the station and invite staff and local residents to take part in workshops, such as tile making and ceramic glazing.

24.11.16 THE TIMES – *From the Times Diary* – “As Chancellor Philip Hammond put the last touches to his Autumn Statement, the governor of the Bank of England was seen chewing his nails and turning to God. Mark Carney was photographed on the Underground yesterday morning reading an advance copy of *Dethroning Mammon*, a book written by the Archbishop of Canterbury for next year’s Lent reflection in which he “explores the tensions that arise in a society dominated by economics and finance”. I’m arguably more surprised to discover that Carney travels to work by Underground”.

24.11.16 EVENING STANDARD – A senior MP warned of a delay in the introduction of a new emergency communications system on the Underground. The MP issued the alert after hearing evidence from Whitehall officials on the proposed 4G network. One of them, the Government’s national technology adviser Liam Maxwell, told how he was being kept awake at night by his concerns about bringing in the new system on the Underground. A communications system called *Airwave* was introduced on the Underground after the 7 July terror attacks in 2005. Now, the Government is seeking to bring in a new system for the emergency services across the country, including on the Underground. The *Emergency Services Network (ESN)* aims to make high-speed data more readily available to police, fire and ambulance crews, to better exploit new technologies and be cheaper. It was due to be introduced in London next year and run in parallel with *Airwave* for a period. But there are growing concerns over the project, with key talks still to take place between the Home Office and TfL. Delays could add to the cost of the £1.2B scheme. A review by Lord Harris of Haringey of London’s readiness for a terrorist attack put the Home Office in the spotlight. He said he was “very concerned” the new system might not operate effectively on the Underground and recommended that *Airwave* should not be switched off until it can be shown *ESN* would work to the satisfaction of the TfL.

25.11.16 CITY AM – LU train drivers will go on strike for 24 hours in December, the RMT announced yesterday. The strike, which relates to drivers on the Piccadilly and Hammersmith & City lines, will start at 21.30 on 6 December – the same day Southern workers are due to go on strike over their ongoing dispute over removing guards from services.

28.11.16 METRO – An Underground station was cleared amid fears a train had caught fire. Highbury & Islington station was filled with Arsenal football fans when it was evacuated yesterday. The smoke was from the train's brakes.

28.11.16 EVENING STANDARD – Vintage posters advertising some of the highlights of London's sporting calendar are to go on sale this week. The artwork, by Parisian André Edouard Marty, aimed to encourage fans to use the Underground for events such as Wimbledon, the Motor Show and the Cup Final. His posters, which were displayed in carriages, now attract four-figure sums, and the Wimbledon work is expected to fetch as much as £5,000. Also in the sale, organised by Dreweatts & Bloomsbury, are posters by Barnett Freedman – tempting travellers to London Zoo, the Tate Gallery and the Theatre.

29.11.16 METRO – “I'm a Celebrity” campers packed onto the *Jungle Tube* for their latest task. Oyster cards at the ready, the campmates had to do more than mind the gap as they embarked on a special train journey on last night's show. Team One took the *Snakerloo* line, and Team Two went on the *Critterdilly* line. Once inside the creature-filled carriages, they had to rummage around on their hands and knees for tickets to the *Jungle Arms* where a spread of snacks and drinks awaited them.

29.11.16 METRO – A thug pushed a stranger on to the Underground tracks as payback for Russian “Ultras” attacking England fans at Euro 2016. Christopher Cole attacked David Pietraszek – thinking he was Russian – at Bond street station in June. Mr. Pietraszek had earlier put Cole in a headlock when the job was being abusive to train passengers. Cole followed Mr Pietraszek before shoving him off a Jubilee Line platform. Mr. Pietraszek heard the thundering of a train but managed to pull himself to safety before it arrived. Cole denied attempted murder but admitted causing grievous bodily harm with intent. Sentencing was adjourned for reports.

29.11.16 EVENING STANDARD – *Post by Peter King* – “Where was the Mayor when the Piccadilly Line train shortage caused chaos for many Londoners on Friday? Given the trains were put into service in 1973 there can't be that much the engineers at TfL don't know about them. As with the Night Tube, it's the people who use the Acton Town to Uxbridge line who are suffering. Maybe Sadiq Khan would like to say what he is doing about it?”.

30.11.16 CITY AM – LU's TSSA union members voted yesterday in favour of strike action. In a ballot of 237 members, 159 (or 67.7%), voted in favour of a strike, with 76 (or 32.3%), against. The transport union said the industrial action concerned a dispute over station staffing and staff safety “in connection with staffing levels, imposed displacements, inadequate staff training, staff safety and transfer and promotion policy”.

02.12.16 METRO – Changes in the weather and heavy leaf fall are affecting some Underground services. When tracks become slippery it can cause damage to the wheels of trains, requiring them to be taken out of service to be fixed. The Piccadilly Line trains are most affected as they are among the oldest on the network. Engineers are working around the clock to make the necessary repairs so trains can be returned to service as quickly as possible. TfL is sorry for the disruption this issue is causing. In the meantime, a service is running to all destinations on the line and the Acton Town to Rayners Lane branch is being supplemented with extra bus services.

02.12.16 EVENING STANDARD – Union bosses today claimed responsibility for this week's Underground chaos – and warned of worse to come. 17 stations were closed during Wednesday 30 November night's rush hour in the “worst commute for years”. The RMT union said the main cause was an ongoing overtime ban by 3,500 station staff in protest over job cuts and changes to staff roles. Today the TSSA union announced an indefinite overtime ban by more than 500 of its ticket staff members starting on Thursday 8 December. They say it is in protest over a rise in verbal and physical abuse from passengers since a programme of ticket office closures started. The unions claim so many jobs have been cut – more than 900 during the past two years – that LU can no longer manage to run the system, allegations which are denied by LU bosses. A union source said: “The overtime ban could make things worse for passengers but we have to take a stand to improve conditions”. Staff cuts followed the decision two years ago by then Mayor Boris Johnson to close all ticket offices to save cash. Ticket staff, instead work out on the platforms and concourses with travellers mainly relying on ticket machines. Mayor Sadiq Khan ordered TfL to draw up an action plan to look at staffing levels, upgrading ticket machines, changes to uniforms to make staff more visible, and a joint working party with the unions.

02.12.16 EVENING STANDARD – *By Columnist Rosamund Urwin* – “For Londoners, this has been a week of embarrassingly late arrivals at parties, of cursing clogged-up streets and stations, and of increasingly desperate prayers to the travel gods. Chaos on the Underground has left thousands of passengers stranded. As one weary commuter put it: “The capital is at a standstill”. There’s nothing quite like transport woes to make Londoners see red mist. Drivers especially will reel off a catalogue of horror spots. This week the Underground has been equally testing. On Wednesday night, King’s Cross, Oxford Circus, Holborn and Euston were shut to prevent overcrowding. At Finsbury Park, the closure of Wells Terrace entrance (for capacity upgrades) has led to long queues outside the other entrance. But the Piccadilly has the biggest problem, so bad they prevented some Arsenal fans from getting to the Emirates on Wednesday; those who managed to get there had the piled-on misery of long delays getting home. November’s rain and *Storm Angus* have damaged the trains’ wheels. Many have been taken out of service for urgent repairs. Of the 79 trains usually running, there were 52 yesterday – and it could be weeks before a full service is resumed. And there’s no guarantee these problems won’t recur; a spokesman for TfL said the 40-year-old trains were not due for replacement until the 2020s.

05.12.16 THE TIMES – RMT members on the Piccadilly, Hammersmith & City and Circle lines will go on strike for 24 hours from tomorrow night.

06.12.16 EVENING STANDARD – There was relief for Underground passengers when the RMT suspended a 24-hour strike due to begin at 21.30 tonight by its drivers on Piccadilly, Hammersmith & City and Circle lines. It said it had called off the strikes, over working conditions, to allow talks. The Mayor, criticised by City Hall Tories for not condemning the RMT for its strikes on the Underground, said: “We are doing everything possible to encourage talks and repair the terrible industrial relations legacy of the previous administration”.

06.12.16 EVENING STANDARD – *From an interview with Transport Secretary Chris Grayling* – (1) He thinks Mayor Sadiq Khan’s fares freeze will store up trouble for TfL bus and Underground services. “It is difficult to see how he can avoid cuts”, said the Minister. “The fact is he has made a lot of very bold promises to London, about a fares freeze and new bridges and other things. I think it will be a challenge for him”. (2) He said that London’s long-awaited north-south rail link, Crossrail2, will be part funded by windfall taxes on developers whose land shoots up in value. “I want Crossrail2 to go ahead”. He said: “What we have to do right now is just to work out the best way of developing and financing it. Part of this has to come from development value. If you happen to own the land next to the station, you do very nicely out of it. We have to capture some of the value gained in order to fund the infrastructure improvement.” The £33B line is on the drawing board, but the infrastructure Commission is backing the go-ahead for its opening in 2033.

06.12.16 EVENING STANDARD – *Letter by Paul Ryan* – “The chaos on Piccadilly Line that has persisted for more than a week frankly beggars belief. I haven’t seen a Piccadilly Line train in north-west London since last week and there is no clear idea when TfL might be able to provide anything approaching even the shoddy service that we have become resigned to. TfL has been astonishingly slow in providing accurate information and its “explanation” – that half the trains have encountered problems at the same time – requires examination. The idea that drivers have considered striking is the only funny side of this miserable affair – how on earth would we notice?”.

07.12.16 THE TIMES – In the obituary for actor Peter Vaughan (“Genial” Harry Grout in three episodes of *Porridge*), a story is often told of the actor walking onto an Underground train and half the carriage hurriedly exiting at the next stop. A probable apocryphal tale summed up the popular image of Vaughan, a burly six-footer with small but piercing eyes, pursed lips and granite features who could exude menace like few other actors.

07.12.16 METRO – Increase in step-free Underground stations as plans for £200M investment as part of TfL’s draft Business Plan. More than 30 Underground stations will be boosted by step-free access after Mayor Sadiq Khan outlined plans for additional funds to be invested over the next five years. It will bring the number of stations with step-free access to all platforms to more than 100. This represents more than 40% of the Underground network, increasing the proportion from the current level of 26%. The funding represents the biggest boost to accessible travel in the network’s 153-year history. This is in addition to major stations such as Bond Street, Tottenham Court Road and Victoria becoming step-free in 2017. As well as making travel easier for older and disabled people, step-free access will directly benefit parents and carers with children and buggies and give more travel options for everyone.

Step-free access has already been introduced at Tower Hill and Vauxhall, while work to make Finsbury Park more accessible is underway. At Harrow-on-the-Hill and Newbury Park the building work is being brought forward to 2017.

08.12.16 CITY AM – TfL has published an ambitious five-year plan to plough investment into the capital and freeze fares at the same time as saving £800M a year by 2021. The Mayor has hailed the draft plan, which will be considered by the TfL board next week, for its emphasis on creating “modern and affordable” Transport. He said: “The previous mayor refused to do it, but in reorganising a flabby TfL and finding major efficiency savings within the organisation, we’re securing this record investment without burdening Londoners with hikes in TfL fares”. The plan includes modernising several major Underground stations, bringing forward plans to extend the Bakerloo Line and investing “record amounts” in cycling and cleaning up London’s air. TfL also said it will explore the option of rolling out the *Night Tube* onto additional lines and will progress with new east London river crossings including the Silvertown Tunnel and a new pedestrian and cycling bridge linking Rotherhithe and Canary Wharf.

08.12.16 EVENING STANDARD – Editorial – “Key railway union figures have visited City Hall for cups of tea with the Mayor, to discuss concerns about the Underground. Mr. Khan stood up to them last week; he must continue to stand firm in the face of a work-to-rule protest by ticket staff. And while he is right to do everything he can to get to grips with the dispute, it is vital that he does not give the impression of being too close to the unions – nor forgets that while strikes might be called off on the Underground, it is the same union bosses who are wreaking havoc on Southern services”.

09.12.16 EVENING STANDARD – Police are investigating if a woman was deliberately pushed onto the tracks while waiting for a *Night Tube* services. The 32-year-old was unhurt after she scrambled to safety moments before the train arrived at Camden Town station at about 02.45 on Saturday. BT Police are analysing CCTV footage and have appealed for witnesses after the woman reported feeling something from behind before she fell.

09.12.16 EVENING STANDARD – A moment of madness as schoolgirl risks death to cross 630-volt track. A child in her school uniform risks her life by skipping across Underground tracks. Horrified commuters look on as the girl narrowly misses the power rail carrying 630-volts, and seems oblivious to the danger of any oncoming trains. Clutching a mobile phone in her right hand and carrying her coat across her left arm, the schoolgirl made the dash between platforms at Latimer Road station yesterday. One passenger captured the moment on his own mobile and alerted LU to stop the approaching trains. The leader of RMT union, Mick Cash, said it illustrated the problems caused by staff shortages. LU chiefs immediately began an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the terrifying event. They have identified the girl’s school and contacted authorities there to alert them about what happened. LU safety officers will now visit the school to advise pupils of the dangers of rail tracks and how to behave. LU denied union claims that the station was unstaffed at the time, although they conformed there was no staff member on the platforms. A spokesman said: “The station was not unstaffed. There was a member of staff on the gateline. That is the usual practice at Latimer Road which is a one-staff-member station and has been for some time”. RMT members are refusing to work overtime as part of industrial action that the union claims exposes alleged shortages of staff on the Underground. A leaked memo reveals that LU are offering clerks, PAs, secretaries and other workers up to £250 per shift to help staff stations. The memo states the offer is being made due to “exceptional circumstances”. LU’s Steve Griffiths writes: “To help minimise disruption to our customers we need both licensed and non-licensed TfL Ambassadors to volunteer at affected stations”. Talks are continuing at ACAS to try to settle the overtime ban, which the union said meant 17 Underground stations were shut during Wednesday night rush hour last week. The Mayor has dismayed unions by ruling against reopening any ticket offices.

14.12.16 EVENING STANDARD – The threat of a major Underground disruption increased today with a warning that hundreds of ticket staff may turn an overtime ban into full strike action. It came 24 hours before the TfL Board were due to meet to discuss staffing levels and how to improve service. But the Board, led by the Mayor, will not agree to union demands to reopen ticket offices closed under the Boris Johnson regime. The TSSA represents ticket staff who now work on platforms and concourses. It says the Board needs to replace many of the 800 jobs lost.

15.12.16 METRO – *Art on the Underground* has commissioned London-based artist Samara Scott to design a new cover for the *Night Tube* pocket map. The free maps are available in Underground stations across London.

15.12.16 CITY AM – The launch of the *Night Tube* on the Piccadilly Line will go ahead as planned on 16 December, despite ongoing disruption to services. The Mayor said: “Piccadilly Line service has not been good enough for thousands of people”. Around half of the line’s fleet had been taken out of service for wheel repairs last month due to damage caused by wet leaves and cold weather. TfL said it will need around 25 trains for the *Night Tube* services, with 66 trains in operation yesterday evening. The line needs 79 trains for full service at peak times. The mayor also said there will be no more delays to the delivery of the Piccadilly upgrade, with re-signalling work starting in 2020 and new trains due to arrive in 2023.

16.12.16 WATFORD OBSERVER – Multi-million pound plans to extend the Metropolitan Line through Watford have disappeared from a major travel agenda. Mayor Sadiq Khan has outlined plans to save more than £3B in the way TfL is run over the next 4 years – completely omitting the £284.4M plan to extend the Met. Line. The newly-released TfL draft business plan – which sets out how the city’s transport system will be run until 2020/21 – includes plans to extend the Bakerloo Line, expand the *Night Tube* and open the Elizabeth Line. But the Met. Line extension, which was given the go-ahead by the coalition government five years ago, was completely left out of the document. Councillors said one explanation could be that TfL is waiting to find a new construction partner. Funding was finalised by LU on 23 November and construction was expected to start next year, with completion due in 2020. However, it is now uncertain when the work will take place.

19.12.16 EVENING STANDARD – Residents are pleading with TfL to prevent traffic disruption by delaying an Underground station closure until roadworks are completed on a nearby cycle superhighway. Lancaster Gate station is due to shut from 4 January to allow its two 30-year-old lifts to be replaced in time for the Notting Hill Carnival. Unlike neighbouring Queensway, kept open as its lifts were replaced one at a time, TfL says lack of space prevents this being done at Lancaster Gate. Locals have sent more than 450 emails in a bid to force a TfL rethink. TfL advised Underground passengers to use Paddington, Queensway or Marble arch stations, all about 10 minutes’ walk away. Lancaster Gate on the Central Line is used by more than 6 million passengers a year.

19.12.16 EVENING STANDARD – Conservatives on the London Assembly claimed that the Mayor’s “fantasy economics” would leave the capital with a £3.7B transport black hole if he delivered on planned projects. They said the Mayor would either have to “raid” TfL’s Underground modernisation budget to plug the gap or break his promise. However, City Hall aides said the Tories’ figures had been “simply made up!” and the Mr. Khan’s business plan was fully funded.

23.12.16 WATFORD OBSERVER – The already over-budget Metropolitan Line Extension will not receive any additional funding from the DfT. The scheme to extend the Met. Line to Watford Junction via Watford High Street was originally to be completed by May 2016 but the delivery date has now been revised to 2019 at the earliest, with costs rocketing from £116M to £248M. Multiple delays and rising costs forced the government to step in last year and ask TfL to take over the project for HCC. However, this left the project with a £2.73M finding shortfall as the council said its contribution would be paid in the form of two parcels of wasteland rather than hard cash.