

UNDERGROUND DIARY

AUGUST 2017

On **Tuesday 1 August**, the Circle and Hammersmith & City lines were suspended between Edgware Road and Hammersmith from 09.30 to 10.05 because of a signal failure at Hammersmith. One westbound train was stalled approaching Hammersmith for the duration. At 22.40, a westbound Central Line train stalled on departure from Leyton, reaching Stratford in restricted manual mode after 25 minutes. Having been detrained it departed empty to Liverpool Street, where it was reversed and sent to Hainault depot.

The only item of note on **Wednesday 2 August** was Marylebone LU station opening late at 06.05 because of insufficient staff numbers.

On **Thursday 3 August**, a westbound District Line train accepted a wrong signal at Aldgate East and ended up at Liverpool Street. The train was then piloted via Edgware Road and High Street Kensington to Earl's Court, where it picked up its westbound working, albeit rather late. A signal failure on the westbound at Paddington (Suburban) from 18.55 suspended the H&C and Circle lines between Edgware Road and Hammersmith until 19.25. Services resumed under failure conditions with clear signals by 21.00. Eastbound Central Line trains non-stopped Leytonstone from 19.05 until 20.45 because of a passenger altercation on a train, which spilled out onto the platform.

Daytime on **Friday 4 August** was uneventful. However, a number of train cancellations because of a lack of Train Operators caused the Piccadilly Line to go into 'severe delays' mode into Night Tube hours.

It wasn't until around midday on **Saturday 5 August** that the Piccadilly Line was free of cancellations for no Train Operators. At 05.40, an altercation between passengers on a northbound Victoria Line train at Stockwell caused the Victoria Line service to be suspended south of Victoria until 06.45. Stockwell station, however, remained closed until 09.15 to both the Northern and Victoria lines. Meanwhile, the cancellations for no Train Operators appeared to be creeping up and affecting other lines, as the Bakerloo Line recorded a maximum of six during the day. *(Let us hope this isn't going the same way as it went in the 1970s with a severe lack of train staff, in those days, Guards – Ed.)* Later in the evening, the Piccadilly Line began to suffer cancellations, to the extent that the Night Tube service had to be suspended. In reality, less than half the trains had crews and ran round empty, so that the trains and crews were in the right place for when sufficient crews became available for the early shift. Last trains departed Heathrow T5 at 01.15 and Cockfosters at 01.25.

An informed source tells us that nine Night Tube drivers at Arnos Grove and 15 at Acton Town have been transferred onto full time daytime working, immediately solving the shortage of daytime Train Operators at a stroke, as no training was required. This was as a result of not recruiting enough staff to replace those who have moved to vacant full-time positions. This, of course, has left many vacancies for Night Tube drivers, which will take much longer to fill because of training requirements, presumably from scratch. We are also told that there had become so many vacancies and retirements that it was agreed to waive the twelve-month rule of no movement from 'Night' to 'Day' rostering, and combine that with the RMT depot staff working to rule (see last month's issue), has resulted in unhappy times for the Piccadilly Line and its passengers.

Trains on the Piccadilly Line continued running empty but in their correct timetabled path, enabling passengers to be carried from 04.15 on **Sunday 6 August**. The report of a positive earth on the Piccadilly Line Holloway Road and South Kensington was narrowed down to be between Caledonian Road and King's Cross on the westbound. On investigation at 11.40, a dead fox was found in section causing the problem. The Piccadilly Line was further in trouble in the afternoon, being suspended east of Arnos Grove from 15.05 because of part of a tree obstructing the westbound track between Oakwood and Southgate. Although this incident had been cleared at 16.00 (with the incident train stalled between the two stations for the duration), the area of suspension was widened to be Wood Green to Cockfosters from 15.30 because of a signal failure at Arnos Grove. The service resumed throughout at 16.15 but two eastbound trains were stalled between Bounds Green and Arnos Grove throughout. The combination of both problems cost 18 cancelled trains. Just before 15.30, two Network Rail signals failing at Kensal Green caused delays and cancellations on the Bakerloo Line until late in the evening,

as the problem proved difficult to resolve. By that time, four trains had been cancelled for the signal failure and a further three because of no Train Operators, making a significant dent in the service. A signal failure westbound at Earl's Court at 19.30 brought the District Line to a stand for 25 minutes.

The only incident of note on **Monday 7 August** was the closure of Tufnell Park station from 17.20 to 18.00 because of lift defects.

On **Tuesday 8 August**, yet another Central Line train became gapped off current approaching Epping at 11.45, suspending the service east of Debden. The delay in this instance was only 20 minutes – staff are now probably well versed in dealing with this problem at this location as it was the fourth occasion in recent times!

After a couple of days respite, **Wednesday 9 August** was full of incidents, the more notable being summarised thus:

- Central Line non-stopped Bank and Waterloo & City Line suspended from start of traffic (05.30 and 06.15 respectively) – local power failure. Once sufficient staff had been mustered, the Waterloo & City Line began operating at 07.30 and Central Line trains began stopping at Bank at 08.05.
- Southbound Northern Line suspended Camden Town – Stockwell via the City from 10.15 to 11.05 – points failure at Kennington. In consequence, Kennington Siding remained unavailable for the rest of the day.
- Northern Line suspended south of Tooting Broadway 11.35 to 12.10 – signal failure at Morden.
- Highbury & Islington station closed 10.45 to 12.10 (exit only) and 12.20 (fully open) – heavy rain caused flooding in the ticket hall.
- Central Line suspended Leytonstone – Liverpool Street 13.00 to 14.20 – person under a westbound train at Mile End. One westbound train was stalled approaching Mile End which was authorised to return to Stratford by 13.50. A total of 24 trains were cancelled in consequence.
- Two separate signal failures caused delays and cancellations on the Metropolitan Line, the first from 17.10 between Marlborough Road and Swiss Cottage on the northbound and then approaching Finchley Road southbound from 19.35. Eight trains were cancelled during the evening peak and into the evening. The first failure impacted on the Circle and Hammersmith & City lines with blocking back beyond Baker Street – trains continued under failure conditions apart from a 15-minute suspension from 17.35 for repairs to be undertaken. The second failure resulted in a reduced service south of Wembley Park until clear signals were obtained at 20.50.
- Central Line suspended Leytonstone – Hainault (inner rail [eastbound] direction only) from 19.40 – defective train at Redbridge. One eastbound train was stalled approaching Redbridge, which was authorised forward to detrain by 20.10. By 21.30 the train behind had been coupled up to form a 16-car 'push-out' to Hainault Depot which then departed at slow speed. However, the over-length train was returned to Redbridge by 22.00 because of concerns about its ability to ascend the ramp approaching Newbury Park. Once part traction had been restored, the 16-car train departed at 22.40, arriving at Hainault at 23.15. Because of problems in signalling an over-length train into the depot, it was then moved to Grange Hill and reversed back into the depot from there, enabling services to resume at 23.40.
- 20-minute delay Westminster westbound Jubilee Line from 17.55 – person ill on a train.
- An eastbound District Line train to High Street Kensington was diverted via the (fast) Piccadilly Line from Acton Town at 00.05, following a SPAD by a Piccadilly Line train, causing a 15-minute delay.
- The last three eastbound Jubilee Line trains were held in platforms from 00.55 with the service being suspended until the end of traffic because of a track fire between North Greenwich and Canning Town. Once dealt with, the trains were moved empty to Stratford Market Depot, the last stabling by 02.25.

Two signals failing on the eastbound at Farringdon from 06.45 on **Thursday 10 August** set SSR services into 'severe delays' mode and culminating in 13 C&H trains and 14 Metropolitan Line trains cancelled. Clear signals were obtained at 08.05. A track fire close to the tunnel between Grange Hill and Chigwell suspended the Central Line between Hainault and Woodford for an hour from 09.40. The problem was reported to be with a defective porcelain insulating 'pot'. A person under an eastbound Central Line train at Bond Street suspended the service between White City and Liverpool Street from 18.05 for an hour. One eastbound train was stalled ahead of the incident off current approaching Holborn until 18.35 and 23 trains were cancelled in consequence.

At 08.45 on **Friday 11 August**, a northbound Bakerloo Line train had smoke coming from underneath it at Oxford Circus, suspending the service south of Paddington. One train stalled approaching Oxford Circus was returned to Piccadilly Circus, arriving at 09.05. The problem was initially thought to be an electrical fault beneath car seating in the middle DM car. A special 'split' service resumed at 10.30 and remained so until afternoon crews became available to put the service back to timetable. Oxford Circus station reopened at 10.45. A person under a southbound train in platform 2 at Camden Town at 22.00 suspended the Edgware branch of the Northern Line until 22.45. A second instance of a person under a train occurred at 01.50 in Night Tube hours on the southbound at Waterloo, bringing the Northern Line to a stand. By good fortune, there was no overnight work taking place on the City branch so southbound trains were diverted via that branch, empty between Camden Town and Kennington. Services via Charing Cross resumed at 02.55. In the meanwhile, a SPAD by a westbound Metropolitan Line train at Moorgate at 23.10 suspended SSR services through the area until 23.40. Services were further delayed for 25 minutes from 00.35 because of a person reported to be trackside at Lords disused station.

The only operational incident to mar **Saturday 12 August** was a defective Central Line train on the eastbound at Mile End from 12.00, suspending the service between Liverpool Street and Leytonstone until 12.30. This weekend, Night Tube on the Piccadilly Line continued to operate, although there were 13 trains cancelled at midnight, just before the transition between 'day' and 'night'.

Sunday 13 August began with some District Line stations closed because of insufficient staff, as follows:

- Aldgate East – Start until 07.55.
- Cannon Street – 07.25 to 10.00.
- Temple – Start until 08.50.

A Network Rail signal failure at Southfields from 10.50 resulted in the District Line going into 'severe delays' mode with an initial 25-minute delay, which also affected South West Trains which were diverted via that route because of the Waterloo blockade. Clear signals were obtained at 12.25. Two separate incidents caused the suspension of the Piccadilly Line between Acton Town and Heathrow, both from 14.55. One was a track fire on the eastbound approach to Northfields, the other at South Ealing with damaged equipment under a westbound train, causing smoke to issue from underneath it. In all, four trains were stalled between stations, three on the eastbound and one on the westbound, all until 15.55. Both incidents were resolved at 16.00, enabling services to resume. Queensway station closed at 22.30 until the end of traffic because of insufficient staff.

Queensway station opened late (at 06.50) on **Monday 14 August** because of insufficient staff, while Whitechapel station closed from 07.55 to 08.35 because of a defect on the station's fire alarm system. A person ill on a southbound train at Tooting Bec 10.15 suspended the Northern Line south of Kennington for 25 minutes. A westbound Central Line train stalled approaching Tottenham Court Road at 19.45, causing a 25-minute delay while it was worked in restricted manual mode to Marble Arch Siding. The only other item of note was a 20-minute delay westbound at Plaistow from 21.30 because of 'passenger action', requiring police intervention.

Tuesday 15 August began with a restriction on the number of trains through the central area of the Central Line because of a cable fault between Holborn and Liverpool Street – a 10% service reduction was implemented. A signal failure eastbound at Farringdon from the start of traffic suspended the Hammersmith & City Line east of King's Cross and the Circle Line in its entirety, both until 05.50. A loss of signalling control at Acton Town at 08.10 suspended the Piccadilly Line west of Hammersmith and the District Line's Ealing Broadway branch, both until 08.50. One westbound Piccadilly Line train and one westbound District Line train were stalled approaching Acton Town for the duration. A signal track circuit failure at West Ruislip suspended the Central Line west of Ruislip Gardens from 08.10 until 09.30. One train was stalled on the approach and was eventually signalled into No.23 road adjacent to the platforms, from where passengers were detained via the track. During this incident, the Central Line was further suspended between Liverpool Street and White City from 09.00 because of a train with a flashed over motor on the westbound at Holborn. Because of the amount of smoke caused by the defect, this event also attracted media attention (with the usual sensationalist reporting). One

westbound train was stalled approaching Holborn and was authorised to return to Chancery Lane, which was completed within 20 minutes. The area of suspension was reduced to be between Liverpool Street and Marble Arch from 09.30 but resuming throughout at 10.00.

Wednesday 16 August was thus:

- Goodge Street remained closed until 06.35 – insufficient staff.
- Angel station closed 08.15 to 09.05 – local power failure.
- District Line's Richmond branch suspended 13.40 to 14.05 – defective London Overground train at Richmond.
- Piccadilly Line suspended Hammersmith – Green Park 15.00 to 15.40 – passenger ill on an eastbound train at Barons Court.
- Caledonian Road station closed 18.25 to 19.20 – local power failure with passengers trapped in a stalled lift until 18.55.

Points failing in London Road Depot prevented the northbound Bakerloo Line from starting up (between Elephant & Castle and Queen's Park) until 06.05 on **Thursday 17 August**. Smoke from an electrical switch room required White City station to close from 09.45 to 10.20, while Lancaster Gate station closed from 16.00 to 16.55 because of insufficient staff. Problems with a platform edge door (PED) opening on the westbound at Canary Wharf caused a 25-minute delay on the Jubilee Line from 17.10. PEDs are linked to the signalling system and its opening in turn caused a signal failure with the two trains in the area having to traverse the section in restricted manual mode.

On **Friday 18 August**, the first westbound Central Line train came to grief at Tottenham Court Road at 05.55 with 'no movement'. Once movement had been obtained, the train continued in restricted manual to Marble Arch Siding, arriving at 06.30. The first westbound train 'through the road' was, therefore, some 35 minutes after the timetabled time. Also at the start of traffic, Finsbury Park station remained closed until 06.00 because of the continuing station staffing issues. Eastbound District and Circle Line trains non-stopped Victoria from 18.55 to 19.50 because of a person ill on the platform. The number of Piccadilly Line trains cancelled for a shortage of Train Operators began to increase during the evening to the extent where the line went into 'severe delays' mode. During Night Tube hours, however, just eight trains out of the scheduled 21 were in service, operating at 20-25 minute intervals instead of the timetabled 10 minutes.

Saturday 19 August was thus:

- Paddington (Suburban) remained closed until 05.50 – insufficient staff.
- Oxford Circus station closed 10.15 to 10.50 – fire alarm activated.
- District Line suspended east of Tower Hill 16.05 to 16.40 – eastbound train stalled on departure from Tower Hill.
- Jubilee Line suspended north of Willesden Green 00.25 to 01.10 – northbound train ran over a discarded bicycle. Service then suspended Waterloo to Finchley Road 01.10 to 02.05 – person reported trackside at Bond Street and a subsequent defective train.
- The situation remained unchanged for Piccadilly Line Night Tube with a very reduced service throughout the night (q.v.).

Once the Piccadilly Line had settled down to daytime staffing levels with minimal cancellations, **Sunday 20 August** was uneventful, apart from a late start (at 07.35) on the Wimbledon branch because of incomplete re-railing work at Wimbledon.

On **Monday 21 August**, a signal failure on the westbound at Barons Court from 07.40 resulted in some District Line trains being diverted via the westbound Piccadilly Line to Acton Town, thereby delaying the Piccadilly Line because of the 'too many trains' syndrome. Normal signalling was obtained at 08.30. A southbound train stalled approaching Clapham Common at 08.15, suspending the Northern Line south of Stockwell. One train was stalled behind the defective train, which was authorised to return to Clapham North, arriving at 08.40. Services resumed at 08.50. Just after 09.00 a computer signalling problem at Baker Street brought the SSR services to a stand, caused by a wrong signal being offered and accepted. Once the train had been set back behind the signal at 09.20, services resumed to the 'recovery' position. Points failing just east of West Brompton, where the two westbound lines converge, suspended the District Line's Wimbledon branch from 12.45 until 13.40. Two trains were stalled approaching West Brompton until 13.30.

There was nothing of note on **Tuesday 22 August** nor on **Wednesday 23 August**.

On **Thursday 24 August**, the District Line started up late at 05.30 west of Earl's Court because of a late finish to overnight work on points at Hammersmith. The westbound Central Line had a 20-minute delay from 10.40 because of a defective train that could not move in ATO mode from Tottenham Court Road. It was detrained and run empty to Marble Arch Siding in restricted manual mode. A lift stalled in the shaft at Bermondsey at 13.30, trapping those within until 14.30. The station remained open throughout. The Jubilee Line was suspended north of Willesden Green from 15.30 because of a signalling problem at Wembley Park. Broken cables were discovered, reportedly caused by a discarded 'shoe' from a train. Services resumed at 16.35.

Signalling problems at Arnos Grove from 11.10 on **Friday 25 August** brought the Piccadilly Line to a stand until 11.35 with two trains stalled between Bounds Green and Arnos Grove for the duration. The queue of eastbound trains stretched back as far as Finsbury Park at one point – the service had already suffered a 15-minute delay at Oakwood at 09.50 while repairs were made to signalling equipment. Hounslow East station closed from 15.45 to 16.15 because of fire alarms activated. A person trackside at West Ham at 00.25 caused a 20-minute eastbound delay to District and H&C services. Meanwhile, insufficient Train Operators for Night Tube set the Piccadilly Line into 'severe days mode' yet again.

Once the Piccadilly Line had recovered from a reduced Night Tube service on **Saturday 26 August**, the service was suspended west of Hammersmith from just after 07.00 because of a discarded bicycle on the track at Ravenscourt Park. This caused a short circuit and blown signal fuses and also suspended the District Line to Ealing and Richmond because of a signal failing at Barons Court. Services on both lines resumed at 07.50. Services to Uxbridge and Watford were suspended from 12.45 to 13.15 because of points failing at Harrow South Junction. Northbound trains to Amersham and Chesham were able to be diverted via the northbound fast line, via platform 1 at Harrow-on-the-Hill and then the northbound main towards Moor Park. One northbound train was stalled approaching Harrow for the duration. A person ill on a northbound train at West Hampstead at 16.00 suspended the Jubilee Line between Waterloo and Wembley Park. Once the person had been removed from the train, the problem was then exacerbated by the train not berthing fully in the siding preventing points to normalise. Services resumed at 16.30. An eastbound Central Line train with an air burst suspended the service east of Woodford from 19.10 until 19.50. A person under a southbound train at Camden Town at 23.15 suspended the Northern Line between Golders Green and Camden Town until 00.55, with Camden Town station reopening at 01.25.

On **Sunday 27 August**, Angel station closed from 14.25 to 17.20 because of flooding in an escalator machine room. A person on the track at Shepherd's Bush at 20.10 suspended the Central Line between White City and Marble Arch until 20.50, with two trains stalled between White City and Shepherd's Bush for the duration.

However, by far the most serious incident of the day was what could have been a 'simple' SPAD by a District Line train on the westbound approach to Earl's Court at 13.25. This brought the westbound service to a stand, although the outer rail Circle Line was able to continue running until 13.55. By then there were a number of trains stalled between stations, one approaching Gloucester Road for as much as 75 minutes. Other trains that were stalled between stations were moved up as quickly as possible. Blocking back occurred right through the central area and out to the east end of the line to Plaistow and beyond, and in consequence the Hammersmith & City Line was suspended east of Moorgate as there was no way the trains could return. A correspondent on the incident train tells us that it performed a 'wrong direction move' (which is within the rules under certain circumstances) but instead of setting back behind the signal which was passed at danger at Earl's Court, the train continued east on the westbound line to a location that was within sighting distance of a train in the westbound platform at Gloucester Road. Once normality had been restored and the train moved in the right direction berthed in the platform at Earl's Court, the District Line resumed at 14.50, Hammersmith & City Line at 15.15 and the outer rail Circle at 15.45. Services on the District Line never did recover and remained disrupted for the rest of the day. Neither this or the (later) incident on the Central Line (q.v.) helped traffic for the Notting Hill Carnival.

Editor's Note: This is not the first time that trains have gone too far whilst undertaking a wrong direction move – Piccadilly Circus (Bakerloo), Whitechapel (District) and King's Cross (Piccadilly), for example, all come to mind over recent years.

The Victoria Line was suspended between Victoria and Seven Sisters from the start of traffic until 07.10 on Bank Holiday **Monday 28 August** because of rail defect found overnight at Highbury & Islington. Mansion House station closed from 09.35 to 10.05 because of a fire alarm activated.

On **Tuesday 29 August**, a person ill on a southbound train at Hampstead caused a 20-minute delay from 17.50, while points failing at Wembley Park at 18.15 suspended the Jubilee Line north of Willesden Green until 18.40. One southbound train was stalled approaching Wembley Park throughout the incident. The final event of the day was the closure of Euston LU station from 19.45 until 21.30 because of a suspect device on the main line station (which turned out to be an e-cigarette exploding for some reason).

A SPAD by a westbound Piccadilly Line train approaching Acton Town at 08.50 brought both services to a stand on **Wednesday 30 August**. The signal involved was such that the train was across points and thus affected both the Piccadilly and District lines. Once the train was set back behind the signal, services resumed at 09.20. Two trains were stalled behind the incident train throughout. The inclined lift at Greenford stalled with passengers inside at 21.45 and weren't released until 23.25.

On **Thursday 31 August**, the second eastbound train from Wimbledon became stalled at Wimbledon Park at 05.15 because of a Network Rail signal failure. This caused an initial 20-minute delay but resulted in a suspension west of Parsons Green from 06.10 to 06.45. A loss of signalling control at Loughton suspended the Central Line east of Woodford from 13.20. One westbound train was stalled approaching Loughton and was authorised to return to Debden, arriving at 14.00. Services resumed at 14.10. Yet another train stalled 'gapped' off current approaching Epping at 17.25, suspending the service east of Loughton. The rising gradient eastbound towards Epping enabled the train to be set back on current, with services resuming at 17.50.