

FROM THE PAPERS

Items for “From the Papers” should be sent to Ian McKenzie at 24 Thamespoint, Fairways, Teddington, TW11 9PP, and not to the Editor of this journal. Please ensure that contributions are identified by date and source publication.

22.01.16 EVENING STANDARD – LU chiefs are considering installing “staff only” seats on station concourses that make users look like they are working rather than resting. A TfL report said: “The staff member must look approachable when located in the seat – i.e. avoid perceptions of off-duty resting spot for staff or area of inactivity. Seat needs to be a raised height, sit-stand “bar stool” style seat in order for staff to be adequately visible to customers and not appear to be off-duty”. The seats, which would be in public areas, are among changes planned following the scrapping of most ticket offices. The report, “*The Human Factor of London Underground Fit for the Future*”, by Nigel Scard, adds: “It needs to be possible to use a mobile device while sitting on the seat. This may mean staff may need to rest a mobile device such as a tablet device on their laps”. A “customer reception table” for use by staff and passengers is also being considered, but the report states: “The table top will slope to a sufficient degree that coffee cups cannot be placed upon it”. LU said: “Some staff would appreciate a seat for short periods between serving customers. We’re having a look at this to ensure it would be an appropriate size, comfortable, hard wearing and easy to maintain”.

24.01.16 MAIL ON SUNDAY – Ministers are launching an assault on the unions by pledging to ban cosy deals for plum jobs such as the £60,000 a year for driving an Underground train. Business Secretary, Sajid Javid, identified the “jobs for the boys” on the Underground as a prime target. Although “closed shops” were made illegal in 1990, Mr. Javid said restrictive recruitment deals still “linger” in the public sector. The starting salary for Underground drivers after training is just under £50,000 – rising to £60,000 after five years. They also get more than six weeks’ holiday and bonuses for night shifts. But unions ensure that vacancies are advertised internally unless they can’t find enough people to fill the post – meaning there has not been a recruitment campaign open to the public since 2008. This has also led to a huge gender imbalance, with only one in six of Underground staff being female. Mr. Javid said such deals were a “relic” in the digital age when jobs can be advertised online. He said: “restricted recruitment in the public sector is the last closed shop and it’s time it was brought into the 21st century. Everyone should have the opportunity to apply for these good and well-paid jobs in the public sector and it’s unfair that a large number of people currently cannot”. He said he would “shine the light of transparency” on such deals and bring in laws to ban them if necessary.

25.01.16 THE TIMES – *By columnist Neil Johnston* – “LU bosses in London have been accused of creating “a honeypot for criminals”, after it emerged that an internal report warned that sex attacks and other crimes were likely to rise when the Night Tube is introduced. The risk assessment for the programme has revealed a number of serious concerns that have so far be kept secret. The report predicts that antisocial behaviour would rise, causing high “high crime levels” and a “rowdy environment”. The chances of such events happening were given the highest possible “rating of likelihood” at five.

25.01.16 EVENING STANDARD – A 24-hour Underground strike due to start tomorrow evening hung in the balance today. More than 100 representatives of the RMT union were staging a mass meeting near Euston to decide whether to accept a revised offer from LU in the *Night Tube* and pay dispute. All other Underground unions decided last week to suspend three days of strikes, but the RMT declared it needed more time.

26.01.16 THE TIMES – The RMT has suspended a planned 24-hour strike on the Underground from this evening, but said that it is still in dispute over plans for the *Night Tube*, and that it was not calling off two further strikes that are scheduled for next month. The union is also planning a week of action from 7 February in a separate dispute over jobs and station staffing.

26.01.16 EVENING STANDARD – The start of the *Night Tube* is months away and might not happen until after the London mayoral election on 5 May. This would rob Boris Johnson of the chance to announce a key achievement before he leaves office. The Mayor announced the 24-hour running on Fridays and Saturdays in September 2014, without agreement from the unions on how it would operate. Yesterday, the RMT became the last union to call off a 24-hour strike due to start today, in the dispute over *Night Tube*, pay and other issues. ASLEF said: “We could still be months away from a start for *Night Tube*. We hope the progress that’s been made means that London will finally get a *Night Tube*”.

service this year". The service failed to hit its launch date of 12 September last year because of a dispute over working conditions and pay. LU have announced they would employ 700 part-time drivers to run the *Night Tube* and LU is still sifting through 6,000 applications, although training takes 12 weeks. LU would not name a new start date, saying the plan was to begin "as soon as possible".

27.01.16 EVENING STANDARD – Post by James Whiting – "Am I the only one who thinks the current Crossrail 2 proposals are missing a great opportunity to regenerate areas of south London where transport links are poor? I understand the need for links and interchanges but why is it that current major beneficiaries are areas with already good transport links such as Balham or Wimbledon? Areas such as Mitcham and Streatham should get a look in too."

28.01.16 EVENING STANDARD – The row over a proposed Crossrail 2 station in Chelsea deepened today as the campaigners against the plan claimed many of the high-profile supporters did not represent the local area. The *No Crossrail in Chelsea* group said that many signatories to a letter backing the move in Monday's Standard, included the bosses of Harrods in Knightsbridge and the Science Museum in South Kensington, were not local to Chelsea.

29.01.16 EVENING STANDARD – Post by Nick Biskinis – "City Hall's enthusiasm for *Night Tube* services is unfounded. Areas in London's suburbs are blighted by late-night disorder arising from nightclubs and bars, whose economic model is based on people getting drunk. There is a world of difference between an Underground service extending later as an extrapolation of the "evening economy", or earlier to suit workers, and changes that simply cater for drunken crowds".

01.02.16 THE TIMES – By Columnist Matthew Syed – "I love the social dynamics of the Underground. For a start, consider that London is a cosmopolitan city, with all creeds and colours, and yet almost everyone conforms to the same social norms, such as standing on the right on the escalator and never starting a conversation with a stranger. Nobody voted on these norms, nobody debated them, and yet they are implicitly and universally understood. Last week, however, I witnessed deviance. A chap in carriage between Waterloo and Green Park cheerfully struck up a conversation with a stranger sitting opposite: "Hello, isn't the weather awful today?". I have only seen this happening on two types of occasion before – when the person initiating the conversation is drunk, or on a day trip from Yorkshire. And yet this chap didn't sound like Geoffrey Boycott at all. Stunned, the rest of the carriage looked around. One bystander seemed to be taking notes. Another was surreptitiously filming with a camera-phone. This wasn't social deviance, I realised; it was social experiment. In the coming months, look out for a paper in the *Journal of Behaviour Science* or similar with the title: "Reaction to the breaking of social norms; a field study on the Underground".

01.02.16 EVENING STANDARD – Mayor Boris Johnson today called on mayoral candidate Sadiq Khan to "man up" and condemn Underground strike plans from the RMT union. He accused Mr. Khan of being a "patsy and plaything" to the unions. Mr. Khan hit back by saying: "There have been more than twice as many Underground strikes under you, than in the eight previous years".

01.02.16 EVENING STANDARD – Letter by Themis Avraamides – "I wonder how many of the people who backed the proposed Crossrail 2 station on King's Road, live locally? The area is served by excellent bus routes and surely it would make sense to relocate the new station to an area – such as around Battersea Power Station – that is not served by public transport? Most residents do not want the station to be built as they will be affected by eight years of disruption, drilling and building work on their doorstep. This is not a case of "nimbysm" but rather a statement of democracy, where the people affected should be heard over those who are motivated by commerce. Developers seem to have a mandate to build wherever they want, irrespective of local opposition – now it is time to say enough is enough and bring back the democratic process".

01.02.16 EVENING STANDARD – Letter by R. Miles – "No part of London belongs exclusively to people who live there and surely everyone benefits from increased connectivity across the capital, so the idea of Crossrail 2 passing through Chelsea without stopping there is grotesque".

02.02.16 CITY AM – The RMT union is planning a 48-hour Underground strike beginning this Saturday until Monday evening – it is over a long-standing dispute over job cuts on the Underground. It comes ahead of a week of action during 7-13 February which includes an overtime ban for station grade workers. RMT's Mick Cash says the demands made to LU were "simple"; no imposed rosters, no short notice duties changes on cover weeks and no imposed framework agreement.

03.02.16 METRO – Post by Dec – "For once, I'm in favour of the Underground strikes over the potential closure of ticket offices. I like to conduct any transactions on the good old-fashioned way with people

and I don't want to be standing in the middle of some draughty platform at a ticket machine, where you are a sitting target for anyone up to no good. Why can't they just leave things alone anymore?"

04.02.16 METRO – Underground staff are being urged to accept a fresh pay deal to run the *Night Tube*, by LU's biggest union, the RMT. The union's decision is seen as clearing a big hurdle for the 24-hour weekend service on some lines that was due to start last September. It has been delayed by a dispute with unions, and strikes over pay and terms for staff. The latest offer includes a 4-year pay deal of above-inflation rises from April last year and a £500 bonus to drivers and other staff. RMT's members will start voting next Thursday. The three other unions have yet to announce their next move.

04.02.16 METRO – *Mail from Jim* – “The closure of Underground ticket offices is a money making scam. At Cockfosters, I had to pay way over the odds for a ticket when the machine ran out of change. Kindly enough, the machine did give the option of agreeing to this overcharge or not”.

04.02.16 EVENING STANDARD – ASLEF is to ballot 2,500 of its members with a recommendation to accept the *Night Tube* and annual pay deal. The union represents the majority of LU drivers. The RMT yesterday announced a similar ballot.

05.02.16 EVENING STANDARD – Underground drivers who turned up to work after taking drugs or alcohol, were among almost 50 punished by LU bosses last year. The workers were caught by LU's “rigorous” testing regime. The data released after a Freedom of Information request shows that a litany of other offences forced chiefs to take action against drivers, including harassment and breaking safety rules. The revelations come amid several disputes between Underground staff and bosses and follow industrial action last year when drivers walked out after a colleague was sacked for failing an alcohol breath test. In total LU had to discipline drivers on 46 separate occasions in 2014/15. Six related to drugs and alcohol, despite the threat of dismissal to drivers who clock on while under the influence. LU said: “Customer and staff safety is our top priority. We take allegations of staff misconduct extremely seriously, fully investigate all incidents and have robust disciplinary processes in place for dealing with these”. ASLEF said: “While we deplore abuses at work, the number of incidents reported in relation to the number of Underground drives and shifts worked, is tiny”.

05.02.16 EVENING STANDARD – Underground union barons today ordered seven fresh strikes over the next five months in a row over “basic safety”. About 1,500 maintenance workers are to stage a series of 12-hour and 24-hour walkouts; the first on 12 February. It comes as station staff are due to walkout tomorrow for 48-hours in a separate dispute over pay, jobs and rosters. Talks were taking place today in hope of preventing the walkout. The intended strike dates are 12-13 February, 6 March, 25-26 March, 27-28 March, 24 April, 15 May and 12 June.

05.02.16 EVENING STANDARD – *Post by David Crawford* – “Your front-page story about “Underground drivers caught on drugs” should boost the overwhelming case for driverless Underground trains, similar to those that operate safely and successfully in Paris. ASLEF's assertion that the number of incidents is “tiny” is contemptible. One is enough to kill hundreds of people. Is ASLEF prepared to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with LU in enforcing zero tolerance? If not, it should stop citing concerns over maintenance workers' safety as grounds for its plan for a five-month series of seven strikes. Is passengers' safety less important?”

09.02.16 EVENING STANDARD – Hundreds more LU workers are to strike at the same time as their colleagues, threatened widespread disruption to Underground services. The RMT said 500 track patrol staff will walk out for 24 hours on Friday 12 February, in a dispute over the use of private contractors to “casualise” their jobs. About 1,500 maintenance workers are also due to strike at the same time in a separate row over safety. The escalation of the strike means that if anything goes wrong with the network, it may not be dealt with until the end of the strike. RMT said: “The strike is protest over an outrageous attempt to undermine the jobs of track patrol members, through an extension of the use of private contractors”. LU said: “Changes for the patrol staff come ahead of the *Night Tube* and contract staff will only be used temporarily, to cover shifts our employees choose not to work”.

10.02.16 CITY AM – Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin has rejected Labour mayoral candidate Sadiq Khan's proposals for freezing TfL fares until at least 2020, by saying central government will not pick up the bill for any unfunded City Hall schemes. Mr. Khan, a former transport minister, has vowed not to increase fares before the end of the decade, but TfL has questioned Labour's costing of the fare freeze. Mr. Khan has said it will cost £450M over four years. TfL said the real cost will be £1.9B.

11.02.16	EVENING		2013	2014	2015
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STANDARD – Delays on the Underground caused by overcrowding have more than doubled since 2013. Last year passengers endured 280,355 “lost” hours because of overcrowding; up from 130,813 two years before.

	Incidents	Lost hours	Incidents	Lost hours	Incidents	Lost hours
Bakerloo	17	19,703	21	9,461	69	24,997
Central	12	13,990	23	69,667	45	36,472
District	24	18,087	17	3,901	15	15,997
H&C/Circle	11	14,764	15	10,920	8	8,358
Jubilee	39	43,971	36	43,504	90	129,200
Metropolitan	1	326	3	5,356	1	343
Northern	8	5,119	29	24,583	29	51,234
Piccadilly	28	14,853	13	5,915	25	13,754

Commuters on the Jubilee Line were the worst affected last year. There were 90 incidents of service disruptions, which caused 129,200 hours of extra journey time. (See further details in table below). Critics called on Boris Johnson to reverse the trend by stepping up investment and looking at more imaginative ways of encouraging Londoners to travel outside rush hours. Lib-Dem mayoral candidate Caroline Pigeon, called for TfL to bring in “early bird” half price Underground fares for commuters starting their journey before 07.30. She said: “These figures demonstrate that improvements to the Underground are in some cases not even keeping up with the rising demand for travel created by London’s booming population and record number of tourists. Continued investment in London’s transport is vital”. In a dig at Labour rival Sadiq Khan, she suggested that anybody who said it was possible to freeze fares and maintain investment in the transport network at the same time was “living in a different world”. Boris Johnson said: “Overcrowding is more often than not a consequence, rather than the cause, of delays. Due to a record demand on the Underground, the number of incidents of delays on the Underground owing to overcrowding has increased from 2013 to 2015. However, only 1.8% of all delays were attributed to overcrowding in 2015. There has been a 38% reduction in delays since 2011”.

11.02.16 EVENING STANDARD – Campaigners opposed to a new train station in Chelsea’s King’s Road have delivered a 10,000-strong petition to Boris Johnson at City Hall. Plans for the station on the £30B north-south Crossrail 2 route have triggered opposition from local residents. Many have said they would prefer to see a station at nearby Imperial Wharf. But local business leaders believe the King’s Road station is essential to boost the local economy and improve Chelsea’s transport links. The *No Crossrail in Chelsea* campaign said: “Our petition demonstrates overwhelming opposition to the £1.2B vanity project. More than half the respondents to TfL’s consultation on the entire Crossrail 2 line opposed the Chelsea station and the people of London have spoken”.

12.02.16 THE TIMES – The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) wants to block proposals by Heathrow, that would result in charges of more than £700 per Crossrail train using the 5.3-mile track linking Heathrow’s terminals with the main line to Paddington. Heathrow’s track, trains and depots were privately funded at a cost of more than £1B in the 1990s. The line is currently use by Heathrow Express, Britain’s most expensive rail service. Heathrow’s plan was criticised by the DfT, which warned that the charge could pile more than £40M on to the annual cost of running Crossrail, inevitably leading to higher fares. The ORR said that there was insufficient evidence to support charging train operators for historical construction costs.

15.02.16 EVENING STANDARD – LU bosses today apologised after overcrowding on the Victoria Line forced it to close one of its busiest stations during the morning rush-hour. There were chaotic scenes at Seven Sisters and passengers reported “crush” conditions after the station was shut for 15 minutes to relieve platform congestion. Commuters were said to have screamed at staff to open the emergency exits as panic broke out. Highbury & Islington station was also evacuated because of overcrowding. TfL said the station closure had been “a station control measure”.

17.02.16 EVENING STANDARD – Nearly 400 train drivers on the Piccadilly Line are to be balloted for strike action by union leaders who claim a “comprehensive breakdown” in industrial relations. Balloting will begin on 22 February, with the result due on 8 March. LU must, by law, be given seven days’ notice of any action, meaning walkouts could take place from the middle of March. Industrial unrest over a range of issues on the line has been simmering for months, if not years, and overwhelming support for strike action is forecast. There were claims of by the union of a “campaign of bullying, harassment and intimidation”, allegations robustly denied by LU. RMT leader Mick Cash

said: “The wholesale abuse of procedures and agreements by management on the Piccadilly Line is rife. LU has done nothing to address the issues”.

18.02.16 EVENING STANDARD – Senior Underground control staff are threatening to pull the plug and bring the entire network to a halt in a row over safety. About 140 controllers, who earn up to £50,000 a year to operate the service, warn of strikes – saying bosses plan to “impose” drastic and additional duties in defiance of agreed procedures. Such a move, claim the staff, would endanger peoples’ safety by giving them too many responsibilities.

18.02.16 EVENING STANDARD – Emergency services across London are making final preparations for Europe’s biggest disaster drill. Exercise *Unified Response* will simulate a tower block collapsing into Waterloo Underground station packed with passengers. The four-day exercise starting on 29 February, aims to test the contingency planning of more than 70 organisations, from mortuaries to the Government COBRA Committee. It will be staged at Littlebrook power station, near the Dartford crossing, and include 2,000 volunteers playing casualties amid upturned Underground trains (*withdrawn D Stock trailers – IDM*) and thousands of tons of rubble. The LFB Commissioner Ron Dobson said the techniques being tested could also be used in a terror incident. The €1M (£770K) drill is funded by the EU and will include specialists from Hungary, Italy and Cyprus. Mr. Dobson said it would test if they could get to trapped survivors faster than in the 7 July 2005 terror attacks, and help “reduce their trauma”. He described Underground tunnels as “the worst place possible” for rescues, with moving trains and live wires adding to the danger. He said: “In something like 7/7 you have to take them from the Underground train, along the lines and out the platforms. One of the things we were criticised for on 7/7 was confusion between emergency services. It took us too long to agree there wasn’t a chemical involved. That wouldn’t happen in the future. We need to be able to get to people who are rescuable and their lives can be saved before the terrorists have moved on”.

19.02.16 EVENING STANDARD – *Post by Matthew Rigg* – “Local business owners have voiced their concerns that their trade may be affected by Crossrail 2 in Chelsea, but I wonder why they think that making Chelsea more accessible will harm their sales? The previous letter states that Chelsea has “excellent transport links” but people who use public transport in the area for daily commuting might not agree, given that many people who work in Chelsea face an hour’s commute each way. These business owners should consider not only their own companies but the staff who they need to travel into the area to run the service that they depend”.

22.02.16 METRO – Work will begin in April to boost capacity at Paddington station, including renewing the escalators and build a new 165m passenger tunnel. The tunnel will allow passengers to change between the Bakerloo Line and Crossrail which will open in 2018. The heavily used escalators serving the Bakerloo Line will be given a major overhaul, which will extend their life by a further 20 years. This will mean that Bakerloo Line trains will not stop at Paddington between April and August. The Underground station currently has 165,000 passengers every day – with 82,000 using the Bakerloo Line. This will increase to 248,000 when Crossrail arrives.

23.02.16 WATFORD OBSERVER – Under the heading of “Motorists to face delays as work begins on the Metropolitan (sic) Line Extension”, utility companies will be re-routing their cables and pipes as builders prepare to start work on the viaduct which will be built over Baldwins Lane and Watford Road. The work starts on Saturday 27 February and will last for up to six months.

23.02.16 EVENING STANDARD – A rush-hour Underground train was showered with chunks of masonry “as big as rugby balls” when builders accidentally drilled down into a tunnel. Commuters described scenes of panic with passengers trying to flee along the carriages as the westbound Central Line train approached White City station. The line was closed for three hours between Marble Arch and Shepherd’s Bush from 17.30 last night, as the hole in the tunnel roof was repaired and track cleared. TfL said that contractors building a £1B extension to Westfield at White City breached the tunnel wall, which is about 100 metres (?) below ground. TfL apologised and said they will be carrying out a full investigation.

25.02.16 EVENING STANDARD – Increased noise disturbance from the proposed *Night Tube* could drive residents to threats of suicide, a TfL report has warned. Its risk assessment of the 24-hour weekend service also found it could mean “reduced quality of life” for those living along the planned routes. The start date of the *Night Tube* has been repeatedly pushed back as the Mayor’s team

thrashes out pay and conditions deals with the unions. An agreement is understood to be close. But Labour has warned the planned service could cause misery for thousands of families who complain about the noise made by the poor condition tracks. It has called for a “noise-busters” team to be set up to repair broken tracks (?) before the launch of the *Night Tube* to reduce noise at anti-social hours. A report for TfL in 2014 identified 121 sections requiring maintenance, yet stated there were no plans to replace them by this year.

26.02.16 METRO – A software bug was blamed after several smartphone travel apps wrongly reported that all Underground and Overground lines were closed during yesterday’s morning rush-hour. TfL’s social media pages were flooded with queries.