

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.

25.10.17 EVENING STANDARD – “The Tube arriving at Baker Street is a transport of Russian delights from Moscow”. So said the Evening Standard but the picture is a subsurface S7 stock set 21456 with a Russian literature wrap. The text goes on to say that it is on a Circle Line train. The seven carriages are ‘painted’ in white, red and blue, the colours of the Russian and UK flags, and include portraits of some of the country’s greatest figures such as *War & Peace* writer Leo Tolstoy, and cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, the first man in space in 1961. Each carriage has a theme, such as ballet, art, literature, space and science and includes panoramic views of Moscow. The livery will be on for three months as part of the UK-Russia year of Science and Education.

26.10.17 EVENING STANDARD – LU chiefs were condemned by London’s official transport watchdog, *London TravelWatch*, for disposing of vital equipment for clearing leaves on the lines which led to prolonged travel disruption. Failure to clean slippery tracks could result in trains being unable to brake properly, putting them at risk of collision or derailing. Piccadilly Line trains, damaged in the slippery conditions, had to be taken out of service. This led to a shortage of rolling stock. But the lathe used by LU to re-profile the wheels was given to *Abellio Greater Anglia* in 2015. The report claims what it calls “the lathe sale impaired LU’s ability to repair damage done to its own fleet”. It blamed budget cuts, saying “the primary cause” of disruption was “a failure to clear lineside vegetation to the agreed standard. In 2015 and 2016 there was a serious deterioration in the Piccadilly Line as trains were withdrawn due to damage to wheel sets. There was disruption as a result of this failure”. The watchdog was writing to LU expressing its “concerns”. It said a “simple” solution was fitting glue-spreading equipment to trains, but this had not been done on Piccadilly Line stock. LU said: “The lathe would not have prevented the leaf fall issues last year. We have trained more staff on wheel repair, introduced two engineering trains to improve adhesion and carried out vegetation clearance. We did not own the lathe. We leased it from Network Rail but the lease was not renewed. It was taken over by *Greater Anglia*”.

30.10.17 METRO – Lift maintenance begins today at Kingsbury station, affecting step-free access to and from the Underground. Work on the northbound platform lift will start first and continue until 9 November. Passengers starting a journey from Kingsbury and wanting to avoid steps should take a southbound service to Wembley Park and change there for a northbound train. To leave Kingsbury station from a northbound train, passengers are advised to continue to Stanmore and change to a southbound service. The work switches to the southbound platform lift between 21 November and 1 December, when passengers wanting to avoid steps are advised to use the opposite of the procedures described above.

30.10.17 METRO – A row of seven commercial units, under the arches of the Overground in Shoreditch, are being transformed for retail, food and drink outlets. Close to the junction of Kingsland Road and Old Street, the arches, and a neighbouring property, will have attractive glass fronts. To keep the character and heritage of the site, the stonework under the front window of the building will be kept and relocated within the new development. TfL said: “Transforming the arches at Kingsland Road will bring a new lease of life to these vacant units, while maintaining the character of the area. They will provide a new location for businesses to thrive and are one of the many ways that we are raising vital revenue to reinvest in the transport network”. TfL owns around 700 commercial arches across the capital. Other converted sites include: a restaurant in Hoxton, a furniture showroom in Hammersmith and a music studio in Stamford Brook – and work started on 31 railway arches near Wood Lane station to create a mix of commercial, leisure and retail spaces.

30.10.17 EVENING STANDARD – TfL has backtracked on a pledge to run main line rail services on Boxing Day. Instead, Boxing Day services on the Overground will be at least a year late. There is doubt if they will even start at Christmas 2018 with TfL now describing Boxing Day services as only a ‘possibility’. A member of the London Assembly has been trying to establish for months whether the service would run. She said: “When TfL signed up to a new Overground contract two years ago, the pledge of a Boxing Day service was at the top of the promises. Passengers are again losing out. TfL and the Mayor are letting us down by making pledges about improved services and then failing to provide answers as to why they have not been delivered”. A TfL spokesperson blamed the amount of

engineering work being carried out across the region as the main reason for not operating on Boxing Day.

01.11.17 EVENING STANDARD – Tramlink drivers are to walk out in two 24-hour strikes in protest over a safety device which monitors to see if they are fully awake and paying attention. The device, installed in cabs in wake of last year's tram crash which killed seven people and injured 51, shines an infra-red beam on drivers faces when they are behind the controls. The first strike, on 13 November, will be just four days after the first anniversary of the tragedy. The second strike by ASLEF members has been ordered for 6 December. The beam monitors movements of drivers' eyes to ensure they are not suffering from fatigue or distraction, and data is relayed back to Tramlink control centre. The device can cause an alert which vibrates the driver's chair if reading shows full attention to duty is not being maintained. But some drivers have complained of headaches, dry eyes and blurred vision, labelling the device a "spy in the cab". ASLEF said: "the strikes were called because the company has put into tram cabs a device that shines infra-red light beams into drivers' faces and has insisted on operating this system despite the numerous health and safety concerns of our members". TfL insisted the *Guardian* device has been tested and has a "proven track record in the road haulage industry". TfL also said the amount of infra-red light used to allow the sensor to see the drivers' eyes and face is "less than 2% of what you would receive from sunlight" and had been certified as safe.

03.11.17 METRO – The entrance to Tottenham Hale station is being moved this weekend as work to modernise the Underground network continues. The station will be open as usual, with lift and escalator service, but there will be no ramp access to the ticket hall this weekend. The improvement work is taking place this weekend as the Victoria Line station will be quieter. From Monday, passengers should follow the signs to the temporary new entrance nearby.

06.11.17 EVENING STANDARD – *Letter by Marcus Man* – "Fare dodgers are taking over our city, travelling without a ticket on our Underground and buses, and they are getting away with it. The other evening, an evader pushed his way through the gate as I left my station in full sight of two staff. I beckoned to them that the man behind me got out on my ticket but the staff said there was nothing they could do but log it on their app. One TfL employee said they cannot stop people doing this and understood my annoyance. As an honest fare-paying passenger, I am fed up with subsidising these cheats and would ask what the Mayor and TfL are doing to clamp down on them".

07.11.17 EVENING STANDARD – *By author Simon Jenkins* – "This year more people will travel on a British train than ever since the 1920s. No less remarkable has been the recovery of London's suburban stations. What used to be Charles Holden's run-down interwar Underground stations, have returned to life, as Art Deco Gants Hill and Southgate. The Moscow Metro would be proud of them. Dickensian Baker Street, the world's first Underground station, has been restored so Sherlock Holmes would feel at home. Credit for the custodianship of this extraordinary collection must go in part to privatisation. Railway managers realised that passenger morale is bound up in the whole railway 'experience', not just the train. The stress of waiting is eased if the wait is somewhere beautiful. The best new stations in Britain are those on the Jubilee Line Extension. Commissioned by the JLE's Denis Tunncliffe in the 1990s, they are a museum of British architecture at the turn of the 21st century. Norman Foster's Canary Wharf is a great tongue, licking passengers up into the capacious embrace of East End capitalism. Michael Hopkins' Westminster is the nearest London gets to Piranesi's Rome. Richard MacCormac's Southwark is an Art Deco masterpiece which, until recently, the local council wanted to crush under yet another tower of empty luxury flats. As long as philistine councils such as Southwark are in charge of development, these fine stations should be urgently listed for protection".

09.11.17 METRO – Former LU worker and ex-serviceman Gary Best will march on Remembrance Sunday with 48 old comrades before laying a wreath at the Cenotaph. In 1920, London Transport Old Comrades were given the right to march by King George V in recognition of the contribution they made when hundreds of transport workers went with their buses to the front line from 1914 to 1918. They played a vital role by moving troops, delivering supplies and taking the wounded to safety. LT workers also helped significantly during WW2, with 20,488 employees joining the forces. So many workers signed up that LT had their own regiment – the 84th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment – which served defending London, as well as serving overseas in North Africa and Italy. Vehicles, buses and coaches were used to move troops and some were converted to ambulances to help evacuate inner city children, hospital patients and expectant mothers. More than 1.35M people were carried to safety. LU stations also played a part, with many used as air-raid shelters, complete with feeding stations, washing facilities

and bunk beds. Throughout the war the network continued to operate, helping Londoners get around during the conflict.

09.11.17 METRO – Last week Dame Barbara Windsor and Shane Ritchie took over some Underground station announcements, urging commuters to dig deep for the Poppy Appeal. TfL joined forces with the TV stars to help raise funds for the Royal British Legion’s work of providing lifelong support for the Armed Forces, reservists, veterans and their families. Thousands of uniformed personnel fundraised at 40 stations and some Circle Line passengers met serving officer, and Britain’s Got Talent winner, Richard Jones, who collected on board.

09.11.17 EVENING STANDARD – A dramatic surge in crime on the Underground, with serious public order incidents up 230% is revealed today. Total notifiable offences have risen by 22% in the second quarter this year, June to September, compared with the same period 12 months ago. Sexual offences are up 7% on the Underground and up 44% on the Overground. A report paints a picture of increasing low-level violence, pushing and shoving, verbal disputes and threatening behaviour during the morning and afternoon peak times and later in the evenings, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights. TfL said: “The figures part-reflect national trends in crime, with the latest figures for England and Wales showing an increase in all police-recorded offences of 13% in the 12 months to June, with even greater rises for violent offences”. The TfL statistics come just 48 hours after it announced it was cutting 1,434 jobs and £3B from the health and safety budget to reduce overall spending. In addition, drug offences fell by 46%, violence against the person by 14% and serious fraud by 51%.

09.11.17 EVENING STANDARD – TfL is planning to pay top managers more than £8.5M a year in bonuses. Proposals were due to be discussed today to increase the size of TfL’s bonus pot for senior staff by at least £50K from last year. This would mean at least £8.56M will be paid out, but TfL is even prepared to pay up to £2.7M more to “incentivise high personal performance”, taking the total bonus bill to more than £11.2M. TfL fears it could lose its best staff to better paid jobs in the private sector. The proposals to the TfL board, come amid union concerns about 1,400 job losses among engineering and Underground staff as part of a feared £5B of new cuts. The Green Party and RMT union attacked the bonuses, with RMT’s Mick Cash saying: “Londoners will be rightly appalled that while services are creaking under the strain of huge demand and staff are struggling to cope, the boardroom at TfL is awash with cash”.

17.11.17 METRO – Britain’s Got Talent winner Tokio Myers was tickling the ivories at Tottenham Court Road station yesterday. It was a surprise performance to launch TfL and Yamaha’s #Platform88 charity project to provide pianos at stations for passengers to play.

17.11.17 METRO – Holloway Road station will be closed immediately after matches and events at Arsenal’s Emirates Stadium. Eastbound Piccadilly Line trains will not stop from one hour before the game, and the station will remain closed from 15 minutes before the scheduled final whistle, and remain closed for a further 90 minutes after the end of the event or the final whistle. The changes to the service will start from 18 November. Passengers can use other local stations, including Arsenal, Finsbury Park and Highbury & Islington. While queue management systems are in place, these stations will be very busy. The nearest station with step-free access is Caledonian Road, which is around 10-15 minutes from Holloway Road.

20.11.17 METRO – Bond Street became the 72nd station to provide step-free access when a £300M upgrade was opened last week. The new entrance and ticket hall on the north side of Oxford Street brings the Underground closer to the Mayor’s target of having step-free access on 40% of the network by 2022. Other benefits of the Bond Street upgrade, which will boost capacity at the station by 30%, include a spacious ticket hall with five new ticket gates, two new escalators and two new interchange tunnels to further ease congestion.

20.11.17 EVENING STANDARD – A coroner has demanded action by LU after an IT expert who fell to his death at an Underground station lay undiscovered for more than seven hours. Bernard Ovu was trapped in a stairwell at Canning Town station for nearly an hour before falling and suffering a “catastrophic head injury”. The court heard the sole member of staff on duty, on 22 January, failed to check when the man set off an alarm by accidentally going through an emergency door. The inquest heard that safety procedures were “inconsistent and unclear”. In a narrative verdict, the jury found: “Processes that were known in the event of an emergency door trigger were not followed. Had this process been carried out, it is possible that the deceased may have been located earlier”. After the inquest the coroner issued a Prevention of Further Deaths Notice urging changes. After the man’s death

the RMT called for an independent inquiry into Underground job cuts and staffing levels. LU said an extra 325 staff were being posted to Underground stations. In its verdict, the jury found the fall was due to the deceased physical state rather than environmental factors, and once he had fallen it was unlikely he could have been saved.

21.11.17 METRO – The 24-hour *Night Overground* service will run on Fridays and Saturdays between New Cross Gate and Dalston Junction, and will be extended to Highbury & Islington next year. It follows the success of the *Night Tube*, which has already seen more than 9M journeys and contributed more than £170M to the capital's economy. Mayor Sadiq Khan said: "The Overground has transformed travel across the capital in the last ten years, opening up areas of London and setting new standards for quality of service on the rail network. We continue to improve the service every year and I am delighted that we can bring night services to the East London line for the first time ever next month. The *Night Tube* has proven such a success with Londoners. I know the *Night Overground* will help thousands more who are working through the night, or out enjoying our capital's nightlife".

22.11.17 EVENING STANDARD – *Letter by Simon Warr* – "When is something going to be done about the appalling service on Piccadilly Line to help us beleaguered daily users? In the past two days alone it has been an unalloyed nightmare travelling into and out of central London. On Sunday there was a signal failure at Gloucester Road and this was exacerbated by a broken-down train at Acton Town, which station seems to have more signal failures than the rest of the line put together. The result was that I missed a train I had pre-booked at King's Cross, so had to pay again and was an hour late for my appointment. On Monday, still reeling from that awful day's travelling, there was a signal failure at South Kensington, which meant a journey which should take 40 minutes, took an hour-and-a-half. I was late for work – again. These disruptions are becoming almost the norm. It was not long ago that we suffered industrial action on the line because of the proposed introduction of the *Night Tube*. The vast majority of us who live on the terrible Piccadilly Line could not care less about a night service – we just want a reliable day service. Is it too much to ask?"

22.11.17 EVENING STANDARD – Sir Peter Blake is working on a new version of his album cover for the *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Heart Club Band*, on the side of an Underground tunnel in Chiswick to celebrate the area's showbiz history. Inspired by his 1967 creation for the Beatles, the mural under Turnham Green arches will feature singers, actors, comedians and music hall artists, who performed at the now demolished Chiswick Empire Theatre. The panels by Sir Peter will be installed in January.

24.11.17 EVENING STANDARD – *By Mike Smith, Head of Operations for the Piccadilly Line* – "I apologise to customers on the Piccadilly Line for the problems they have experienced this week. Our engineers work hard to resolve these issues but we know we must do more. We are investing tens of millions of pounds into the interim upgrade of the signalling system on the line to boost reliability, and a huge modernisation programme will transform the line in the mid-2020s, with new generation trains and more reliable services. Until then, we will strive to ensure the service is as reliable as possible for the millions of customers who use the Piccadilly Line each year".