

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.

26.03.18 EVENING STANDARD – Crisis talks were being held today in a bid to avert strikes which will shut down the DLR for 48 hours. The 04.00 walk-out on 28 March follows a row over work practices and outsourcing of roles. The RMT alleges DLR staff have been treated "like dirt" by operators *Keolis Amey*. The firm said talks are "continuing" and strike action "is totally unnecessary".

27.03.18 METRO REPORT INTERNATIONAL – Transport for London has awarded Bombardier Transportation a contract to supply a further five nine-car Class 345 Aventra electric multiple-units for use on Crossrail, taking its total order to 70 trains. The order includes an expansion of the existing train services agreement to cover the additional train sets, which takes the total value of the contract signed on 22 March to £73m. The extra vehicles will follow from the 585 Aventra cars (65 nine-car trains) which Bombardier's Derby plant is already producing and are scheduled to enter service by the end of 2019. The additional trains will allow Crossrail to serve all the terminals at Heathrow Airport and provide an increased frequency when the line is fully open in December 2019.



Mayor continues to urge both sides to get back around the negotiating table and reach an agreement to avoid further disruption for Londoners and visitors". The photo (Above) shows a vintage RML on a DLR replacement service.

28.03.18 EVENING STANDARD – Hundreds of thousands of commuters suffered disruption today as a strike hit the DLR. Most of the network was shut, with only 10 trains operating out of the usual 55 at peak-time. The network will also be suspended tomorrow, and many services will be cancelled on Good Friday. A further four days of strikes have been ordered for the end of April – threatening to cause travel chaos for London Marathon spectators. RMT leader Mick Cash called for Mayor Sadiq Khan, as chair of TfL, to "take full note of the workplace abuses happening on his watch" and help settle the dispute. But the Mayor refused to intervene. His spokesman said: "The

Photo: Steve Smith

29.03.18 EVENING STANDARD – Contained in a Budweiser advertisement – "Bud Light hay have just made dreams come true. A leaked official letter from Bud Light reveals formal application has been made to rename *Piccadilly Circus* station to *Piccadilly Dilly Circus* – and turn the *Fountain of Eros* into the *Fountain of Beer-os*. Images have also been released showing the new *Piccadilly Dilly Circus* roundels to be installed from 1 April".

30.03.18 WATFORD OBSERVER – London Mayor Sadiq Khan has blamed problems with the Metropolitan Line on his predecessor, Boris Johnson. The Mayor was asked how he would improve services on the line between Harrow-on-the-Hill and Watford, during the Mayor's Question Time at the London Assembly. He was informed by a councillor who had received complaints from residents travelling on the Metropolitan Line, that they have suffered constant trackwork maintenance that mean continuous problems for commuters. Track and drainage on the line is currently being replaced to increase reliability and to shorten journey times. The Mayor said that some of the equipment on the line dates back to 1863. He said: "Even I as Mayor cannot be blamed for things dating back to 1863, although I'm sure some will try". The councillor said: "I'm sure you'll find a way of blaming your predecessor because he seems to get the blame for everything". The Mayor responded: "I would like to apologise profusely on behalf of the previous mayor over the last eight years for his failure to invest in TfL, agreeing to £700M worth of cuts on an annual basis while at the same time as increasing fares by 42%".

05.04.18 EVENING STANDARD – A four-day strike by workers on the DLR is to go ahead after talks failed to resolve an outsourcing dispute. RMT members will walk out from 04.00 on 20 April covering the weekend of the London Marathon. Huge crowds are expected to line the route on 22 April. (*Compilers note: The strike was called off on 19 April*).

10.04.18 METRO – Lily Allen has leapt to pal Olly Murs' defence after he hinted that last year's terror scare at Oxford Circus station was "covered up". The Voice UK judge Olly was mocked after tweeting from inside Selfridges on Black Friday, claiming he had heard gunshots. In a panicked post sent on 24 November, he wrote: "Everyone get out of Selfridges now, gun shots!". He addressed the incident in a new interview this week, saying: "Something happened that day. Whether it was covered up, I don't know". But BT Police (BTP) quickly slapped down the stars – insisting there were no shots that day. It is understood that false rumours of a terror scare started after a scuffle on the station's platform sparked a case of "Chinese whispers". In a statement, the BTP said: "A full and methodical search of the station and Oxford Street was conducted by specially trained firearms officers. During the search, the officers did not find any evidence of gunfire at the station. During the station evacuation, one woman is believed to have sustained a minor injury. We understand incidents like this cause panic and concern".

11.04.18 EVENING STANDARD – Hundreds of women are using a police text messaging service to report sexual offences on the Underground and train networks in London. More than 500 people have reported incidents in the last 18 months., though the figures also show that only 14 people have been charged as a result. No suspect was identified in almost half of all cases, while victims decided not to take further action in 127, according to the BTP. Officers say the text reports do build a picture of crimes and help eventually identify serial suspects, but many people who use the service do not want to be identified and this makes prosecution more difficult. The *Report It to Stop It* campaign was launched four years ago by TfL and the BTP, to encourage sexual victims to use the BTP's 61016 text message service. The figures show 348 incidents on the Underground – 100 were on the Central Line, nearly double that of the next most reported line, the Victoria Line at 55.

12.04.18 METRO - An LU worker was pushed on to the tracks at Victoria station. The customer service assistant was on a District line platform soon after 10.00 on Tuesday 10 April. The victim was not injured but was "understandably shaken", according to the BTP, who released a CCTV image of a man they want to speak to. An LU director said: "This was an appalling attack. Everyone has the right to go about their day without fear or intimidation." BTP said: "This was a very serious incident. I would like to hear from anyone who was at Victoria and saw what happened".

12.04.18 EVENING STANDARD – Passengers are to be hit tomorrow by a District Line walk-out over an Underground driver alleged to have passed three red signals in his 11 weeks driving. He had been qualified for 18 weeks but due to sickness, retraining and a compulsory removal from duty only drove for 11 weeks. Two of the signals passed at danger (SPADs) were within a four-week period. LU said it was "simply not safe for this employee to continue in a role as a driver". LU refused to identify the severity of the SPADS – which could derail the train – or where they took place. After the first incident the driver spent three days retraining with a driver/instructor in the cab. After the second he spent five days retraining and another five on stand down. After the third SPAD he was removed from driving duty. The District Line is the busiest on the network and used by more than 800,000 passengers a day. Services will not come to a halt, but severe disruption is forecast – particularly in the outer London areas. ASLEF is the main train drivers' union but driver members of the RMT union, not involved in the dispute, could refuse to cross picket lines, adding to the disruption. The driver has been transferred to station duties by "mutual" decision, said LU – a claim robustly denied by the unions. An ASLEF organiser said the only reason the driver had accepted a transfer of duty was because LU had threatened disciplinary proceedings if he did not. LU denies taking disciplinary action.

13.04.18 THE TIMES – 400 miles above the Earth's surface, two probes collectively known as *Sentinel-1* have been firing radio waves at the ground and measuring how long it takes them to bounce back. Geometric Ventures Ltd (GVL) used the changes in these readings over time to build a sort of heat map showing how some 90 million squares of the country are sinking while others are on the rise. There are red blotches of heavy subsidence around former coal fields in the Black Country and Yorkshire, others in Highland peat bogs. In Kennington Park, by the Oval cricket ground, a "subsidence bowl" with a diameter of half a kilometre has formed over the extension of the Northern Line.

13.04.18 EVENING STANDARD – Thousands of commuters were suffering travel chaos today as some District Line drivers went on strike. Passengers reported "nightmare" crowds on the platforms as a result

of the ASLEF members walk-out in support of colleague moved to other duties for allegedly passing three red signals. TfL said 40 of the 70 trains were running with all stations being served. The District Line is used by over 800,000 people per day.

13.04.18 EVENING STANDARD – One of “the greatest” Underground posters ever made is expected to be sold for a five-figure sum when it goes under the hammer at auction next month. American surrealist Man Ray was signed up by London Transport during his brief stopover in the capital in 1938, after he left Paris to return to the USA before the outbreak of WW2. A contemporary of Pablo Picasso and Salvador Dali, he was known for creating ghostly photographic images without using a camera, by placing objects directly on the light-sensitive paper – which he called *Rayographs*. His poster, one of a pair with the slogan “London Transport Keeps London Going”, transforms the Underground’s classic roundel into a mysterious flying object next to Saturn. Experts at Manhattan’s Swann Galleries, where the poster will be auctioned, say its message is “unclear”, which has provoked “much commentary” about its meaning. A spokesman for the company said: “A straightforward interpretation places the LT system within the larger, smoothly running, elliptical orbits of the solar system, suggesting efficient and punctual service.”

16.04.18 METRO REPORT INTERNATIONAL – London Underground has awarded Leeds company Pickersgill-Kaye a £0.5-million contract to supply 1,400 emergency alarm pull handle units for the trains used on the Bakerloo Line. This follows orders to supply similar equipment for the Central, Jubilee and Northern lines. The electromechanical assemblies designed to be installed in the saloon wall panels comprise a red handle which, when pulled, actuates a three-pole electrical switch, sending a signal back to the driver. If the driver does not respond in a set time, the train will automatically be brought to a stand.

17.04.18 EVENING STANDARD – *Letter by Pete Dobson* – “Further to your story about a District Line drivers’ walk-out (see 12.04.18), when rail companies want to remove guards in favour of driver-operated trains, the rail unions call strikes citing passenger safety as a reason. The unions claim that such a move increases passenger risk. But the Underground has had driver-operated trains for decades and enjoys a fantastic safety record. Yet when TfL redeploys an Underground driver who passed three red signals (putting passengers in danger) ASLEF calls a strike, completely ignoring the fact that the driver in question actually put passengers in danger. What if TfL had taken no action in which this driver had passed another red signal and caused an accident in which passengers were injured or killed?”

17.04.18 EVENING STANDARD – *Letter by Debbie Gowns* – The unions have been passionate about keeping guards on trains for safety reasons. So how can they support someone who has repeatedly put passengers at risk? It’s yet another example of protectionism and an excuse to punish long-suffering travellers. TfL has been very generous to give that person an office position. In most other organisations he would be out of a job”.

17.04.18 EVENING STANDARD – *Editorial Response* – “Dear Pete and Debbie. You’re right that last week’s strike on the District Line was infuriating for all of us who use it. Rail unions are risking the patience of Londoners – and by striking in support of a driver who’d agreed to move jobs after passing three red signals, they can hardly claim to be putting “safety” first. It is telling that while drivers at Acton depot voted to strike, those at Earl’s Court weren’t persuaded to join in. So even union members didn’t seem convinced. Really this is about control. Who decides when trains can run? Rail unions still have great power – and Underground drivers are very well paid – but I used the DLR a lot, which has never had drivers, and testing has just begun this year of automatic operation on Thameslink in central London. Senseless strikes like these will only encourage the switch to new technology, which should help passengers, but in the end could leave drivers wishing they hadn’t walked out so often”.

20.04.18 WATFORD OBSERVER – London Mayor Sadiq Khan has vowed to keep the Metropolitan Line Extension (MLE) project on track – if more money is coughed up. He has responded to a letter sent by the Mayor of Watford and the leader of Hertfordshire County Council in February, which slammed his decision to scrap the scheme. The Mayor has written back to them this week reassuring them he shares their “disappointment and frustration” the scheme has reached impasse. In his letter he blamed the project tripling in cost and being several years behind schedule. The letter read: “While the Government did offer to close the funding gap on the project, this was conditional on TfL accepting any future cost risk, and it failed to address the real possibility of substantial further cost increases. I firmly agree with you that the MLE has the potential to contribute both to better transport connections and to sustainable growth and addressing the housing challenge in Watford and wider region. TfL has not

abandoned the scheme. If an alternative funding package could be agreed TfL remains willing to deliver the scheme". However, one of Watford's leading politicians says the London Mayor is being "completely disingenuous" by claiming he is supporting the scheme. He said: "I am hugely disappointed in the London Mayor. The MLE is only five miles of track, and in June last year he wanted an extra £50M, and by October it was £73M. Even so I have jumped through every hoop to get this project up and running, and each time he blocks it. The MLE has the support of two Secretaries of State, with nearly £200M of government funding. His budget already includes a £49M contingency, this is not about money. He just doesn't want to do it, and that's clear now".

20.04.18 EVENING STANDARD – TfL are launching a campaign next week to ensure pregnant, disabled and elderly passengers most in need of a priority seat are able to get one. Large circular blue signs are being placed on carriage windows with the message "Priority seating: Please consider other passengers when using this seat". The "Priority seat week" is being run on the Jubilee Line and Overground trains, and marks the first anniversary of TfL's "Please offer me a seat" badges. Akin to the "Baby on board" badges sported by pregnant women, more than 30,000 have been issued to passengers, many of whom have "hidden" disabilities. Announcements will be broadcast on PA systems across the Underground. The initiative follows the case in February of Dr. Amit Patel, a blind man, who was subjected to an angry tirade from a commuter trying to barge past him and his guide dog on an escalator at London Bridge. TfL said able-bodied passengers needed constant reminders to treat fellow travellers with courtesy and to be ready to surrender their seat. (See photo on page 281 – Ed.).

23.04.18 EVENING STANDARD – A hidden tram tunnel has been used to help build Crossrail. The disused, Grade 2 listed Kingsway tram subway once carried Edwardian commuters from the old Holborn station to stops en route to Highbury, Tower Bridge and Kennington. Now it is being cleaned up after Crossrail engineers used it to pump cement-like grouting into the ground to make it stable enough for the 1,000 tonne Tunnel Boring Machines to cut through the London clay. During the works, a shaft 26ft deep and 16ft wide was excavated and other bore holes were dug to pass concrete, water, air and electricity cables down to the Crossrail tunnels, six storeys below street-level. The former stop at Southampton Row was brought into service for the works in 2012 because it is directly above the Crossrail route between Tottenham Court Road and Farringdon stations. The old station opened in 1906, connecting London's old north and south tramway networks, and by the late Twenties double-decker trams were running through the tunnel. It closed in 1952. The southern end of the subway opened to road traffic as the Strand Underpass in 1964, which links to Waterloo Bridge. Original white wall tiles are still visible as well as the granite cobbles, with space underneath for the power supply, and escape holes remain along the tunnel walls for workers to avoid oncoming trams. Before being put into service by Crossrail, the dark and damp site was used as storage by Camden council, which owns the northern section. It was also used as a film location, including *The Escapist* starring Joseph Fiennes, when it became the fictional Union Street station. The blue and red roundels from the film are still visible



on the walls. Crossrail's community relations manager said: "This was the prime location for getting access down to the works below so we could pump in grout and take electricity and water down. It was a golden opportunity to use the existing infrastructure without the complication of going in at street level".

24.04.18 METRO – The commute on the Underground this morning was brightened when Baker Street station was taken over by gnomes, who were promoting the new film *Sherlock Gnomes*. The sequel to 2011's *Gnomeo & Juliet* is being released on 11 May 2018.

Photo: Phil Wimbush