

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.

04.01.12 METRO – Maintenance work to the four escalators which extend from Monument to the DLR platforms at Bank will be in place until April. The work will see the escalators worked on two at a time for two months each.

05.01.12 EVENING STANDARD – Fare dodgers on the Underground and buses are enjoying a 7 week holiday from increased fines after TfL failed to put up warning notices in time. Penalty fares should have increased from £50 to £80(reduced to £40 if paid within 21 days) across TfL services from 2 January but will now come into force until 19 February. Fare evasion during 2010/11 totalled £75M, including £40M lost on the buses and £20M on the Underground.

06.01.12 EVENING STANDARD – The Underground has equalled its record for the largest number of passengers in a day. A total of 4.17M passengers used it on Friday 9 December last year, the same as Friday 7 December 2007. Christmas shoppers also helped to make the week ending Saturday 10 December with 24.9M passengers.

06.01.12 WATFORD OBSERVER – An early warning that traffic delays and disruption could be caused by the building of the Croxley Rail Link. A huge viaduct will be built from Croxley Green, across the busy A412 (Watford Road) and into West Watford to facilitate the link through two new stations and into Watford High Street and on to Watford Junction. In the Watford Road area there may be lane closures when they are building the piers to support the bridge deck, but they will most likely lift the deck into place during the night time.

06.01.12 METRO – A new automated signalling system at Edgware Road station is improving service reliability and will help increase capacity, as new longer trains are introduced on the lines. The signalling upgrade ensures the new trains can run on the Hammersmith & City, Circle and District lines. Much of the original signalling, which dates back to the 1920s, has now been modified to accommodate the trains that are 23 metres longer than the existing Circle line fleet. Work has been ongoing for the past year, with a significant amount taking place in the engineering hours and during the four-week closure of the lines between Edgware Road and High Street Kensington. This included relocating signals and installing an equipment room, which was built off-site and craned in overnight.

09.01.12 EVENING STANDARD – Commuters on rail and Underground platforms could soon be monitored by radar in a bid to reduce suicides. Researchers at Université Lille Nord de France, hope to adapt the system normally used to scan for aircraft and ships. It would be combined with CCTV cameras to automatically cut power and stop oncoming trains should it detect someone, or a large object, falling off the platform. A spokesman said, “In a large capital city underground, this can happen two to three times a week and lead to significantly long service interruptions”.

09.01.12 METRO – The Emirates Air Line cabin is part of a display at the LT Museum that runs until June. Visitors will be able to board the cabin and see an animated film that give an idea of the aerial views between the two docking stations at Emirates Greenwich Peninsular and Emirates Royal Victoria Dock. The new cable car system is due to be completed this spring and will carry up to 2,500 passengers per hour.

09.01.12 METRO – With the introduction of the Underground reliability programme, passengers are seeing a better service. New initiatives include: Introduction of a series of Command Centres set up for each line on the network; New signal monitoring technology that helps to indicate potential failure; Closer ties with BT Police in order to improve response times to incidents; Upgraded and more detailed electronic status update boards.

09.01.12 EVENING STANDARD – It’s one way to get a seat in a packed Underground carriage. Passengers stripped off their trousers and skirts for a worldwide stunt yesterday. What started as the “No Pants Subway Ride” in New York has now become an annual event and spread to cities in more than 27 countries, including London.

10.01.12 SUN – Around 150 people whipped off their kit for the barmy tradition of riding the Underground without kecks on. The global stunt is run by comedy group “Improv Everywhere”.

Organiser Dan Becherano said, "The purpose is to have fun, entertain and see the reaction of people who aren't involved". Around the world, 16,000 daft souls took part.

11.01.12 EVENING STANDARD – The location of a new Underground station for the planned £950M Northern Line extension from Kennington to Battersea is set to be approved by Lambeth council. The site in Wandsworth Road, Nine Elms, is the preferred option for the project, which would also see a new Underground station created at Battersea power station. Real Estate Opportunities, owner of the power station, has gone into administration, but the Government says it will meet its £200M commitment to the scheme if a new developer is found swiftly. Critics claim the new spur is not needed.

12.01.12 EVENING STANDARD – Letter – "So Nine Elms and Battersea are considered so important that they get a new Underground stop. What were the planners thinking of by stopping it there? It would be a perfect opportunity to give Clapham Junction the link it desperately needs with the Underground. I guess it was far too logical to connect South London up as well as North London is". – Alan Seddon.

12.01.12 EVENING STANDARD – Rosamund Urwin Column – "A "good service" on the (Circle) Line of torment usually means a train every 10 minutes. More annoying are its countdown boards whose information is as reliable as that from Orwell's Ministry of Truth. Half the time, to adapt a line from Drop the Dead Donkey, you only know that the train is coming, is when the mice start scampering out of the tunnel. When the debate raged about what the line (no longer, of course, a circle) should be renamed, I was gunning for Lucifer's Lasso".

12.01.12 METRO – A sixth month training placement with LU is on offer to 18 graduates, and will provide good grounding and insight into the industry, as well as valuable frontline experience. Typical roles in Track and Train will be in network operations, station and train teams, customer service, sales and marketing, route strategy, asset management and project management. Graduates will be funded by and contracted to Network Rail. A TfL spokesperson said, "We are pleased to be part of the extremely laudable project. It is providing graduates with a vital first job opportunity in a crucial UK industry that is expanding to play a major part the nation's recovery and future prosperity".

13.01.12 EVENING STANDARD – Boris Johnson is to unveil a new dust-busting Underground train that will vacuum LU's tunnels to improve air quality and prevent signal failures. The Mayor will this year begin testing an innovative new cleaning train that will cut the time taken to "Hoover" the entire network from 2 years to 2 months. Currently teams of TfL workers have to clean the tunnels manually every night. The work is so painstaking that a single shift worker can only clean a few hundred metres a night. The tunnel-cleaning train will consist of one carriage that will be circled with giant vacuum nozzles, turning the train into a 360-degree sucker that can clean an entire tunnel in one quick sweep. Critics have said that dust on the Underground could be harmful to commuters and particularly Underground workers. Fine layers of dust, if allowed to accumulate and settle on equipment, can cause signal failures and interfere with electrical systems. This new machine will be able to suck up four times more dust than the current hand cleaning method. (*Don't hold your breath – the new vehicles aren't even built yet and the power cars for them are still in a 'stripped' state at Acton Works – Ed.*)

13.01.12 WATFORD OBSERVER – Rickmansworth artist Ross Ashmore has embarked on the ambitious task of painting his way through all of the 270 Underground train stations in London. He has so far completed all the first 64 in Zone One and is now about half way through the 100 stations in Zone Two. The artist said, "I love the Underground, I love the concept of going below ground and resurfacing somewhere else. A Doctor Who also did it for me as a youngster – The 'Yetis' in the Underground".

13.01.12 WATFORD OBSERVER – Letter – (*After completion of the Croxley Rail Link*) Watford (Met.) station and the track leading to it should not be left to become an eyesore like many disused railways, and definitely not be sold off and built on so it could never be a railway again, and no bridges removed. It should be incorporated into the proposed St. Albans Tramway. Trams could cross the West Coast mainline at Watford Junction then run along the street, or on a viaduct, to the Town hall then run alongside Cassiobury Park and be tunnelled under the road into Watford (Met.) station and then on existing lines to Rickmansworth – John R. Hyde.

16.01.12 METRO – If you need help or information while waiting for your train, look no further than your nearest help point. The blue information button connects you straight to staff at the station who will be able to tell you when the next train is or where to change lines. The green button is for emergency assistance – e.g. disturbances, vandalism or unattended packages. It will connect you to station staff, or the police if staff are not available, within 30 seconds. Help points are located on the platforms of Underground and London Overground stations, at some tram stops, river piers and bus stations.

18.01.12 EVENING STANDARD – Mayor Boris Johnson will demand the Government funds a new Underground line if he is to back fully the high-speed rail project. He risked a row with ministers over the £32B link, saying he was “far from happy” with current plans. The Mayor says he will press for funding for a new north-south Crossrail line, “You cannot possibly go ahead with HS2 unless you have a plan for alleviating the massive congestion at Euston, and that means another Underground line”.

18.01.12 EVENING STANDARD – The head of Britain’s Olympic team, Colin Moynihan, says he will forgo the privilege of being driven on the Olympic “Zil lanes” and will take the Jubilee Line to the Olympic Park and to allow his car allocation to be used by athletes instead. It is understood that at least 250 VIPs will be given their own BMW and chauffeur to escort them during the Games. Thousands of other officials, sponsors, dignitaries and athletes will share the remaining pool of cars. Meanwhile the public have been urged to ditch their cars and travel on trains, buses and the Underground, to realise organisers’ hopes of creating a “Green Olympics”.

19.01.12 METRO – Refurbishment work on both Piccadilly Line lifts at Earl’s Court station are now complete, weeks ahead of schedule. The two lifts have been out of service since last year so work to increase reliability could take place. Passengers with heavy luggage, reduced mobility or pushchairs will now be able to use these lifts between Earl’s Court Road ticket hall and the Piccadilly Line platforms.

19.01.12 METRO – Passengers are being asked to use Leicester Square station until mid-April, while pavement works take place outside Covent Garden station. The work will reduce the number of ‘way out’ ticket gates in use at Covent Garden, so to avoid congestion, passengers are being advised to take a different route.

19.01.12 NEW CIVIL ENGINEER – Aggregate Industries has appointed consultant Waldeck to design and detail three precast concrete plinths for a memorial structure at Bethnal Green Underground station. The memorial will be to those who died in the Bethnal Green station disaster – the worst civilian disaster of WW2 – when 173 people were killed in a crowd crush during an air raid alert. So far the local community has raised £256K to pay for the first phase of the project. The Stairway to Heaven Memorial Trust appointed Aggregate Industries to manufacture the three concrete plinths, the largest will weigh 10 tonnes. One of the polished plinths acts as a support arm for a hollowed out laminated teak stairway.

23.01.12 EVENING STANDARD – Underground platforms across the capital are to get wireless internet access in time for the 2012 Games. Passengers at 120 stations will be able to check emails and surf the web from platforms. There had been fears that plans could be shelved after a similar scheme for the UK’s four mobile operators to offer mobile phone services in Underground platforms was abandoned last year. It has not yet been revealed whether commuters will be charged for the service. The editor of Mobile Marketing magazine said, “It’s just a pity it doesn’t extend to carriages themselves”.

24.01.12 EVENING STANDARD – London’s highest paid Underground driver is receiving a benefits package worth more than £61,000. The drivers were immediately attacked over their “platinum plated” deals as the scale of the salary and perks were uncovered. The pay, pension, overtime and free travel package of a single driver amounted to £61,218. The revelations renewed demands for driverless Underground trains, and sparked fresh accusations that the deals had only been won by unions “holding London to ransom” with strike threats always in the background.

26.01.12 EVENING STANDARD – An Underground train has been turned pink to raise awareness of the digital TV switchover. The Central Line train has had all 272 of its seats reupholstered in distinctive Digital UK fabric and the carriages themselves have had been wrapped in new pink livery.

26.01.12 EVENING STANDARD – Train staff on the DLR have secured a bonus of up to £2,500 for working during the Olympics. The deal – for more than 550 staff including train “captains” – is the best for the Games so far and paves the way for thousands of Underground workers to secure bumper bonuses. The agreement created astonishment among other train operators yet to finalise Olympic bonus payments. The DLR, which carries 260,000 people a day, will play a crucial role in the Olympics with direct links between events at Stratford and Greenwich transporting more than 2,000,000 extra passengers. RMT union leader Bob Crow said, “This is a truly ground-breaking deal raising the bar in the industry and putting £2,500 in our members’ pockets as a reward for the extra workload and pressure they will carry throughout the Olympic and Paralympics period”.

26.01.12 METRO – There will be a reduction in the number of Sunday late starts on the Northern Line between Camden Town and High Barnet/Mill Hill East. Between now and April only one of the planned closures will take place. The rest of the closures have been cancelled because work on the signalling installation programme is ahead of schedule. Late starts will begin again on 1 April until November.

26.01.12 METRO – There will be reduced escalator service at Baker Street station from 1 February until late May. The ‘down’ escalator to the southbound Bakerloo and Jubilee lines will be out of service for refurbishment. LU is working to reduce the disruption to passengers by asking them to use the escalators to the northbound platforms or using Regent’s Park or Marylebone stations only a short walk away.

27.01.12 EVENING STANDARD – TfL has had to pay about £25M in penalties to Canary Wharf’s owners because of delays to the Jubilee Line upgrade. Canary Wharf Group, housing the European HQs of global banks, ploughed hundreds of millions into the Jubilee Line project in the Nineties, as part of the deal it demanded strict performance figures be reached by the end of 2009. A series of failures and delays meant the deadline was not met and TfL has been paying huge fines ever since.

27.01.12 EVENING STANDARD – Jubilee Line carriages are crashing together as trains slow down, severely jolting the passengers, because couplings are wearing out. Bodywork on the trains is damaged when the ends of the carriages smack together, particularly when slowing to come into stations. LU said safety was not being threatened. An overhaul of the 15-year-old fleet will take until the end of June. A source claims the 12 trains of the 63-strong fleet have had to be taken out of service for the couplings to be replaced.

30.01.12 EVENING STANDARD – How will our transport system cope with the greatest show on Earth? On a normal day the Underground system carries 3.9M people. The most that has been carried is 4.2M on 9 December 2011. On the busiest Olympic days 4.5M will be carried. TfL’s modelling suggests that more than a third of the Underground stations will be affected. On 13 August this year, when the whole Olympic circus heads home, Heathrow will have its busiest ever day.

31.01.12 WATFORD OBSERVER – Hundreds of trees have been cut down near the Metropolitan Line track in Croxley Green, to stop falling leaves causing delays. Nearby residents have described the new landscape as “a film scene of a WW1 zone”. The trees also acted as protection for people’s homes from the noise of trains, and screened back gardens in which now overlook each other. Others have suggested that animals including birds, deer, squirrels, bats and badgers have not been seen since the trees were cut down. A TfL representative said the work was part of “vegetation maintenance” on Metropolitan Line embankments. A survey was undertaken in spring last year, recommending that trees on the slopes should be coppiced to ground level, and some on top of the slope should have branches trimmed. The representative said, “the cuttings were overgrown and some trees were damaged and at risk of falling onto the railway should they fail; others were obscuring signals and contributing to leaf fall problems”.

CONDITIONS ON THE DISTRICT RAILWAY 1905 – FROM THE TIMES ARCHIVES

Letter to the Times dated 29 December 1905 – “In view of the alarming conditions imperilling the safety of the public since the electrification of the District Railway, I, with several other daily travellers on that line, have taken counsel’s opinion on the subject of the disgraceful overcrowding in the carriages of this railway; and there is a by-law against such overcrowding, and that the only way to make the District Railway take heed and do something to lessen this crying danger is to appeal to the Railway Commissioners; and we therefore propose to ask the Commissioners to receive a

deputation on this subject. Our case mainly is that an accident may happen at any time that, whilst we naturally are bound to take a certain risk in travelling, no private enterprise, for the sake of swelling its returns and advertising for the investing public that they have carried 200,000 more passengers since electrification, has a right to so enormously increase the danger of travelling as is now happening every day on the District Railway. The discomforts of the accommodation, the annoyance from the attendants ignorant of their duties, the doors working when they should not and not working when they should, the terrible jars and jerks which must be dangerous to health, are after all comparatively minor matters that would accrue in the case of an accident when the carriages are filled to three times their seating capacity; and that such a position was contemplated by the organisers of this new system is shown by the fact there are 72 straps for the standing public to hold to and 48 seats. Any one can imagine for themselves what would happen in an accident. The standing public being so wedged together it would be difficult for them to help themselves, they might be thrown upon those sitting down, or those sitting down might be crushed in the panic of those standing up trying to escape". – W.Lestocq.

23.12.11 GUARDIAN

DIG FOR BRITAIN; GERMAN "MOLE" SET TO TUNNEL UNDER LONDON

As a vision of the imminent future, it might strike a chill into Europhobic hearts; a German contraption measuring 140 metres (460ft) in length, designed to drive into the very core of the City within months.

Yet the unveiling of the first Crossrail tunnel boring machine marked what should eventually be a very British achievement; a major new rail line across London from Heathrow through to the east, one of the biggest current engineering projects anywhere in the world, providing jobs and economic stimulus.

For now, though, the starring role belongs to the machines in the small town of Schwanau, in the south-western state of Baden Württemberg, at the growing global headquarters of Herrenknecht, which is prospering as the manufacturer of more than half of such monsters worldwide.

Eight of these £10M moles have been commissioned for the 13 miles of tunnel: 6 designed to cope with the London clay from Royal Oak in Paddington in the west, and 2 for the chalk in the eastern stretch down to Woolwich.

"It's not so much a machine as a mobile factory," says Roy Slocombe, Herrenknecht's UK director; a factory with a canteen and toilets for the 12-hour underground shifts. Via conveyor belts and pipes, the 6.2-metre cutter heads will remove about 6M tonnes of earth. Some has been earmarked to create a nature reserve at Wallasea Island off Essex.

The first machine will soon be reassembled in Royal Oak to start tunnelling in March through the capital's labyrinth of sewers and tube lines, plus MoD (location and contents unknown). All tunnellers have to submit their routes for MoD approval. "It's like playing battleships," said project manager Andy Alder; planners only know if they have scored a hit, but not where. Crossrail is at pains to stress that more than 95% of the £14.8B outlay will be spent in the UK, on other-machinery, construction and employment. More than 3,000 people are working on Crossrail and thousands more will be employed in the next four years as the main infrastructure work is carried out. Further jobs will be supported along the supply chain.

Critics wonder if Crossrail will be a glorified tube. The six new central London stations from Paddington to Whitechapel are only five miles apart, but backers say the crucial question is not speed but capacity. Up to 36,000 Passengers an hour can be lifted off London's underground system.

Crossrail's genesis has been, according to Tony Travers of the London School of Economics, a peculiarly British example of how not to get big infrastructure schemes off the ground, because almost 30 years will have elapsed from its political conception in 1989 to its current projected completion date of 2018.

Funding arrangements eventually struggled into place in George Osborne's 2010 autumn statement, although contracts for rolling stock and operators need to be signed when more controversy is likely to ensue.
