

## 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.

“**RAIL No.690** – 22 February – 6 March 2012”, pages 76-77. “A Day in the Life of Simon Hanney – General Manager, Epping and Ongar Railway”.

This is an interesting article on the varied work of the GM of the EOR. This includes communicating with the local community, ensuring that all policies, procedures, rule book, safety management system, emergency plans, risk assessments, and other documentation is fully updated and reviewed. It also covers and the progress on the Railway’s plans for resumption of passenger services later this year, on this ex-LU section of the Central Line that was closed in 1994.

**01.03.12 METRO** – A new poster campaign by LU is encouraging passengers to bin their rubbish and help reduce delays. Litter such as coffee cups, drink cans, bottles and food packaging can get stuck in train doors or fall on the track. Newspapers, often left on trains or platforms for passengers to read, can sometime be blown on to the track and cause signal failures. The first poster has the message “What doesn’t go in the bin causes delays on the track”. In the past year, the number of bins on the Underground has increased by 25%.

**02.03.12 EVENING STANDARD** – The Underground is running its most reliable service in a decade thanks to a “Germanic approach” to management, claims Mayor Boris Johnson. He said, “The latest performance figures demonstrate we are bang on target to deliver the most reliable year of service for a decade”. Commuters disagreed and stated there were at least six serious delays in the past two weeks. There was anger from the Underground’s unions to the Mayor’s claims.

**02.03.12 EVENING STANDARD** – The Central London Forward group is suggesting that Underground services should run later at Weekends so Londoners can make the most of the city’s nightlife. The move would cut long queues at taxi ranks and bus stops, making it safer and easier to get home from a night out on Fridays and Saturdays. Warning have been made that the current operating hours are “no longer suitable for a 24-hour global city”. Services currently run from about 05.00 to 01.00.

**02.03.12 WESTERN MORNING NEWS** – ASLEF have stepped up their opposition to driverless Underground trains after a young child fell between carriage and the platform (*at Finchley Road*) on the Jubilee Line. The union said the driver of the train spotted a tiny hand reaching up from the track when he made a final visual check before starting the train. The boy, aged 5, escaped without injury, after all the automatic devices in place showed the platform was clear and it was safe for the train to depart. The driver’s action saved the child from death or injury.

**02.03.12 WATFORD OBSERVER** – *Letter from Christopher Gunning* – TfL attitude to wildlife and habitats makes heartening reading and claims, “Although the Tube is often associated with underground tunnels, more than half of the network is above ground. The 4,000 hectares of land surrounding the Tube’s rail; tracks act as a safe haven for a huge variety of wildlife including bats, badgers, reptiles and water voles. We are working to protect and enhance the biodiversity of our track and highway verges, including street trees”. Not in Croxley you’re not. Here your workers are wrecking the environment by cutting down literally hundreds of perfectly healthy trees (*see From the Papers 31.01.12 entry*); every species imaginable in this area of ancient and supposedly protected woodland. Our garden, which borders the railway, is becoming a refuge for terrified animals and birds trying to escape the chainsaw massacre. So why is TfL squandering resources on this unnecessary butchery? Too many slippery leaves? Then why not just deal with those relatively few trees particularly close to the railway line?

**05.03.12 EVENING STANDARD** – *Letter from R. Love* – When Mayor Boris Johnson claims that the Underground’s reliability is at its best since 2003, I wonder whether the statistics used are robust. I catch the Jubilee Line at Waterloo shortly after 08.00 each day and lately the number of occasions when the doors between the mainline station and the Underground ticket hall are kept shut due to overcrowding, has increased. Each time, my journey ends up taking 20-30 minutes longer, but when the delay is due solely to sheer weight of numbers no refunds are given and it is not reported as a problem with the system.

**05.03.12 EVENING STANDARD** – Cable thieves have struck on the Underground for a second time in seven days, causing disruption for thousands of Jubilee Line commuters when cable was cut between Wembley Park and Stanmore. Over the past five years there has been a near seven-fold increase in cable thefts and related incidents on the Underground.

**05.03.12 METRO** – A limited number of original 1960s Metropolitan Line luggage racks have been restored and are now available to buy from the LT Museum. The racks were removed from decommissioned A Stock, and come in three sizes. They are light but strong, having carried briefcases, shopping bags, suitcases and coats for around 50 years between the City and Baker Street to the classic “Metroland” destinations out to Amersham, Chesham, Uxbridge and Watford.

**07.03.12 EVENING STANDARD** – *Comment by Richard Godwin* – While I was in Delhi, I had the chance to ride on the city’s admirable new Metro system. I was just marvelling at the sign requesting passengers not to carry manure onto trains when we passed through a station called Green Park. Any relation? Imagine how much money and hassle the international traveller could save if London’s Green Park contained a “deep metro” portal to its Indian twin.

**07.03.12 EVENING STANDARD** – *Letter by Andy Robson* – I can’t be the only person tired of trying to navigate through both tourist luggage and selfish commuters at platform entrances and stairwells on the Underground. Couldn’t TfL paint yellow “no stopping area” grids in high pedestrian traffic areas, as happens in other countries? That would ease both congestion and delayed customers’ blood pressure.

**07.03.12 EVENING STANDARD** – Thousands of Underground and rail users are still being “ripped off” on Oyster pay-as-you-go because they don’t touch out at the end of a journey. The latest figures show that the total cost of “incomplete” journeys rose to £66.5M last year. An incomplete journey, only 1.6% of journeys, is normally one where the card holder has not touched out at the end of a journey. Reasons for incomplete journeys include passengers forgetting to tap in or out, barriers being left open to prevent overcrowding after major sporting events or concerts, and machines failing to work. TfL moves to combat the problem include automatic refunds in circumstances for passengers who forget to touch out.

**09.03.12 EVENING STANDARD** – TfL aims to cut huge delays caused by passenger illness, by employing a team of BTP trained as medics who will be able to respond to emergencies quickly. A team of 20, plus two emergency response cars, will be employed on key lines ferrying people to the Olympic Park this summer. They will be able to move people off trains on to their vehicles, which will contain treatment facilities. Currently station staff have only basic first-aid training and services can be delayed for up to an hour as they wait for paramedics to arrive and decide whether a patient can be moved. LU bosses hope the new unit will be able to get to the scene first and make a decision earlier. Other measures to cut delays include using motorbikes to carry spare parts across London to get to broken down trains.

**09.03.12 METRO** – As any hassled commuter braving the daily scrum that is rush hour on the Underground knows, anything that makes you smile is welcome. Some turn to Metro (naturally), others listen to music, read a book or play a computer game. But those heading to the Northern Line at Angel, a simple whiteboard with a few well chosen words, has proved to be a godsend. LU colleagues Ken Waters and Rathees Kadadcham have been writing a daily quotation on the board for the past few months. Some have included, “If you don’t pay your exorcist, do you get your house repossessed?” and “Childhood is like being drunk – everyone remembers, except you”.

**09.03.12 METRO** – Underground workers could pocket an extra £850 for working during the Olympics. The RMT has been locked in a dispute with LU over the bonus deal. The union confirmed it had received the offer which will affect 18,000 staff. RMT’s Bob Crow said, “Moving from nothing to £850 is a massive shift by LU. The offer will now be considered by union reps”.

**09.03.12 EVENING STANDARD** – *(Further to above item)* – The unions have already used their industrial muscle to force through other huge Olympic bonuses, including up to £2,500 for DLR staff, and up to £900 for Overground drivers. UNITE union has also threatened strike action by London’s 28,000 bus staff unless they get £500 each.

**09.03.12 TIMES** – *(Further to above items)* – Drivers on the Underground have been offered £1,000 bonus to work during the Olympics. RMT leader Bob Crow said he had put the offer to his representatives but declined to recommend it to members, although a spokesman said it represented

“significant movement” in negotiations. Boris Johnson, the chairman of TfL, became London’s Mayor promising to negotiate a no-strike deal with transport unions. Four years later he finds himself humiliated by union bosses whose feet are still firmly on the windpipe of the capital’s overloaded network. If 70,000 people volunteering to help at the Games for nothing is a source of national pride, the greed of RMT and the cowardice of TfL is a cause for national embarrassment. In the meantime, now that the principle of payment according to numbers of passengers has been accepted, we can look forward to RMT accepting pay cuts when the crowds have departed and carriages grow emptier again.

**12.03.12 EVENING STANDARD** – Top City experts delivered a damning verdict on mayoral candidate Ken Livingstone’s plan to cut fares by 7% if he is elected. They claimed TfL faces years of financial turmoil and economic collapse and could cost £1B in lost revenue. Rating’s agency Moody’s is warning that any fall in TfL revenue will lead to a “downgrade” in its credit rating, which would cause higher rates for borrowing. TfL bosses fear upgrades to Underground lines would be scrapped and fares would have to be increased as a result.

**12.03.12 METRO** - *A text from Suzie* – I love the Piccadilly Line as it’s the only one where a 5ft 2in shorty like me can reach the overhead grab rails.

**13.03.12 EVENING STANDARD** – The new 1,000-tonne Crossrail tunnel boring machines, nicknamed **Ada** and **Phyllis**, were unveiled by Mayor Boris Johnson, accompanied by Transport Secretary Justine Greening. (*“Ada” was an extraordinary mathematician who collaborated with Charles Babbage, the inventor of the “difference machine” – the world’s first computer. “Phyllis” was a portrait painter who got lost on the way to a party in 1935 in London, and she spent the next year walking London’s streets – a distance of 3,000 miles – and drew up the A-Z Guide.* (See also 21.03.12 to 03.04.12 below).

**14.03.12 EVENING STANDARD** – UNITE union has rejected an offer of £850 bonus from LU bosses, for extra work during the Olympics, as “not being enough”. The union representative said, “UNITE was prepared to accept the deal, but the strings attached are totally unacceptable. It would be irresponsible to accept this deal”.

**14.03.12 METRO** – A widower was killed when he ignored safety signs to smoke a cigarette between carriages on a Metropolitan Line train. He had been drinking on the anniversary of his wife’s death, when he lit and walked out on to the rain-soaked footplate separating the two carriages, and slipped when the train went over a bump and was dragged hundreds of yards up the track. Toxicology results showed he was 3 times over the drink driving limits. A witness in the same carriage pulled the emergency alarm. The train’s driver said, “There was no way of knowing what the incident was. LU policy is to continue to the next station and get help”.

**15.03.12 EVENING STANDARD** – Although there doesn’t seem to be much prospect of privatising the present Underground network, there is rather more interest in allowing redundant stations to be put to use for commercial purposes such as nightclubs. Tory MP Mike Weatherly is backing efforts of the Old London Underground Company “to open up London’s ghost stations and deep level shelters to the public as a viable enterprise following HM Treasury’s Wider Markets Initiative “as an exciting opportunity for outside investment in the leisure and tourism sector”. Aldwych and Brompton Road are just two potential sites that could be revamped as hot nightspots or similar .....

**15.03.12 EVENING STANDARD** – *Editorial* – Plans to install Wi-Fi internet access on the Underground are exciting, but they do not go far enough. There will be free internet access at 80 stations during the Olympics, but after that, provider Virgin Media will charge for access. Moreover, the service will be available only on platforms, not in carriages. London needs an Underground for the 21st century; regardless of some passengers’ annoying phone calls, that should mean full, free internet access.

**16.03.12 EVENING STANDARD** – In the first election debate Mayor Boris Johnson has warned he is prepared to take “historic decisions” to keep Underground unions from holding the transport system to ransom. He threatens to press ahead with plans for more driverless trains to break the grip of union barons. The Mayor’s rivals claimed his aggressive stance could condemn London to more crippling strikes and insisted it is “vital” he meet the unions leaders for talks instead.

**16.03.12 EVENING STANDARD** – The Underground’s second largest union, TSSA representing ticket office and managerial staff, has thrown out the £850 bonus offer for working longer hours

during the Olympic and Paralympic Games, saying there are “too many” strings attached. The RMT, representing drivers, is still considering its offer of £800 – £1,200 bonuses.

**16.03.12 METRO** – London could get a 24-hour train service if independent mayoral candidate Siobhan Benita is voted in. She plans to provide a skeleton 24-hour train service to the outer London suburbs and extend Underground services to 01.30 on Fridays and Saturday. She said, “If we have a 24-hour city, you have to have a transport system to go with that. A lot of people, especially women on their own, are uncomfortable taking the night bus and a lot of people can’t afford taxis”. As part of her plans, Londoners will get a free weekend travel every month, with discounts in restaurants, shops and attractions. She also intends to freeze fares until April 2014 and improve the river boat service between Putney and Greenwich.

**19.03.12 EVENING STANDARD** – Underground union leaders are demanding an Olympic bonus deal for more than £2,000 for train drivers, who have already been offered £800 – £1,200 each for working longer and changed hours during the Olympics. LU understood that “an agreement has already been reached with the drivers”. The RMT also rejected a £850 offer from LU for 13,000 more staff, which excludes drivers. The escalating row threatens to be an embarrassment for Mayor Boris Johnson over a lack of agreement over Olympic payments, which is set to dominate the weeks before the mayoral election.

**19.03.12 EVENING STANDARD** – *Column by Lucy Tobin* – A single Underground station has more signs than the whole of Times Square – “priority seat”, “service suspended”, “mind the gap”, “these escalators are out of service”, “ticket inspectors are easy to spot – they look like you”. I have looked in earnest for a sign that must surely be there but that I’ve never seen. The one that says, “the Tube gives you an invisibility cloak, use it wisely”. It must be there, because why else would otherwise entirely civil people behave like unseeable beings as soon as they step on the Underground? Like the on-train make-up sessions. I can see the benefits of another 10 minutes in bed in favour of some mirror-gazing between Kennington and Camden Town. What makes me sure people think they’re invisible is the nose-picking, eyebrow-plucking, balls-scratching, skin-exfoliating, deodorant-spraying activity that kicks off as soon as the “mind the closing doors” is heard. It opened my eyes to a whole new game of Eye Spy – Tube Activities That Really Should Take Place In The Bathroom (or TATRSTPITB for short). Leave your imaginary cloaks at home please, Londoners – and your personal grooming sessions too.

**19.03.12 METRO** – Londoners will be able to use Wi-Fi to access mobile internet services at Underground stations from June. A contract has been awarded to Virgin Media to provide access at up to 120 Underground station platforms, at no cost to taxpayers. The partnership with LU will see more than 80 stations Wi-Fi enabled by June.

**19.03.12 CITY AM** – Underground workers are set to reject yet another Olympics bonus offer, leaving transport bosses scrambling to avoid strikes during the Games. Almost 150 RMT reps will call on the union to turn down the latest £850 overtime and bonus package. The reps said the offer unfairly excludes drivers and admin staff. The RMT executive will meet to decide whether to turn down the package. Unions have already sealed bonus deals for workers at Network Rail, Virgin Trains, London Overground and DLR.

**20.03.12 EVENING STANDARD** – A scheme which allows Underground engineers to travel in a flashing “blue light” road vehicle has almost halved response time getting to critical incidents in the first month of operation. It came as LU bosses announced they are to increase the members of the Emergency Response Unit, from 100 to 130, who are first on the scene at all major Underground incidents. ERU engineers are using three new BTP vehicles, driven by a police officer, to cut through London’s traffic with the same blue light used by the Met, fire and ambulance services. The ERU is used for incidents where public safety could be at risk, such as stranded trains, “person under a train” or any obstruction on the track.

**21.03.12 – 03.04.12 RAIL MAGAZINE** – (see 13.03.12 above) – In addition to **Phyllis** and **Ada**, other tunnel boring machines have been named **Victoria** and **Elizabeth**, and **Mary** and **Sophie**.

**23.03.12 METRO** – Talks at the conciliation service ACAS, to settle a dispute over Olympic pay for Underground staff collapsed again. Union leader accused LU of attempting to impose “new strings” in order to “sabotage” the talks. LU said its offer would see station maintenance, service control staff and operational managers receive up to £850 subject to attendance, customer satisfaction scores and working flexibility for defined periods to help deliver a successful transport system.

**23.03.12 WATFORD OBSERVER** – *Letter from Stuart Alderman* – I rather naively assumed that some credit had been allowed on the costings for the Metropolitan Line extension to Watford Junction, for the sale of the unwanted land on the to-be-disused line to Watford Met. station. One solution to keep Watford Met. operating would be to put a crossover halfway down the platform at Croxley. This would allow a 2 or 3 car shuttle train to operate between the Watford Junction services. By putting the crossover at platform mid-length, the train could arrive at Croxley, unload the passenger for the London bound service, then reverse via the crossover to the other platform to pick up passengers for Watford Met. On a schedule of 4 minutes each way and a 6 minute stopover at each end would give a maximum 20 minute service, requiring only one train and one driver.

**27.03.12 CITY AM** – Mayor Boris Johnson has announced an all out push towards automation of the Underground network, pledging that he will never again buy an Underground train that requires a driver. “It is time for London to learn from other metro networks and get the benefits of automatic train control, with all the efficiency benefits that will bring, and absolutely no loss of safety”, he said at the launch of his manifesto. He also pledged to take on what he called “hardline union barons” who cause disruption to services.

**27.03.12 METRO** – The RMT union warned that Mayor Boris Johnson is preparing to take a “lethal gamble with passenger safety in his quest for votes”, by introducing driverless Underground trains, if re-elected. The Mayor responded by saying, “It may be that some hardline union barons will object, as they have traditionally objected to many technologically improvements”.

**27.03.12 METRO** – The Queen has been presented with a specially designed Diamond Jubilee Oyster card to mark her 60 years on the throne. The card features an official portrait of Her Majesty and will be available to the public from May.

**29.03.12 EVENING STANDARD** – Jubilee Line commuters have again suffered huge disruption, only days before the new 30-train-an hour service will be introduced. A signal failure at North Greenwich crippled the entire line from Stanmore to Stratford. Used by more than 650,000 people per day, the Jubilee is the main route to the Olympics. The London Assembly transport committee pointed out it is the only line to report in latest figures a rise in delays caused by infrastructure failures.

**29.03.12 EVENING STANDARD** – Underground bosses are being accused of “robbing” commuters by penalising them for simply walking through a station. An Oyster system anomaly means travellers can be charged £4.60 for going through one entrance at Paddington and exiting the station 100 yards away. The situation occurs when Oyster card holders wanting to use the H&C Line swipe in at Praed Street across the road from the main station, then directed along a corridor through a second swipe barrier and into the main station. This anomaly was confirmed in a test by this newspaper.

**29.03.12 METRO** – The “spoof” Olympic Legends Underground Map replaces all station names with legendary Olympians and each underground line is dedicated to a sports discipline, such as track and field or boxing. Some of the biggest names in sports history are featured, including sprint king Usain Bolt as Victoria, multi-gold medal winning rower Sir Steve Redgrave as Knightsbridge and basketball great as King’s Cross St. Pancras. The challenge of compiling the list of athletes for the map was met by journalists Alex Trickett and David Brooks. “There were heated debates and a few late changes of heart but we are happy with the result; dozens of nations are represented and all sports at the 2012 Games are accounted for”, said Trickett.

**29.03.12 METRO** – Work to prepare for the tunnel boring machines at Crossrail’s Canary Wharf station in 2013 has been completed five months ahead of schedule. Construction work began three years ago. Since then the construction team has poured 375,000 tonnes of concrete and pumped out nearly 100M litres (equivalent of 40 Olympic size swimming pools) of dock water.

**29.03.12 METRO** – Two of Britain’s strongest men have recreated a video version of the TfL “Get Ahead of the Games” poster showing weightlifters squeezing out of a busy Underground train. Britain’s Strongest Man competitor Rob Frampton and weightlifter Rich Corvin brought the colourful ad to life at Charing Cross to raise awareness of the campaign, which encourages commuters to make alternative travel plans ahead of the summer’s events. View the boys in action at –

**[www.youtube.com/user/GAOTG](http://www.youtube.com/user/GAOTG)**.

**30.03.12 EVENING STANDARD** – A Victorian Underground station could be taken apart brick by brick and rebuilt seven storeys up. Fifteen flats and shops are planned for the site of the former Shoreditch station in Code Street, but while modern materials will be used on the lower floors, 30,000 original bricks will be hoisted up to “crown” the new building. The station was built in 1876 and closed in 2006, after being replaced by the new Overground Shoreditch High Street station

**30.03.12 EVENING STANDARD** – The number of RMT union members taking part in strikes has fallen by 43% while Boris Johnson has been Mayor. While there have been 15 strikes during the Johnson tenure and only 8 under Ken Livingstone, the number of strikers were 10,865 under Johnson and 19,052 under Livingstone. LSE transport expert Tony Travers said “the decrease was partly due to the economy, but also because individual union members are becoming “less militant”.