

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.

28.05.12 EVENING STANDARD – LU are to start paying financial compensation to passengers who suffer major disruption after hundreds of people were trapped in a tunnel for up to three hours. How much travellers will be entitled to is still to be determined, but the sum would be on top of refunded ticket money. It could apply to passengers stranded on trains for a long time or who have to walk along tracks to safety. It follows the decision to pay £40 to each of the 800 passengers caught up in last Wednesday’s Jubilee Line chaos. Passengers were stranded in sweltering heat for up to three hours before being walked to safety.

30.05.12 EVENING STANDARD – *Text from Glenn Lawes* – “Why, oh why can’t there be more trains from Watford? Also I think we should invade somewhere to take our minds of the awful Jubilee Line”.

30.05.12 EVENING STANDARD – Canning Town used to be the sort of place outsiders described as “close knit” – a gritty, working class district famous for brawny dockers and boxing clubs. For years it languished outside the property market. Developers feared to tread, deterred by sprawling council estates and the bleak landscape. But the council-backed regeneration is transforming the scene and the area is being touted as a new hotspot. Sandwiched between Canary Wharf and Stratford, the location cannot be ignored. Transport-wise it is one of the most under-used hubs in London. On the Jubilee Line, it also has a DLR station and a whacking great bus station.

01.06.12 WATFORD OBSERVER – A Watford councillor has pointed to the parking mayhem around Cassiobury Park caused by the recent warm spell, as being another reason to keep Watford Met. station open after the completion of the Croxley Rail Link.

01.06.12 EVENING STANDARD – Underground passengers will be able to access the internet from their laptops, tablets and mobiles while waiting for trains this summer. Virgin Media is providing the technology. The original plan to let passengers access the internet as trains travel between stations was ruled out because of the cost of upgrading the lines.

07.06.12 METRO – The Underground will fail to cope when millions of extra passengers descend on London for the Olympics in seven weeks, insiders have told the Metro. The creaking 150-year-old network will buckle under the extra workload and turn the capital into a “laughing stock”. One senior LU employee said: “It is simply not ready and there is nothing we can do about it. It will not be able to cope with the extra numbers. The attitude at LU seems to be: ‘Let’s just wait to see what happens – there’s little more we can do now’”. London has spent £9.3 billion preparing for the event but the Underground and rail network was found to be wanting during the past weekend’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Cuts to the number of safety inspections on tracks, trains and escalators ahead of the Games is already taking its toll, unions say. TfL is urging commuters to leave work later or find other ways of getting to work to ease the pressure. A TfL spokesman said: “We are confident not complacent”.

07.06.12 THE TIMES – For anyone trying to get home from the River Pageant, it was as though training had begun for the biggest queuing event of the summer – the Olympic Games. And indeed it had. Transport planners used Sunday’s event as a dry-run for the Olympics. Entrances were closed to key mainline stations and the police were called in to corral spectators into one-way systems. The Twittersphere buzzed with complaints from passengers kept in the rain outside mainline stations or barred from Underground stations that had become exit only. “Looks like this has not been good dress rehearsal for Olympics,” tweeted Christian Wolmar. The watchdog Passenger Focus agreed: “As dry runs go, it was not great for the railway”.

07.06.12 EVENING STANDARD – *TEXT from Sue* – “I was a passenger on the Tube train trapped between Stratford and Mile End yesterday afternoon. Despite reports to the contrary, throughout the 70-minute ordeal the train driver kept passengers regularly informed, whenever he had information to impart. The evacuation was efficiently and safely handled, and passengers remained calm and well behaved throughout”.

07.06.12 EVENING STANDARD – Could there be a new owner of Battersea Power Station? Malaysian company SP Setia has entered an “exclusive agreement” with receivers Ernst & Young, to buy the site for £400M. Existing planning permission requires full restoration of the listed building, estimated to cost an additional £600M. Restoring the facade and chimneys only, would cost far less, but would need new planning consent. Wandsworth council may also want an explanation of the Malaysians’ commitment “to the construction of a new Underground station”. The existing permission requires any developer to contribute £200M to a new Underground Northern Line spur to Battersea, not just a new station.

07.06.12 EVENING STANDARD – Blundering workmen flooded the Underground with 2M litres of water as they tried to fix a leaking pipe – causing chaos for hundreds of thousands of commuters. Thames Water started one of the Underground’s biggest safety scares by sending torrents cascading onto the Central line. Hundreds of passengers were stranded for two hours, then had to escape along the tracks. A senior LU source said: “We are usually to blame when things go wrong but this time we can say “it wasn’t our fault, guv”. It was 100% down to Thames Water. The crisis happened between Stratford and Bow (*Mile End?*) stations as workmen were lifting a 24inch main to try to plug a leak. A Thames Water spokeswoman said: “The pipe was encased in concrete and as the crew were working, it broke”. The utility company now faces a multi-million-pound compensation bill after cars in streets and a housing estate near the Olympic park were flooded. TfL will also expect compensation. LU’s Howard Collins said the crisis was a “nightmare scenario” for the Olympics, with just 50 days until the opening ceremony.

08.06.12 EVENING STANDARD – Mayor Boris Johnson has summoned Thames Water bosses to City Hall to deliver a dressing down after blundering workmen flooded the Underground. The Mayor was said to be “absolutely seething” after contractors broke a 24inch main as they tried to fix a leak. TfL said that it was “exploring all the options” on compensation for the clean up and the impact on passengers. “Costs of the whole operation will be substantial,” said a TfL source. “We are talking millions of pounds and it is not something that we will be able, or willing, to let go”.

08.06.12 EVENING STANDARD – *Letter from R. Artois* – I stayed late at work on Wednesday having heard about the delays caused by the Central Line water leak – and still there was chaos when I got to Stratford – dozens of people shouting and screaming as they tried to get on the replacement bus service. There was very little help from the Underground staff and, bizarrely every bus seemed to stop at the same stand, rather than spreading out across the many alternative stops available in the bus station. If anything goes wrong with the Underground, London is not going to cope during the Olympics.

08.06.12 METRO – Passengers can now get on-line for free and stay in touch with the world above King’s Cross, Warren Street, Oxford Circus, Green Park, Victoria and Euston Underground stations. Up to 80 stations across the capital will be connected by the end of July and 120 stations by the end of the year. LU’s Gareth Powell said: “Wi-fi at Underground stations will help us improve the journeys of the millions of people that use the network every day at no cost to fare or tax payers”.

11.06.12 EVENING STANDARD – A row broke out today over claims that a French telecommunications company was in talks with TfL bosses about getting mobile phone coverage on the entire Underground network. Ben Verwaayen, CEO of Alcatel-Lucent was reported to have said passengers could soon be able to use mobile phones and the internet. But TfL sources said there had been “no contact” with the firm. Free wi-fi at some LU stations was made available this month with Virgin Media running the pay-as-you-go service until after the Olympics. But Mr. Verwaayen said his company could go further offering wi-fi and full phone service in the tunnels as well as stations.

11.06.12 METRO – There were high levels of ridership across the capital’s transport network during 2011/12. 1.17B passenger journeys on the Underground, 2.3B journeys on the bus network, 102M journeys on the Overground, 86M journeys on the DLR, and 28.5M on Tramlink.

13.06.12 EVENING STANDARD – The Thames cable car looks set to be open to the paying public in time for the Olympic Games. Engineers have been in a race against time to finish the ambitious £45M project before the opening ceremony on 27 July. Emirates is funding the scheme, called the Emirates Air Line, which will link Greenwich (for the O₂) with the Excel exhibition centre at the Royal Docks. There will be 34 cable cars carrying 2,500 passengers an hour. The gondolas, about 160

feet above the river, will run every 30 seconds and the journey will take 5 minutes. The new TfL Underground Map features the cable car for the first time.

13.06.12 EVENING STANDARD – A Sunday train service last used just after WW2 is to provide a major transport link during the Olympics and Paralympics. The Waterloo & City – known as The Drain – is to open on Sundays throughout the Games. Usually the busy commuter route does not open on Sundays because, according to TfL, there is no demand. Sunday services last operated during 1943-47. It will provide a major boost for the 80,000 extra passengers a day expected to use Waterloo NR station. It will provide direct access to the DLR and the Central Line at the Bank.

13.06.12 METRO – *Tweets – by Paul Coggins* – “I tried the wi-fi connection while stuck on the Tube this morning at Victoria Station. It’s amazing. It just needs to work in the tunnels now”. *By Tom Webb* – “The England’s goalkeeper’s kit looks like it has been thriftily made from the seat coverings on the District Line”.

14.06.12 METRO – *Letter from Dr Brian Yim Lim* – TfL does not provide refunds for instances beyond their control or for disruptions advertised in advance. Therefore commuters should ask whether TfL has the precedent to suspend the Customers Charter during the Olympics, given this burden on the network is beyond its control and it has warned us in advance.

15.06.12 METRO – Cannon Street will be open each weekend throughout the summer. Weekend closures of the station had enabled the station upgrade, including two new entrances in Dowgate Hill, two new passenger lifts between NR and LU stations and improved staircases.

15.06.12 WATFORD OBSERVER – Transport bosses were presented with an array of impassioned arguments as to why Watford Met. station should remain open to the public. At a packed public meeting, residents, commuters and politicians got their chance to say why the station should not be shut to passengers as part of the Croxley Rail Link. House prices, the safety of school children, bias against the people of Cassiobury and the fact it is there to be used, were all cited as reasons for LU should maintain the service. The man who has the final say on its fate is Mayor Boris Johnson, who will only hear from the Watford residents in the form of a report by 2 September and he will make his decision later this year. Under current plans, Watford Met., which has been in service since 1925, will be kept but only for train storage, after the Metropolitan Line is diverted from Croxley, via two new stations and Watford High Street, to Watford Junction. Work is expected to start in 2014 for completion in 2016. An LU representative said the station was the 25th least used on the network.

19.06.12 EVENING STANDARD – The Underground will be forced to close if the Friday 22 June London bus strike created dangerous overcrowding levels on the already packed service, a union chief said. They will order staff to stop work – citing workplace health and safety regulations – if they believe too many passengers are creating conditions for themselves and other users. RMT leader Bob Crow said the union “has deep concerns about the safety implications of trying to cram hundreds of thousands of extra journeys into the system creaking at the seams, and our safety reps will be monitoring the situation closely. Any threat to staff and passenger safety, and well of course take appropriate action”.

19.06.12 METRO – The Emirates Air Line, a 1.1km river crossing, will open on 28 June. Dubai-based Emirates signed a £36M ten-year deal to sponsor the service. Initially it will operate 07.00-21.00 Monday to Friday, 08.00-21.00 on Saturday, and 09.00-21.00 on Sunday. There will extended opening hours when there are events at the O2 Arena and Excel exhibition venues. Each-way Fares are to be: Adult (cash) £4.30, Adult(Oyster) £3.20, Child (cash) £2.20, Child(Oyster) £1.60.

21.06.12 EVENING STANDARD – Five days of Underground strikes are set to cause massive disruption across a huge section of the network. The Piccadilly Line will be the worst affected, with further disruption across all the sub-surface lines. RMT leaders ordered four days of strikes among more than 100 staff who service the Piccadilly Line control centre. The strike is planned from 19.00 on 1 July to 19.00 on 4 July, followed by eight days of working to rule 8-15 July.

21.06.12 EVENING STANDARD – *by columnist Andrew Martin* – Olympic visitors to London who use the Underground are in for a treat. They will experience the crepuscular, Dickensian moodiness of the original Metropolitan, or the Edwardian jewel boxes that are the Leslie Green stations in the West End, each with its own ornate tiling scheme. They can contrast the Sixties functionalism of the Victoria Line with the yuppified braggadocio of the Jubilee Line Extension. No system is more diverse, or (if you ask me) more beautiful. And none is more paranoid either. The cause of the

paranoia is our national character, which has the ingenuity to create the world's first underground railway network, but not the political will to fund it. So a thing that ought to be a source of pride is begrudged, and Tube managers have gone defensive in response. It is not enough to provide a good service, they must be seen to provide a good service, hence that regular and tragic announcement: "There is a good service operating on all Underground lines". But as the announcements keep coming, a frown might set in: "To reduce queuing in Tube stations, there is a minimum Oyster top-up of five pounds". They might just get their heads round that, when – if they're on the Northern Line – they'll hear "This train terminates at Morden via Bank". Now the ungrammatical nature of that announcement (there is no such place as "Morden via Bank") might be lost on them, but they'll probably wonder what it means anyway. As well as lacking the political will to fund the network, we lacked the will to plan it, so the Northern Line is a mess held together with the sticking plaster of announcements. The system has always overdone it in this respect. We might date the neurosis back to the Twenties, when gramophone records used peevishly to instruct escalator users, "If you must stand, stand on the right". The Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations require the announcement of the next station coming up and any significant delays, and I am fine with that because I might one day be visually impaired myself. But a whole tower of babble has been built on top, and when I use my local station, I have to block my ears as the following begins to reverberate at deafening volume: "Please try to keep Highgate station tidy". The announcements are so loud that those relating to the southbound service can be heard on the northbound platform. I'm not alone in my indignation. A consultancy called Noise Direct recently presented London Underground with an anti-award for being number one among: "Those Contributing Little or Nothing to Prevent Noise Nuisance". In 1992, when the Central Line became the first to have automated in-train announcements, the voice was nicknamed "Sonia" because she "gets-sonia-nerves". Sonia was a joke back then, but now she's taken over and is doing nothing at all for the blood pressure of Londoners.

22.06.12 WATFORD OBSERVER – *Letter from Stuart Alderman* – I would not criticise Mike Wright's report on the public hearing on the future of Watford Met. Station (see 15.06.12 above), but he did omit the absurdities which must have sent officials back to the capital thinking the country bumpkins could be found closer to London than they had thought. One speaker grasping a wad of notes, told us about the Channel Tunnel and direct services from Euston to St. Albans. One woman reminded us that Watford Met. station was the 25th worst used (out of around 300), but Croxley station was even worse. When Mayor Boris Johnson reads that, he may wonder why they opened the Moor Park to Watford branch at all. TfL has been scrapping underground trains for ages in Rotherham. I'm sure they could find a couple to refurbish for the Watford Met. to Croxley shuttle.

26.06.12 METRO – London Tramlink passengers will now benefit from a 50% increase in services, thanks to a new route from Therapia Lane to Elmers End via Croydon town centre. The new service will run four times an hour during peak hours, bringing the number of trams operating between Therapia Lane and central Croydon up from 8 to 12. Tramlink has been bolstered by the 6 new trams introduced earlier this year. These trams are air conditioned and 100% low floor – which is more accessible for passengers.

26.06.12 METRO – Thanks to new air-cooling technology, work is underway on a project to cool two stations, Green Park and Oxford Circus, ahead of the 2012 Games. At Green Park, water will be extracted from nearby boreholes and pumped to 8 platform air units, mounted above the tracks. Cooled air can then be discharged over the platforms and drawn into platforms by moving trains. At Oxford Circus, the cooling will be created by rooftop chillers where the cooled air can then be released on to the platforms in the same way. Air cooling units are already used in the ticket hall, but the project will mean more comfortable temperatures will also benefit the Victoria, Bakerloo and Central Line platforms.

27.06.12 METRO – London will be the first city to have hosted the Olympic Games three times. Changes in travel arrangement are noteworthy as follows: 1908 – Horse-drawn buses and trams were still in service, but were increasingly replaced by electric trolleys, motor buses and trains. That year was the first time independent operators from London's rail network agreed to jointly promote their services as "the Underground" in a bid to boost passenger numbers. 1948 – The London Transport Executive was formed that year. Much of its early work involved repairing and replacing stock and stations damaged during the war, so transport for the Games was very much "make do

and mend". 2012 – Take your pick from rail, Underground, bus, Overground, DLR, Barclays Cycle Hire, walking and the Emirates Air Line cable car. All Underground lines will run services until 02.00-02.30 throughout the Games. All spectators will be able to travel by public transport or park-and-ride services.

27.06.12 RAIL – LU is looking to test what it describes as an “Alternative Track Bed System (ATBS)”. The trial will take place over a 40-metre section of track in a tunnel with two running rails, two conductor rails, drainage, trackside and signalling equipment. They are looking for a contractor to carry out the trial, to enable it to decide whether ATBS is worth pursuing.

29.06.12 EVENING STANDARD – LU bosses will close a long section of the Jubilee Line on Sunday 1 July to ensure it is as “reliable as possible” for the Olympics. The line, which has had a £721M upgrade, will be closed all day between London Bridge and Finchley Road. LU’s Operation Director Nigel Holness said the closure is “not related to the completed Jubilee Line upgrade, but it is to ensure that the line’s infrastructure is as reliable as possible during the Olympic and Paralympic Games”. This line is the principal route for the Olympics linking central London with Stratford stadium and equestrian events at Greenwich. However, three days of strikes by control room staff on the Piccadilly and all the sub-surface lines, due to start on the Sunday evening have been called off, after the RMT union and LU reached a deal over conditions and pay. The union has ordered TfL travel information and call centre staff out on a 24 hour strike from 21.30 on the Sunday.