

THE UNDERGROUND OLYMPIC DIARY

AUGUST 2012

On **Wednesday 1 August** two signals failing at Turnham Green Junction on the eastbound, where the Ealing and Richmond routes converge, suspended the District Line between Earl's Court, Ealing Broadway and Richmond from 07.00. Two trains were stalled approaching the junction, one from the Ealing road until 08.00 and one from the Richmond road until 08.25.



The trains trapped on the Richmond branch shuttled between there and Gunnersbury, reversing via the short section of 4th rail line on the NLL (there is no other way of doing it).

The use of the east-west reversing facility via the NLL at Gunnersbury is so rare, but the photo (*Left*) was on a training run on 31 January 2008, where the reversing train is seen returning to the westbound platform. The normal District Line tracks veer off to the right in the background.

Photo: Brian Hardy

Trains on the Ealing branch were put into Ealing Common depot – there was no evidence of an Ealing – Acton shuttle. Some Piccadilly Line trains called at District stations (where they could) in both directions. Once a defective trainstop was replaced, services to Ealing Broadway resumed at 09.40 and to Richmond at 10.05. Some 17 trains were cancelled for the morning peak. The only other problem of the day was a local power failure, closing Marble Arch station from 15.20 to 16.00.

The Bakerloo Line was suspended between Paddington and Queen's Park from 08.10 on **Thursday 2 August** because of a broken rail on the northbound at Maida Vale. While traction current isolations were being implemented, the area of suspension was extended to Piccadilly Circus and Elephant & Castle for short periods. Services resumed throughout at 10.10. A signal track circuit failure at West Ruislip suspended the Central Line suspended west of Northolt from 13.10 to 13.45, while later in the evening the line was suspended Leytonstone – Epping and Hainault (via Woodford) from 19.35 to 20.35 with a loss of signalling control at Woodford.

Passengers hoping for an early arrival at Stratford for the Olympic Games events were thwarted by a loss of signal control at Bethnal Green at 07.20 on **Friday 3 August**, suspending the Central Line between Liverpool Street and Leytonstone. Two trains were stalled on the eastbound and one on the westbound, the last one being clear of passengers by 07.55. Services resumed at 08.45. Yet again, no trains were recorded as cancelled for the morning peak (see page 463 of the September issue of *Underground News*, entry for 31 July!). Two signals failing on the northbound Bakerloo Line between Waterloo and Embankment from 16.20 resulted in delays in the area while trains worked through under failure conditions, costing five cancelled trains for the evening peak. Clear signals were obtained at 17.15.

There was just one incident of note on **Saturday 4 August**, when the Waterloo & City Line was suspended from 17.10 because of a signal failure at Bank. One train stalled on the approach was authorised to return to Waterloo, where it arrived at 17.40. The intention to implement single line working, not especially difficult in itself (apart from having a separate pilotman for each single line with each train 'locked in'), created more problems than it solved, especially with the potential management of passengers at Waterloo with two physically isolated platforms with a considerable walk between them – the "which train is first" and "can we get over there before it goes" syndromes. This was abandoned in favour of concentrating a one-train service in the eastbound tunnel.

However, this would have meant passing signals at danger on the approach to Bank (i.e. the home signal that had caused the failure) and also on departure (i.e. the westbound starting signal which could not have been cleared to send a train westbound into the eastbound tunnel). There would also have been issues with the lack of in-cab CCTV departing from Bank and also no Correct Side Door Enable on arrival at Waterloo, plus delays caused by the Speed Control After Tripping equipment, all of which negating the advantages of using two Train Operators to 'double-end'. It would probably have been necessary to 'drop' track circuits in Waterloo depot too, in order to protect the western end of the 'Single Line' section. Services resumed at 21.10 – and without single line working!

On **Sunday 5 August** a loss of signal control at Hainault at 21.30 suspended the Central Line between Newbury Park and Woodford. Two trains were stalled, one arriving at Fairlop inner rail at 21.55, the other at Hainault outer rail at 22.00. Services resumed at 23.05.

A person on the track at Finsbury Park southbound suspended the Victoria Line between Walthamstow and King's Cross at 10.25 on **Monday 6 August**. The westbound Piccadilly Line was also delayed as trains were cautioned because of the close proximity of the crossover tunnel. However, the person headed north and was detained at Seven Sisters, enabling services to resume at 11.20. The Metropolitan Line was suspended through Harrow-on-the-Hill from 18.25 to 19.00 with two signals failing, one each on the northbound 'local' and 'fast' lines' approach. A local power failure at Chalfont & Latimer necessitated the station closing at 21.15 when there was insufficient daylight, reopening at 21.55 when power was restored.

Tuesday 7 August began with the west end of the District Line unable to start up until 06.00 because of a late finish to overnight work at East Putney, a loss of signalling control in the Earl's Court area and incomplete work on pointwork at Hammersmith. The District and Piccadilly lines were then suspended west of Hammersmith – Northfields and Uxbridge (Piccadilly) and Turnham Green – Ealing Broadway (District) from 06.10 because of a signal failure at Acton Town. Two westbound Piccadilly Line trains were stalled approaching Acton Town. The second in the queue was authorised to return to Turnham Green, where its passengers were detrained by 07.05. The first train couldn't go forward into Acton Town station and was later authorised to return to Turnham Green also, its passengers being detrained through that in the platform, which was complete by 08.00. Services resumed at 08.05 but the incident cost 24 cancelled trains for the morning peak. The Jubilee Line was suspended north of Willesden Green from 06.35 with a signal failure at Wembley Park. The last of five stalled trains reached a platform by 07.10 and services resumed at 07.30. During the failure period Metropolitan Line trains stopped at Willesden Green. A northbound S Stock train stalled across the crossover approaching Harrow-on-the-Hill at 14.00, suspending services between Wembley Park and Harrow. Once the train arrived in the platform after the deployment of gap jumper leads services were able to resume at 14.40. There was a further 20-minute delay to the Metropolitan Line from 21.35 because of a passenger falling between a train and the platform on the northbound at Finchley Road. The Jubilee Line was then suspended north of Wembley Park from 22.10 to 00.15 because of points failing at Stanmore. This also caused a knock-on effect to the rest of the Jubilee Line service, which wasn't particularly helpful for return Olympic traffic from Stratford. The day ended (at 00.45 in the early hours of the following morning) with a person under a southbound Victoria Line train at Stockwell, suspending the service south of Victoria until 01.50.

Wednesday 8 August wasn't without incident, although none of them caused excessive delays. A loss of signal control at Arnos Grove from 16.40 resulted in 10 Piccadilly Line trains being cancelled for the evening peak.

Thursday 9 August began with a signal failure on the eastbound at Acton Town at 05.40, suspending the Piccadilly Line between Uxbridge and Acton Town. The last of stalled eastbound trains arrived at Acton Town at 06.25 enabling services to resume. A limited eastbound service from Heathrow was provided by trains running via the local line from Northfields. The only other notable problem was a signal failure on the southbound approach to Piccadilly Circus from 12.40 with Bakerloo Line trains passing through under failure conditions until fixed at 15.10. There was no 'declared' suspension as such, just slow progress through the area.

The Victoria Line was suspended north of King's Cross from 08.40 on **Friday 10 August** because of a person under a northbound train at Finsbury Park. The station closed and Piccadilly Line trains non-stopped. One stalled northbound train was authorised to return to Highbury & Islington, arriving

there at 09.00. In the meanwhile a very limited service was implemented between Seven Sisters and Walthamstow from 09.10 with through running an hour later. There were no other incidents to cause undue concern.

A broken rail between Seven Sisters and Finsbury Park on the southbound, nearer to the latter, prevented the Victoria Line from starting up normally on **Saturday 11 August**. All that could be achieved was a very limited service of three trains (the three overnight stblers from Victoria and Brixton were the only trains available) shuttling between Brixton and King's Cross. Services over the rest of the line began at 06.35.

There was nothing untoward to report for **Sunday 12 August**, which was the last day of the Olympic Games and the closing ceremony at the Olympic Stadium. In the event the closing ceremony ran late and the District Line was able to organise a handful of extra trains beyond the planned 01.30 finish and in fact the last westbound train was about 30 minutes later than scheduled.

Timetables and service levels now revert to normal until the Paralympic Games commence at the end of the month.

The Ruislip branch of the Central Line was delayed during the evening peak on **Monday 13 August** with a track fire at Perivale and a defective train at Marble Arch. The only other problem was a fire alarm operated at Earl's Court, closing the station from 20.45 to 21.10.

There was nothing out of the ordinary to note for **Tuesday 14 August**, nor **Wednesday 15 August**.

Lambeth North station closed from 06.35 to 07.20 on **Thursday 16 August** because of defects with both lifts. The combination of a signal failure at Walthamstow Central and a defective southbound train at Warren Street, both at around 21.30, resulted in late evening delays on the Victoria Line. The offending train at Warren Street was moved to Victoria sidings by 21.55.

Two temporary 5mph speed restrictions imposed at Finchley Road and Farringdon on **Friday 17 August** resulted in a number of cancellations on the Metropolitan, Circle and Hammersmith & City lines throughout the day, reaching 11 trains in total for the evening peak.

On **Saturday 18 August** the Piccadilly Line was suspended between Arnos Grove and Cockfosters from 12.40 to 14.50 with points failing just east of Arnos Grove. A points failure on the northbound approach to Wembley Park suspended the Metropolitan Line south of Harrow-on-the-Hill from 14.00 to 15.25. Three trains were stalled between stations, the last reaching the platform at 14.50. A southbound Jubilee Line train became gapped off current approaching Neasden at 16.35, suspending the service north of West Hampstead. Willesden Green was unavailable to reverse because of issues with a train occupying the siding there. In consequence the Metropolitan Line was suspended south of Harrow-on-the-Hill (17.05 to 18.00) while passengers from the defective Jubilee Line train were detained via the track to Neasden station. By the early evening the Metropolitan and Jubilee lines each had 13 trains cancelled. Services resumed at 18.35. The Piccadilly Line non-stopped Gloucester Road from 17.30 to 18.45 because of lift defects, while the Bakerloo Line was suspended on the LU section from 18.50 to 19.10 because of a passenger emergency alarm operated on a northbound train just departing Marylebone. The delay was exacerbated by the Train Operator unable to exit the cab and walk through the train because it was heavily loaded and therefore station staff were requested to attend the train and reset the passenger alarm.

Sunday 19 August belonged to the SSR in terms of problems, beginning with a 20-minute late start through Harrow-on-the-Hill because of incomplete work on points at Harrow North Junction. Just after 07.30 points failing at Aldgate North Junction suspended the Metropolitan Line into the City, the Hammersmith & City Line east of Moorgate and the outer rail Circle Line. One Hammersmith & City Line train was stalled on the North Curve until 08.05. Services resumed at 08.10 but with platform 2 out of use for the remainder of the day. Points failing at Watford South Junction from 08.30 suspended Chiltern Railways' services south of Amersham. Northbound Watford trains were diverted to run via Rickmansworth until the fault was fixed at 09.55. Points failing at Rayners Lane at 10.45 resulted in Piccadilly Line trains reversing in the westbound platform and the service suspended to Uxbridge in consequence. One eastbound Piccadilly Line train was authorised (and piloted) to Harrow-on-the-Hill to clear the road and allow the Metropolitan Line to operate near-normally. The Piccadilly Line resumed to Uxbridge at 13.00.

The service on **Monday 20 August** was one of near perfection, or so it was suggested in various circles!

Tuesday 21 August began with a loss of signalling control from the start of traffic at Wembley Park, Neasden and in Neasden depot, preventing trains from running south of Wembley Park until 05.40. An event that wouldn't normally make "The Diary" would be a defective train withdrawn from service at Parsons Green with motor alternator problems at 19.50 and put into the sidings. Of interest though is that it remained there until 11.00 the following morning, when it was returned empty to Hammersmith depot, but via the south side of the District and Aldgate – i.e. the train didn't have to reverse direction.

The only notable event on **Wednesday 22 August** was a points failure at Upminster at 21.50 which resulted in a 20-minute suspension east of Hornchurch.

On **Thursday 23 August** a loss of signalling control from the start of traffic between west of Hornchurch and east of Dagenham Heathway resulted in a 50-minute delay to the first westbound train while points were secured at the former. Even when trains were able to move under failure conditions, it continued to take some 40-50 minutes to pass through the problem area and thus the westbound service between Upminster and Barking was rather limited. The eastbound service was suspended east of Barking until 09.00 to maintain some sort of westbound service for the morning peak, although there were 16 trains cancelled. In the event a section of signal cable had to be replaced which enabled normal signalling from 14.00. Staying with the District Line, a reported 'kink' in the westbound track on points just west of East Putney suspended services west of Putney Bridge from 19.35 to 20.05. Earlier in the afternoon a multiple signal track circuit failure between Vauxhall and Pimlico from 14.35 resulted in delays for the Victoria Line, with services 'thinned' south of Victoria until the fault was fixed at 16.55.

The Piccadilly Line was suspended west of South Harrow from 12.05 until 13.05 on **Friday 24 August** because of a signal failure at Rayners Lane. The Metropolitan Line was able to continue almost normally. Hyde Park Corner station closed from 15.45 to 16.20 because of a fire alarm activated.

On **Saturday 25 August** the southbound Jubilee Line suffered a 25-minute stand from 05.05 with a signalling problem at Wembley Park. Just as the service was returning to normality, a cable theft north of Canons Park suspended the service between there and Stanmore from 06.20. The area of suspension was widened to be north of Wembley Park from 06.40 when an empty train attempting to reverse on the reception road to Stanmore sidings stalled across the crossover. Services resumed at 08.40 after sections of cable had been replaced. Arcing in the depot at Waterloo suspended the Waterloo and City Line twice, from 14.25 to 15.05 and again from 17.05 to 17.50. Heavy rain caused flooding and the closure of Lambeth North station (15.40 to 20.45), Covent Garden (15.45 to 18.30), Gloucester Road (Piccadilly Line, 15.50 to 16.55) and Aldgate (platform 4 from 15.50 to 16.40). The closure at Lambeth North was protracted because of damage to the station supervisor's office roof, which had to be made safe. At 18.50 a person ill on an eastbound District Line train at Bromley-by-Bow caused a 30-minute suspension of both the District and Hammersmith & City lines.

Points failing at Willesden Junction suspended the Bakerloo Line north of Queen's Park from 08.35 on **Sunday 26 August**. Services resumed at 10.15, only to be suspended again for a final 'fix' from 12.50 to 13.25. White City station closed from 16.10 to 18.15 because of flooding caused by a burst water main close to the station.

Southbound Metropolitan and Jubilee Line services from Wembley Park were late starting up on Bank Holiday **Monday 27 August** because of a rail defect at West Hampstead. The first Metropolitan Line train departed Wembley Park 30 minutes late with the Jubilee Line not so badly affected, as that line starts up a little later. Problems with the computer signalling at the east end of the Piccadilly Line resulted in manual 'on-site' (local) operation from 05.45. However, at 07.50 the service came to a complete stand for 30 minutes while the system was 'rebooted'. The combination of a SPAD (at 16.05) and a signal failure (at 16.15) on the westbound at Bounds Green resulted in a 25-minute delay 'through the road' and seven trains being cancelled in the early evening for timetable recovery.

On **Tuesday 28 August**, a multiple signal failure westbound between Stepney Green and Whitechapel from 10.00 resulted in the Hammersmith & City Line being suspended east of Moorgate. The District Line continued through the area under failure conditions but not without 12 District and 5 H&C cancellations by midday. The fault was fixed by 12.15, when the Hammersmith & City Line resumed, but as soon as a normal service was achieved, a signal failure occurred at

Stepney Green westbound just before 17.00, delaying services once again until fixed at 19.30. In the meantime a local power failure closed Warwick Avenue from 15.10 to 18.25 and again from 21.10 to 22.30.

The Diary now continues to cover the Paralympic Games period, with later finishes daily and an earlier start-up on Sundays.

Wednesday 29 August was trouble-free. The fact that the opening ceremony of the Paralympic Games ran an hour late resulted in the later last trains through the Olympic Park area running some 10-15 minutes later still, all without problems.

Smoke from under a southbound Jubilee Line train at Bond Street at 10.25 on **Thursday 30 August** suspended the service between Finchley Road and Waterloo. One train stalled between St. John's Wood and Baker Street was authorised to return to the former, arriving back there at 10.50. Services resumed at 11.35 after the incident train departed for Stratford Market depot. The only other notable event of the day was a 35-minute suspension through Earl's Court on the District Line from 16.25 because of a person trackside east of the station. The traction current layout and arrangements meant that the Circle Line had to be suspended as well. Five trains were stalled between stations, the last reaching a platform at 17.00, from when services resumed.

Friday 31 August began with Blackfriars LU station closing for 30 minutes from 05.40 because of a fire alarm operated. A track defect on the northbound approach to Old Street suspended the northbound City branch of the Northern Line for 30 minutes from 13.15. The rest of the day was uneventful.