

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.

27.03.13 UXBRIDGE GAZETTE – *Letter by Dr. John Stark* – “On 20 March 20, Baker Street platform one was closed, so that any train normally planned to use that platform was terminated at Harrow-on-the-Hill. This was because the Queen’s visit to Baker Street as part of Underground 150th celebrations. The already overcrowded Harrow to Finchley Road section, consequently way over capacity, causing many passengers discomfort and presenting a possible safety problem. Why on earth was the ceremony timed to be on a week day and not at the weekend nearest to the anniversary? Why was the train left in situ at Baker Street for the entire day, when the Queen’s visit was over by mid-morning? Why did the event have to take place at such a capacity-critical station? Why not hold it in one of the bays at High Street Kensington? The slogan on the side of the train at Baker Street “Keeping London moving since 1863”, seemed richly ironic, given that a quarter of morning peak services were effectively cancelled for part of their route. Does TfL not understand that headline-grabbing “nice” events really should come second to one of their actual business purposes – that of providing an adequate peak service? It struck me as rather shameful treatment of passengers just to gain some good media publicity. Perhaps the most irritating thing is that nowhere on TfL’s publicity do they even apologise for the disruption caused!”

28.03.13 EVENING STANDARD – *Letter by Edmund Murphy* – “As a regular Tube user, I’m disturbed by the frequent announcement of “a person under the train”. As I travelled on the Victoria Line at about 5pm yesterday, it was mentioned no less than 20 times in 5 minutes. Why can’t they announce “an incident” or some other less graphic expression?”

02.04.13 THE TIMES – Britain’s first new big railway in more than a century looks likely to be run by an overseas operator. The franchise to run the trains on London’s £15B Crossrail route has been opened to tender, and operators of the Paris Metro (RATP), the Hong King mass transit system (MTR) and the state railway company of Germany (DBS) have emerged as early favourites. All three have expressed clear interests in running Crossrail in a competition being run by TfL. In stark contrast, domestic operators have been equivocal about the contract. None of First Group, National Express or Stagecoach has said definitely that they will bid. They privately concede that with 10 mainline franchises coming up for tender over the next four years with DfT, a Crossrail contract may be a bid battle too far. TfL says that it wants an operator in place from May 2015. Formal expressions of interest have to be in by the end of April.

02.04.13 METRO – “GIGS 2013” is an annual competition that gives musicians the opportunity to perform at London landmarks, and compete for music prizes including an official Underground busking license and studio recording time. The competition is open to Londoners aged 11 to 25. Last year, 500 young musicians performed during the Olympic Games in the GIGS 2012 busking competition. Between them they played more than 2,000 hours of music to around 750,000 people.

04.04.13 METRO – 100M passengers used the DLR in the last financial year – breaking all previous records. The milestone marks an impressive year for the DLR when 7.2M people were carried during the 2012 Olympic Games – double the number of passengers usually expected at that time of the year. Since it opened 25 years ago, the DLR has grown from 11 carriage units and 15 stations, to 145 units and 40 stations. The six extensions that have been added to the network include two under river crossings.

04.04.13 METRO – *Text by Smurfer* – “Does anyone else Tube surf? That’s seeing how long you can surf the Tube without holding on to a rail. I like to imagine myself surfing the waves at Bondi Beach when I am coming into Paddington station”.

08.04.13 METRO – *Text by Wobbler* – “Smurfer, I had no choice but to train surf on Friday, thanks to a short man who decided to lean against the pole and read his paper so no one else could hold it”.

08.04.13 METRO – Travelling on the Underground is becoming easier for disabled people as $\frac{2}{3}$ of the network – 108 stations – now have wide aisle gates. These gates also make journeys quicker for parents with buggies and passengers with heavy luggage. Wood Green is the latest station to benefit, bringing the total number of gates on the network to 348. Nearly 40% of all stations and stops in London (including National Rail, Underground, DLR and Tramlink) currently have step free

access – up from 30% five years ago. There will be a further 28 step-free Underground and Overground stations over the next 10 years.

09.04.13 METRO – London’s cable car, the Emirates Air Line, has celebrated carrying its 2 millionth passenger since opening just before last year’s Olympic Games. Over the past 9 months businesses located near each terminal have reported an increase in footfall – boosting local investment and help drive wider plans to regenerate the North Greenwich and Royal Docks areas of east London. Business and leisure passengers have also been rating the new river crossing highly, giving it 93% in a recent independent customer satisfaction survey. Emirate Air Line’s Danny Price said: “I am please Emirates Air Line passengers are so happy with the service they receive. The cable car is a new transport experience and, like river services on the Thames, it offers a unique way to see London”.

11.04.13 WESTERN MORNING NEWS – There were no tin cans cheekily tied on the back of the carriage carrying these blissful newlyweds to their reception – because the entire wedding party travelled on the Underground. Eliot Maunder and Emily Drabek, from Devon, made the short trip from Marylebone Register Office to the venue of their celebration meal at Charing Cross on a Bakerloo Line train, with their 30 wedding guests. Eliot said: “We wanted to travel on the Underground because it is so quick and easy. I travel on the Underground to get to work and it is the best way to get around the capital. Staff guided us to the front of the train and we had a carriage to ourselves”. An LU spokesman said: “We were delighted we could speed this young couple to their wedding meal”.

10.04.13 EVENING STANDARD – Police are investigating the deaths yesterday of two people on LU tracks. A woman from Gillingham died after falling onto the District and Circle Line track at Victoria. A man from Leyton fell on the Central Line track at Stratford.

12.04.13 METRO – Refurbishment of Kensington (Olympia) station has begun with work to prepare for the installation of automatic ticket gates. The gates will be installed in the booking hall and will help tackle fare evasion and improve security. An additional staircase for the footbridge will also be built to relieve congestion and to provide free pedestrian access across the station. Work is expected to be completed in mid-July.

16.04.13 EVENING STANDARD – *Letter by Ray Boulger* – “RMT leader Bob Crow’s outburst in response to a survey in which 59% of respondents said they thought it was too easy for Underground workers to go on strike was pathetic but totally predictable. I presume that by accusing the London Assembly’s Conservatives who commissioned the poll, of “behaving like Hitler, Mussolini and Pinochet” he is referring to their distaste for democracy. Perhaps he should reflect that by responding to a public poll in this way he is going down exactly the same path”.

18.04.13 METRO – At Bank station from now until later in the year, both escalators leading to the Northern Line ticket hall will be out of service. While the two escalators are being replaced, passengers are advised to use one of the four large lifts that run between the platforms and the ticket hall. Extra staff will be on hand but there may be queues at busy times. To avoid these, follow the signs to the District and Circle lines and exit via Monument station.

18.04.13 THE TIMES – Two foreign-owned rail construction companies are among the front-runners to take over the operation of the DLR. Colas Rail, in joint bid with Go-Ahead, is the railway unit of Bouygues, a French construction group. Keolis, a subsidiary of SNCF, is teaming up with Amey which is owned by Spanish group Ferrovial. Also among the shortlisted bidders are SERCO, the current incumbent, and Stagecoach. The winning franchise operator is expected to not only to operate the trains but also maintain the track and stations. The new franchise is due to be operational from September 2014.

19.04.12 METRO – When Crossrail is complete in 2018, Farringdon will become one of Britain’s busiest stations. It will also provide a key link from outer London to the business hubs in the City and Canary Wharf. It will be an interchange between the Underground, Thameslink and Crossrail with more than 140 trains an hour passing through during the peak times. It will be the only interchange between all three networks, also having direct connection for three London Airports plus Eurostar services at St. Pancras International.

19.04.13 WATFORD OBSERVER – Watford-based Taylor-Woodrow has secured the contract to design the £118M Croxley Rail Link scheme. It will draw up engineering plans to route the Metropolitan Line from Croxley Underground station to Watford Junction station.

22.04.13 METRO – 15 leading international artists have been commissioned to create a series of posters to celebrate the Underground's 150th anniversary. The "15 for 150" project will see artworks go up in June on prominent sites at Gloucester Road, Southwark, St. James's Park and London Bridge. As part of the commission, each artist will create a signed and numbered edition of prints which will go on sale in July. Revenue from the sales of the prints will help to support *Art on the Underground*.

23.04.13 DAILY TELEGRAPH – Police are investigating a YouTube clip which apparently shows a woman racially abusing a man on an LU train. The footage is believed to have been filmed on an eastbound District Line service. BTP has released images of a woman they would like to speak to in connection with the alleged episode. The police said: "We treat all allegations of racism very seriously and urge anyone with information about this incident to contact us".

23.04.13 DAILY TELEGRAPH – A new version of the Underground map by Simon Patterson, one of the Frieze artists, will be on view at the London Original Print Fair at the Royal Academy. *Saptarishi* is an update of Patterson's famous *Great Bear* print based on the Underground map which was printed in 1992 in an edition of 50. Originally costing £400 each, the prints of the Great Bear have fetched up to £35,000 at auction. In *Satarishi*, which was commissioned by the LT Museum, all the station names have been changed. Printed on enamel in an edition of 15, they are available at £18,000 plus VAT each.

23.04.13 EVENING STANDARD – Underground commuters have voted Canary Wharf, Charing Cross, Baker Street and London Bridge as their favourite stations. Among the most hated stations, Bank easily made first place, followed by Elephant & Castle, King's Cross and Oxford Circus. Two thirds of those questioned put Canary Wharf at the top of their lists because it was light, clean and close to good restaurants and shops. However, they said Bank station was like a maze because of its 10 exits and entrances. During the morning peak, it is used by 96,000 people and it is estimated its absolute capacity of 100,000 will be reached by 2016. The station is linked to Monument by long underground passageways, slopes, stairs and escalators. With so many exits situated so far apart, passengers often find themselves emerging in a different part of the City from which they intended.

23.04.13 EVENING STANDARD – *Letter by Richard* – "Yesterday I sat on a Tube platform with a 19-minute wait. We were told the delay was due to "an investigation by the Fire Brigade". I work for the Fire Brigade and we do not descend on a busy station at a whim – such delays are typically caused by LU's poor housekeeping – forcing them to call us to resolve a situation. It's bad enough having to wait so long without Underground management passing the buck".

24.04.13 METRO – At Highbury & Islington station there is stair-only access between the ticket hall and the Victoria Line until mid-October, so that both escalators can be refurbished. At peak times, the station can get very busy and using the stairs can take up to 10 minutes. To avoid queues, passengers are advised to use other nearby stations of Holloway Road, Finsbury Park and Angel which are served by frequent bus services. These escalators are 45 years old. Having run for about 20 hours per day, 364 days per year, they have travelled the equivalent of a return trip to the moon.

25.04.13 METRO – Tiny dust particles in the atmosphere on Underground lines could damage passengers' health, new research shows. The pollutants were "metal rich", similar to that in steel mills where exposure has been shown to be harmful to health. They could easily penetrate the lungs and reach other organs in the body, including the liver, brain and kidneys. But LU said the research at one underground station in Europe could not be applied to its service. Researcher Matt Laxham of Southampton University estimates 1.2B journeys were made on London Underground and called for more work to be done to assess the risks to staff or passengers. He said: "Typically, ultrafine dust is composed of inert matter that does not pose much of a risk". LU said their own research – independently supported – had "consistently shown mineral levels within the dust are perfectly safe".

26.04.13 METRO – Passengers using Paddington(H&C) station will notice further improvements, following the opening of a third stairway and larger booking hall. The rebuilding of the station is part of a joint LU and Crossrail project to expand capacity and make it step-free. The final stage of the

project includes the addition of two new ticket machines and lifts to the platforms, and is scheduled to be finished next year.

29.04.13 METRO – Latest figures show the Underground is on track to record its most reliable year. The figures cover 6 January to 2 March. In total there were 187M journeys made and 97.5% of services operated as scheduled. The new Victoria Line timetable for 33 trains per hour was introduced following the upgrade of track, signalling and train fleet, giving the passengers the highest frequency service anywhere in the UK. Underground journeys are to become even more reliable as TfL plans to cut delays by 30% by the end of 2015.

30.04.13 TIME OUT – Students at Kingston University have been applying a bit of out-of-the-box thinking to the Underground's design classics. The following are some of their ideas: (1) "Met-Roll" Newspaper. A newspaper that unwinds from a post to allow several people to read the same paper at the same time. (2) Roundel Seesaw. A seesaw made from the LT logo made from plywood with the seats covered in classic LU fabric, taken from cushions from the LT Museum shop. (3) Germy Seat Fabrics. We'd rather not picture the filth lurking on your average Underground seat. New versions of the iconic upholstery patterns reveal the microscopic life that commutes alongside us. Patterns include "Bacillus" (based on bacteria) an, um, "Sperm".

30.04.13 CITY AM – Commuters on the Jubilee Line are facing intermittent closures for the next 18 months while TfL repairs damage done by acidic water in the tunnels. Stations between Finchley Road and Waterloo will be out of action for five periods this year, with nine more closures during 2014. TfL says it needs to fix the effects of acidic ground water and soil surrounding the tunnels. LU spokesman said: "We will be doing as much of the work as possible overnight, however in some cases we need to carry on beyond normal overnight engineering hours". Caroline Pigeon of the London Assembly has asked TfL to look into "one intensive block closure" instead of the planned 30 days of intermittent disruption. Tests last year have shown water seeping in to the tunnels at *pH*2, the same acidity as vinegar or lemon juice. Staff have been asked to use rubber gloves in the tunnels for safety.

Editor's Note: The following closure dates have been announced:

16 June 2013	12 January 2014	15 June 2014
26 August 2013	1-2 February 2014	17 August 2014
6, 12, 13 October 2013	1, 8, 9 March 2014	16 November 2014
25-30 December 2013	18-21 April 2014	25-30 December 2014

30.04.13 EVENING STANDARD – TfL bosses have come under intense pressure to launch round-the-clock Underground services in a major new report from the West End Commission. Trains need to run from central London until at least 03.00 – and preferably later – on Friday and Saturday nights to help the huge crowds of visitors, as well as evening economy workers, in the West End to get home. The east-west Crossrail line to be completed in 2019, and the modernised Thameslink route must also provide a 24-hour service to make central London properly accessible day and night. The report said it was vital that London matched global competitors such as New York and Paris where Metro services run until 02.00 at the weekend. TfL has already said that it will run the Victoria and Jubilee lines until 02.00 from 2015. TfL's Sir Peter Hendy said: "We do need a few hours a night for maintenance. But I'm not saying we couldn't do it. I'm saying it's really sensible to look at it in the context of the strategic future of the West End". There is also strong support for the proposal from Westminster Council.

30.04.13 EVENING STANDARD – Disability access on the Underground is to be improved with wheelchair ramps brought in at an extra 19 stations. TfL will make the improvements as a legacy of the Paralympics, when the ramps used to bridge the gap between platform and train, were widely used. There are 66 stations on the network that are step-free but the gap between platform and train has meant that wheelchair and mobility scooter users can struggle. Three quarters of the step-free stations will now be equipped with ramps. Over the next eight years, 27 more Underground and Overground stations will be made step-free. The first in line are Bond Street, Tottenham Court Road and Victoria.

30.04.13 EVENING STANDARD – An Underground passenger told how he helped rescue a woman who fell onto the tracks at Stockwell station. Osman Dean was waiting on the packed Northern Line platform last week when the woman next to him collapsed headfirst as the train was approaching.

Despite his fear of being electrocuted by the live rail, he jumped down with another man to rescue her while other passengers waved to stop the train. Luckily the driver managed to stop the train a few metres away from them, and they were able to get out safely. The traction current was quickly switched off. The woman escaped unharmed, but was really dazed, didn't seem to realise what had happened and declined the offer of an ambulance. LU's Howard Collins said: "I would like to thank our customers for their prompt reaction".

MAY 2013 MODERN RALWAYS – Procurement has been approved by TfL to order 57 additional intermediate carriages for all Overground's Class 378 units to be increase to five carriages per unit, for delivery from Bombardier by 2014. There is an option for two new additional five-carriage trains.