

## FROM THE PAPERS

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**01.01.13 THE TIMES** – *By Lord Adonis* – "This year is the 50th Anniversary of the infamous Beeching Axe. Looking back, even with hindsight, he was mostly right to close thousands of miles of railway track and hundreds of stations. Some reprieves were inspired. The North London line is now part of London Overground, the hugely popular orbital service connecting Willesden, Camden, Islington, Stratford, the City, East London and Clapham Junction".

**02.01.13 EVENING STANDARD** – *Letter from M. Qureshi* – "With the anticipation about the Metropolitan Line's 150th birthday, I am not sure it is getting the respect it deserves as it lags behind the Victoria, Jubilee and Northern lines for upgrade works. At Baker Street, for example, rain regularly comes down onto platform 5 from the Marylebone Road. You would have thought the oldest line would be the first in the queue for an upgrade. Getting signal upgrades and platform works completed this year would be the best birthday present TfL could give the Metropolitan Line, ahead of any transport heritage celebrations".

**07.01.13 CITY AM** – The first 800 townhouses, flats and penthouses at Battersea Power Station will go on sale to the public on 10 January as building of the £8B scheme gets underway later this year. The 39-acre scheme will eventually include 3,400 homes, 1.7m square feet of offices, shops and two hotels. The Northern Line will also be extended with two new stops to the area.

**07.01.13 EVENING STANDARD** – Pieces of ceiling fell onto an Underground platform at 08.15 as commuters waited on the Central Line platform at Oxford Circus. LU immediately closed the westbound platform and said it would remain closed for the rest of the day. Travellers were advised to use Bond Street or Tottenham Court Road stations instead. Eastbound services were not affected. A TfL spokesman said: "Trains are non-stopping following a small amount of plaster falling from the ceiling above the platform. No passengers were hurt".

**07.01.13 EVENING STANDARD** – An investigation has been launched after a Central Line train overshot the platform by half a carriage at Holland Park.

**08.01.13 CITY AM** – SERCO has won an 18-month extension to its DLR contract, worth around £100M, following a landmark summer for the transport system. The extended contract will run to September 2014 and will involve operating, maintaining and marketing the DLR. The light railway carried 7.2m passengers – more than double typical levels – through last year's Olympic Games, making it a record summer for the line. Overall, the DLR has carried more than 830m passengers over the past 15 years.

**09.01.13 METRO** – With number of passengers using the Victoria Line Vauxhall station set to increase by 40% over the next few years, extra space will be created by reconfiguring the ticket office to increase the number of ticket gates. The station will offer step-free access from the street to platform level thanks to the new lift from the ticket hall to complement the existing bus station lift. The upgrades are part of the wider project to support the regeneration of Vauxhall, Nine Elms and Battersea.

**09.01.13 THE TIMES** – *Letter to the Times from Irving Courtenay dated 25 February 1863* – "This morning a party of six, including myself, awaited the 11.38 train at Portland Road (*now Great Portland Street*). As soon as it stopped we attempted to get seats in the first-class carriage, but the vacancies being few, one of the party and myself had to wait while passengers whose places we had hoped to take left the carriage, and while so waiting, the train was started, and we were left behind to bewail our fate, in company with other passengers, second and third class, who were in the same condition from the like cause. After complaining, I was told one minute was allowed for each stop, but it was actually 15-25 seconds. Whether such delay is sufficient to enable passengers to get in and out with safety may well be doubted, as it will assuredly lead to the reprehensible practice of getting into the train while in motion. I found there was no stationmaster or superintendent of any kind, save a porter, who said he was in charge of the station, but had nothing to do with the starting of the trains".

**09.01.13 EVENING STANDARD** – LU's MD Mike Brown has warned that passengers could suffer years of disruption because of a £12B funding gap in planned upgrades on two lines. He is calling for government money to complete the Piccadilly and Bakerloo lines' modernisation, as well as upgrades at Bank, Monument and Holborn stations. He said reliability on the services – with 30-year-old trains operating on the Piccadilly Line – would be affected and money would be wasted on repairs. Funding has already been secured for the Northern Line upgrade, new trains and signalling for the “sub-surface” lines. If funding is granted, the Piccadilly Line could be acquiring the first articulated trains with walk-through carriages, as well as air conditioning. The Waterloo & City, Piccadilly and Central lines could be the first with driverless trains, but not until the middle of the next decade.

**10.01.13 EVENING STANDARD** – With an iPad as her canvas, artist Nadja Ryzhakova has painted digital pictures of the Underground using an app as her palette and her finger tips as paint brushes. The works, which she calls iPaintings, show surreal scenes from the Underground. They were created as part of the LU series, celebrating the 150th anniversary by showing works inspired by it. One of the paintings, as an underwater platform populated by fish using not only Oyster cards but actual oysters, with a shrimp wearing a hoodie and fish holding an umbrella! She is a former student of the Stroganov Moscow State University of Arts and Industry.

**10.01.13 EVENING STANDARD** – The running costs of the £60M Thames cable car, the “Emirates air Line” are set to hit £6M in its first year. TfL has admitted to costs of about £500,000 a month to run the scheme since it was launched in June. More than 1.7M passengers have taken the five minute ride between North Greenwich and the Royal Docks, surpassing its first-year target of 1.3M trips. But passenger numbers have fallen from 180,000 a week during the Olympics to as few as 300 travellers a day, leading to demands for the Mayor to do more to attract commuters and cyclists rather than marketing the cable car as a tourist attraction. The cable car has been closed on 21 occasions, each for an average of more than 3 hours.

**11.01.13 EVENING STANDARD** – *Letter from Tom Barry* – “Wet and windy weather often forces closure of the Emirates Air Line – they skimped on the design so it can only cope with lower top wind speed than an alpine cable car. The main problem is the ticket price, £3.20 with an Oyster card, plus the fact there is a perfectly usable connection between boarding points, in the form of the Jubilee Line and DLR. There's little chance of increasing traffic unless the fare is cut dramatically”.

**11.01.13 EVENING STANDARD** – Two Underground strikes scheduled to take place on 18 and 25 January were suspended today. The ASLEF union ordered the walkouts in a long running dispute over pay and bank holiday working. A strike on Boxing Day caused massive disruption throughout the network. A union spokesman said both strikes had been “suspended to allow meaningful talks to take place”. The dispute dates back to a 1992 agreement under which staff received pay increases in return for changes to working conditions. ASLEF says conditions have changed since then and have demanded up to three days' pay and a day off in lieu for working bank holidays.

**14.01.13 THE TIMES** – A competition to operate the DLR could prompt an audacious bid from Hong Kong Mass Transport Railway Corporation (MTRC) to run all of London's rail network outside of the Underground. TfL has launched a new tendering process to operate the DLR from 2014. MTRC has emerged as an early front-runner for the £430M contract. Ambitious plans for the DLR, currently operated by SERCO, could incorporate connections to St. Pancras and Victoria, as well as an extension to the borders of Kent at Bromley. MTRC currently operates the Overground network and is shortlisted for the Essex Thameside (currently C2C) railway franchise.

**14.01.13 EVENING STANDARD** – (*See 07.01.13 CITY AM above*) – More than £600M worth of flats and townhouses, ranging from £343,000 studio flat to £6M for a penthouse, have been sold at Battersea Power Station development called Circus West in a four-day stampede. Three quarters of the initial phase of 800 properties at the project were snapped up at what is thought to be the fastest selling property development on record in London.

**14.01.13 EVENING STANDARD** – *From Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson as part of the paper's “Your big ideas to make London Better” campaign* – “One thing I noticed during the Olympics and Paralympics was just how happy people were on the Underground. I think we should spray some happy pheromones on people as they walk in and out of the Underground. I remember that during the Olympics someone would be wearing ordinary clothes but would have on their Games Makers

trainers and people would just start a conversation with them. I sat there thinking: "This is just lovely". Everyone was just a bit happier. Maybe we could have pictures of nice things that happened at the Games in the Underground to remember it".

**14.01.13 EVENING STANDARD** – Chilling morning wasn't it? But that didn't stop those Underground travellers from stripping down to their underwear to mark "No Pants Day". The no trousers movement started as a prank in 2002 in New York but has become a global phenomenon, with cities including Shanghai, Mexico City and Sydney taking part this year. The organisers said the only two requirements for participation were a willingness to ride without trousers and the ability "to keep a straight face about it".

**14.01.13 EVENING STANDARD** – Who would have thought that Michael Portillo was a train spotters' pinup? Last night he was mobbed on board LU's Metropolitan No.1 steam locomotive which chuffed slowly between Kensington Olympia and Moorgate while hundreds of train spotters snapped away and queued up to get him to sign their commemorative booklets. He said: "Personally, I don't think that I have ever been more photographed in my life". LU had nearly missed a trick as the former MP had been invited at the very last minute. The LT Museum sent him a book, which he had taken the trouble to E-Mail his thanks and wished them well for Sunday's 150th celebrations, and back came an offer of a ticket, albeit third class.

**15.01.13 METRO** – *Quote from Mayor Boris Johnson* – "There is something about the sight of a steam train that seems to turn adult males into bug-eyed adolescents".

**15.01.13 METRO** – 1M passengers have used the Overground's new extension between Surrey Quays and Clapham Junction during its first month. The link across south London created the capital's first orbital surface railway and means passengers can avoid changing trains in central London. There a four trains an hour in each direction linking the southwest to east London. In the five years since TfL took over the Overground, passenger numbers have quadrupled.

**16.01.13 METRO** – In a feat of overnight engineering a 20 metre long, 33 tonne beam was installed on a bridge adjacent to Perivale Underground station. The beam is in place to protect the bridge in the unlikely event of an over-height lorry collides with it. The work is part of the LU upgrade and was carried out after the Central Line was closed for the night.

**22.01.13 METRO** – Work to replace the second of two Underground overbridges in Hammersmith was completed at the weekend. Hundreds of staff worked round the clock in freezing conditions to replace the structures ready for Monday morning. The two bridges were over 100 years old and becoming costly to maintain. The replacements have designed life of 120 years and will reduce maintenance and improve journeys.

**22.01.13 METRO** – For the first time since 2010, much sought after free licences are up for grabs, which allow buskers to play to millions of people that use the Underground each day. Auditions will take place in the spring in front of a panel of judges made up of music industry professionals and people from the Capital's music scene and LU, who will be looking for gifted performers. Entrants will be marked on their presentation, musical ability, repertoire and originality. Since its launch in 2003, the busking scheme has been very popular with passengers and has showcased some of the best live music in the city. The scheme currently includes 37 pitches at 25 stations, and there are currently 200 licensed buskers.

**22.01.13 EVENING STANDARD** – Florence Welch, singer with Florence + the Machine, led an Underground train carriage full of fans in an impromptu sing-along of one her biggest hits when they recognised her as she headed home after a gig. She hopped onto a Hammersmith & City train at Hammersmith, and when fans spotted her and started singing her band's 2009 hit "You've Got the Love", instead of shying away in horror, joined in. Welch is not the only chart superstar that like to get around London by Underground, Chris Martin, Kim Wilde and Rihanna have both been spotted using the Underground to travel to their own gigs.

**23.01.13 EVENING STANDARD** – *Letter from Roy E. Bennett* – "The problem with the capacity on the Northern Line is thanks to the failure to resume the four-track working started in the 1930s and stopped during the Second World War when the empty tunnels were used as air raid shelters and then forgotten about. Finishing the four track infrastructure scheme would help boost employment and overcome safety hazards at stations like Clapham Common, which should have separated north and southbound platforms".

**25.01.13 METRO** – There are 426 escalators on the Underground network and some are nearing the end of their lives. As part of the LU upgrade programme almost 200 escalators have been replaced or restored so far, and work continues on a number of others. Two were completed ahead of schedule at Victoria before Christmas, and two at Baker Street are due to be completed in March. The next on the list are those at Highbury & Islington and Vauxhall. These heavy duty machines are custom made for each station, and it can take up to 24 weeks to carry out an overhaul, particularly when spare parts have to be manufactured from scratch. Every escalator is inspected regularly for wear and tear so replacement parts can be ordered if needed. The sheer volume of use can result in withdrawal from service at short notice if a defect occurs.

**31.01.13 METRO** – The Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall took a trip on the Underground to mark its 150th Anniversary. They visited Farringdon and saw the on-going work to prepare for the east-west Crossrail link and met Underground staff and apprentices involved in the upgrade and construction work. Farringdon will become one of the busiest stations on the network and the only station to be served by the Underground, Crossrail and Thameslink services. The Royal couple travelled from there on an S Stock train to King's Cross to see the Grade 1 listed facade of the Network Rail station revealed by the removal of the unloved green canopy.

**31.01.13 EVENING STANDARD** – Union bosses will demand pay rises for running the Underground later at night. Under the plan, trains on some lines could run until 02.00 – at least an hour later than they do now – on Friday and Saturday night from 2015. The Underground's three largest unions said they were angry with LU for announcing the plans in the media, without first telling staff or starting negotiations. ASLEF spokesman said: "There will have to be major changes to shift patterns which would have a huge effect on all staff, not just drivers. This is not just about pay. It is about changes to the working and home life of our members". RMT spokesman said: "Major changes to operational hours mean major changes to rosters and would require the recruitment of more staff". TSSA spokesman said: "As well as safeguarding maintenance work, there are many other issues, like health and safety of both staff and passengers."

**FEBRUARY 2013 MODERN RAILWAYS** – Part of the 2ft gauge Post Office Railway in London – Mail Rail, closed in 2003 – may be reopened as part of the proposed new Postal Museum at Mount Pleasant, following receipt of around £250,000 Heritage Lottery Fund grant, for further development.

The old Mail Rail car depot and workshop would be converted into an exhibition space and terminus. From these platforms, trains would dive down twin track tunnels into the double track eastbound platform of the old Mount Pleasant station, where there would be displays illustrating the history of the railway and how it was used. Trains would then continue round one of the original single track return loops to re-emerge on the westbound platform, alongside a display of examples of rolling stock, before climbing back up to the new terminus.

It is estimated that the just over 1km long trip would take around 15 minutes. The railway which opened in 1927 was the world's first fully automatic, driverless electric underground railway, never carried passengers in its 76 year history, though there was one single passenger carriage, used by visiting dignitaries (*including Michael Portillo in the TV series Great British Railway Journeys*).

New trains would therefore be needed, each carrying about 30 passengers. The current plan is that these should use tractor units from some of the 1981 built units which have been in warm storage underground since the closure. If the second round lottery fund bid for £4M is successful, this could lead to a planned opening in 2016.