

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.

18.07.13 CITY AM – The City’s historic Guildhall played host to one of the capital’s more eccentric traditions yesterday. Every year since 1655 a city livery company – the Worshipful Company of Carmen – have gathered in Old Yard, wielding red hot branding irons. Not for sinister reasons, but to put their stamp on various horse-drawn carriages and steam-driven vehicles. A more modern mode of transport – old Metropolitan Railway carriage number 353 – this year also met its marker. But with space in mind, it took pride of place at Mansion House station.

20.07.13 NEW SCIENTIST – The Jubilee is the youngest and smartest of the LU lines, but it is mouldier than the much older Central and Bakerloo lines. Researchers from the University of Bath collected fungal cells lurking on the platforms at 12 stations across the three lines. They then compared these levels with those in a London hospital and in one of the city’s parks. People travelling on the Jubilee Line – opened in 1979 and extended in 1999 – breathe in fractionally more fungal cells than those on the Central Line which opened in 1900. In both cases, it was just over 3 fungal cells per minute. This is twice as much as you would get in the park and, reassuringly(?) four times as much as in the hospital. On the Bakerloo Line, which opened in 1906, people take in 0.75 cells per minute. Strangely, the Jubilee Line had the fewest *Penicillium* cells – from which *penicillin* is produced – though it is one of the most common fungi species in the outside air. The difference is likely to be down to temperature, humidity and how the stations are connected to the outside.

01.08.13 SOUTHWARK NEWS – Campaigners who are concerned that an extension of the Northern Line could result in overcrowding and increased traffic in Kennington, have struck a blow for victory with the announcement that a public enquiry will be held into TfL’s plans. The DfT announced that they will be holding an enquiry to examine the viability of the plan to extend the Northern Line down in to Kennington. Residents are worried the Kennington Park(*sic*) station in its current state would struggle to cope with surge in passengers if the Northern Line was lengthened to include that part of the borough. (*Complier’s note: Kennington station is located in Kennington Park Road*).

01.08.13 METRO – Redevelopment work at Tottenham Court Road station is now around 60% complete. Two new entrances and expanded Northern Line access are due to open in 2015, with Crossrail services through the central hub set to start in 2018. Up to 150,000 passengers use this station every day. That number is expected to more than 200,000 when Crossrail opens.

02.08.13 WATFORD OBSERVER – More than 2,000 people have signed an on-line petition calling for a new Metropolitan Line station planned for West Watford to be called “Vicarage Road”. The Mayor of Watford has forwarded the signatures and comments collected to TfL, which has the final say on station naming.

02.08.13 WATFORD OBSERVER – The first stages towards building the Croxley Rail Link will be taken next month as site surveys get underway along the new route. These surveys will help engineers draw up detailed designs in order to start construction in Spring 2014. Funding has been promised for the £118M scheme since 2011, but work was not able to commence until DoT signed a Transport Works Act last week. The target date for trains to start running on the new link is 2016. Last week it was also announced that Watford Metropolitan station would close as part of the rail link, and the connecting section of track to become train sidings.

04.08.13 – 10.08.13 TIME OUT – *Slang for the chattering classes – “Breezeblock” – “A selfish individual who insists on standing directly in front of a Tube carriage’s end window during a heat wave, hogging the breeze for themselves”.*

04.08.13 – 10.08.13 TIME OUT – The disused Brompton Road underground station in Knightsbridge, which was used as a secret by Winston Churchill in WW2, is up for sale. Closed in 1934 and since the war has been owned by the MoD, which hopes to sell the site for more than £20M. What will you get for your cash? The property includes a drill hall, mess and tunnels. One thing to note: TfL owns the platforms and has sealed them off – just in case would-be buyers are hoping to beat the rush hour.

06.08.13 EVENING STANDARD – Waiting for the next Underground train to appear on the information board – if the station has one – is a common cause of frustration for commuters. Now a new phone app, which shows the trains moving on the LU map, promises to address the problem. Called *Tube Map Live*, the free app uses TfL data and an algorithm to display the most recent location of trains. The app was developed by mathematician Andy Drizen, who became annoyed with departure boards at Stepney Green while he was studying for a PhD. He also plans to provide an app for London buses.

08.08.13 EVENING STANDARD – Thousands of bodies buried under the City of London centuries ago are being unearthed by Crossrail tunnelling work. The remains of several hundred people have been found a few feet beneath Liverpool Street station. The two-acre pit was dug in the mid-17th century by order of the Mayor after parish graveyards became vastly overfilled. Plague victims were buried over two centuries next to rich, poor, young, old, mental health patients and citizens whose corpses were never claimed by their families. Crossrail archaeologist Jay Carver estimated more than 4,000 bodies could be revealed and appealed for public help in identifying them, as the names are scattered in parish records across London.

09.08.13 WATFORD OBSERVER – *Letter from G.A. Smith* – “It is probably too late now but I would like to make a logical suggestion for the new LU station in Ascot Road. How about Dickenson Halt (or Dickenson Sun)? Before their demise Sun Printers and Dickenson Paper Mills employed thousands of people and brought prosperity to the town. This would leave a fitting memorial to the companies and the staff who worked there”.

09.08.13 WATFORD OBSERVER – Campaigners are celebrating after TfL confirmed it is recommending the name of the new LU station on the Croxley Rail Link in west Watford be “Watford Vicarage Road”. The station will be located close to Watford General Hospital and Watford FC’s Vicarage Road stadium.

09.08.13 THE TIMES – Jewellery, pieces of ships, medieval ice skates and skulls are among the thousands of items that have come to light during the construction of the 73-mile Crossrail project in London. More than 100 archaeologists have worked on the excavations at 40 sites over four years alongside the tunnelling work which is advancing by 100 meters a week and is due to be finished next year, and due to open in 2018.

09.08.13 EVENING STANDARD – A four foot long dead shark was found in the New York subway this week. I assumed the NYPD would arrest everyone in the Jets street gang, (but that joke only works if you know West Side Story). One possible explanation is that it was the worst ever publicity stunt for Shark Week, the Discovery Channel’s annual bid to win sympathy for the creature. Another possible explanation is that the possession of a dead shark is the only way a stressed commute can get a seat in the rush hour. As all New York trends eventually end up here, the Circle Line should be awash with hammerheads within months.

12.08.13 EVENING STANDARD – Crime on the Underground and DLR rose last year fuelled by a big surge in pick-pocketing and theft of mobile phones. Figure released indicate 17,030 offences were committed. The BTP Chief Constable Andy Trotter said that police are investigating organised pick-pocketing and theft gangs, most of them from Eastern Europe or South America. He confirmed that BTP had made “great inroads” in tackling cable theft which was down by 13%.

13.08.13 METRO – Leaked plans by LU show every ticket office on the network is lined up for closure in the next two years. According to rail union TSSA, LU bosses are considering axing 6,000 jobs along with 268 offices, which will be replaced with about 20 “travel centres” at major stations. LU refused to rule out the possibility, saying only that any changes would be discussed with their staff first.

13.08.13 EVENING STANDARD – Station supervisors face the axe at a majority of Underground stations in a move to save cash that has sparked a major row over safety. Only 36 of the larger stations would retain their own supervisor, despite staff playing key roles in major incident evacuations. 158 stations would share a “mobile supervisor”, looking after three stations during a shift. The remaining 70-plus stations would share a supervisor looking after six or more stations.

16.08.13 METRO – From 19 August until March 2014, both spiral staircases at Finsbury Park station will be closed. Passengers will still be able to access all lines, however the station will be extremely

busy at peak times and Underground passengers are advised to use nearby stations. The work on the staircases is going to double their capacity to make changing between platforms easier.

16.08.13 CITY AM – Commuters who use the booming Overground network are set to face disruption after unions announced strike action in a row over job losses. No date has been set for the walkouts, which relate to proposals to sack 130 train guards for cost-cutting reasons. Overground services on the Euston – Watford Junction and East London services already operate with only a driver. But the RMT insists it would be “safety critical” to extend this policy to the rest of the network.

16.08.13 CITY AM – TfL has appointed a contractor to lengthen Overground platforms as part of an effort to increase capacity by 25%, by adding a fifth carriage to all trains.

16.08.13 EVENING STANDARD – TfL’s Sir Peter Hendy has confirmed he is considering closing Underground ticket offices. He said: “Yes, we are looking at every economy we can make to run a cost-efficient Underground in a growing city with less public subsidy in order to make sure that it all works”. He added that no decision has yet been made. This is part of a larger cuts programme by TfL to counter a 12.5% – £220M – reduction in government grant.

19.08.13 METRO – More trains are being introduced on the Waterloo & City and Central lines, effective 16 September, helping to ease congestion and cut passenger waiting time on the platform. On the Waterloo & City Line increased frequency on weekday evenings with extended services on weekdays and Saturdays until 00.30. On the Central Line increased frequencies during the morning peak with more services extend to Epping instead of reversing at Loughton or Debden.

19.08.13 THE TIMES – Commuters on new trains can forget about cattle class – they will have less space than the legal minimum for moving farm animals. Carriages are being designed to fit four standing passengers in each square meter of floor space, according to rolling-stock contract documents for the Crossrail and Thameslink upgrade. Calves weighing up to 110kg must have 0.7m² under European law.

19.08.13 EVENING STANDARD – *Text from Graham Larkbey* – “Good news that the Waterloo & City Line will run after midnight. Now what about London Overground?”.

19.08.13 EVENING STANDARD – *Letter from Janine Booth* – “For years we have had ticket machines, but many people still use the ticket office because they have a question a machine cannot answer, or are not confident using the machines. Close the ticket offices and these people will suffer huge inconvenience and distress, or even feel unable to use the Underground altogether”.

19.08.13 EVENING STANDARD – *Letter from Steve Pearson* – “Good luck trying to use the travel vouchers given out after delays in a machine, or buying specific cheaper fares that the machine mysteriously don’t offer. If TfL had upgraded machines to make them as versatile as the service offered at a ticket office that would be one thing – but it hasn’t, despite plans to replace ticket offices going back more than a decade”.

20.08.13 METRO – Work to increase the capacity on the DLR route between Stratford and Canary Wharf started today. The installation of a set of double tracks at Pudding Mill Lane station will enable passengers to benefit from better reliability and an increase from 10 to 15 trains per hour in each direction by next spring. The project is part of a wider scheme which includes relocating the station to allow for the construction of Crossrail tunnels. The new station will provide excellent access for people travelling to events at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, with wider platforms and space for escalators in the future if they are needed. DLR passengers will additionally be able to change to Crossrail services at Stratford.

20.08.13 EVENING STANDARD – *Letter from Peter King* – “As I waited the usual six-eight minutes for a train into town at Hanger Lane, I read that we’re to get a service every two minutes during the rush hour from next month. I’m assuming this is two minutes from North Acton onward with the majority of trains coming from Ealing Broadway and the usual cattle truck conditions continuing on the West Ruislip branch? TfL needs to do something for customers on this stretch and the equally poorly served Uxbridge branch of the Piccadilly Line”.

23.08.13 BUILDING MAGAZINE – A team of consultants has won a high profile delivery partner contract for LU’s £331M stations upgrade programme. The winning team is set to play a key role in a radical new approach to procuring work on the capital’s underground network, assisting LU with a seven year overhaul of 71 stations. Initial projects include improvements at Baker Street,

Embankment and Chancery Lane. The delivery partner will help LU implement plans to trial a new procurement approach called “Stake”, in a bid to save up to 25% on the cost of the upgrade work programme. Through the new programme, LU will take on a much greater share of the construction risk and large amount of the management of jobs.

23.08.13 CITY AM – Overground users are facing a bank holiday weekend of travel chaos due to strike action – despite just 53 staff voting for the staff walkout. TfL has unveiled plans to sack 130 guards on the network as part of a cost cutting measure, prompting the RMT union to ballot for strike action against compulsory redundancies. Just 43% of eligible guards voted in favour, leading to the criticism that the rules are too lax.

23.08.13 METRO – Football hooliganism on the Underground is on the rise again, according to BTP recently released statistics. The number of football related incidents on the national rail network had risen by 38% in 2012-2013. LU incidents rose from 121 to 168, an increase of 64%. The figures will raise fears that football violence is on the increase after decades of relative peace. Senior police officers said most hooliganism takes place away from the stadiums which have become heavily policed. But they add that the public were becoming less tolerant of bad behaviour and are more likely to report offences or record incidents on camera phone and post images online. Officers say that most cases of abuse and anti-social behaviour are fuelled by alcohol and take place after matches. BTP said that they will use CCTV, uniform and plain clothes officers to identify those responsible and then take action against them.

23.08.13 EVENING STANDARD – Underground bosses have hired fashion designer Wayne Hemingway to create new uniforms for their 10,000 front line staff. Their blue uniforms will be replaced by more colourful and eye-catching clothing to make workers “highly visible and easily identifiable”. Hemingway has begun meeting employees to assess their needs and requirements. The new uniforms will be introduced before the end of 2014. Hemingway said: “Once we have come up with a couple of different options, we’ll do wear tests, then they’ll be used at one or two stations in various situations. They’ll be tested for comfort and whether they wash well. You want the design to last for a decade”. Hemingway’s most recent success was his uniform for McDonald’s employees, but he said that LU Staff can be reassured they will not be made to look like they are working a fast food outlet.

23.08.13 EVENING STANDARD – Up to 20 Underground staff have been given 6 months leave of absence to help promote cost-cutting moves aimed at saving £220M after a government grant reduction. TfL’s under its *Every Journey Matters* programme includes closing 268 ticket offices and axing thousands of jobs. The team will tour stations and offices, urging staff to support “a future where automatic machines sell all tickets”.

29.08.13 EVENING STANDARD – Terrified passengers were left frantically trying to free themselves from an Underground train as it filled with smoke. Scores of people were trapped behind closed doors, fearing there was a fire, on the packed Central Line train at Holland Park on 25 August. A YouTube video of the incident shows terrified passengers desperately trying to force open the train doors to flee. People on the platform repeatedly press fire alarm buttons and try to help those inside the carriages to get out. One woman attempts to squeeze herself (*successfully it seems*) between carriages and on to the train roof in order to escape before Underground staff eventually arrive and the doors are opened. One passenger said: “The doors were not being opened, everyone was trying to smash windows panicking and frightened”. A TfL spokesman said the smoke was caused by brake locked against train wheels, and that the doors were closed in case passengers climbed onto live tracks as the train was not fully in the station.

SEPTEMBER 2013 MODERN RAILWAYS – LU has confirmed funding for a complete upgrade of the Piccadilly Line has been secured as part of the Government latest Spending Review. The upgrade would include new trains, signalling and track. As part of the agreement with the Treasury, LU will defer replacement trains currently used on the Bakerloo and Central lines, a decision that will see the Bakerloo’s 1972 stock to remain in service until at least 2030. The new trains will be of a new design – now officially named the New Tube for London. Following work with suppliers, LU plans to invite tenders for the new trains in 2015 to allow a contract award in 2017. These trains will be fully-automated, driverless design with no cab. Staff on board will be likely to perform a similar role to the passenger assistants seen on DLR. Images of the new industrial design have been revealed which show walk through carriages with longitudinal seating. The most significant change

will be a reduction in the number train bogies – sets are likely to be shared between carriages – to cut the amount of heat generated in the tunnels. In parallel with this project, the life extension of the Bakerloo Line 1972 Stock is believed possible, with investment in windows, driver's cabs and mechanical systems, with LU likely to appoint a contractor to carry out the work at Stonebridge Park depot.

SEPTEMBER 2013 MODERN RAILWAYS – The Northern Line's 1995 stock is being refurbished at Morden depot by Alstom with new flooring, new seats with Barman moquette and new blue grab poles and hand rails. The external door controls, long out of use, have been covered over. With the *New Tube for London* pencilled in for the Bakerloo, Central and Piccadilly lines, the most likely option for new stock for the Northern Line's Battersea extension now seem to be 1995 clone trains, with the retention of the existing fleet of 1995 stock on the Northern Line.