

## 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.

**29.01.14 EVENING STANDARD** – Boris Johnson has been accused of deliberately dragging his feet over the Piccadilly Line upgrade because of his own “grandiose” proposals for a Thames Estuary airport. Work to improve the Underground line out to Heathrow by providing new trains and a better signalling system was originally due to be completed this year, but was delayed by spending cuts. In 2011, TfL still estimated the upgrade would begin in 2014 and be finished by 2021. Hounslow council, where the line passes through, says it found out only last week that the start date had been delayed until 2019. Town Hall insiders suggested the hold-up might be down to Mr. Johnson’s reluctance for Heathrow airport – one of the main rivals to his own scheme – to benefit from the improvements to the Underground. The airport would be forced to close if London’s main international hub moved elsewhere.

**30.01.14 METRO** – LU has urged TSSA union leaders to withdraw the threat of strike and industrial action. The strikes, set to last 48 hours on 4 and 11 February, will disrupt commuters and lose union members four days’ pay. According to TSSA figures, more than 70% of members either voted “no” or did not vote for strike action, which was a similar outcome of the RMT’s union ballot.

**30.01.14 EVENING STANDARD** – The idea of vegetables grown in the dark, dusty tunnels LU tunnels, might not immediately whet the appetite. But a subterranean farm is taking root 100 feet beneath the Northern Line near Clapham North and its produce of herbs and vegetables has been described as “delicious” by Michelin-starred chef Michel Roux Jr. Entrepreneurs Richard Ballard and Steven Dring – with the help of Chris Nelson, an expert in growing crops in the harshest conditions – have created *Growing Underground*, a farm in a tunnel used for shelter during the Blitz. Roux said: “When I first met these guys I thought they were absolutely crazy. But when I visited the tunnels and sampled the delicious produce I was blown away. The market for this produce is huge”.

**31.01.14 EVENING STANDARD** – TfL boss Sir Peter Hendy has admitted that the collapse of Bombardier’s £350M Underground signalling contract is a “serious embarrassment” for the firm – just days before it learns whether the Mayor will award it the £1B deal to build Crossrail trains. In his first public comment on the fiasco, he said that Bombardier “missed every milestone” in the year before pulling out of the contract.

**31.01.14 WATFORD OBSERVER** – *Letter from Michael Fish* – “As Watford Met. station is within 3 minutes’ walk of Cassiobury Park, is this not a good time to give new impetus to the Campaign to Keep the Met Station Open? The £6M park upgrade proposal promises new and exciting facilities that will attract extra visitors. Why not encourage some of them to come by train rather than by car? The line to Watford Met. remains fully functional. Each day and every day, Watford Met. will be used for stabling of trains, as there are no stabling facilities at Watford Junction to cater for the Croyley Rail Link trains”.

**03.02.14 METRO** – Londoners overwhelmingly support the Mayor and LU’s vision for the future for the Underground, according to a new poll undertaken by TfL. 82% of people surveyed back moves to bring staff out of underused ticket offices into ticket halls, on gate lines and platforms, and 89% encourage the introduction of the “Night Tube” from 2015. LU has made the following commitments: (1) Ensure all stations remain staffed and controlled at all times, with more staff visible and available to help passengers, (2) Run a new 24-hour service at the weekends from 2015, (3) Provide more frequent and reliable services with better, more accessible stations, (4) Introduce simpler ticketing – such as contactless bank card payment, (5) Provide the best possible value for the fare you pay. LU has also committed to making the station staffing changes without compulsory redundancies and has made clear to staff that there will be a job for everyone who wants to remain with the organisation and be flexible.

**04.02.14 CITY AM** – *Underground Strike Survival Guide* – (1) Make yourself a big, warm flask of your favourite hot drink. You might be waiting outside for a while and it is definitely cold, (2) Load your iPod up with some nice relaxing music, (3) Don’t be afraid to talk to your fellow commuters. We know it’s against your nature but having a good communal moan might be therapeutic, (4) Consider taking a folding chair or stool. It could save your legs while waiting at a bus stop, (5) Wear some

comfortable shoes. Sky-high heels or a new pair of brogues might add an unnecessary irritation to your commute, (6) Make sure you've a decent Tube map app. Most of them will give you real-time updates on the lines. They might miraculously start working again! (7) Download some cab apps so that they could come to your rescue when you have given up on public transport entirely, (8) And finally .... don't forget to pick up your copy of City AM to keep you entertained throughout your journey!

**04.02.14 THE TIMES** – *Letter from Peter Bryson* – “It was interesting to read that directly beneath the Northern Line under Clapham, some farmers are growing vegetables in old tunnels. However, these “bomb shelters” were actually designed as long high-speed tube tunnels by LU. They were built as part of a 1940s project to relieve overcrowding and congestion on the Northern Line. LU in 2014 is now looking at a project called Crossrail2. A key project objective is to relieve overcrowding on its busiest and most overcrowded Underground route. This is of course, the Northern Line in the Clapham area. Instead of spending billions of taxpayers' money on Crossrail2 by digging new tunnels, why not evict the farmers and run new tube trains down these tunnels”.

**06.02.14 THE TIMES** – *Letter from Sir Peter Hendy* – “If we had long, high-speed tube tunnels under the Northern Line we might indeed use them for Crossrail2. Sadly, they are only the length of a station, and only underneath a few of them – they were built as deep-level shelters in WW2. In the face of relentless population growth, the former bomb shelters do not provide a solution to London's transport needs in the 2020s and they can be left to other useful purposes like growing vegetables”.

**06.02.14 METRO** – A new subway is being built as part of the upgrade of Bond Street station. The two escalators that carry passengers down from the ticket hall are being taken out of use in April, while the tunnelling for the subway passes underneath. To keep the station open, a one-way system will be in place. All entry/exit will be via the three remaining escalators on the right-hand side of the ticket hall. At busy times entrance to the station may be temporarily restricted to prevent possible overcrowding.

**07.02.14 THE TIMES** – *Editorial by Robbie Millen* – “*Beat the Tube strike, get a bike*”, shouts the website of Evans Cycles. And this week, during the 48-hour shutdown of London Underground, thousands did just that and took to two wheels. And just as surely as the middle-class volunteers who drove trains and trams during the General Strike of 1926 were strike breakers, so this week's two-wheeled commuters were giving two fingers to the Trots and troglodytes of the RMT”.

**07.02.14 EVENING STANDARD** – *Letter from James* – “Please can you organise more strikes, Bob Crow? I have had the most pleasant of journeys: free Underground travel due to barriers left open, more space on the Underground, a regular six-minute service on the District Line and, above all, friendly, helpful non-striking staff”.

**07.02.14 EVENING STANDARD** – Demands for blister plasters, second-hand bikes, umbrellas and grocery deliveries soared as Londoners battled through town during this week's Underground strike, according to Google. Fed-up commuters looking for alternatives to public transport triggered a 20% jump in searches for second-hand bikes on Google. Searches for Google Maps traffic and cycle directions leapt by 350%. As many commuters chose to walk in, Google said that searches for “foot plasters” and “Compeed blister treatment” rose 12% during the two days of the strike. The wet weather drove a 32% jump in searches for umbrellas, and a similar spike in searches for waterproofing options for bags. Some Londoners appeared to be keen to avoid leaving the house at all – Google searches for grocery deliveries rose 45% during the two days.

**08.02 14 THE GUARDIAN** – A plan by Paris mayoral candidate Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet has been published to transform eight of the closed Métro stations in Paris. A series of futuristic photographs depict the closed Arsenal station as a gleaming swimming pool, a theatre and concert hall, art gallery, night club or restaurant. The question of how the city would pay for the lavish makeovers of these forgotten historical relics is as yet unanswered, but the pictures have captured the imagination of those who live and work in the capital, despite their mixed feelings about the Métro's elusive “charm”. *Google NKM Paris and click on the appropriate link – Ed.*

**10.02.14 CITY AM** – A second Crossrail to link south-west and north-east London could be built for £12B-£20B, with less than half of its funding from central government, according to a report by London First. Published research argues that the railway could be partly paid for by extending the

rise in business rates imposed to fund the first Crossrail line, along with contributions from firms that would benefit such as Heathrow and developers along the line.

**10.02.14 METRO** – Rail and Underground users could be overcharged because of a quirk in the “contactless” payment system, it has been revealed. Commuters who, when touching in and out, have their Oyster and bank cards in the same wallet are having fares deducted from the wrong one, TfL have warned. Although only currently available on buses, contactless payment is due to be rolled out to all London transport this year. TfL has warned passengers about the “card clash” issue and a spokeswoman accepted the system would need a “change of behaviour” for many. TfL insisted the technology would make commuting easier.

**10.02.14 METRO** – RMT union leader Bob Crow insisted yesterday the strike which brought travel chaos to London last week was a success. He said the majority of the public supported the union’s opposition to job cuts. Millions of commuters were forced to squeeze on to buses and the limited Underground services which still ran.

**10.02.14 METRO** – LU’s MD, Mike Brown, has thanked passengers for their patience during the recent strike. Despite the industrial action up to 75% of stations remained open, with around 35-40% of services operating. Up to 45% of regular Underground users still made their journeys. Good services operated across the bus network, DLR, Overground, Tramlink and on LU’s Northern Line (*not all the time – there were many cancellations – Ed*). Extra bus services were provided, alongside enhanced river and coach services and marshalled taxi ranks at London rail termini. Barclays Cycle Hire saw daily journeys up by 50% compared with normal levels. Approximately 1,000 Travel Ambassadors worked more than 2,000 shifts at bus, Underground and rail stations to help Londoners plan their journeys, and hand out walking maps and information.

**10.02.14 EVENING STANDARD** – *Text from Marco V. Periera* – “I agree that moving Stratford into Zone 2 would be a wise decision. Surely Shoreditch High Street should straddle Zones 1 & 2, allowing for a complete Overground lap of London within Zone 2? It is a shame that Zone 1 fares are forced on anyone using the East London line beyond a few stations”.

**10.02.14 EVENING STANDARD** – *Text from Martin Welborne* – “Given that Bombardier has just failed to deliver a new signalling system for the District Line, can it be trusted to build Crossrail trains on time? Will the trains be identical to those on the Metropolitan Line with very few seats? It is a long ride from Maidenhead or Shenfield”.

**11.01.14 – 17.02.14 TIME OUT** – Sub-Urban Dictionary – Slang for the chattering classes – **TFHell**, – noun. Definition: A special form of torture reserved for London Commuters and at its most painful during Underground strikes. Usage: “*Have mercy on my soul, I think I’m going to be entering the fifth circle of TFHell today*”.

**11.02.14 EVENING STANDARD** – *Text from Tina McDade* – “A big thank you to London’s bus drivers who kept us all moving during the Underground strike last week and are about to do so again. They had to put up with extra passengers asking lots of questions along with the awful traffic – and they do it all at half the wages of the Underground drivers”.

**12.02.14 METRO** – A second 48-hour Underground strike was averted yesterday after LU agreed to union demands for a station-by-station review of staffing. The walkout was called off after days of negotiation ended with LU agreeing to put plans to close all ticket offices and cut 950 jobs on hold pending review. RMT leader said the deal allowed all parties to talk “away from the pressure cooker”. A TSSA spokesperson said that they have now agreed a process where all their serious concerns over safety and job losses will be seriously addressed through normal channels. LU’s MD, Mike Brown, said that LU has always said they want the unions to engage fully in order to help shape the proposals for the future of the Underground.

**13.02.14 THE WHARF** – Those living around the Thames Cable Car are to get half-price tickets under an initiative to boost flagging user numbers. Greenwich and Newham residents will get a 50% discount from Valentine’s Day until the end of the year. Caroline Pigeon, leader of the London Assembly Lib-Dem group said: “It is time the Mayor and TfL finally admitted that the only way to attract regular passengers onto the cable car is to treat it as an integral form of public transport”.

**13.02.14 EVENING STANDARD** – *By Columnist Rosamund Urwin* – “It takes a special kind of idiot to throw a shoe onto the Underground tracks. On Friday night, I was that idiot. Swapping heels for flats on a platform at Stockwell, I sent my stiletto cart-wheeling, only for it to land among the mice

and dust. As I recounted my tale to a bemused TfL employee, I assumed the shoe was lost, an accidental sacrifice to the gods of the Underground. Bet the next morning, staff at Stockwell – with scarcely a snigger – returned the polka dot pump. After last week’s strike, underground workers haven’t had a good press of late. But this Cinderella is very grateful they played fairy shoe-mothers”.

**17.02.14 THE TIMES** – Shauni O’Neill, the youngest train driver working on the Underground, can be sure her job is safe – at least according to RMT chief, Bob Crow. The union leader warned that he would fight any plans to introduce driverless trains. He claimed that driverless trains were not safe and “were not going to happen”. Commuters would be in a state of “absolute panic” on London’s train network in the event of a breakdown, he said.

**18.02.14 METRO** – The London Underground roundel has been rated among the world’s greatest, coming 8th out of the best logos ever. Designed by Edward Johnson in 1919, it is now a world-famous and instantly recognised icon of London, and the only British logo to make the top ten.

**18.02.14 METRO** – Latest performance figures show that overall delays to Underground passengers continue to decline, with a 13% reduction year-on-year. Phil Hutton, COO of LU, said: “The autumn presented plenty of Challenges for the LU team, not least severe weather experienced in late October, which caused some disruption of services. However, having robust plans in place helped us to minimise that disruption and maintain a good service”.

**18.02.14 DAILY MAIL** – Still modelling at 64, Twiggy is, however, depressed by a recent incident on the Underground. Her husband, Leigh Lawson said: “Twiggy came home the other day and asked me what did I think of her face, and was there something changed about it?”. During the London Fashion Week, she had been on the Underground and a young person jumped up when she saw Twiggy standing, and offered her the seat. Given how unchivalrous most Underground users can be, shouldn’t the M&S model be grateful?

**19.02.14 METRO** – Crossrail lead archaeologist Jay Carver says that during the past year, excavations have delivered some exceptional finds across central London. They encountered early Londoners through the discovery of a suspected 14th Century Black Death plague burial ground and a highly unusual group of Roman skulls buried deep within one of London’s lost rivers. They have also tracked down evidence for a rare Mesolithic hunting group in the Thames Marshes and made further investigations at the site of London’s greatest Victorian shipbuilding yard. A number of these finds are being exhibited at the *Portals to the Past* Exhibition, and it is unusual for an archaeology exhibition like this is that the finds are so diverse, from pretty much every important period of London’s history.

**20.02.14 METRO** – Poems on the Underground are going Greek on 24 February. Underground passengers will be able to read verses from Greek, British and Irish poets about love, mythology and the natural world on posters displayed in the carriages. The Greek poets include Sappho and Anyte are being displayed in honour of the Greek EU Presidency.

**20.02.14 METRO** – Regent has a new Tube – at Hamleys. The capital’s famous toy store has converted its basement floor into an Underground-themed sales area a features a driver’s cab from an old Bakerloo and Victoria line train and Edwardian station style cash desks. There are games, Tube-tastic toys, Underground licensed products bays and the opportunity to get photos taken in a real 1970s train drivers cab.

**20.02.14 METRO** – The DLR has achieved its highest scores for punctuality and performance in its 26-year history. The railway ran 99.7% of trains on time and operated 99.8% of its scheduled trains in the period 5 January to 1 February. TfL’s DLR director Rory O’Neill said: “The DLR continues to deliver to its passengers one of the most reliable and punctual rail services in Britain. This performance was made possible by a continuous and sustained effort by all staff and we will continue to strive to improve performance even further”.

**21.02.14 WATFORD OBSERVER** – A man who exposed himself to a group of female passengers on a train near Croxley station, has been jailed and banned from the London Underground network. Ion Iorga exposed himself and carried out an indecent act in front female passengers on 3 July 2013. He was later identified as the person wanted in connection with four previous crimes. He pleaded guilty to five charges and sentenced to 15 months in prison. He was also handed a 5 year Sexual Offences Prevention Order, which bans him from travelling on any LU train, or entering any LU station, between 18.30 and 05.00 until 2019.

**21.02.14 EVENING STANDARD** – On Tuesday evening (18 February) around 18.00 the escalator at Cutty Sark (DLR – and running up whilst the other one was being worked on) suddenly reversed and threw people into each other, sparking panic, and with people screaming as they stumbled off. One woman had her coat trapped, and another her foot making her fall and hurt her head and foot, with her shoe shredded and people piling all around her.

**21.02.14 EVENING STANDARD** – An article (page 24) says that Mike Brown is hoping to emulate the style of the Boris Bus on the next generation of Underground trains, with full details of the £200m order for new trains for the Bakerloo, Piccadilly and Waterloo & City lines. Bombardier, Siemens, CAF and Hitachi are all expected to bid, with the Piccadilly Line having priority as 20,000 extra passengers an hour are expected to travel once the new stock and signalling are operational in the middle of the next decade ..... the term *New Tube for London* is being unashamedly used, as air-cooling and walk through carriages will be included (along with a driver's cab!).

**24.02.14 METRO** – *Text from Hanger On* – “Lazy Commuters, I must clarify that the poles in the middle of the Tube are for people to hold on to, not for people to lean on”.

**25.02.14 METRO** – *Text from Leaner* – “Hanger On, I must clarify that the manner in which I choose to stabilise myself on the Tube is a matter of personal preference. I will continue to go hands-free until the Pole Safety and Use Act 2014 comes into effect”.

**25.02.14 CITY AM** – Canary Wharf's new Crossrail building is set to open next year – three years before the station starts operating. Plans for the six-storey building were recently released, with glimpses of the semi-open plan balcony for waterside diners. The first firms to occupy the development include Everyman Cinema, a Sports Bar and Grill, and Mexican restaurant Poncho 8. The retail and leisure development above the new Crossrail station, combined with the recent Jubilee Place extension, makes it one of the largest retail expansions currently being built in the UK.

**25.02.14 EVENING STANDARD** – Underground staff who worked during the 48-hour strike by RMT and TSSA members are to receive up to £50 in vouchers. TfL will pay staff £25 in high street vouchers for each shift they worked, at an estimated cost of £20,000. The leader of the TSSA union, said the scheme of an “example of Mayor Boris Johnson's gesture politics”.