

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Brian,

4 March 2015

### KING'S CROSS CROSSOVER

The work relating to the new crossover is indeed underway, though as stated is only designed to handle 20tph reversing, a figure which looks rather low compared to other sites. This is partly due to the speed of the crossover, and also its exact position. The new crossover will be shorter than the example mentioned at Brixton and consequentially the speeds over it cannot be as high. The other issue affecting reversing capacity is the crossover position – it is located more or less halfway between Euston Square and King's Cross. The intention is that post-resignalling, trains from the City can be extended to reverse at Euston Square via the crossover rather than detraining at King's Cross to shunt back just beyond the crossover whilst empty. Unfortunately, this advantage cannot be realised just yet. As a point aside, the now removed 'hand worked' points were not strictly so! They were powered, but were operated via a local switch rather than a lever in the Interlocking Machine Room at King's Cross.

### UNBROKEN NOSES

Mike Horne correctly notes in his letter the unbroken crossing nose at Euston (City). These were, once upon a time, considered to be the way forward for little used trap roads, generally in sidings or depots. Whilst I'm not sure there is a definitive list of where they were installed, I am aware of survivors at Barking (one to be removed later this year), Triangle Sidings, Uxbridge, Upminster and, I believe, at Moorgate. A number have been removed over the last ten years as part of Points and Crossings renewals, including examples on 'main' lines at Tower Hill and Loughton.

A similar design was also used on the Stockholm T-Bana, not just in sidings and trap roads but also on little-used passenger crossovers. The last such example I can remember on a passenger route was at Skogskyrkogården (on the green line), and I did manage to travel over it in the unbroken direction once. I doubt many of my fellow passengers even noticed the bumps as we rode over the unbroken side of the crossings.

*Yours Sincerely, Thomas Crame.*

*By E-Mail.*

Dear Sir,

4 March 2015

### GREAT NORTHERN & CITY

The letter from John Savage in *Underground News* No.639 about the depiction of the GN&C line in Harry Beck's admirable maps prompted pre-war recollections of it. On two occasions, probably in 1938, I accompanied my father to his Moorgate office on a Saturday morning. I would have been about six years old, and being used to the Piccadilly Line I was struck by the cavernous station at Finsbury Park, with extensive white tiling almost devoid of posters and with the Metropolitan-style red diamond backing on the station name plates. The other surprise was the full-size rolling stock, in brown livery, with loud, slow-running compressors.

The early change to the black line diagram must have been an example of the future non-event of association with the Northern Line casting its shadow before it. Having moved to Gloucestershire in 1941 I had intended to travel on the steam train to Alexandra Palace on an annual holiday in London, but unfortunately left it until 1954 and missed it by three months!

I always regretted the abandonment of the Northern Heights plans, especially in view of the expenditure on Highgate high-level station, substations and other infrastructure, although it was some consolation that the *Big Tube* at last became part of the Great Northern suburban network, and now living in London I use it to visit Enfield.

Only last week I met a man who resented the poor public transport at Muswell Hill. He was quite surprised to learn that it had had its own railway station until 70 years ago and nearly became part of the Underground.

*Yours sincerely, David Lyall.*

*By E-Mail.*

Dear Brian,

4 March 2015



## REFERENCE EUSTON (CITY) AND STOCKWELL

On reading this article by Mike Horne on page 162 of the March 2015 issue, I had noticed years ago this type of crossing in sidings and bay roads but not used very often. Off the top of my head Loughton had this type of nose on the east end of eastbound main platform, long since removed. Plaistow bay and Parsons Green No.28 road still have these type of points – I was going to complete all the installations on LT where these noses were provided but alas I never got round to it. The photo (*Left*) was taken at Parsons Green.

**Photo: Jeff Mew**

It would seem that if used in error the train is safe in the forward direction but it can't reverse back without the help of Engineers?

*Yours sincerely, Jeff Mew.*

*By E-Mail.*

**Richard Griffin adds –**

I can state that there's one such 'through' crossing-nose on the trap points at the north end of No.25 road in Uxbridge sidings – the reception road leading into the 'hill' – I went over them (on the continuous bit!) as recently as this morning (5 March). On the Uxbridge one, there's a ramp only on the far side, making it easier to recover a train but on the way into the sand-drag it must make a helluva bang!

I can also confirm that there is a continuous rail over the signalled route into/out of Moorgate bay roads, in respect of the sand-drag points there. However, further research has uncovered four such crossing-noses on the four sand-drags at top and bottom of the twin depot-access roads leading down from Northumberland Park to Seven Sisters. I think these are the only sand-drags/bufferstops without signalled routes up to them on the Victoria Line, and it demonstrates that they were considered 'de rigueur' in the mid-1960s as well as earlier.

Dear Brian,

4 March 2015

## CENTRAL LINE EXTENSIONS – UNDERGROUND NEWS No.636

With reference to Eric Stuart's article (and subsequent features/letters) about the Central Line Extensions, the following two web links add extra information which I think will be of interest.

This first link leads to a page which is primarily about Leyton signal box. Included in the information is how it was resited and extended to accommodate the new Central Line trains and that during off-peak hours the (then) 'southbound' platform (nowadays westbound) was sometimes served by Central Line trains travelling in both directions. This was necessary because the adjacent goods yard had a short shunting neck so at times the (then) 'northbound' (nowadays eastbound) station platform track was used when shunting the wagons. There are six excellent illustrations, some of which are in colour. These include external and internal views of the signal box, the junction where the mainline and Underground trains met, and more.

<http://www.signalbox.org/gallery/e/leyton.php>

The second link leads to the September / October 2008 edition of the Loughton and District Historical Society Newsletter. There are two articles in this edition which will be of interest to readers.

The first is entitled "Steam and diesel trains in Loughton in the 1960's". This describes some of the regular mainline passenger and freight trains which used the line in the 1960's, which included summer Sunday excursion trains that typically ran from the centre platform at Loughton to coastal destinations in Kent and Sussex. These trains would travel to Liverpool Street where they reversed their direction of travel and then continued their journey via the East London Line. There is much information about

locomotive types, numbers and the requirement for them to be tripcock-fitted. This article also includes a truly delightful account of a school trip during the morning rush hour where the pupils travelled on a special non-stop train (which they boarded at Buckhurst Hill) hauled by a J15 steam locomotive and passed through stations thronged with commuters awaiting Central Line trains to take them to work.

The second article is a reminiscence about Loughton station 1929 – 1939 as remembered by a boy aged 5-15.

**<http://www.theydon.org.uk/lhs/Downloads/LHS%20News%20178.pdf>**

This second article is in portable document format for which some computers will need the free Adobe Acrobat reader (or equivalent).

In addition, and in keeping with the Central Line extensions theme, I can offer you two photographs of a westbound red-fronted 1962 Tube Stock train arriving at Leytonstone station. Both images are in colour and were taken using a 110 film camera. In this first instance I am supplying links to the images on my Flickr photostream but I would be happy to send you scans from the negatives, if you wish. I do not recall the date when I took these photographs.

This image shows the train poised to arrive at the platforms. In the background the signal box can be seen.

**<https://www.flickr.com/photos/citytransportinfo/15324004602/in/set-72157644311262510>**

This image shows the train in the distance with a different train travelling to Hainault partially on the down ramp. The cable run over the tracks still retains smoke baffles.

**<https://www.flickr.com/photos/citytransportinfo/15366030507/in/album-72157644311262510/>**

*Yours sincerely, Simon Smiler.*

*By E-Mail.*

Dear Brian,

9 March 2015

### **COMMUTING INTO CENTRAL LONDON**

I have just finished reading Alan Jackson's highly comprehensive book *London's Local Railways* (published in 1999 – I'm a slow reader!). I was surprised by the following comment in it: "the 1930s policy mistake of extending costly all-stations urban tube service deep into outer suburbia (and beyond) is nowhere more apparent than on these eastern extremities of the Central Line, which unlike those of the tube lines in north and northwest London, lack any faster and more comfortable alternative rail routes".

When I started working in High Holborn in 1976, the outer eastern stretches of the Central Line seemed an ideal place to live for direct access, and this was an obvious attraction to all those working in the City or shopping in the West End. All British Rail services required a change to the Underground (or a walk) to get anywhere useful. I well recall the tedious journeys fellow workers faced with infrequent journeys into Waterloo and then onward to High Holborn.

Even at the time this book was published, and certainly in more recent times, hundreds of users have forsaken Essex mainline trains, preferring to drive to Epping – so much so that it is sometimes difficult to get a seat at Debden in the morning peak period. Certainly, now I live in Surrey, I appreciate (in my retirement leisure), 'faster and more comfortable' train journeys from Surbiton to Waterloo, but from there I need to seek means of onward travel.

*Yours sincerely, Bob Prichard.*

*By E-Mail.*

Dear Editor,

9 March 2015

## LONDON ROAD

The view of London Road depot on the back of the March 2015 issue of *Underground News* brought back memories of the yard in 1976-77 and I can confirm the 'shed' still existed then minus glazing. Also, a short "P. Way" wagon, marked "B&W Railway 1906" on the axleboxes, rested by the siding on the extreme left of the picture. Was this item ever saved?

The signal cabin at Elephant & Castle was not a good place to work during the hot summer of 1977. The temperature at 05.00 was around 28°C. The train crews were refreshed during the day with cold drinks and ice cream! It kept the service running!

*Yours sincerely, Dave Evans.*

*Gravesend. By E-Mail.*

Dear Brian,

9 March 2015

## 'THROUGH' CROSSING NOSES

With reference to Mike Horne's letter in the March 2015 issue of *Underground News*, and his comments on the continuous running rail through the frog of the right hand set of points in the upper photograph, this is quite a common feature on Japan Railways on all of its six divisions. However, it is used mostly on safety or trap points at the end of passing/station loops on the many single track lines, both main and secondary. It is also used on the many large and small private passenger railways in the country.

*Yours sincerely, Colin Brown.*

*Luton.*

Dear Brian,

14 March 2015

## WEST RUISLIP BRANCH

I look forward to learning the answer to John Hillman's enquiry in the March 2015 *Underground News* as to why the West Ruislip branch was built to 'main line standards' west of Greenford, although surface stock was actually cleared for both Central Line branches west from North Acton. This had allowed surface stocks to reach Ruislip Depot and the main line connection therein before the long-planned Ruislip connection was finally built for Fleet (subsequently Jubilee) Line construction trains.

Photos have been published of A Stock trains on commissioning test runs before they were transferred by this route upon delivery. (The February 2013 issue of *Underground News* on pages 82-84 discusses 1979 approved routes, whilst the May 2013 issue pages 291-294 shows that some surface stock engineer's trains were still allowed there by a 2012 document.)

*Yours sincerely, John Hawkins.*

*Sheffield, Tasmania. By E-Mail.*

*Editor's Note: The Central Line Working Timetables of the time had booked 'paths' for A Stock test runs between Ruislip depot and North Acton and transfers to the Metropolitan Line from Ruislip depot, North Acton and Ealing Broadway.*

14 March 2015

Dear Brian,



## ROUNDEL CLONES

The 'City Circle' in Sydney is not actually a circle, but a double track loop from Central through Museum, St. James, Circular Quay, Wynyard, Town Hall and back to Central. It opened to the two underground stations at Museum and St. James in 1926 and to the two underground stations at Town Hall and Wynyard in 1932. The end of the loop, through the above ground station at Circular Quay, connecting the two sides, was not opened until 1956. Three of the four stations have roundel-style station nameplates, which I photographed yesterday.

At Museum, which is very similar to a Paris Métro station, the nameplates, which I think are probably originals, are brown to suit the station tiling.

Town Hall lost its signs many years ago, but during a 2014 refurbishment some new signs have been put up at the ends of a couple of the platforms. These are in the new Sydney Trains Corporate orange and were only put up at the end of 2014.

At St James, they are green. Some are only half a roundel to allow other signage above. Again I think these are originals.

## ESCALATORS

Wynyard has no roundels, but may have had some once. Also at Wynyard, the four escalators leading to the street from the concourse were refurbished a few years ago. As you can see they are very similar to London Underground escalators. In keeping with the station's heritage, these refurbished escalators were fitted with brand new wooden treads, comprising ply steps with individual slats screwed on.

I don't know how safety concerns were addressed, but these are not totally underground and of course the station is wholly non-smoking. They must be some of the very last anywhere with wooden slats, as all others on the system use aluminium slatted steps. Incidentally all four escalators are reversible, usually operating as three up, one down in the morning and three down, one up in the evening. In the middle of the day, as here yesterday, they were operating as two up, two down.

*Yours sincerely, Basil Hancock.*

*Faulconbridge, Australia. By E-Mail.*

Dear Brian,

14 March 2015

### **PRESTON ROAD**

Further to the item in *Underground News*, as I recall the "cabin" at Preston Road had limited hours of opening as most of the time southbound trains from Harrow ran on the local line to Stanmore Junction. The WTTs of the time had the actual hours of opening I seem to think.

*Yours sincerely, Nigel Hyde.*

*By E-Mail.*

Dear Brian,

14 March 2015

### **GREENFORD MAIN LINE**

I was reminded by the letter in the February *Underground News*, of a use one evening in the early 1960s, of the Down Main Line platform.

I was travelling from Northolt to home, at West Ealing, and I and other passengers were waiting by the Bay Platform between the Central Line tracks, on the embankment. We saw the train coming from Ealing, but only with one carriage, instead of the normal two. Instead of coming up the slope into the Bay – it disappeared under the eastbound Central Line track.

Almost immediately a member of Station Staff came up and asked us to follow him down to the Booking Hall. He then took us through a small door, and along a passage, until we came out on to a short platform, level with the Main Line tracks.

There was our one carriage, with the Driver using a Newspaper as a funnel, to pour water from a Fire bucket into the diesel engine radiator tank. I spoke to him, and he told me that the engine had problems, and could not pull the second carriage, or climb the slope to the Bay. They had left the second carriage in the siding at Ealing Broadway, which was then the terminus for the Greenford service. I guessed that it probably had to stay there until the next day.

The "fire water" was effective and we got safely back to Ealing.

*Yours sincerely, David C. Smith.*

*Ealing, London, W.13.*

Dear Brian,

28 March 2015

### **RAILS FROM UXBRIDGE TO THE CITY**

I was pleased to read Michael J. Smith's letter in the March issue of *Underground News* giving some of Mr. Dott's reminiscences of the Metropolitan and GWR, and mentioning two very different routes from Uxbridge to the City. But there were more opportunities for the Uxbridge commuter. I have looked at my copy of the July 1936 LPTB Local District Timetable booklet for "Uxbridge & Ruislip, Hillingdon, Denham and District." This was the first issue of the series which continued until February 1972.

Taking the morning rush-hour at that date, the GWR from Uxbridge Vine Street station had two through trains to Liverpool Street via West Drayton and Ealing Broadway (steam to Paddington, then electric loco haulage) leaving Vine Street at 08.18 and 08.42 getting to King's Cross about 09.02 and 09.37 (I have chosen King's Cross to allow direct comparison also with the Piccadilly service).

The Metropolitan option (leaving from the original Met. station in Belmont Road, Uxbridge, now the site of a Sainsbury's supermarket) had many through City trains, and tracking the GWR times above, there were through Met. trains from Uxbridge at 08.16, 08.25 and 08.38, getting to King's Cross about 09.01, 09.06 and 09.22.

The Piccadilly option (again, leaving of course from Belmont Road) had direct trains leaving Uxbridge at 08.19 and 08.35, getting to Kings Cross about 09.16 and 09.31.

For the eccentric, the GWR Uxbridge High Street station had a train at 08.35 to Denham and Gerrards Cross. Arriving Denham at 08.41, and changing platforms, you could catch the 08.56 fast train which got to Paddington at 09.19. Changing trains again, if a train for the City arrived at the Paddington Suburban platforms at – say – 09.25, you would get to Kings Cross at about 09.37 (maybe you'd find yourself on the 08.42 from Vine Street!). Or of course you could decide to go to the Praed Street platforms for a Circle Line train.

Finally, if you fancied a tram as your railed journey, tram 7 was timetabled at 66 minutes from Uxbridge to Shepherds Bush. So, if there was a tram leaving the terminus in Uxbridge High Street at – say – 08.20, then Shepherds Bush about 09.26 (if no significant road traffic delays in Southall or Ealing), change to the Hammersmith & City and your journey to King's Cross would then take about 24 minutes – so you'd be at Kings Cross about 09.55/10.00.

Five very different ways – a different option for every day from Monday to Friday.

*Yours sincerely, Guy Marriott.*

*Bourne End. By E-Mail.*

Dear Brian,

30 March 2015

### **D-TRAINS**

One thought comes to mind about this project. I wonder what trials have been carried out to assess the suitability of the Transit engines for this application. I recall back in the 1950s BR had many problems and failures with the early DMUs. Apparently they used existing bus engines of good reliability, but these did not fare well in railway service. It seems they were quite unsuited to the conditions experienced under a rail vehicle, though I cannot now recall precisely what was wrong. They underwent a process called 'tractionising' which eventually made them fit for the job, but this took several years before reliability could be assured. Despite the reliability of the Ford product for road use (I not only used them, I did a stint at Southampton in the works!) rail service could be a different story. Does anyone have details on this issue?

*Yours sincerely, Tony Holland.*

*By E-Mail.*