

# 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.

**18.02.15 EVENING STANDARD** – Assaults on Underground station staff have risen by 44% in 5 years – with 1 in 4 recent incidents involving alcohol. Insiders say frontline workers were pushed, punched, kicked, threatened and spat on while doing their jobs. TfL figures revealed the number of assaults rose from 1,917 in 2009/10 to 2,753 in 2013/14. LU claimed the rise was in part down improved staff training which encouraged victims to come forward. It pointed out that while the overall number of assaults had gone up, physical attacks – as opposed to verbal ones – had fallen, as staff were better equipped to handle trouble. Separate TfL figures show alcohol was a contributing factor in 25% of all recent assaults, followed by race in almost 1 in 10, and service disruption in 1 in 20. Fare issues – including failure to hold a ticket or problems with Oyster cards – were also involved in a large number of attacks. The Central Line was the worst affected, and King's Cross St. Pancras was the worst station over the same period. The majority took place in the booking hall and at ticket gates and were most likely to happen between 22.00 and 24.00 on a Friday.

**25.02.15 BRENTWOOD GAZETTE** – Anyone passing North Weald station on the Epping – Ongar Railway at the weekend may have caught a glimpse of an entirely different sort of arrival. The heritage railway was used as a backdrop to an unusual 1940s themed calendar, which will be sold to raise cash for charity. 30 women appeared in some Calendar Girls style poses – some more risqué than others – that will be sold to raise money for PEACHY – *Promoting Early Access to Counselling and Help for Youth*. Dean Walton of the EOR said he was delighted to support a "worthwhile" charity.

**26.02.15 EVENING STANDARD** – Underground passengers at Tottenham Court Road station found themselves in the middle of a risqué fashion parade on the Northern Line. Lingerie models were showcasing a new range from *Bluebella*, creator of *Fifty Shades Of Grey* underwear collection. Model Charlotte Moore said: "It was probably one of the most nerve-wracking catwalk shows I've ever done, but it was very exciting and created a real buzz". Emily Bendell, of *Bluebella*, said: "We thought it would cheer up a few commuters on their way to work".

**27.02.15 THE TIMES** – *By Helen Rumbelow* – "As of this September, the Underground will run all night at weekends. Your reaction reveals your fogey-age. Me: horrified! Since I was about 24 I have relied on the "last Tube" to dash for the door of any party at 23.15".

**27.02.15 METRO** – An Underground worker has been sacked for having epilepsy. She was diagnosed 5 years ago but was sacked after suffering an episode in January in which a colleague had to help her. Despite her excellent attendance record, it led to LU saying her condition is "too risky for them to manage" and she was let go. Her local MP has asked Health Minister Norman Lamb to review the case.

**FEBRUARY 2015 YOUR AMERSHAM** – *Letter from Alan Wallwork* – "Last October TfL proudly informed the local Transport Users Group that an additional £75M of funding had been secured to make travel across the network more accessible, particularly step-free access for disabled. Given the difficulties that physically disabled travellers arriving at Amersham station from London face, namely they have no means of exiting the station at present. The Group Secretary wrote to TfL to seek clarification whether or not some of that additional money would be spent on providing disabled facilities at Amersham. I consider this to be a reasonable expectation given that a few years ago, work was started on constructing lift shafts and associated access ramps, which was suddenly halted supposedly for lack of funding, then inexplicably, all the work which had been done was removed, involving extra expense and thereby wasting a great deal of money for no good purpose. Confirmation has now been received that none of this extra money will be spent at Amersham, which reinforces the views expressed by Group Members that a democratic deficiency exists beyond the London Assembly boundary, being outside the area in which the Mayor of London seeks votes and that stations in Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire are unlikely to receive their fair share of TfL's budget in future. By way of information, the only alternatives currently existing for physically disabled passengers are to

alight at Chalfont & Latimer, or instead travel to Chesham and then catch a connecting bus service, thereby adding at least 30 minutes to an already slow journey, particularly off-peak”.

**02.03.15 EVENING NEWS** – Underground drivers are to take strike action at the weekend over the sacking of one of their colleagues for allegedly failing 2 breath tests for alcohol. RMT driver members have been ordered not to book on for shifts between 21.30 on Saturday and 04.00 on Sunday. Thousands of passengers heading home after a night out could be affected. RMT’s Mike Cash warned: “the strike is the first stage as part of a rolling programme of industrial action” over the sacking. Union leaders said that LU had not carried out the testing correctly, and that the driver had diabetes could have affected the results. LU bosses deny the claims and are refusing to reinstate him.

**04.03.15 EVENING STANDARD** – *Letter from Cllr. Tony Devenish* – “A 3% cut in Underground fares achievable by targeting TfL waste is not earth-shattering news and does not need to be controversial. Any public or private organisation with a multi-billion budget routinely saves at least 3% a year by working with staff, customers and suppliers to improve efficiency”.

**04.03.15 EVENING STANDARD** – *Letter from Keith Ballinger* – “Reducing Underground and bus fares and then freezing them is achievable. Getting rid of the pointless Customer Assistants on the new Routemaster buses would be a start, as well as the irritating platform assistants on the Underground. We should also cut back on overpaid consultants in TfL’s citadel in Southwark and remove free travel passes from spouses and dependents. London councils have managed to freeze or cut Council Tax bills, so why can’t TfL do the same with its fares?”.

**05.03.15 NEW CIVIL ENGINEER** – Poor quality ground and nearby infrastructure have led to some innovative engineering work for Victoria Underground station upgrade. The £700M upgrade is expected to make life a little more bearable for commuters in 2018. The station handles 84M passengers a year and is the 2nd busiest on the Underground network. It is also the most congested, not least because it consists of two relatively small ticket offices and lacks even basic lift access.

**05.03.15 METRO** – Passengers using Tottenham Court Road station can continue to enjoy the colourful mosaics designed by Eduardo Paolozzi in the 1980s. With the station undergoing a comprehensive upgrade to increase its capacity, TfL has worked hard to ensure these much-loved artworks are preserved; in fact 95% of them have been saved in their original locations. The designs at the former Oxford Street entrance will be removed by restoration experts, and safely preserved for redisplay within the station. New artworks at the new Oxford Street entrance will be joined by new pieces in the ticket hall and plaza entrance to complement Paolozzi’s iconic 1984 designs. The mosaics are part of London Underground’ heritage and TfL has worked closely with the Paolozzi Foundation, historians and design and conservation professionals, to protect and renovate them.

**06.03.15 WATFORD OBSERVER** – The property market in Watford is set to skyrocket in the next couple of years with people hunting for a “bargain buy” outside of London, but social housing is at crisis point. Watford has been tipped for a boom by estate agents, who say it is becoming increasingly popular with people looking for a cheaper home on the outskirts of London. The new transport infrastructure, the Croxley Rail Link, which will provide better access to the Metropolitan Line and Watford Junction, is expected to become a big attraction for commuters.

**06.03.15 WATFORD OBSERVER** – *Letter from Dave Degan* – “Another writer worries that residents of Buntingford, among many other places, will be “incensed” if they find their Council Tax is being used to fund the Croxley Rail Link. Fine, let them pay for it. They will be among the beneficiaries when they watch Watford play in an away game. Yes, the costs will spiral – they always do. The controversial project, which quietly includes the closure of Watford Met. station, will leave a legion of residents on the Cassiobury and Cassio Metro Estates without a local transport hub, not to mention concert goers to the Colosseum, Watford Grammar School pupils and day trippers to the park. But of course the sale of the land and iconic Met. station building, probably for new homes, will be necessary to offset costs. Quibbles about the funding, mask the main issues. In fact, the more external funding the better, as it will take pressure off the need to sell existing infrastructure to pay for it”.

**06.03.15 THE TIMES** – Blind and partially sighted train passengers will be guided to their platform using Bluetooth technology in an experimental new system. Sensors are being installed throughout Pimlico station on the Underground to give directions to passengers via headphones plugged into their mobile phones. The *Wayfinder* system, developed by *ustwo*, allows guidance messages to be sent to phones via Bluetooth, which can be used underground as it does not rely on a mobile phone signal.

Sixteen beacons have been installed at key points in the station to transmit warnings or instructions such as “you are approaching the bottom of the escalators” or “turn right for trains to Brixton”. The system, part of the project led by TfL and the Royal London Society for the Blind, is undergoing a trial this month.

**06.03.15 METRO** – It’s a wrap. Look out for the specially wrapped Underground train that is running on the Circle, District and Hammersmith & City line to mark new trains being introduced to the lines. By the end of next year, 191 new air-conditioned trains will be running on all three lines, with spacious walk-through carriages for a more comfortable journey.

**06.03.15 EVENING STANDARD** – *Letter from Averil Marks* – “The horrendous scenes at London Bridge prompted to write with regard to the Underground station at Lambeth North. This station is very crowded at times. The huge success of the Imperial War Museum nearby means there are many more people in the area, with two enormous building projects set to bring 1,000+ extra visitors. How the very small public areas of the Underground station will cope remains to be seen. We can only hope that there are some plans to enlarge the station”.

**06.03.15 EVENING STANDARD** – LU has barred a poster for an acclaimed play called *Bad Jews* – even though it ran a previous campaign for the same show. The Producer, Danny Moar, said the decision seemed like censorship for a play that has won a 5-star review from the Jewish Chronicle among others and “could not be less anti-Semitic. Half the cast are Jewish, I am Jewish and the writer is Jewish. This is a form of censorship which is so weird and ironic when, in the wake of the Charlie Hebdo events, everyone marched against censorship”. He admitted the first campaign for the production had prompted one complaint to the ASA. The ASA investigation concluded that the poster did not breach rules, but TfL disagreed. A TfL spokesman said: “The advert for *Bad Jews* was previously displayed on our network as our advertising contractor approved it without consulting us”.

**06.03.15 EVENING STANDARD** – Underground bosses were forced to apologise after more than 1,000 passengers were caught in an “insane” scrum at Oxford Circus station. Crowds of people were locked out the station by staff trying to prevent overcrowding after a Victoria Line train broke down. TfL were forced to backtrack after a spokesman said the situation “was nothing out of the ordinary”. As the scale of the chaos became clear, a senior official admitted the scenes showed the transport network need to be upgraded. The station – the 4th busiest in the capital with 125,000 passengers a day – is under extra pressure because Central Line trains are not stopping at Tottenham Court Road during the Crossrail construction work. Scuffles broke out as passengers were crammed together on pavements. One Underground worker told the Standard the station was temporarily shut at rush hour almost every day to alleviate “very high levels of overcrowding”.

**10.03.15 – 16.03.15 TIME OUT** – You can still drink on the Tube .... kind of. Back in the good old days, you could enjoy a pint of Carlsberg on the Jubilee Line or do a couple of *Jaegerbombs* on the Bakerloo, but then “the man” came along and harshed on everyone’s mellow<sup>1</sup>. If you pine for that halcyon era of public transport drinking, *Cahoots* might be the place for you. This subterranean cocktail bar in Kingly Court has been done up to look like a 1940s Underground station, and doles out drinks with plenty of wacky “*dig for victory*” inspired ingredients like peas, potatoes and beetroot. It’s a sweet idea, and the perfect place to get blitzed.

**10.03.15 THE TIMES** – A team of 60 archaeologists has begun excavating about 3,000 skeletons from a burial ground used during the Great Plague in 1665. The Bedlam burial ground is at the site of the new Liverpool Street Crossrail station. Used from 1569 to at least 1738, the site was also known as Bethlehem and the New Churchyard. A Roman road runs under the site. To date Crossrail has found more than 10,000 artefacts at more than 40 different sites.

**10.03.15 EVENING STANDARD** – “Colourless commuters” (completely covered in white clothing) took to the Underground today as a new research suggest people in the city are shying away from bright colours. The stunt was organised by the paint firm *Dulux*, which found a fifth of people weren’t confident enough to use colour in any part of their lives.

**12.03.15 EVENING STANDARD** – *Letter by Steve Lustig* – “Further to the chaos at London Bridge; I’ve just heard that the Jubilee Line is shutting down over Easter for engineering works. It’s hard to believe this is “essential” on that weekend and it will make Londoners’ travel plans more difficult, as the Metropolitan Line is shutting as well, cutting off the one easy alternative there is. TfL managers

<sup>1</sup> Your compiler does not know what “harshed on everyone’s mellow” means, but that is what it said!

are always quick to condemn “reckless strikers” but seem happy to inflict the same misery when it suits them. How hypocritical.”

**13.03.15 WATFORD OBSERVER** – *Letter from Carol Scleater* – “I wonder if the 1.66M people who used Watford Met. station in 2013 are happy with Hertfordshire County Council’s Cabinet statement that the total cost to build the Croxley Rail Link (CRL) is now likely to be between £285M and £298M. At the rate costs are increasing, we may be sure this is not the final sum. Watford Met. station users will be contributing to this vast amount and their station will be closed to passengers. We have examined LU’s own entry/exit statistics. Do commuters know that if Watford Met. station retained just half of its present passenger numbers when the CRL comes into operation, it would still have more passengers than either Moor Park or Chesham? We are not suggesting these stations close – just pointing out the overwhelming case this makes to keep Watford Met. open. Let’s see if together we can save this station”.

**13.03.15 METRO** – A commuter dragged under the Underground train yesterday morning escaped death when her screams were heard by passengers who alerted the driver. Witnesses said the commuter’s coat got caught in the carriage doors, while others stated she was accidentally pushed from the platform at Clapham South. The driver halted the train and fire-fighters lifted the carriage to release the victim, who was taken to hospital. She was said to have suffered non-life-threatening injuries. TfL insisted commuter levels were “normal”. The incident led to widespread Underground delays. A TfL spokesman said; “I can confirm the platform, and I suspect the station too, was not overcrowded. We have had that confirmation from our operations staff. Crowd levels were normal”.

**13.03.15 EVENING STANDARD** – *Post from David* – “How terrible that a woman was dragged under a train at Clapham South station. When will the scandal of dangerous overcrowding in all Clapham Underground stations be addressed?”.

**16.03.15 EVENING STANDARD** – *Letter from LU’s Mike Brown* – “We wish a speedy recovery to our passenger involved in the incident at Clapham South station last week. We are investigating exactly what happened and will publish the results. It has already been established that, while the station was busy, the platform was not overcrowded. We do everything in our power to keep customers and staff safe; it is our top priority. Thankfully, the Underground is one of world’s safest metro systems. London’s success means that our population is growing faster than any other European city. That’s why we need sustained investment to continue modernising the Underground with higher capacity trains and more frequent services. This is where our funds are being invested – there is no ‘surplus’”.

**17.03.15 – 23.03.15 TIME OUT** – At the end of this month, we’ll find out if the fabled Bakerloo Line extension gets the go-ahead, which will put Catford Bridge station on the Underground map. As everyone knows, new Underground lines = guaranteed neighbourhood pimp-up. It won’t be until the 2030s, mind. But time flies when you are having fun in Catford.

**17.03.15 NEW CIVIL ENGINEER** (Internet) Croxley Rail Link gets green signal – the Metropolitan Line is to be extended to Watford Junction, with new station built at Vicarage Road and Ascot Road. The plans include improved access to the hospital, football ground, business parks and to wider west Watford, MP Richard Harrington MP announced this morning. The Treasury gave the green light on the project this morning and Transport for London have now taken over management of the project. Harrington said: “I’ve had extensive meetings with Boris Johnson, the DfT and others, and this morning the Treasury. This was the final hurdle, and I look forward to seeing the construction start soon. I now intend to move forward and renew discussions for the retention of Watford Metropolitan Line station as well as linking Crossrail to Watford Junction and improvements on the Abbey Line and at Bushey Station”.

**18.03.15 METRO** – Passengers using Finsbury Park Underground station will be treated to a new entrance, more space and step-free access to Underground platforms under upgrade plans announced this week. The station, which is the 4th busiest in London outside Zone 1, will be transformed over the next few years. In April, the Wells Terrace entrance will close and new ticket gates will be introduced at the Station Place and Seven Sisters Road entrances. This will improve security and crack down on fare evasion. A new, larger and more accessible western station entrance will open in 2018 and, by 2019, new lifts will provide access to all platforms.

**18.03.15 EVENING STANDARD** – A terrified 3-year-old fell through the gap while trying to board an Underground train as her nanny looked away. The girl was standing with the nanny at Baker Street Metropolitan Line, when she tumbled between the platform and the waiting train. Passengers lifted the

frightened child back onto the platform where she was given a check-up by station staff. She reportedly had a bruised forehead after hitting her head on a metal plate. The platform is one of ten at Baker Street and has a pronounced curve which creates a gap when the train pulls in. LU said: "An investigation is under way but it seems that while the carer's back was turned, the girl stepped into the gap between platform and train. The train was stationary throughout and the girl was pulled out straightaway". RMT's Mick Cash said: "This latest incident is shocking. Once again, RMT warned that there were dangerous gaps between platforms and the trains with this rolling stock. This incident again exposes the lethal nonsense of cutting station staff on the network".

**20.03.15 WATFORD OBSERVER** – *Letter from Dave Degen* – "Carol Scleater (see 13.13.15 above) is right, as it stands, the Croxley Rail Link project will hit Watford residents in a double whammy; first they will be deprived of a main transport hub, and then, in a final kick in the teeth, asked to pick up the tab. No one objects to the rail link in principle, just the bit in the small print which involves the closure of the Watford Met. station. Planners had it correct before, with a spur line that ran from Watford Junction to Croxley. All that needed to happen was for this line to be extended, to link up with the Met. line at Croxley, just as the branch line serves Chesham. I would seriously question TfL's projection of a mass exodus of commuters aspiring to take the Metropolitan Line to venture north via Watford Junction".

**25.03.15 THE TIMES** – A £27B north-to-south rail link through London was all but given the green light yesterday as ministers moved to protect land along the route. The DfT said that safeguards would be placed on a strip of land from Wimbledon in the southwest to Tottenham and New Southgate in the north. The move is a vital step towards approval of the Crossrail2 line, with trains due to be running by 2030. Property companies were already prevented from developing the land without taking the plans into account.

**25.03.15 EVENING STANDARD** – The start of the weekend 24-hour Underground was thrown into doubt today after train drivers demanded a 4-day week and more money to operate the service. LU plans to run trains on the Jubilee, Victoria, and some of the Piccadilly, Central and Northern lines on Friday and Saturday nights from 12 September. But annual pay talks have reached deadlock, ASLEF submitting a list of demands for running the night trains. These include a 4-day week, enhanced payments and "quality time off" after working nights at weekends. LU announced the "night Tube plan" last year. Leaders of the rail unions said the announcement was "premature" as it was made before any agreement on pay and staffing had been reached. Talks were continuing today but the unions have not ruled out industrial action.

**26.03.15 METRO** – Ticket gates in the main ticket hall at Liverpool Street Underground station are now out of service until late April while improvement work takes place. Passengers using contactless payment cards or Oyster will need to use temporary card readers instead of the usual yellow readers. The work will provide more gates and a new layout. During the closure, some Crossrail preparatory work is also taking place.

**26.03.15 EVENING STANDARD** – *Letter by Peter King* – "It's good news that the Underground lines that run above ground are being upgraded by 2021. But where does that leave customers like me who use the Central Line? LU/TfL have been running peak White City to Leytonstone services for almost a year now, with no extra trains, instead of taking them from running through to either Ealing Broadway or west Ruislip. The result on the West Ruislip branch is severe overcrowding at peak times. Are we to wait until 2022 at the earliest to get a service that warrants the high fares charged to travel on it?".

**27.03.15 WATFORD OBSERVER** – *Letter from Leigh Hutchings of Disability Watford* – "Nobody seems to be picking up on that there are no plans to drag Watford High Street station up to a standard so that we can all use it. We are not sure if any of your reporters have visited this dinosaur of a station recently, but it is not accessible for people with a disability nor are there any plans to update this station to an accessible standard in the future. This is really strange, as this station is the nearest to the *INTU* shopping centre and all the retail parks in the Lower High Street area. In the past, when we have asked the question about this station, the message coming back was that the retailers should pay for the update as they would be getting the extra custom from a user friendly station on their doorstep".

**31.03.15 THE TIMES** – A 35-year-old man was killed trying to save his younger brother from being hit by an Underground train after a night out in London. They were waiting at Old Street station shortly after midnight on 28 March, when the younger man climbed down on to the tracks. It is understood to have been trying to retrieve something from the tracks – possibly his wallet or mobile phone – after

dropping it. His elder brother tried to pull him out of the way of the train but both were hit as it came into the station. The elder brother suffered severe head injuries and died later in hospital, while the younger brother who ended up under the train, is being treated in hospital, is in a critical but stable condition. The police said that they were treating it as a “tragic accident”.

**MARCH 2015 CROYDON CITIZEN** – Sharon Thompson, Tramlink Director, informed locals that there are currently no plans for extensions of the Tramlink network to either Crystal Palace or to the southeast end of Croydon. Some feasibility work has been done, but neither a business case nor funding exists.