

## FROM THE PAPERS

**01.08.09 THE TIMES** – Film Review: *The Taking of Pelham 1 2 3*, a kitsch classic from 1974 is transformed into a thing of brute efficiency in the hands of veteran action maestro Tony Scott (Top Gun). Here, both the title and the bare bones narrative of Joseph Sargent's subway train hijack drama, while the central roles of jaded lawman and psychopathic gangster have now been rebooted by Denzel Washington and John Travolta. In this version Washington is an instinctively gifted train dispatcher who once took a bribe and is hoping for redemption by saving the hostages.

**03.08.09 EVENING STANDARD** – More than 150,000 rail passengers on National Express East Anglia services into Liverpool Street will have to wait until the last minute before knowing if they have a service on Thursday and Friday. ASLEF and RMT union bosses are to meet management to try to prevent further walkouts, but negotiations will not begin until tomorrow.

**METRO** – A £695 million upgrade to Victoria Underground station received planning permission last week, following a three-month public inquiry. The improvements will increase the size of the station by about 50 per cent, provide a new ticket hall, lifts and more escalators to ease congestion, plus step-free access from street level to all platforms and for interchange. Subject to Transport for London approving funding for the project, construction will start in 2010.

**04.08.09 THE TIMES** – Sir Ian Johnson, head of the BT Police, has been appointed security director for the London 2012 Olympics.

**05.08.09 EVENING STANDARD** – Victims of the 7/7 bombings and their relatives have told of their anguish at a new comedy series that pokes fun at aspiring terrorists. The series, called *Living With The infidels*, is based around a Bradford-based group of Muslims planning a suicide bombing similar to the attacks in London in 2005. They dream of wiping out Bradford with a chemical weapon so they can all go to paradise. The man behind the series due to be launched on YouTube later this month is former advertising executive Aasaf Ainapore. He admitted that TV channels were uneasy about screening it.

**06.08.09 EVENING STANDARD** – (1) The parents of a boy who slipped into the gap between train and platform at Acton Town station have praised a commuter who threw himself on to the platform and hauled the child to safety. The mother has vowed to track down the unknown “guardian angel” so she can thank him personally.

(2) Peter Hendy, London's transport commissioner, has forgone more than half of his annual bonus. Boris Johnson, who chairs TfL, believed Mr Hendy's achievements in the 2008/09 financial year merited his full entitlement of £136,590 in a performance-related payment, but Mr. Hendy asked to receive only 45 per cent, or £61,466. He said that in these tough economic times it is only right that senior executive's basic salaries should be frozen and bonuses cut.

**07.08.09 EVENING STANDARD** – (1) A drug dealer has been jailed after he was caught smoking cannabis at Finsbury Park station. Police found £400-worth of class A drugs on him including cocaine and heroin. He was jailed for three years at Southwark crown court for intent to supply.

(2) Plans for a high-speed railway from London to Birmingham via Heathrow are being drawn up on the basis that the Tories will block a third runway if they win the

general election. High Speed Two, the company designing a new north-south route, is working on a business model that features a Heathrow station but does not factor in a third runway.

**THE HERALD (Glasgow)** – A reader on holiday in London was on the Jubilee Line when the driver announced over the PA system: “This train will terminate at West Ham – like many footballers’ careers”.

**10.08.09 EVENING STANDARD – (1)** A Sri Lankan tourist, travelling with her two grown-up children, had been shopping in south London before boarding a Northern Line called train at Tooting Bec, bound for Hounslow via Leicester Square. There they realised a bag containing £2,000, as well as credit cards, passports and flight tickets, was no longer with them. Numerous telephone calls by the Leicester Square station supervisor revealed that the bag had been handed in, untouched, by an unidentified passenger at Woodside Park. The Sri Lankan tourist later said she intended to write to her High Commission praising London Underground.

**(2)** The police riot squad linked to the death of a news vendor during the G20 protests was hit by fresh controversy today after pictures emerged showing an officer apparently battering a party-goer. Chris Leonard, 26, can be seen with blood running from his mouth after he was allegedly punched repeatedly in the face during a scuffle at Liverpool Street station. Mr. Leonard was one of 1,500 revellers packed into the station concourse for the *Last Orders on the Tube* party on 31 May last year, the eve of the public transport alcohol ban. He had been accused of hitting a police officer and was charged with violent disorder. A judge cleared him last week at Southwark crown court after prosecutors viewed Press photographs and decided there was no case to answer. Mr. Leonard plans to take his case to the Police Complaints Commission and may sue the Metropolitan Police.

**THE GUARDIAN** – The news that the cash-strapped New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority has accepted an offer of \$4 million to adopt the name Barclays for its subway station at Atlantic Avenue and Pacific Street is likely to cause apprehension among those who believe that what America does today, Britain will do tomorrow. A wealth of precedents might plausibly be cited. There’s already a station IBM on the Glasgow to Wemyss Bay line. Gordon Selfridge urged the managing director of the Central London Railway to bestow the name of his store on Bond Street station. Perhaps now the juiciest opportunities now are the new subterranean stations to serve Crossrail. Better to journey from Primark Paddington to Lloyds (sic) Liverpool Street via TalkTalk Tottenham Court Road, than not to be able to travel the line at all.

**11.08.09 ESTATES GAZETTE** – Crossrail has awarded a raft of design contracts for four of the central stations and three tunnel portals:

- Victoria Dock Portal – Hyder Consulting
- North Woolwich and Plumstead Portals – Capita Symonds
- Bond Street Station – WSP
- Paddington Station – Scott Wilson
- Liverpool Street Station – Mott MacDonald
- Whitechapel Station – Hyder

**12.08.09 EVENING STANDARD** – Transport for London today signed a £140 million six-year contract with Serco, which operates the DLR, to introduce a bike hire scheme across central London. First devised by Ken Livingstone, the plans are being taken forward by the current Mayor. A total of 6,000 bikes will be available for

hire from next summer in nine central London boroughs and several Royal Parks inside fare zone 1.

**13.08.09 EVENING STANDARD** – The high-speed Javelin train service is to be extended to Ramsgate, Canterbury West, Dover Priory, Folkestone Central and Folkestone west from next month. Southeastern has been operating limited high-speed services between St. Pancras and Ebbsfleet and Ashford since June.

**14.08.09 ES MAGAZINE** – Jeremy Dellar, the 2004 Turner prize winner, writes that he became so tired of the banal announcements on the Underground that he approached Art on the Underground and outline an idea for train drivers to read out literary quotations unrelated to the journey. He compiled a passport-sized booklet called *What is the City but the People?*, a line from Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*. The drivers have to learn the lines because they're not supposed to be reading while driving. At the moment the project is only on the Piccadilly Line, but he is hoping to roll it out over the whole system. The passengers are reported to love hearing quotation from Einstein and Marx, among many others.

**EVENING STANDARD** – Eurostar is to appoint a Frenchman to replace the current British chief executive Richard Brown. As part of what is being seen in some quarters as a political compromise between Britain and France, A Brit will no longer run the high-speed train service but Paris has agreed to reduce its stake in Eurostar, while Britain will increase its holding.

**17.08.09 EVENING STANDARD – (1)** Andrew Gilligan writes to ask why, when the Paris Métro is planning for its Line 1 to be fully automatic without drivers by next year, London is not interested in doing likewise. Paris is Europe's busiest metro system, and Line 1, with 250 million passengers a year is its busiest line. Paris Métro drivers have been on strike at least six times in the past four years. In November 2007, they stayed out for nine days. In 1995, it was three weeks. The authorities thought about no-strike deals, but they have ended up trying something altogether more radical: a no-driver deal.

**(2)** An LU signalman has been sacked after two rush-hour trains came within seconds of collision. A District Line driver had just left Ealing Broadway station and mistakenly passed a red signal. The train stopped automatically and the driver immediately reported to control what he had done. He was given permission to move by the signalman who should have stopped other trains in the area, but failed to do so. As the driver moved off, a Piccadilly Line train crossed the track junction ahead of him. No blame was attached to the Piccadilly Line driver. An inquiry heard how the signalman realising his mistake had failed to take action to rectify the mistake. (See also *Underground News* No.569, "The Diary" for 27 March [last paragraph] on page 307).

**METRO** – To celebrate 50 years of operation, Upminster's District Line train depot will open to the public on Saturday/Sunday, 29/30 August. The depot, which opened in 1958, was the first new Underground depot to be built after the war, and replaced cramped and inadequate facilities at East Ham. Ironically due to planned engineering work the District Line will not be operating Barking and Upminster that bank holiday weekend. C2c, NEEA (Saturday only) and replacement bus services will bridge the gap. Heritage buses will run between Upminster station and the depot.

**18.08.09 EVENING STANDARD** – A garden established by station supervisor Ian Hutchings at Brent Cross supplies staff with fresh fruit and vegetables and brings

biodiversity to the Northern Line. Mr. Hutchins leads a team of five volunteers who offer their services in exchange for a share of the produce.

**METRO** – Transport for London is holding a competition to design a new seating moquette for use on the Underground. The winning design will be launched initially on the Piccadilly Line.

**19.08.09 THE TIMES** – Rail companies are poised to impose sharp increases in the cost of advance tickets to compensate for a reduction in other fares because of deflation. Ashwin Kumar, director of the transport watchdog Passenger Focus, said: “While most season tickets and off-peak fares will fall by 0.4 per cent, what passengers won’t want to see is train companies trying to claw back money through higher increases in unregulated fares, car parking charges or by cutting services”.

**21.08.09 EVENING STANDARD** – Buskers are to face an X Factor-style play-off in front of Boris Johnson for the right to perform at Underground stations. The musicians were invited to enter a competition and pay for 20 minutes at Underground stations last month. Their recordings have been posted online so the public can vote for their favourite. On 1 September the top 20 buskers will be whittled down to 10 by a panel of judges from the music industry. Finalists will perform at the Mayor of London’s Young People’s Question Time later that month. The winner will receive a year’s licence to perform on the Underground.

**24.08.09 EVENING STANDARD – (1)** A man who climbed on to a DLR railway bridge near Gallions Reach station and threatened to jump on the tracks was persuaded not to jump and later arrested. In one of the first cases of its kind, he was charged with obstructing a railway and causing a public nuisance. The former charity worker and member of the Bank of England rugby team was freed on bail after he agreed to counselling and treatment at a psychiatric unit. He will later appear at Isleworth crown court.

**(2)** A new map of the underground in Zones 1 and 2 has identified areas with particularly high temperatures in mid-summer. Tourist favourites Oxford Circus, Paddington and St. Paul’s are in the highest bands. According to the research by TfL’s *Cooling the Tube* team, the network has recorded figures above 35<sup>C</sup> in all these areas.

**METRO** – Transport for London is calling for volunteers with hidden disabilities, such as autism, learning or hearing difficulties, to trial a new Travel Support Card. The size of a credit card, it is designed to give disabled people greater confidence to ask for help if they need it. Showing the card will alert members of staff that the passenger may need extra support.

**25.08.09 EVENING STANDARD** – Boris Johnson said today that the performance of Tube Lines was unacceptable and that he was hugely frustrated by the delay in the modernisation of the Jubilee Line after it emerged there were grave doubts whether the £500 million upgrade would be completed by Christmas. Despite being the newest line, the Jubilee Line has suffered full or part closures every weekend this year. Another 12 are planned before the end of December, but Tube Lines are demanding even more shutdowns to get the work done. The company, which made a £73 million pre-tax profit in 2007/08, had initially promised to finish the upgrade by June.

**26.08.09 EVENING STANDARD** – Tube Lines, which was yesterday castigated for repeated weekend disruption on the Jubilee Line, has asked Transport for London for permission to shut parts of the Northern Line early from next year. This most

complex line on the network is about to undergo a two-year replacement of its signalling system to increase capacity by 20 per cent. Caroline Pidgeon, Lib-Dem transport spokesperson has encourage TfL to think outside the box and consider if full-line closures, lasting several weeks at a time, might be more efficient in the long run. However, she feared weekday evening shut-downs were a way for Tube Lines to avoid contractual obligations to keep the Underground open.

**27.08.09 EVENING STANDARD** – The Railway Inspectorate has warned LUL it may shut down the District Line if they fail to improve safety procedures, after three instances of trains passing signals at danger: West Kensington (23 February), Earls Court (24 February) and (17 March).

**METRO** – British artist and Turner Prize winner Richard Long has designed the next pocket Tube map cover. Called Earth, the design shows the different colours of the Tube lines stacked on top of each other, with a separating black grid denoting the Northern Line. This echoes the format of an I Ching hexagram symbolising Earth, a figure composed of six stacked horizontal lines from the ancient Chinese Book of Changes. The work was commissioned by *Art on the Underground*.

**THE TIMES – (1)** Serco has recorded a 33 per cent increase in pre-tax profits in the first half of the year to £83.4 million, and looks set to continue to benefit from the Government's increasing need to outsource work that traditionally was the domain of the public sector workers. This low-profile company runs prisons, inspects schools, tests blood and runs the National Physical Laboratory. In the transport world Serco operates the DLR, Mersey Rail and Northern Rail. It runs the National Rail inquiries service and operates the Queen's aircraft from RAF Northolt, as well as all London's traffic lights. About 30 per cent of its revenue is generated outside Britain. It recently won the contract to operate Dubai's air traffic control system and recently clinched a deal to operate immigration centres in Australia.

**(2)** Rail passengers could travel from London to Scotland in just over two hours on a £34 billion high-speed line proposed by Network Rail. Trains travelling at 200mph would reach Birmingham in 46 minutes and Manchester in about an hour.

**28.08.09 THE TIMES** – Sergei Mikhalkov, who wrote the lyrics for the Soviet national anthem, lavishing praise on Joseph Stalin and adapted them for Vladimir Putin's Russia, died in Moscow yesterday, aged 96. Mikhalkov's lyrics still cause controversy. Human rights activists have expressed outrage that an entrance hall to the Kurskaya station on the Moscow metro has been restored to its original 1950 design, complete with an inscription from his anthem, exactly the words he had used to praise Stalin.

**31.08.09 THE TIMES** – The Crossrail project could be saved by the specialist bank set up by the Treasury to bail out the beleaguered private finance initiative. Speculation has mounted that Crossrail's scheduled 2017 opening will have to be postponed as the private sector struggles to raise its £6 billion contribution.