

NEWS AND NOTES

TRAVEL IN LONDON 2024: ANNUAL OVERVIEW

During 2023 and into 2024, following the pandemic, travel demand recovery in London continued, but by late 2024 had apparently achieved broadly settled conditions. As well as pandemic-related changes, such as more hybrid working, cost-of-living pressures and operational difficulties affecting some networks may be impediments to a fuller recovery. Active travel continues to consolidate a positive post-pandemic legacy, with 5% more cycle journeys in 2024 than in 2023, and 26% more than in 2019. London's population in 2023 was estimated at 8.9 million, 1.6% higher than 2021, and 9% higher than in 2011. The changing structure of London's population, notably a shift towards an older average age, could also have longer-term implications for travel demand.

London's economic recovery since the pandemic has been relatively slow, albeit with some positive indicators beginning to emerge such as a particularly strong bounce back in workforce jobs, up by 11% since 2019.

Overall LU demand was 88% of the pre-pandemic baseline, with a concentration of commuter demand on certain days of the week (Tuesday to Thursday) a significant feature, although to a lesser extent than in 2022/23. Public transport crowding remains below the pre-pandemic norm, with the proportion of passenger kilometres travelled in 'crowded' conditions (standing densities exceeding two people per square metre) at 2% in 2023 compared to 9% in 2019. The new capacity created by the Elizabeth Line contributed substantially to this trend, carrying an average 660,000 journeys per day as of July 2024, but it also reflects changed patterns of travel throughout the day.

COLINDALE STATION REOPENED ...

Colindale station reopened at 12.50 on Friday 20 December 2024, having been closed since 8 June 2024 for reconstruction. The work included piling, crane operation and heavy demolition work that could not be done with the station open. The closure enabled the installation of steel beams and concrete foundations to provide the base for the new station building. The 1960s-built entrance is being replaced with a new station building, which will include a more spacious ticket hall and a lift giving step-free access from street to platform.

At street level, the ground floor remnants of the 1962 building, itself with a post-modernist cladding applied in 2014, have been reduced by two-thirds, leaving just the central entrance section. The ticket hall remains generally untouched, but without the gateline. This was apparently removed during the closure period to allow for the easier passage of materials. In view of this, Validator Units have been provided for Oyster and Contactless users.

A new footbridge corridor, bearing east, in the same position as the old one, spans the northbound track and leads to new concrete and glass stairs to and from the platforms. The way out/up staircase is on the right, facing south. The way in/down staircase is to the left, facing north. This is reached by a slight diversion, and obviously skirts what will be the shaft of the new lift. Finishes here are all very temporary and consist mainly of white hoardings.

At platform level, all the 1924 Stanley Heaps finishes (canopy etc.) have gone, replaced by modern concrete and steel structures. (Prior to closure, a platform 'hump', serving trains in both directions, had been installed at the southern end of the island platform, giving level platform-train boarding and alighting). Again, finishes at platform level are currently rudimentary, with some temporary roundels in use and platform indicators yet to be installed. Meanwhile, in the former car park area, the shell of the new station continues to take shape.

The temporary arrangements enables work on the station's upgrade to continue – which includes installing a lift – with a planned completion in autumn 2025. Without this upgrade, Colindale station was expected to reach passenger capacity by 2026.

TICKETING EQUIPMENT

Equipment	Amount	Device Nos.
Validator Unit	4	90-93



Above: (Left) The exterior as it has been reduced by two-thirds from a previous image in *Underground News*.

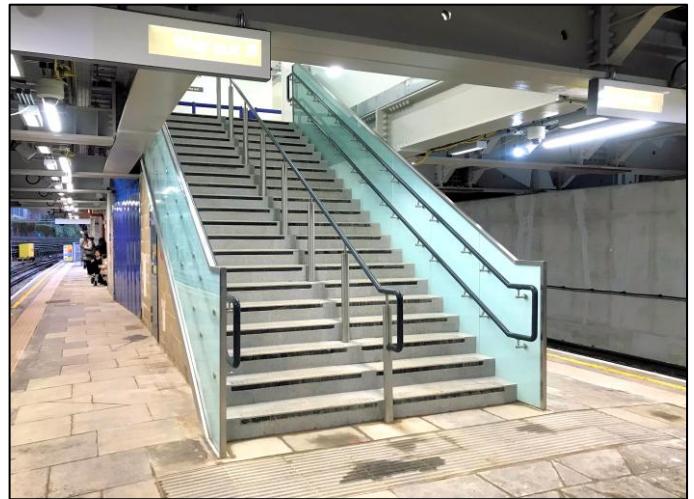
Above: (Right) The ticket hall with UTS gates removed.

Left: The deck adjacent to platform and platform foundations at Colindale looking north.

Photo: Transport for London

Below: Two views of the footbridge between the footbridge and the stairs leading to and from the platforms.





Above: The station line diagram at Colindale this being for southbound trains, south-facing but looking north. Of interest is that the Battersea extension is depicted as a shuttle from Kennington, which it is not (apart from very early and late night trips).

Photo: Transport for London

Top: (Right) The new exit stairs from platform to the ticket hall.

Above: (Right) The northbound platform looking south, the blue area being for the future lift?

All notes and other photos: Kim Rennie

... AND ALSO KENTISH TOWN

Kentish Town finally reopened at the start of traffic on Monday 23 December 2024. The station had shut on 26 June 2023 to allow the replacement of the 1997 escalators, with an original proposed reopening date of "Summer 2024". However, engineers subsequently found that concrete in the ticket hall ceiling and floor had degraded, and steel beams supporting the station and pavement had corroded, meaning the work required was more extensive than first thought, and thus the "estimated resumption of service" date was changed to "the end of the year" (year 2024).

In addition, the replica Leslie Green platform tiles, themselves only installed by Tube Lines in 2006 under the ill-fated PPP scheme, were also found to be failing and required replacement too. Although care was taken in 2006 to replicate the original 1906 tiling pattern as far as practicable, this is no longer the case in the new scheme, with a much plainer design now used and, at the time of reopening, there were just platform station name friezes and no platform roundels!

In the ticket hall, the old UTS-era ticket office with its FFM (few fare) and MFM (multi fare) machines have been removed, and there is now a rearranged gateline array. The downside is that those not using Oyster or Contactless are currently unable to buy paper tickets, nor can anyone top-up Oyster cards (at time of writing) as the replacement Ticket Vending Machines are not due in service until early-2025. Another feature still to be reinstated is the ticket hall ceiling.

The cream and brown Leslie Green- influenced colouring scheme has now been extended to this area, replacing the 1980s light grey tiled finishes. The existing Validator Units remain for those interchanging between the Underground and National Rail but are only accessible via the on-street out-of-hours

entrance, as the direct link from the LU ticket hall is hoarded-off (again, at the time of writing). This was not a concern on opening day however, as Thameslink services were suspended between Harpenden and London from 21 to 29 December 2024 anyway due to planned engineering work.

TICKETING EQUIPMENT

Equipment	Amount	Device Nos.
Ticket Vending Machine †	Nil	N/A
Reversible E2 Gate	41-45	5
Wide Aisle Gate	1	22
Validator Unit	5	91-95

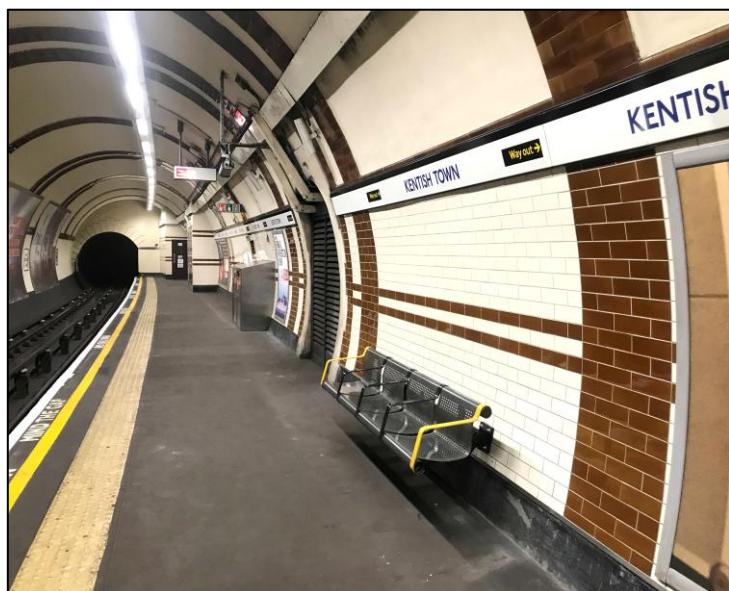
† New facilities to be commissioned later

ESCALATORS

Asset	Make	Between
Escalator No. 1	Otis 520	Ticket Hall and lower landing
Escalator No. 2	Otis 520	Ticket Hall and lower landing

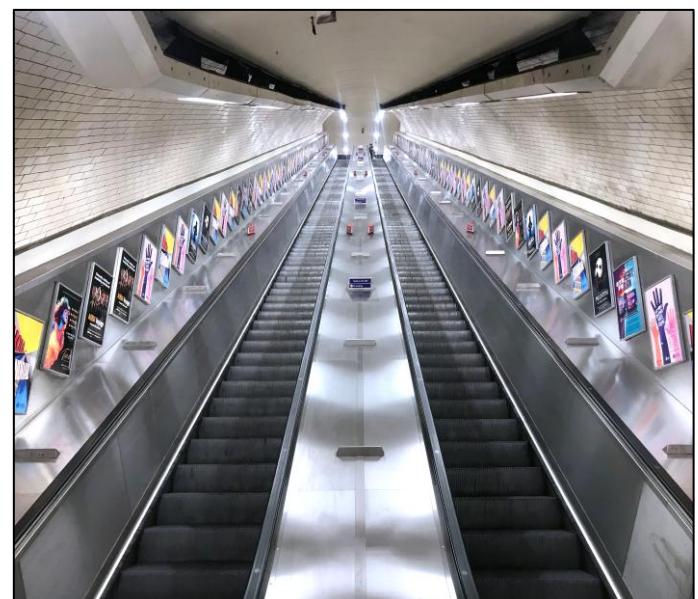
Editor's Notes: Kentish Town is now into its fourth pair of escalators. It is interesting to note that the first pair of escalators of 1932 lasted some 50 years, yet the combined total of the second and third pair only lasted fractionally under 40 years.

Type	From	To	From	To
Otis MH	21.11.32	13.07.82	21.11.32	31.10.83
CNIM-56E	16.10.83	21.08.95	16.12.84	16.05.96
APV-PSX	15.05.96	25.06.23	23.12.96	25.06.23
Otis 520	23.12.24		23.12.24	



Left: Platform level at Kentish Town showing the rather plain tiling scheme now adopted. Presumably, to install the previous tile pattern design was rejected because of finance – after all, it was envisaged that only the escalators would be replaced in the original plans. As at reopening, there were no platform roundels. Large 'KENTISH TOWN' names on some cream tiled spaces remain. At least the brown colour has been replicated (or maybe it is the remaining 2006 tiles installed by Tube Lines?).

Below: Two views of the new escalators Nos. 1 and 2 from the lower landing (Left) and looking up the shaft towards the ticket hall (Right). Note the emergency stop buttons halfway up the escalator shaft.



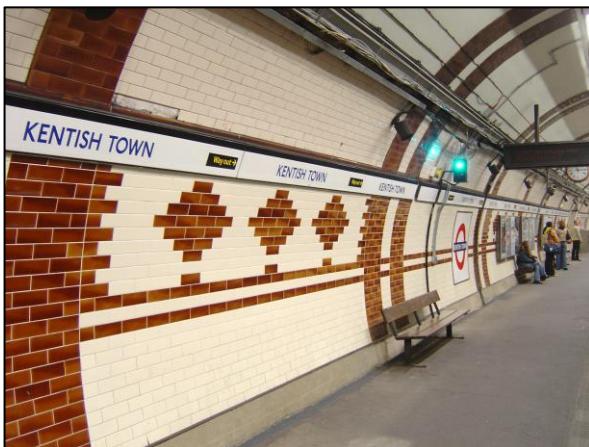


Above: (Left) the top escalator landing and showing that the cream and brown tiling, hitherto confined to platforms and passageways, has been extended into the ticket hall. Because just the two escalators are in the one shaft, the emergency spiral stairs from 1907 remain available to the left.

Above: From the 'paid' side of the rearranged ticket gates with the entrance/exit beyond to the left. The LU access to and from the Thameslink platforms remained incomplete on opening day.

Left: From the ticket hall (unpaid) side of the station with part of a wide-aisle-gate on the right.

All notes and photos: Kim Rennie on 23 December 2024



Before the 2023-2024 closure: Three views of Kentish Town after refurbishment by Tube Lines, on 2 November 2005 (Above, Left), 8 November 2006 and after the cables had been panelled over and showing the station name in the tiles (Left) and a view of the northbound platform looking south (Above) on 14 May 2009, after some of the tile décor had been covered over by advertisements.

All photos: Brian Hardy

TWO CLIPs TOGETHER



Above: (Left) Then the only two Central Line Improvement Project (CLIP) trains of 1992 Tube Stock are seen in Hainault Depot side by side on 19 December 2024, the second to be outshopped being on the right – note the car number above the solebar hasn't yet been changed. It was due a test run before entering service the next day. A third CLIP train was due to be outshopped from Acton Works in January 2025, but that will be reported if and when it happens.

Photo: Chris Wakeman

Photo: Mark Cole

TOWER HILL



Above: The two Restricted Manual Hold boards (at Tower Hill middle platform looking east) are provided for sighting purposes, the one nearest the camera for distance sighting on approach but is then obscured by the cab pillars when stopped at it, hence the Co-Acting board slightly further behind. Note the points set for the eastbound line.

Photo: Chris Wakeman

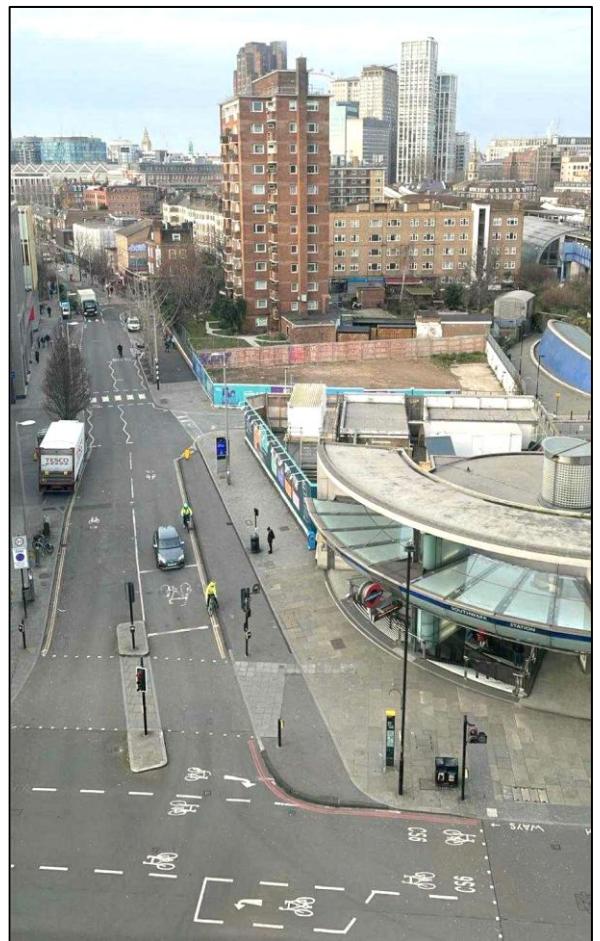
BROKEN ROUNDELS



Spotted in Hackney for an 'Apple' product repair shop.

Photo: Chris Wakeman

SOUTHWARK



Above: (Right) As noted in various "Planned Engineering Work and Station Closures" sections of the magazine, Southwark station has been closed on some weekends while work begins on building a 14-storey student tower above the station and affordable homes adjacent to it. This view looks towards Waterloo before the appearance of the station and the area is changed forever.

Photo: Mark Teale



REVERSING AT KING'S CROSS

Some weekend engineering possessions on the Piccadilly Line has required the service to reverse at King's Cross, in this case east to west in the eastbound platform, giving the rare opportunity for 'King's Cross' (Left) to be displayed.

Photo: John Podgorski

A BLAST FROM THE PAST

Observed in a north end (35xx) cab of a Bakerloo Line 1972 MkII Tube Stock in early January 2025 (*Below, Left*) was this destination blind label affixed to the destination box, which is thought to originate when the 1972 MkIIs went to the Bakerloo Line between 1986 and 1989.

There have been at least three sets of blinds since then, the latest (from 2015) being yellow on black and in lower case lettering. Note that 'Watford LMR' was included on the first two sets, possibly on a 'just in case' basis? Whether this was from the first or second set isn't known, but it survived the refurbishment programme in the early-1990s. However, logic says that it was probably a replacement destination box from the depot spares and put in long after refurbishment. The latest blinds (which is actually on the blind on the car in question) also include Piccadilly Circus, Lambeth North, Willesden Jctn, Wembley Central, Not in Service and Test Train.

Photo: LURS Collection



A CHANGE OF UNIFORM

Transport for London is changing the uniform that thousands of its staff wear across the network to help make staff more easily identifiable to passengers, especially in busier stations.

The new look uniform was progressively rolled-out, starting with London Underground, the Lost Property Office, TfL Visitor Centres and the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) from December 2024. The roll-out will then continue throughout all TfL modes, with River Services, Woolwich Ferry, Compliance Policing Operations & Security, Public Service Transport Planning, Buses, Victoria Coach Station and Dial-a-Ride staff following in early summer 2025 and other modes receiving their uniforms thereafter.

The new look uniforms are a refresh of the uniform design first introduced in 2015 by HemingwayDesign. The refreshed design, supplied by uniform provider Cooneen, has brighter roundels representing each mode or team on the overcoat and fleecington jacket and on accessories such as hats, scarves and ties. The larger, brighter roundels will provide improved contrast and visibility – a key point in feedback on the current uniform design from visually impaired customers. Non-mode specific roundels will also be visible on other items, such as trousers and skirts.

TfL used staff feedback on the current uniform to inform the changes, which include using softer yet durable fabrics. The new viscose blend fabric in the trousers, shorts and skirts was chosen for its breathable qualities, while still draping well.

As the old uniforms come to the end of their working life, staff will have a 12-month transition period to move over to the new uniforms, and old uniforms will be recycled where possible.

D STOCK ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT UPDATE

The early days of Class 484 operation on the Island Line saw units 484.001 and 484.004 operate as a four-car set. Plans have been in hand for some time to undertake further trials so that four-car trains can operate at busy periods. Some heavy loadings were experienced last summer with only two car trains in service.

Starting on 6 January 2025, trials began using units 484.002 and 484.003. Performance of the sets is being monitored, in particular with regard to power consumption and compatibility issues. Stopping points at stations are also being assessed to ensure suitable access is available for disabled passengers. With the trials taking place in mid-winter there is time to redress any issues before the busier peak periods later in the year. Three return empty trips were made between Ryde St. John's Road and Shanklin on 7 January 2025.



Above: 484.002 was at the north end of the train, coupled to 484.003 at the south end, seen at Ryde St. John's Road (Left), while 484.003 is seen nearest at the south end leaving Brading (Right).

Photos: Gary Ranson (Left) and John Mitchell (Right)

ANOTHER BLAST FROM THE PAST

Recently uncovered on westbound platform 1 at Leytonstone (Left) is this 40-year-old poster advertising the then new Capitalcard, enabling travel on the Underground, British Rail (London area) and London buses, all on one ticket. Conceived in 1982, it was introduced as part of a fares revision implementation on 6 January 1985 but lasted only four years until superseded by a new Travelcard in January 1989.

Photo: Kim Rennie

PRE-1938 TUBE STOCK MEMORY

This Underground train tread plate (Below) was seen in the window of a house clearance shop in Freshwater, Isle of Wight, on Monday 13 January 2025. From the date (of 1925) underneath "The Metropolitan Carriage Wagon & Finance Co Ltd.", it is thought that it must have been acquired from a withdrawn Pre-1938 Tube Stock 1925 MCCW control trailer that was running on the Island Line.

Photo: Paul Bradley

