



UNDERGROUND NEWS

First series Issue number 179

THE TIMETABLE for period beginning 20 January 1977

Saturday 5 February

The Society will be operating its sales stand at the transport Enthusiasts' bazaar, Islington Town Hall, Upper Street Islington N1, 11.00 to 15.00.

Friday 11 February

Talk by Mr R Blakey, of the London Transport Chief Signal Engineer's Department, on the application of computers to signalling on London's Underground. Hammersmith Town Hall, 19.00 for 19.15.

Saturday 12 February

Morning visit to Queens Park railway depot (very restricted in numbers). Please apply IMMEDIATELY, enclosing SAE to Dept BFC, 6 Launceston Gardens, Perivale, Greenford, Middlesex UB6 7ET.

Beyond

For details of any future timetable events readers are advised to consult notice UN 178b sheet 3 which should contain the prospective timetables until April, and which was circulated during the week containing 1 February. All people receiving this should have received the notice which also contained some information about sheet 4.

The entrance to Hammersmith Town Hall is situated in Nigel Playfair Avenue (GWR end) off King St, W6. The nearest (FIN) station is RAVENSCOURT PARK, not Hammersmith.

GLASGOW SUBWAY 1976

D J Carson

1976 marked the 80th year of operation of the Glasgow Subway and sadly it marks the last full year of operation of an underground system that most of us know so well.

At platform level at any one of the fifteen stations on the circle, the 80th year old 2-car trains shake, rattle and roll unhindered, as they always have done. But on street level the changes are noticeable.

At St Enoch station, the Gothic sandstone copy of a Scottish castle keep which forms the station building has now lost its glass canopy, and behind the building, piling rigs are now at work underpinning the station building itself, now a listed structure of architectural and historical interest. It will become a city travel centre with a new booking-hall below.

Govan Cross station on the west side of the City has now lost its 1953-built exit and depot offices. The station entrance and exit now being on the other side of Greenhaugh Street.

The car sheds are now surrounded by fenced-off compounds containing rails, sleepers, points and, of course, the inevitable site office.

The new rolling-stock for the line will not be dissimilar to LT present generation style tube stock although the people of Glasgow have quite a say in the design of these cars, for example the cab has been enlarged on the mock-up and the Victoria Line type of armrest has been removed; it appears that the Glaswegians do not like armrests.

The Subway cars of 1896 still run well but the failure rate is catching up on them. On 19 July 1976, a disabled train was waiting for assistance near Merkland Street station on the Inner Circle. The assisting train collided end-on with the disabled set causing seven minor injuries and one more serious.

The Subway celebrated its 80th anniversary on 14 December 1976 which was to be marked by the transfer of two cars to the Museum of Transport at 25 Albert Drive. These two cars will eventually be displayed in a mock-up of Merkland Street station, to be built at the Museum, with one track demonstrating the erstwhile cable traction and with electric traction on the other track. The display will be complete with sound effects- and smells!

From December onwards, some cars will be put up for preservation. The cars will be free of charge and all one has to pay for is getting them home! (perhaps the Society could offer some advice here; Ed.). Some have been requested for Summer-houses whilst one may well be regauged to fit 1½ins to run on the Ffestiniog Railway.

Sadly the system will close in June 1977 and re-open in November 1978, to enable the work to be carried out within the contract period.

After this the new Underground will be opened and be built, according to Greater Glasgow Passenger Transport Executive, 'to a standard not less than London's Fleet Line or Victoria Line'.

A REQUEST FROM THE TREASURER

The Treasurer requests, as a matter of some urgency so that the accounts for the year 1976 may be completed and audited prior to the AGM, that members having outstanding monies belonging to the Society, or members similarly having outstanding claims against Society accounts, or members in possession of stocks of Society non-capital account material (such as film, ink, paper, fuses etc), submit such monies, or details of such claims or monies or stocks of materials in hand, to the Treasurer (address in the Handbook) IMMEDIATELY but in no case, unless absolutely unavoidable, later than one week following receipt of this newsletter.

EDITOR RESIGNS

The Editor (M A C Horne) recently informed the production team that because of the Society's continuing situation he intended to resign. By the time this is being read his resignation will have taken effect. It may have been evident from the previous issue that he had already left the committee but he had in any case been unable to attend meetings of any sort since July. The team understand that initially there was considerable pressure brought about for the Editor to remain, but recent events have made this quite impossible.

Both the Editor and his production team were delighted to receive the large number of letters from people wishing us well and expressing their views on various topics. It is a shame that we could not provide individual answers to all of them but a feature in this issue is devoted to the matter and the points brought out may be of general interest. It is surprising how many ex-Editors of small circulation newsletters we have had (they are always the most sympathetic!).

With this (last) issue of Underground News (First Series), is both the first and the last issue of Underground to be edited entirely by Mike Horne (it may be evident, but Vol XIV numbers 1-3 were largely edited by a subcommittee). This is the only copy of Underground he regards as in any way typical of what he intended to follow; but all the work put into planning and organizing the future issues now seems to have been wasted. The same could be said for the Handbook. What had been issued so far was only a drop in the ocean; it may have been evident from the section numbering that there was to have been a huge amount more to have come - easily enough to have filled three binders.

During the team's term of office we were all abundantly aware, especially Mike, of the hiccups to the regularity. Some members of the team did everything they possibly could, bar giving up their jobs, to get the publications out promptly. The team could never understand the mentality of the few irate members the Society has acquired over the years, their scathings were sometimes extremely unhelpful and counter-productive. How many of them have taken time off work to help the Society? How many have travelled across London late of an evening to staple and collate? For we have once worked through until two-thirty on a Christmas morning. How many have spent evening after evening coaxing the printed page to emerge from an old and sick duplicator? Not many, we think. Yes, we know under the OLD system that everything turned out on time, but that was two years ago and under the old system, which is not really comparable anyway, we produced the goods on time because we PAID for it. To re-introduce this now would cause a severe rise in the subscription rate, and a drop in the amount of material published.

So there we have it - the ruinous dedication of, on average, 2-3 people produced more copy and more up-to-date copy at a relatively lower cost, even though we have not been able to produce quite as much copy as we originally envisaged. This is due to reasons partly of unforeseen financial difficulties and partly because of the unreliability, disinterest or friction from certain individuals who ought to have known better.

What of the future? Mike has gone and everyone else seems to disbelieve or under-estimate the problems. No doubt Underground News will continue in one form or another but the futures of Underground and (even more so) the Handbook are very doubtful. The Chairman has never tired of saying that he disliked the idea of having more than one publication, and since he is almost certain to be involved in forming a new team, this could be an important factor. We shall see.

I shall leave Mike to pursue his revived interest in pre-Cambrian topography and shall myself, at last, get around to writing that book I have been trying to start for years but hitherto have never found the time. Au revoir.

(Deputy Editor)

POINTS FROM THE POST

Without employing a full-time secretary, replying to letters must take second place to producing the periodicals in the Society's 'time-slot'; and it should be said that the latter job alone actually fills the 'time-slot' and overflows mercilessly into other things. Consequently it was intended to start a 'Points From The Post' feature at some time in the near future, but as this is the last issue of Underground News, as such, it will have to both start and finish here. Most of the letters were not intended for publication, so we will not embarrass their authors by revealing their names. For obvious reasons of space we cannot possibly reproduce all of the letters intact, though we have done so in some cases.

1. Regarding the Society publications, I believe that Underground News and the Handbook both fulfill the aims that you stated in your letter, and while the contents of 'Underground' have been excellent only three issues have so far appeared. If the problems with 'Underground' are financial, shouldn't an extra charge be made to members for it? I have not seen the accounts for 1975, but in the previous year Members' subscriptions did not cover the cost of the publications.

Deputy Editor - Members' subscriptions only barely covered the costs of recent publications and this has not only been the case for very many years but shows every sign of continuing for years to come. As you say sometimes the sub does NOT cover the periodicals. An additional increase of, in real terms, one pound (ie an additional increase to the usual 'inflation beater') raising our subscription to £6 would certainly have helped in this respect. Another significant aspect is that quality research is virtually unavailable at the moment. We had commissioned a number of items but basically people are (necessarily?) unreliable, and not much had been forthcoming, which left the matter in the hands of the usual few. We think our policy had been the right one though, there are some people notorious for publishing virtually anything, however dubious, as long as it looked good, or 'filled a gap', and the Editor of the revised Underground did not want the journal to acquire this reputation. It should be said that recent issues of Underground have been fatter than originally intended, and had more photographs, to compensate in a small way for the reduced number of issues.

2. ...Regular appearance of the Magazine and especially Underground would improve image of the Society. Coverage on LT railways is much better- LURS sources on railways appear to be better than mine except on stock alterations - I write the LT column in... (another magazine).

Deputy Editor- On the first point we could not agree more. On the second, we were acutely aware of gaps in certain spheres, but we went to a great deal of effort to get the remainder of the information, we were not short of sources but of time.

3. Underground News serves its purpose very well
Underground, main criticism is the quality of the illustrations which for a publication which will be kept is very low. If it is not economical to produce good illustrations by the method used for the text, why not insert a sheet of better quality illustrations during the stapling operation?

Deputy Editor- We would like to improve the quality of the photographs and the Editor had been taking steps to use an improved production method in future to aid this. Some of the original photographs have been wholly unsuitable though (as we found AFTER printing); compare the GN&C rolling stock in issue three with Alan Jackson's excellent photograph below. On the plate the photographs both looked marvellous, appearances can be very deceptive.

4. I am a very keen modeller and am engaged in building a gauge '1' garden railway which will eventually be largely Met... .
... From a personal point of view any article on stations, signals, signal boxes, locos, coaches and goods rolling-stock and colour schemes etc, would have a tremendous interest.

I imagine there must be quite a few modellers in the Society yet I have never seen an article.....of a model of Underground interest. I realize you can only publish the material you receive and am as lethargic as the next man!

Deputy Editor- We would scarcely call this gentleman lethargic! Seriously though, the modelling side of the Society had virtually lapsed. When the 'retiring' editor planned this publication system, it was realized that it would not be amenable to modelling subjects and thought was given to the publication of occasional 'modelling supplements'. The complete dearth of material caused no further action to be taken, and our concentration was directed on the 'prototype' system. It is gratifying that the writer is one of the few to realize that we can only publish what we receive, and goes on to say:

'Thank you for your efforts, I am afraid the running of any club always seems to be left to the dedicated few, but if people were not really interested they would not pay their sub every year.

We wonder sometimes!

- 5 and Undoubtedly the mags are better than they were... .

6. You can never satisfy every members' wishes and I think a reasonable balance is achieved.

Deputy Editor- Yes, so did we. Nevertheless one can never satisfy every member's wishes as you say so rightly, it depends on what you want. Basically societies in general get the publications they deserve; not all, though, know what they want. The publication team had thought that the present system could, with a bit of co-operation have achieved great things. Being so tied to a headline budget meant that too much time was spent on trivial things and not enough on important things such as Underground. Even so, while the system was in operation the membership increased significantly.

7. ...I know from personal experience of service to another transport society of which I am no longer a member, that it is extremely difficult to judge what the membership want; the majority of us remain cabbages and seem to have no interest in the hard work put in by the few officers and assistants on our behalf. May I therefore take this opportunity to thank the committee for their work which enables me to maintain and further my interest in Underground railways. ...May I say that I consider the Handbook an excellent idea.

Deputy Editor- Thank you. One point though, some officers and others were so engrossed in their work that they just did not know what to do with anyone who did offer their help. Of course, sooner or later they would end up doing something but it is actually very time consuming training someone to do a job, and somehow one never seems to be any less busy ones self as a result. A forty hour day would be more help!

8. ...Havn't received enough of the Handbook to offer constructive critis-

ism, other than to say that the referencing system appears to be so involved as to defeat its object... . I am...indebted to the committee for all its hard work.

Deputy Editor- We don't accept the Handbook comment. We had divided the proposed contents into about thirty major headings and allocated each one a code letter (or letters). Within each main heading the individual studies were each given a number. For example, the programmed study of 'patterns of train service' would be coded H (for railway operating) 15 (the serial number of the article within section H) making H15. The articles were numbered so that when the handbook was reasonably complete, they would follow in a reasonably logical order. The 'issue number' comprised a letter and figure code, the first issue invariably to be issue A1. As pages or sections were reprinted, the number would be increased by one each time, viz A1, A2, A3... . If ever a reprinted section had spilled over its original number of pages and caused certain other things to be re-arranged, then the letter A would have been changed to a B to make it clear. Other codes on the sheets were for the use of the compilers.

For ease of reference, individual paragraphs within features were numbered, so that paragraph 3 in our above example would be referred to as H15.3, and H15.21 would be the twenty-first paragraph in the same section. In some cases, we had found it convenient to split a section into two or more (eg E8 and D22). Where this has had to be done it should have been reasonably clear from the heading. There were some anomalies within the first batch which could have caused some confusion. These were to have been reprinted. We were to have produced a contents sheet both for the handbook as a whole and for items within each major heading, and this would have made the whole position clearer.

9. (When comparing our publications to those of other Societies) ...more care seems to be taken in the writing of articles and there is a greater quantity of them.

10. The service which I find of greatest interest is the provision of progress reports on LT projects and changes. Possibly the inclusion of standard press releases could help in this service; on some occasions a friend has shown me copies of 'Branch Line News' which have contained information not given in the Underground News.

Overall I am pleased (and occasionally impressed!) by the Society publications

Deputy Editor- We were aware of gaps in our coverage but had found difficulty in filling them. It must be realized that many people didn't get Underground News in isolation and may possibly have preferred that we devoted space to items NOT covered sufficiently elsewhere, instead of reprinting press notices (even had we received all of them) that many others had used and which inevitably included some that were less than accurate.

11. ...I feel that publications of the LURS are maintained at a high standard of content and presentation.

Deputy Editor- Presentation had always been looked at carefully, but there were a number of improvements the Editor would have liked to have made to the construction of Underground. These included front cover design and general layout.

It is interesting to note how the cover design for Underground News was arrived at. The one currently in use is the seventh attempt, but has not been altered subsequent to its inception because we did not feel it could be bettered.

12. ...the content of the LURS mags are, to me, very technical, and even to ask educated questions of the editors requires a good knowledge of the Underground System.

Deputy Editor- The Editor was aware of the 'novice' faction within the Society and it was this that lead him to produce the 'Basic Underground At Work' series which some people found very useful. We thought that we kept the balance about right though- some people had found our articles not technical enough.

13. Although it may be true that there is a certain amount of apathy amongst the members I feel that part of the problem is a lack of awareness of ways in which we can assist in the running of the Society. During the two years of my being a member, although I have seen many times requests from the Editor for more active participation by the members, I cannot remember seeing any suggestions of how this can be achieved. Do you want us to make contributions to 'Underground News', do you want us to purchase more publications through the Society

Other than this, I find the format of the Society as it is to be excellent. I appreciate that lack of finance makes the publication of 'Underground' a considerable problem, but, in my opinion, 'Underground News' is a very good publication in itself.

Deputy Editor- Thank you for your point, though we must say that at the time we were making pleas for help, we thought that we were making it clear that what we were short of was SUITABLE material for Underground and Underground News. This plea did not really work and alternative arrangements for prising news out had to be arrived at. This was by no means a satisfactory arrangement from the point of view of the Editor, but on the other hand, judging from the very few serious complaints we have had, the majority of the membership seem to have been reasonably happy.

I do not think that the Editor put in more than about three appeals for help (not the 'many times' alluded to above, though it may have seemed such) but there is a limit to how many times people can be asked to help, as criticism for the third insertion indicated. The trouble is, perhaps, that the people who write for us already HAVE SOMETHING THEY WANT TO SAY OR COMMUNICATE TO OTHERS, and generating new people to write items in an unco-ordinated fashion, merely to fill up space, has been shown to be disastrous. Either that or we would end up reporting the unreportable, things that no-one is interested in.

14. As an editor myself I know only too well the difficulties you labour with particularly with material. ...keep up the good work on the new style journal.

15. Having worked on a magazine at work, I soon discovered that 'Letharap' (a combination of lethargy and apathy) is a disease suffered by approximately 98% of readers. People are content to be given something, providing they don't have to do anything in return. This I'm afraid is a fact of life which you will never alter, try as you may. In fact, I'll be very surprised if you get half of the questionnaires back. I would be interested to know. Keep up the war on Letharap, I failed.

Deputy Editor- The Editor failed too, but he was not beaten by Letharap alone. The writer will be interested to know that we got back almost exactly half of the assessments we sent out, giving us a clear view of members interests and requirements regarding the publications. On the whole it seems that we have provided the best possible compromise of satisfying members' needs, less than 5% thought that any major improvement was necessary, though many thought that

regularity could be improved. It is a pity that the person who provided the service will no longer be available to do so, but it is always good to know that our combined efforts were appreciated while they lasted.

16. I always enjoy reading all three publications and find them very informative. As a motorman on LT I have worked at several depots on various lines so my opinion may be good news for the Editor and his helpers. ... Would it be a good idea to attempt setting up local residential groups so members could get together for chats and possibly exchange information?

Deputy Editor- in principle this is a good idea, but in the light of what this Society has already tried everyone may be assured that a fair amount of effort would be needed to do this, possibly for little return. We have tried 'Pub-Chats' in various parts of London, but by far the majority of the few who turned up were people who frequently drank with each other anyway! Central organization of this sort of thing is unlikely to succeed - but if any individuals would like to suggest something let them do so.

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FURTHER HANDBOOK ALTERATIONS

- Section D paragraph D5.3: Delete entry for Hounslow Central.
- paragraph D7: Amend entry for WF by deleting the word 'cabin' and inserting the words 'IMR' and 'from Earls Court'.
- Section E paragraph E2.3: Amend entry for 'BC' so as to read 'BC 1-11' (and not BC 1-3 as stated) and alter remainder of entry to read 'Wood Lane depot and Shepherds Bush to White City'.
- Section Z paragraph Z3.3: Delete entry for D F Taylor.
- paragraph Z4: Under heading 'Editor' delete 'M A C Horne'.
- paragraph Z5: Delete entry 'M A C Horne' under heading of Sound Librarian.

UNDERGROUND Vol XIV No 4

No 4 had been completed by the end of December and should have been ready for distribution in January. Due very largely to Union problems in the printing and reprographic trades it has been difficult to (amongst other things) get 'unauthorized' artwork accepted at the more suitable plate-making establishments. To some extent further problems accrue from the fact that other establishments, that might have accepted our artwork, are overloaded with work from people in the same position as us.

As explained on page 265, number 4 is the first (and it seems the only) Underground to be exclusively a representative issue from the departing team, and it is infuriating that it MAY not be ready to go out with this UN. If this is the case we will ensure that it is circulated immediately upon receipt.

REVIEWS

'I belong to Glasgow' by Gordon Caseby and Bill Hamiton, Nexus Press Ltd of 2 Boswell Square, Hillingdon Industrial Estate, Glasgow G52 4UX at 95p. (23 B&W photographs and four colour plates). The sub-title of this book is 'the human story of the Glasgow Underground' and that is precisely what this book deals with, no more, no less. Readers are spared technical and legal details and therefore the book makes interesting reading to both railway historian and layman alike.

Fourteen chapters portray the underground from inception in both humorous and serious vein; in some cases the authors appear to be cynical about the oppositions that the underground met during its early life.

The only set-back about this book is that the English born and bred reader with little or no knowledge of Glasgow will have difficulty in pronouncing or translating some of the Glaswegian slang used in some places in this book.

Overall, it makes very good reading to those who like Glasgow and its underground.

- Dave Carson.-

'London Passenger Transport' by the London Passenger Transport Research Group. Despite signs over the last twenty-five years to the contrary, the trend in London's passenger transport is towards integration. It seems only sensible, therefore, if not a little overdue, to study it as a whole rather than in the fragmented way we do at present. London Passenger Transport (LPT) achieves this aim admirably, for it covers the whole system within the old 'London passenger transport area' of 1933, viz: Central and Country buses and coaches, British Railways suburban services, and also, of course, the Underground network.

London Passenger Transport, quite rightly aims high (the term is up-market) and seems to be right on target. This advance, or initial, issue explains that the demand for LPT has been clamant for a number of years. The publication will apparently be only a part of the total 'package', for its creators are primarily a study and research group. They hope to publish historical and technical treatises whenever possible. It is, it seems, their intention at the moment to produce these larger works (possibly in the form of books or booklets) as some sort of supplement to editions of LPT and at particularly advantageous rates to LPT subscribers, although also available on general sale.

This initial LPT is a worthy attempt and contains much of interest for people whose pre-occupations include the Underground, or indeed, London as a whole; 'number spotters', though, could be disappointed.

Obtainable (we think normally on a subscription basis only) from 'London Passenger Transport', 24 Cranbourn Street, London WC2.

The cost? A modest £4 per set of issues. Well recommended.

-MH/77-

'Deluge' by Richard Doyle, published by Arlington Books at £3.50 (hard cover).

This book can best be described as 'a sort of novel' and as may be clear from the title, is devoted to the tale of London coping with a massive Thames flood. A large section of the book concerns the release of passengers trapped in the Underground system (somewhere on the Circle Line, near the river). Whatever the dramatic merit of the book, it is not particularly accurate in its references to London Transport. A suspiciously minded person might think that the book was produced to convey some of the secrets acquired by the author, regarding the 'secret' flooding procedures, to the populace, rather than writing a novel which just happens to be about London flooding. Either way, nothing of Underground flood procedures, in real life, is given away. Not even a mention of the Flood Control Room at Bull & Bush, talking of which (I refer to Underground Nol27 of 1972, beneath the City streets, on p120 not p20 as shown on the page and in the index) it has now been definitely established that 'Paddock' is beneath the GPO research station at Dollis Hill and not at North End as shown in the book, by Peter Laurie, which was withdrawn. Back to our flood though, if you buy the book, be prepared to make allowances.

LETTER TO UNDERGROUND NEWS

Sir,

With regard to John Reed's letter of 26 August, in UN 177, my researches for 'the book' on headcode and destination displays (and their origins) reveal some slightly unsettling features. One in particular is the use of both BLUE and PURPLE headlamps in the same set of displays on the District Railway round about 1897. I know of no individual code to use both colours.

Bearing in mind that at this time the majority of codes incorporated white lights, the following used in addition one blue lamp:

- (Up) Chiswick Park or Mill Hill Park and Hounslow;
- (Up) Lillie Bridge Yard;
- (Down) No 1 Road, Mansion House;
- (Down) No 5 Road, Mansion House;
- (Down) from Hammersmith line to Hammersmith, West Kensington, Earls Court, or High Street Kensington;
- Middle Circle;
- Mineral trains to and from the Midland Railway depot at High Street Kensington, these to carry in addition a square, white board with a black, diagonal cross thereon, in centre of buffer-beam.

(the apparent reversal of the UP and DOWN line orientation of the District Railway running lines, as compared with the usual practice, and originating from the connections with the Metropolitan, need to be borne in mind)

The code to use a purple light was called 'Short Journey Circle' and is reputed to have come into operation on 1 April 1887, some years after the opening of the City Lines and Extensions company's Inner Circle completion railway.

The need for coloured lights at all is questionable for the apparent number of lamp positions available for white far exceeds the number of codes actually used. The need, therefore, for yet a third colour, especially one easily confused with blue, is highly debatable though I would not presume to try and allocate a reason for this action at this stage, if ever.

Mr Reed may now wonder why it is that his superficially simple original question has raised so many other points without actually being answered in itself.

Yours faithfully

M A C Horne

London NW4
7 January 1977

NEWSFLASHES

- NF 1730 In December LT agreed to market for a trial period of a year a number of its major publications through Ian Allan. This entailed substantial price increases from February of between 30 and 96 per cent.
- NF 1731 The line between Boston Manor and Hounslow West was re-signalled from 29th November in the vicinity of Hounslow Central where the signal cabin was replaced by an Interlocking Machine Room (see H/B amend'ts). The remainder of the signalling in the section remains to be renewed.
- NF 1732 A new ticket hall and escalators were brought into use at Bond Street on Monday 23 January, together with a subway system. This portion of the station redevelopment temporarily provides the facilities eventually to be offered by the much larger area available when the old hall and escalators have been rebuilt, which could take about 5 years.