

## FROM THE PAPERS

Items for “From the Papers” should be sent to Ian McKenzie at 24 Thamespoint, Fairways, Teddington, TW11 9PP (or E-Mail [secretary@lurs.org.uk](mailto:secretary@lurs.org.uk)), and not to the Editor of this journal. Please ensure that contributions are identified by date and source publication.

**29.12.18 EVENING STANDARD** – A South Korean craze whereby fans pay (literally) tribute to their favourite bands by buying advertising space to honour their birthdays has arrived in London. Across Underground stations, including Notting Hill Gate, posters have appeared wishing happy birthday to Kai, a member of the nine-strong South Korean-Chinese boy group *Exo*, accompanied by “940114” – his date of birth, 14 January 1994. A common sight on the Seoul metro, the craze recently spread to New York’s Times Square. The weirdest part? Kai, who lives in Seoul, will never see the London posters, though the group paid £1,500 for the ad spaces.

**30.01.19 – 12.02.19 RAIL No.871** – *Stop and Examine Column* – If you go down to the Underground today you’re sure of a big surprise. At least, Underground users were on 13 January, when they risked being confronted by the *No Trousers Tube Ride 2019*. A report in the Evening Standard reveals that an estimated 500 people gathered at the National Gallery (in full clothing) before removing their trousers/skirts etc, and taking a trip on the Underground to show off their underwear. This was the tenth staging of London’s *No Trousers Tube Ride*, which was inspired by the *No Pants Subway Ride* that began as a small prank in New York in 2002. And the reason? Merely to banish those January blues.

**31.01.19 EVENING STANDARD** – Transport chiefs have revealed the crisis-hit Crossrail line has no chance of opening this year – and they have no idea when it will. Its Chief Executive Mark Wild told the Mayor he faced a “huge” task and hopes of the £17.6B line being ready this autumn were non-existent. He said: “I can’t see how this job can be delivered in calendar year 2019. I don’t know when it will be delivered after that”. One figure close to the project warned it could be “two or three years” before services are running fully through the central section. Mr. Wild said there had been a “massive step forward” when the first train entered the central tunnels to start testing on 14 January. But there were “many, many weeks” of trials to come, and it will take until the summer before trains can be fully tested. He was “less certain” how long it would take to complete the nine “huge” stations, with Paddington, Whitechapel and Tottenham Court Road among those with the biggest problems.

**31.01.19 EVENING STANDARD** – A “Night Rider” fare that enables passengers to switch between Underground, trains and buses at no extra cost should be introduced to boost London’s 24-hour economy, the Mayor was told today. Expanding late-night activities with pop-up markets, exhibitions and cultural events in empty shops and public buildings could also help to save the high street, according to the London Night Time Commission. The Commission was set up by the Mayor in 2017 to draw up ideas to boost the night-time economy. Today it published a number of recommendations to attract more Londoners out of homes between 18.00 and 06.00. The night-time economy is already regarded as a success. About 33% of jobs and 25% of public transport trips are at night. About 67% of Londoners say they are active at night, working, socialising, at sport or cultural events or doing chores. The report also calls for improved safety and measures to tackle violence. The perception of crime outstrips the reality and 19% of Londoners say they don’t feel safe going out at night.

**01.02.19 METRO** – New lifts have opened at Finsbury Park station marking the first milestone in a major upgrade project. The lifts provide step-free access to the Piccadilly and Victoria lines, as well as Network Rail platforms, making it easier for passengers with mobility needs, buggies or heavy luggage to travel on the Underground. The upgrade work at the station includes a new, larger entrance which will create an alternative step-free route and a larger staircase have already been installed. Finsbury Park is the fourth busiest station outside Zone 1, with more than 31M customers using the station in 2017.

**04.02.19 THE TIMES** – Siemens wants to link up with Alstom, its French rival, to compete with China. In recent days the Siemens CEO’s proposed merger with Alstom seems to have run out of track. In Germany, such a deal is known as a “wedding of elephants”. Siemens-Alstom would be by far the biggest beast in the European jungle and the second biggest in the world with a combined workforce of more than 60,000 people and sales of Euro12.5B a year. It would bring the Continent’s

most recognisable rolling stock brands, including Pendolino, ICE and TGV, under one roof. Most importantly, it would create a powerhouse with enough left to counter the Chinese state-backed CRRC. The struggle over the merger has pitted Berlin and Paris against Brussels, industrial strategy against competition policy and regional interests against global.

**07.02.19 THE TIMES** – EU defends rules as it blocks Siemens-Alstom rail merger. The merger was seen as a counterbalance to the growing might of China. Brussels firmly defended its competition laws yesterday as it blocked the merger. Margarethe Vestager, the European competition commissioner, drew stern criticism from France and Germany as she dismissed pressure to shake up the rules in order to fend off the threat of China. Berlin and Paris had cast the deal as a test of Europe's readiness to create industrial "champions" able to hold their own on the global stage. They fear that Beijing is stripping away European technologies and using its state-backed groups to dominate world markets. Last week Alstom and Siemens offered Brussels further concessions, including selling smaller subsidiaries and licensing some technologies to rivals, in an eleventh-hour attempt to revive the flagging merger. Mrs. Vestager said that the revisions were not enough to answer concerns raised consumers, trade unions and rivals.

**08.02.19 WATFORD OBSERVER** – The developer Kier Property says *Riverwell* is "still viable" without the Metropolitan Line Extension (MLX). A transport link which would run via West Watford as an alternative to the MLX is still being considered. After a multi-storey car park at Watford General Hospital was given the go ahead, the Mayor of Watford says a feasibility study looking into the possibility of an MLX alternative is ongoing. Last year the Mayor of London said TfL would not support MLX, an extension from Croxley to Watford Junction via Ascot Road and Vicarage Road. *Riverwell* was initially put forward with the idea the MLX would run via Vicarage Road, but the Watford Mayor says the introduction of a transport link near the development is alive. Kier Property says MLX has "no impact" on the viability of *Riverwell* adding the town is "attractive" and somewhere which people "desire to live".

**13.02.19 – 26.02.19 RAIL No.872** – Vivarail has announced plans for a four-car hydrogen D-Train. The company says the modular design of the Class 230s allows a hydrogen-powered set to have more seats. It has also confirmed that trains entering traffic with diesel gensets can be modified to be hydrogen-powered. Its hydrogen-powered "230" D-Train will follow the Transport for Wales (TfW) sets by having two driving vehicles powered by Hoppecke batteries. The difference is that rather than a diesel genset beneath the two intermediate vehicles, hydrogen tanks and fuel cells will be housed there. This means that seats and the interior will not be compromised. The demonstrator battery powered 230.002 will be used during the trials because it can be reformed with hydrogen-fitted intermediate vehicles. It says the train will have a range of 650 miles and feature regenerative braking. Vivarail has built diesel-powered demonstrator 230.001. Three diesel set are on order for London Northwestern Railway, and five battery powered sets have been ordered by TfW.

**13.02.19 EVENING STANDARD** – A bizarre row broke out today about the new red vests being worn by Underground station staff. The RMT is to ballot its members on taking action short of a strike in protest at having to wear the reversible tabards. They were introduced on Sunday by TfL to help passengers spot Underground staff (see next entry). The RMT said it was a "pathetic" attempt to disguise alleged staff cuts by increasing the visibility of those who remain on duty. The union also claimed the poor design of the vests, dubbed "gilets rouge" in reference to the "gilets jaunes" (yellow vests) protests in France, was causing staff to "overheat". The RMT said the "imposition" of the red vests was an "ill-conceived" attempt to cover-up the "intentional lack of staff on our stations due to cost-cutting exercises". They added that they make the staff "a target for anti-social behaviour" and the union's national executive has decided to ballot all station staff for industrial action that would involving refusing to wear the vests. A TfL spokesman said there were 325 more station staff as a result of the decision to close ticket offices and get workers out from behind the counter.

**14.02.19 METRO** – Station staff on the Underground will be standing out from the crowd with a new high visibility vest launched this week. The new modern look is part of a programme on the Underground and will help make it easier for passengers to see staff and identify who they need to speak to for assistance. The tabards are reversible, with a red side complete with a "Here to help" message for customer service duties in ticket halls and around gate-lines, while the orange side will

be worn when staff are dispatching trains, assisting on platforms and in emergencies. LU said: “The new vests will help customers easily identify staff of the red vests if they need help. Our station staff already do a brilliant job assisting customers every day, and we are confident that better visibility will help them to provide and even better service in future”. The vests have been launched following recommendations from *London TravelWatch* on how the Underground could improve customer service. Other recommendations that have already been implemented include providing more and better signs directing customers to lifts and visitor centres, improved processes to support disabled customers, fast access to refunds for Oyster credit and upgrades to ticket machines in stations.

**14.02.19 METRO** – A dangerous sex fiend has been jailed for life thanks to a brave woman who heard his victim’s screams and followed him onto an Underground train. The 68-year-old offender started tailing his victim at Colliers Wood station. He boarded a bus after her and attacked her when she got off and began to walk home. But the woman fought back when he pushed her to the ground and he fled, stealing her purse. A passer-by who heard her screams and saw part of the attack followed the attacker on to the Underground. She noted his appearance, including his tattoos, and saw him get off at Tooting Broadway. Her actions enabled police to track the attacker via CCTV footage and his Oyster travelcard. Met police recognised the serial offender, who was arrested four days after the attack. The attacker was ordered to serve a minimum of five years, after admitting robbery, false imprisonment with intent to commit a sexual offence and possession of a bladed article.

**14.02.19 METRO** – Poems on the Underground is celebrating the timelessness of love poetry with a new leaflet which includes *The Rescue* by Seamus Heaney. One of the most important poets of the 20th Century, he won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1995. Another of the poems is *Wild Nights!* By Emily Dickinson. Although she wrote nearly 1,800 poems during her lifetime, her first volume of poetry was not published until four years after her death in 1890. She is now recognised as one of America’s greatest poets.

**15.02.19 EVENING STANDARD** – Mayor Sadiq Khan’s oversight of the Crossrail fiasco was called into question today as secret documents revealed his spin doctors were drafting crisis plans almost two weeks before the date on which he claims he discovered the line would not open on time. These documents show the first of ten draft press releases, announcing the axing of last December’s royal opening, were sent by Crossrail to TfL on 17 August last year. This was 12 days before the Mayor says he was told the cross-London rail line could not open as planned, which was announced by Crossrail on 31 August. In January, Crossrail admitted they now have no idea when the line, which has soared £2.8B over budget to £17.6B, will open. A London Assembly member said: “If the Mayor, who is chair of TfL, really wants to hold the line that he knew nothing until 29 August, the only possible explanation he can now peddle is that he is kept in the complete dark by the very organisation he is supposed to be in charge of”.

**20.02.19 EVENING STANDARD** – The London-based travel app *Citymapper* is to launch a seamless “one stop shop” transport pass that it claims will be a world first for a major city. The subscription service *Citymapper Pass*, will initially cost about £40 per week for unlimited travel on the Underground, buses and Overground in Zones 1 and 2, unlimited use of Santander bikes and £12 towards trips with *Citymapper Ride* cab shares. There will be a £30 option that includes the public transport access of the more expensive pass, but excludes bikes and cab shares. It still undercuts the existing weekly TfL Travelcard by £5.10. Outside those Zones the pass will operate as a pay-as-you-go Oyster-style card. Azmat Yusuf, *Citymapper* founder, said: “It’s not just about the price, we’d like to provide a better experience – we want to make this really easy and reduce the hassle to a minimum”. Different packages with extra zone coverage are expected to be added “within months”. It hopes the whole capital will be on the system by the end of the year. TfL said the subsidising of the travel card cost intended to attract users will be covered by *Citymapper*.

**22.02.19 EVENING STANDARD** – A sixteen-year-old boy is in a serious condition after he was shot in the stomach during a late-night fight on an Underground train. Witnesses said the fracas broke out on a Hammersmith & City Line service and it spilled on to the platform at Barking, where the victim was shot. One passenger pulled the emergency alarm and a bystander tripped up one of the fleeing attackers, but they had gone by the time the police arrived. In the confusion, onlookers thought a knife was used. One tweeted: “Just witnessed a stabbing at Barking station. Passenger

alarm pulled and a brave gentleman tripped the individual with the knife up. Suspect appeared to flee along the platform after the doors were opened. I saw blood on the station stairs". BT Police said the victim was taken to hospital and a small bullet was removed from his abdomen. They believe he had been arguing with two other men.