

UNDERGROUND DIARY

FEBRUARY 2020

Because of the weekend engineering work at the west end of the Piccadilly Line and to enable engineers' trains to transfer to site, the Piccadilly Line's Night Tube was additionally suspended between Hyde Park Corner and Hammersmith from 01.45. However, because of the time taken to position the engineering trains, it meant that the Night Tube service from Hyde Park Corner to Hammersmith couldn't resume until 04.50 instead of 03.45 on **Saturday 1 February**. Coupled with this was that four trains were cancelled for no Train Operators, causing some extended gaps in the service. A person trackside between Barkingside and Newbury Park brought the Central Line to a stand for 20 minutes from 07.30. The rest of the daytime service was incident free.



Above: *With the Piccadilly Line being shut down west of Hammersmith for the weekend of 1/2 February 2020, it was strange to see the east end exterior of Northfields Depot devoid of trains.*

Photo: *Martin Keegan*

There was nothing of note to report for **Sunday 2 February**.

The only incidents on **Monday 3 February** were two separate persons ill on trains. The first was at Elephant & Castle northbound Northern Line at 08.45 causing a 20-minute delay and the second at Tower Hill westbound at 13.20. In the case of the latter the train detrained its passengers (apart from the casualty) and moved to Embankment where assistance was arranged. The train departed at 13.55 out of service creating a 25-minute gap 'through the road'.

A late finish to Network Rail engineering work at Richmond on **Tuesday 4 February** prevented the District Line's Richmond branch from starting up until 06.20. A track defect on the westbound between Bermondsey and London Bridge resulted in the Jubilee Line being suspended between Canary Wharf and Waterloo from 10.35 until 11.45, with 18 trains cancelled in consequence. Piccadilly Line services via Heathrow Terminal 4 were suspended from 12.35 to 13.15 because of a signal failure on the T4 loop.



Wednesday 5 February was uneventful until 18.25, when a loss of traction current between Dover Street and Cobourg Street caused an initial 15-minute delay to the Victoria Line service. A person ill on a northbound train at Highbury & Islington shortly after prevented a swift return to timetable. Holborn station closed from 19.15 until 20.35 because of a fire alarm activation.

Left: *This westbound Hammersmith & City Line train at Mile End bound for Hammersmith clearly in service, picking up and dropping off passengers with "Not In Service" unhelpfully on display. One wonders what the passengers made of it!*

Photo: *Chris Wakeman*

Thursday 6 February began with a defective Jubilee Line train at Neasden at 06.20 with a smell of burning reported coming from underneath it. It was detrained of passengers and then reversed back into Neasden Depot, but stalled entering the depot, blocking both southbound Jubilee and Metropolitan lines. The Jubilee Line was suspended north of Willesden Green and the Metropolitan Line initially south of Wembley Park but south of Harrow-on-the-Hill from 08.00. The offending train reached Neasden Depot at 08.20 with services resuming at 08.30, although the Metropolitan Line between Baker Street and Aldgate remained suspended until 09.30. There were further problems with trains reversing in Neasden Depot when another Jubilee Line train was unable to move, having stalled on the flyunder line at 08.40. This was eventually pulled into depot by another train, being clear at 10.35. For the morning peak, 17 Metropolitan Line and 24 Jubilee Line trains were cancelled. Service recovery on the Jubilee Line was then set back further with train crewing issues at Willesden Green, with a northbound train delayed for 20 minutes from 11.45. A SPAD at Stonebridge Park by a London Overground train at 12.05 caused a 25-minute delay to the Bakerloo Line.

Below: *The defective Jubilee Line 1996 Tube Stock straddling the southbound Metropolitan and Jubilee lines and also (in the distance) the shunting neck and depot access.*

Photo: *Rob Jones via Twitter*



Friday 7 February was uneventful until 15.20 when an eastbound Hammersmith & City Line train encountered a door problem at Latimer Road. Passengers were detrained and the train departed empty after a 25-minute delay. Clapham South station closed at 16.10 because of an incident close to the station, reopening at 19.30. The Night Tube service on the Piccadilly Line had extended gaps for much of the night with eight out of the 21 trains cancelled for no Train Operators.

Saturday 8 February was as follows:

- District Line's Richmond branch suspended 09.05 to 09.35 – discarded traffic cone on track
- Old Street station closed from 12.05 to 14.10 – ingress of sewage.
- Central Line suspended Newbury Park – Hainault 15.15 to 15.45 – defective inner rail train at Fairlop.
- Central Line suspended Leytonstone – Hainault 23.55 until 00.50 – signal failure at Hainault. One train stalled approaching Hainault was authorised to return to Fairlop.

- Eight Night Tube trains cancelled on the Piccadilly Line for no Train Operators with the same extended gaps in the service as previous night which extended into the early Sunday morning daytime service.

Sunday 9 February will be remembered as the day that Storm Ciara hit the UK, with the London area taking its share of the grief. In addition, there were some non-weather related problems. These included a signal failure westbound at Osterley from 06.00 causing an initial 25-minute delay and a further 25-minute delay from 07.05 while the problem was fixed. The Bakerloo Line was unable to start up north of Queen's Park until 09.00 because of a late finish to Network Rail engineering work. A loss of signalling control in the Blackhorse Road area from 09.00 suspended the Victoria Line north of Seven Sisters until 09.30, while a track circuit failure at Hainault suspended the Central Line between there and Leytonstone from 13.00 until 13.55. A discarded umbrella on the track at Aldgate caused a short circuit and consequential signal failure, causing a 20-minute stand from 14.05. Signal failures from mid-afternoon at both Acton Town and Barons Court decimated the Piccadilly Line service with 33 trains cancelled in consequence. The District Line's Ealing service was also affected because of missed and late Piccadilly Line crew reliefs at Acton Town (late running varying between 30 and 50 minutes) and neither service recovered for the rest of the day. Late in the evening, the Central Line came to a stand at North Acton from 23.25 because of a loss of signalling control caused by a local power failure. One train was stalled approaching North Acton, arriving in the platform after 30 minutes. As this was the last eastbound train through the road (to Hainault) and because many stations had closed because of insufficient staff numbers by then, the last eastbound train ran empty from North Acton to Hainault.

Weather related problems may be summarised thus:

- 30-minute delay on the District Line's Wimbledon service from 09.15 – train front tripped by a bag which had been blown onto the track at Wimbledon Park.
- Metropolitan Line suspended Harrow-on-the-Hill – Uxbridge and Piccadilly Line suspended west of South Harrow from 09.30 – tree across the track west of Rayners Lane. Two trains were stalled in the vicinity of the fallen tree (see below). The passengers on the Piccadilly Line were detrained via the track to the Metropolitan Line train by 10.15. Once points were secured at Rayners Lane, the Metropolitan Line train then returned to the station with two trains worth of passengers, arriving at 10.30. The by then empty Piccadilly Line train, with sections of the tree removed from underneath it, then returned wrong line to Eastcote, arriving at 11.25. Once clear, the Metropolitan Line resumed at 11.55, the Piccadilly Line to Rayners Lane at the same time, and through to Uxbridge at 13.30.



Above: The offending tree west of Rayners Lane, as viewed from Canon Lane road bridge and looking east towards Rayners Lane.

Photo: Courtesy stevepinzo55

- Tree across the track at Oakwood. Piccadilly Line suspended east of Arnos Grove from 09.40 until 10.05.
- Central Line suspended White City – North Acton 09.55 to 11.20 – tree across the track between East Acton and White City.

- Metropolitan Line suspended north of Rickmansworth 10.00 to 10.30 – tree on the track at Chorleywood. This was followed by the Chesham service suspended 10.40 to 11.25 – tree on the track near Chesham.
- Chiltern Railways service suspended south of Amersham 10.50 to 13.05 – tree across the track on the northbound main line north of Northwood. LU services were unaffected.

Monday 10 February was uneventful until the afternoon, when a passenger fell on a westbound Central Line train at South Woodford at 16.20, suspending the service between Woodford and Leytonstone until 16.55. Westbound Jubilee Line trains non-stopped West Ham from 17.30 to 19.45 because of a loose Underground roundel which fell onto the platform. Fortunately, there were no injuries to passengers.

Insufficient staff kept Southwark station closed until 05.45 on **Tuesday 11 February**. A southbound Victoria Line train became defective at King's Cross at 08.00 with door problems. Having detrained, it departed empty after 15 minutes but stalled entering Brixton Sidings, which meant there was only one platform to reverse the service until 09.00. A Network Rail signal failure at East Putney, which began at 20.20, initially resulted in a reduced service west of Parsons Green but culminated in a suspension of the District Line west of Parsons Green from 21.30 until 22.10.

A late finish to overnight work on District Line points at Ealing Broadway on **Wednesday 12 February** meant a 30-minute late start to both the District and Piccadilly lines, with platform 7 at Ealing Broadway unavailable for the whole day. The rest of the day saw several delays of a minor nature, but none of them causing any notable disruption.

On **Thursday 13 February**, continuing defective points at Ealing Broadway saw platform 7 out of use all day again. A late finish to overnight signalling repair work at Leicester Square resulted in a 35-minute delayed start to the eastbound Piccadilly Line through the central area. Incomplete work on points at Walthamstow Central also meant a 40-minute late start for the Victoria Line north of Seven Sisters. Later in the day, a southbound Victoria Line train lost ATO mode approaching Pimlico at 12.10. Services were suspended south of Victoria for 25 minutes. Passenger action at High Street Kensington at 16.35 brought the Circle and District lines to a stand for 25 minutes.

Platform 7 at Ealing Broadway District Line remained out of use for the whole of the traffic day on **Friday 14 February**. A smell of smoke on the westbound Jubilee Line platform at Westminster caused the station to close from 11.40 until 12.20, while a fire alarm activation necessitated Clapham Common station closing from 14.05 until 14.45. Another fire alarm activated at the Bank-Monument station complex caused both stations to close and the Waterloo & City Line suspended from 18.15 until 19.10.

On **Saturday 15 February**, a person under a southbound train at Finchley Central suspended the Northern Line's High Barnet branch and also the Mill Hill shuttle because of Finchley Central station being closed. Whilst all clear at 12.25, northbound services were unable to resume until 13.00 because of two consecutive non-communicating northbound trains at Finchley Central. Points failing at Newbury Park from 12.25 suspended the outer rail/westbound Central Line between Hainault and Leytonstone until 13.45. One train stalled approaching Newbury Park was authorised to return to Barkingside within 20 minutes. A smouldering on the track at Hyde Park Corner, where trains were reversing west to east, suspended the service west of Green Park from 13.45 but subsequently west of King's Cross after traction current was discharged. Services resumed at 14.35. A Network Rail points failure at Harrow & Wealdstone suspended the Bakerloo Line north of Stonebridge Park from 16.25. Although services resumed at 17.35, service recovery was hampered by passenger action on the southbound at Kilburn Park with services then suspended north of Paddington from 17.55 until 18.25 – eight trains were cancelled in consequence. A person trackside just west of Woodford suspended the Central Line between Leytonstone, Loughton and Hainault via Woodford from 17.55 until 18.25. And platform 7 at Ealing Broadway again remained out of use all day ...

Sunday 16 February was as follows:

- A stalled lift in the shaft at Kennington trapped a passenger within from 03.30 to 04.10.
- Insufficient Train Operators resulted in an average of 12 trains cancelled on the Central Line for much of the day.
- Bakerloo Line suspended Paddington – Queen's Park from 07.30 to 09.45 – loss of signalling control at Queen's Park.
- All three SSR lines suspended through Euston Square 07.40 to 08.15 – non-communicating westbound Hammersmith & City Line train. It was worked empty to Edgware Road in restricted manual.
- Blackfriars LU station closed 12.35 to 13.35 – defect on the station's fire alarm system.

- Metropolitan Line suspended south of Harrow-on-the-Hill from 14.00 to 14.45 – person on the track at Northwick Park.
- Central Line suspended White City – Leytonstone 15.45 to 16.15 – track fire on the eastbound at Holborn.
- Jubilee Line brought to a stand for 25 minutes from 22.40 – passenger trackside at Neasden. Metropolitan Line also delayed but only for ten minutes.
- Highgate station closed 22.45 to 23.10 – fire alarms activated.
- Hammersmith & City and Circle lines suspended Edgware Road – Hammersmith from 23.25 – person on a trackside walkabout at Royal Oak. Although clear by midnight, a non-communicating train westbound at Paddington prevented service resumption until 00.20.

Monday 17 February began with points failing at Gloucester Road Junction, suspending the District and Circle lines through the area from 06.20 until 07.20 (Circle Line until 08.00). Later in the day, points failing at High Street Kensington suspended both lines from 21.00. Services resumed at 21.40 but were suspended again from 22.30 to 22.50 when the failure reoccurred. A lack of Train Operators on the Piccadilly Line saw cancellations vary between six and eight during the evening peak and through until the end of traffic.

On **Tuesday 18 February**, an eastbound Hammersmith & City Line train became ‘non-communicating’ at Latimer Road, eventually limping to Ladbrooke Grove after a 20 minute delay. The problem re-occurred at Edgware Road, where the train was changed over and put onto a District Line working. Also being non-communicating at the opposite end at Edgware Road, it worked in restricted manual to Paddington after another 20-minute delay, where it then continued normally in tripcock mode. An altercation between passengers at Becontree necessitated the station’s closure from 19.25 until 21.10 for police investigative work. The number of cancelled trains because of a lack of Train Operators on the Piccadilly Line deteriorated by mid evening, with 11 trains cancelled.

The Jubilee Line had a late start on **Wednesday 19 February** because of a late finish to the repair of a rail defect between St. John’s Wood and Baker Street. Services began between Finchley Road (southbound) and North Greenwich (eastbound) began at 05.55. Also starting up late was the Central Line west of White City because of a track circuit failure in the area of White City Sidings, preventing trains from entering service until clear at 05.45. On a positive note, platform 7 at Ealing Broadway (District) was returned to service from the start of traffic. There was nothing else to note that hasn’t been encountered before.

On **Thursday 20 February**, a Metropolitan Line train was unable to depart Baker Street at 08.30, having been found to be ‘non-communicating’. It was left in platform 1 until after the peak, with trains destined to reverse in platform 1 short tripped at Wembley Park and Harrow. The train departed empty at 11.30 and gained ATO, then successfully changed over to tripcock mode at Finchley Road. The District and Circle lines were suspended through Cannon Street from 20.20 when a passenger became wedged between the platform and westbound train. Services resumed at 21.35. Approaching the end of traffic (early on Friday 21 February) a person went walkabout at Acton Town, suspending the Piccadilly Line west of Hammersmith and the District Line between Turnham Green and Ealing Broadway from 00.25 – in reality, trains were held in platforms. With nobody found after an extensive search, the all-clear was received at 01.45. However, it was too late to resume passenger services so it was a case of moving trains empty to their booked stabling points.

The Bakerloo Line was suspended north of Piccadilly Circus from 11.40 on **Friday 21 February** because of a person under a northbound train at Kilburn Park. This coincided with the beginning of the Train Operators’ strike on the Bakerloo Line and services were suspended throughout from 12.15. Once the incident had been resolved, a limited service resumed at 12.45 but between Elephant & Castle and Queen’s Park only. Such was the situation mid-afternoon that all that was in operation from 15.30 was a two-train Harrow – Queen’s Park (empty to and from Kilburn High Road) shuttle until late in the evening.

The Bakerloo Line resumed to a two-train service between Queen’s Park and Harrow from the start of traffic on **Saturday 22 February**, with the rest of the service cancelled because of strike action. It wasn’t until late afternoon that services began over the trunk section after late shift crews began to book on duty. By late-evening, a normal service was in operation. At 14.45, a defective eastbound Central Line train at Bond Street caused a 25-minute delay while it was worked in restricted manual to Liverpool Street Sidings. This was followed by a person on the track at Tottenham Court Road on the eastbound at 15.30, suspending an already disrupted service between White City and Liverpool Street until 16.05. Service recovery was hampered with late running and displaced crews – a lack of Train Operators also

didn't help the situation. A total of 23 trains were cancelled, which reduced as the evening progressed. A multiple signal failure on the westbound at Holloway Road from 18.15 set the Piccadilly Line into 'severe delays' mode. Although fixed at 19.50, the line remained well under par for the rest of the evening with 56 out of the 58 trains cancelled at midnight and over half of the Night Tube service cancelled into the early hours – despite a good service being noted at 01.15! Bounds Green station closed from 01.10 to 02.00 because of passenger action.

The Bakerloo Line strike added to the weekend woes for passengers which, coupled with planned engineering work, saw no services as follows:

District Line – South Kensington to East Ham.

Hammersmith & City Line – Baker Street to Barking.

Metropolitan Line – Baker Street to Aldgate.

Circle Line – the whole line.

Northern Line – Moorgate to Kennington.

Plus the Bakerloo Line (q.v.).

On Saturday, your reporter noted that it was very busy on the Jubilee Line, and the Jubilee – Piccadilly interchange at Green Park was a solid mass of people trying to get to the Piccadilly Line platforms. Baker Street was also noted heaving full of passengers.



Above: (Right) A view of the LU gated entrance at Marylebone on Saturday 22 February 2020.

Photo: Antony Badsey-Ellis

Sunday 23 February began with Chancery Lane station closing from 07.00 to 08.50 because of insufficient staff. The Bakerloo Line Train Operators' strike began to take hold after midday with services winding down in the early afternoon. The service was 'split' from 13.15 with a two-train shuttle between Harrow and Queen's Park but that lasted only until 14.00, after which the remaining trains in service ran between Queen's Park and Elephant & Castle. That, too, was short lived, with the whole line suspended from 15.00. There were sufficient crews available to reinstate the Harrow shuttle from 15.40 through to the end of traffic, although the number of train in service varied between one and three.

The only service operating on the Bakerloo Line from the start of traffic on **Monday 24 February** was a two-train shuttle between Harrow and Queen's Park. Once the strike ended, services over the trunk section began late morning, but it wasn't until the end of the evening peak that a normal service had been restored. Soon after, however, a Network Rail points failure at Harrow & Wealdstone suspended the service north of Stonebridge Park from 19.10 to 20.00. Other incidents included Fulham Broadway station closing from 07.50 until 09.00 because of a fire alarm activation, which was followed by a Network Rail multiple signal failure at East Putney from 07.55 with delays caused by trains passing through under failure conditions and a reduced service west of Parsons Green in consequence. However, the service was suspended west of Parsons Green from 09.25 until 10.45 for repairs to be effected. Later in the day, a person ill on a northbound Northern Line train at London Bridge at 19.35 caused a suspension of the northbound City branch for 25 minutes.

To be continued in the next issue ...