

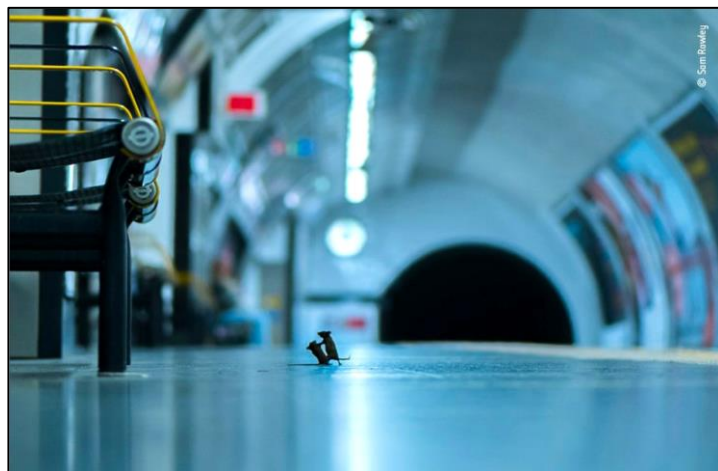
# FROM THE PAPERS

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.

**09.03.20 METRO** – From today until mid-June, there will be no down escalator service at Marble Arch station, while planned maintenance work takes place. There are around 120 steps between the ticket hall and platform level. Passengers using the stairs at Marble Arch are reminded to hold the handrail and not to rush or run. Passengers who have difficulty using the stairs or anyone with children, luggage and/or buggies should use Bond Street station instead, as it has step-free access to all platforms via the entrance on Marylebone Lane.

**10.03.20 CITY A.M.** – The UK’s public transport systems and schools should be shut down early to combat the spread of the *coronavirus*, according to independent London mayoral candidate Rory Stewart. He said the “short-term economic damage” of shutting down TfL, for instance, would be worth it to “stave off a bigger spread”. Yesterday a TfL employee, who works at the body’s control centre at Palestra House (sic) in Blackfriars, rather than on a part of the Underground network, tested positive for *coronavirus*.

**12.02.20 DAILY MAIL** – Whilst wildlife photography would be more at home in the Amazon rainforest, a photographer has won a prestigious award for the capture of a fight between two mice over some crumbs on an Underground station platform. The photograph was named “Station Squabble” and beat 48,000 other images submitted to the Natural History Museum, and won the photographer the Wildlife Photographer of the Year Lumix People’s Choice Award. Whilst the altercation between the rodents is pin sharp in the photograph, the rest of the picture is, of course, not. The photographer was not willing to disclose which station it was but (*Editor’s comment*) it appears (possibly) to be somewhere on the original Central Line judging by the tunnel profile.



**Photo: Courtesy Sam Rowley / Daily Mail**

**10.03.20 EVENING STANDARD** – London’s TfL chief Mike Brown has warned that parts of the Underground were of risk of “serial decline” unless the Government helped to fund major upgrades. He said that a £1.5B fleet of 94 trains due on the Piccadilly Line from 2023 would not be able to run any faster or more regularly than at present because there was no money to upgrade the “knackered” signalling system. A £656M upgrade of Bank station would not deliver its full potential on the Northern Line because trains would still get stuck in a bottleneck at Camden Town. Mr. Brown, who stands down on 8 May after five years as TfL Commissioner, today pleaded with Boris Johnson to ensure that any “levelling up” of spending with the North did not mean a “levelling down” for the capital. He said: “There are huge parts of the transport network that are still at real risk of serial decline. We have the two oldest fleets of trains now in the UK. The Piccadilly Line trains were introduced in 1973, but they are not quite as old as the Bakerloo Line trains that were introduced in 1972. It’s quite remarkable that they’re still running, but it’s not sustainable”. He said weekday passenger numbers on the Underground had doubled to five million since 2000 but “not one kilometre of extra track” had been built. There are no new projects in the pipeline once Bank station and the extension of the Northern Line to Battersea Power Station are completed. Holborn station was also in need of expansion but no cash was available. TfL’s finances have been badly hit by the loss of a £700M annual Government operating subsidy. It will also be deprived of about £1.35B in lost fares due to delays in opening Crossrail. This is addition to the £640M cost of Mayor Sadiq Khan’s four-year partial fares freeze.

**11.03.20 EVENING STANDARD** – *Letter by J.D. Milaric* – “In these troubling times, with coronavirus likely to adversely affect the people who live and work in and around London, it is indefensible for the RMT and ASLEF to consider strike action. We are facing an unprecedented situation with coronavirus in the coming weeks and months, the Underground, like other employers, might have to contend with a substantial number of work absences due to people becoming infected. The whole economy could soon be down the tube, please don’t let such action strike at the heart of our capital city right now”.

**11.03.20 METRO** – Some 4.4M homes have slower broadband than at Underground stations. The average speed on the Underground is 19.8Mbps, two-times faster than homes with older Wi-Fi, found at *uSwitch.com*.

**11.03.20 METRO** – An enhanced cleaning regime has been unveiled by TfL to improve the already-high hygiene levels on the capital's public transport. Cleaning taking place across the Underground and bus networks now includes additional substances that kill viruses and bacteria on contact in order to reduce the risk of the *coronavirus* spreading. Public Health England has stated that there are currently no specific concerns about using public transport. However, TfL has chosen to improve its well-established cleaning programme, which already sees its trains, stations and buses professionally cleaned daily. TfL began rolling out enhanced anti-viral fluid, which is used in hospitals, on Underground trains and at stations on 13 March. Key interchanges will also be cleaned more regularly than usual, including during the day. TfL is also using the enhanced disinfectant in depots and drivers' cabs, which previously were cleaned on a regular basis with traditional disinfectant. TfL is at the final testing stages of a new, longer-lasting cleaning agent that would provide anti-viral protection for up to 30 days and hopes to begin using it across the network in the next couple of weeks.

**12.03.20 EVENING STANDARD** – TfL is facing a £400M drop in fares income, according to credit rating agency Moody's. It predicted a 30% fall in passenger income in the four months to the end of June, assuming that 20% of the workforce will work from home and leisure trips will fall due to "social distancing".

**13.03.20 EVENING STANDARD** – An Underground driver was today revealed to have tested positive for Coronavirus. The Jubilee Line worker, who also taught other drivers, had recently returned from a trip abroad. TfL said trains and the Jubilee Line depot at Wembley Park were being deep cleaned. The man, who was diagnosed last night, is self-isolating and is in contact with the NHS. ASLEF said: "We are very concerned about the safety implications for him and his family". TfL said the man was "not working in a customer-facing area". The areas where the driver worked are being cleaned in line with guidance from Public Health England.

**13.03.20 EVENING STANDARD** – The number of people injured on the Parsons Green bomb attack has risen to 69, according to new police figures. Previously, 51 victims were thought to have suffered cuts and burns when Ahmed Hassan's homemade device partially detonated on a District Line train at the Underground station on 15 September 2017. Police said there was a delay to some of the victims being recorded, and that full numbers were established and confirmed over the course of the investigation. Victims of terrorism were included because improvised explosive devices are categorised as offensive weapons. Hassan tried to detonate his bomb in a packed carriage during the morning rush hour. If it had exploded, dozens of passengers could have been killed. Hassan was jailed for life with a minimum of 34 years in 2018. The attack propelled Parson Green to fifth out of 1,386 UK stations for the number of incidents involving a weapon in the past three years. Only Victoria (88 incidents), Stratford (82), St. Pancras (79), Manchester Piccadilly (76), had more between January 2017 and December 2019. Waterloo (66), Euston (63), Liverpool Street (60), Leeds (54) and Birmingham New Street (49) made up the rest of the top 10.

**13.03.20 EVENING STANDARD** – Underground fares will rise each year if Sadiq Khan is re-elected mayor of London. He admitted he would be unable to continue with the four-year partial fares freeze but promised to limit future increases to no more than the "cost of living" – and said there would be no increase in bus fares. Today's announcement reflects the precarious state of TfL's finances. It has lost its £700M annual Government grant and the Mayor's fare freeze has deprived it of £640M in income. The two-and-a-half year delay in opening Crossrail – which is not due to open until summer 2021 – will cost it £1.35B in lost income. It is not known whether the annual increases, which will also apply to Overground services, will be based on the CPI rate, inflation or the RPI index, which tends to be higher. Last month's RPI figure was 2.7%. Campaign sources said it would depend on how much money TfL receives later this year in the Government's long-term funding settlement. Tory mayoral candidate Shaun Bailey has said he will follow the TfL business plan and increase fares annually by RPI plus 1% to enable greater investment in the transport network.

**13.03.20 EVENING STANDARD** – *Interview by journalist Julian Glover* – "There's a set of dark glass windows which look down on the escalators in King's Cross Underground station, I stood behind them this week with the boss of London's transport system, Mike Brown. For a few minutes we watched a normal scene of normal commuters flooding down to a normal train service. Some held hands or touched their faces. Most grabbed the black rubber handrail. Almost none wore masks. "Londoners are very resilient", Brown said. But as the coronavirus crisis spreads, normal scenes like this may vanish for a time. He is in the last few weeks of his job, which ends on 8 May, the day after London is – for now

– set to elect its Mayor. Bright-eyed and perky, Brown hadn't expected to sign off planning for a sombre national emergency. Suddenly the Underground network, trains and buses are at the epicentre of choices about how to stop the spread of the disease. Every commuter knows that they are where we all push up against each other, in hot confined spaces. So are they still safe? In his smooth Northern Irish accent, Brown is reassuring, as of course he has to be. "The virus is, for most people, a quite mild case", he says. He doesn't expect to be told by the Government to shut services down. "I can't envisage that," he says. "I'm very confident we will keep this thing running." That doesn't mean life on the Underground over the next few weeks will be normal. It's already less busy. "It's too early to see a massive trend" of people working from home, he says. But if staff and passengers get sick, services would change fast. There would be fewer trains and some routes and stations could shut. Running "core services required to get Londoners to and from work and keep the city moving would be our priority. Carrying on in a crisis is what the Underground has always done". It stayed open during WW2, Brown points out. The day after the bombing attacks in 2006 "85% of the Underground network was operating. But like everyone else he is in the dark about the seriousness and consequences of what may be about to hit us all. All he can do is prepare. He describes "new enhanced cleaning product that will provide ... a protective film of antiviral coating" which could help to make the grab poles in carriages safer".

**13.03.20 EVENING STANDARD** – Underground drivers have voted overwhelming in favour of strike action in a growing dispute over pay. ASLEF union members, which controls nearly 2,500 – the majority – of Underground drivers, have rejected a four-year inflation plus deal. More than 10,000 further staff from the RMT union are currently voting in the same dispute. Their result, due later this month, is expected to endorse walkouts, threatening to halt the system. ASLEF has stopped short of announcing any strike dates pending further talks with LU. A TfL spokesman said the deal "reflects the hard work our staff do".

**16.03.20 EVENING STANDARD** – LU chiefs held emergency talks with union leaders in an effort to help keep vital services running during the coronavirus outbreak. ASLEF last week voted for strike action in a row over pay, but today its district organiser, Finn Brennan, said the situation is "rapidly changing". He said: "Keeping public transport operating will be vital to making sure that NHS and care workers, government and council staff, supermarket, distribution and other essential people are able to get to work. More than ever we will need the vital public servants, including transport workers. Our approach will be to do what is right, not just in the interests of our members, but of their families and of the wider communities we are all part of". In a "gesture of goodwill", the TSSA union suspended long-running industrial action involving TfL clerical staff to allow them to help at Underground and other stations. It came as Grant Shapps, the Transport Secretary, revealed a dramatic drop of up to 20% in train passenger numbers. He admitted fewer trains could be run if the trend continues.

**17.03.20 EVENING STANDARD** – Letter by Fleur Anderson – "We hear a lot of talk from the Government about "levelling up". It should not just be applied to regions; it needs to be applied to people, too. TfL has left East Putney off its latest upgrade list, but must think again. The Underground station is one of the busiest on the District Line, but steep stairs make it useless for disabled people and parents with children. With close links to Putney (SWR) station, and no step-free access at Putney Bridge as well, there is a strong case for funding East Putney station. This is a basic equality issue".

**17.03.20 EVENING STANDARD** – A dramatic appeal to Underground staff who are "fit" and in operational roles running the system to come to work and keep London moving was made today. Mike Brown, the transport commissioner, said: "people's lives are relying" on a network carrying "essential workers and services". In an unprecedented message to more than 15,000 staff, he said: "If you are in an operational/safety critical role and you are fit and able to come to work, we really need you to do so. It is critical for London, and in particular for all essential workers and services, that we continue to provide the best service we can". TfL said yesterday that the outbreak could result in a £500M loss of passenger income, and is asking the Government for financial support. RMT, the largest of the transport unions, said: "We offered the support of the RMT during this time on a mutual basis that the management would back the staff in all companies". They admitted the union listed "serious concerns" over cleaning staff welfare and support. "Vulnerable staff should be supported. Parts of the Underground could be closed if needed, taking in-house all cleaning as well."

**17.03.20 EVENING STANDARD** – Underground passengers will be able to make mobile phone calls in some Underground tunnels for the first time today. A trial was launched offering 4G signals on the eastern section of the Jubilee Line, between Westminster and Canning Town. TfL aims to introduce 4G across the entire line by the end of the year – with other lines following. The project means 4G will soon be available in all Jubilee Line tunnels. Customers on all four UK mobile network operators – EE, O2, Vodafone and 3 – will be able to access the system. There will also be "enhanced" Wi-Fi connections

at stations. Connections for super-fast 5G have been laid in the tunnels, as well as Home Office's emergency services network radio link. TfL which has paid £10M towards the 4G infrastructure, hopes to receive £25M in revenue in the next five years. Ticket halls and corridors within stations are also covered by the pilot scheme, except for London Bridge and Waterloo stations where the signal will only be available in the Jubilee Line platforms.

**18.03.20 THE TIMES** – Terrified or not, London is swiftly shutting down. At Piccadilly Circus station, normally one of the busiest on the network, yesterday it was unrecognisable. Where crowds normally flow to and fro, there were only empty spaces. The staff on duty in their orange hi-vis jackets almost outnumbered the passengers. One of them, bored, leant against a ticket barrier. "It's dead," he said. "And you should see it at night. It's even worse".

**19.03.20 EVENING STANDARD** – Major closures of the Underground began today in a bid to try to contain the spread of the coronavirus. LU bosses closed nine stations at short notice from this morning and up to 40 of the network's 270 stations could shut within the next 48 hours. More could follow after that. The stations closed today were Arsenal, Barbican, Borough, Bounds Green, Bow Road, Covent Garden, Goodge Street, Hampstead, and Manor House. Commuters arriving this morning found gates locked and were forced to seek alternative ways to travel. From tomorrow and until further notice, there will be no Waterloo & City Line, the key one-stop link between Waterloo main line and Bank stations. All *Night Tube* services on the Victoria, Jubilee, Central, Northern and Piccadilly lines will stop from the same time – as will the Night Overground on the East London line. From Monday 23 March, there will be fewer services on all other Underground lines. The closures are the most dramatic ever in peacetime London. There was a warning of even more cuts to come if transport staff fall victim to the virus. Mayor Sadiq Khan said: "Londoners should be avoiding social interaction unless absolutely necessary, and that means they should be avoiding using the transport network unless absolutely necessary". Arthur Leathley, chairman of TravelWatch, said: "These actions may seem draconian but they are absolutely vital at a time like this".

**23.03.20 METRO** – Metro travel news mentions that TfL have closed all tenancies in Underground stations. They have given all small and medium enterprises 100% relief from rent in TfL properties across London, and all those closed in Underground stations, for the next three months. All on-going negotiations on rent reviews and lease renewals have also been suspended.

**24.03.20 EVENING STANDARD** – *Letter by Terry McCarthy* – "With social distancing, or a lack of it, all over the news this weekend, a blind eye seems to have been turned towards our transport network, as seen on the Jubilee Line from Canada Water at 06.55 yesterday. This is absolute madness. In no other European country would this be tolerated at the moment. I felt uncomfortable and at risk on this train, but as a front line worker I need to go to work. It would seem that reducing the frequency of Underground services has led to overcrowding on the trains that do run, especially during rush hour. Something needs to be done about this if we truly want to stop the spread of the virus."

**30.03.20 BRADFORD TELEGRAPH & ARGUS** – A third year psychology student at the University of Bradford has devised a London Underground-style map with colour co-ordinated lines to connect the county from Keighley to Pontefract. His proposal, called "Mass Transit in West Yorkshire: A "Long Overdue Proposal" includes seven lines with a total length of 127.4 miles and a total of 119 stops. This link should tell you more –

<https://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/18340249.mind-gap-students-100bn-plan-west-yorks-underground-including-bradford/>

**08.04.20 EVENING STANDARD** – *Letter by Philip Hoskins* – "I hope to correct an omission that seems to occur whenever London's key workers are mentioned. Very rarely are transport workers in that list. Many Londoners who need to go to work rely on bus, tram, Underground and train drivers to get them there safely. Behind the scenes are the people who maintain, clean and schedule the services. I have worked in the London bus industry for 40 years, mostly as a bus driver. Although we do not seek personal elevation, we would like to see transport works included in your excellent paper or on TV bulletins".

**13.04.20 THE GUARDIAN** – *Reported by Lisa O'Carroll* – Three weeks into the coronavirus lockdown, traffic on the Underground has been slashed with all but essential workers discouraged from travelling because of the risk of infection in crowds. According to TfL, the number of journeys has dropped from 3.98M on 3 April last year to just 200K on 1 April this year. TfL gave this newspaper access over two days to document its reduced Underground service, which is still running during the COVID-19 crisis. So, what is it like? In parts, it is as if the grim reaper is waiting at the bottom of the escalator. Posters at the station entrances offer clear orders; essential workers "you can travel", everybody else "go home".

Staff are cordoned off from the ticket barriers with red and white tape to ensure their distance from potentially infected members of the public. Public address systems blare out war-like instructions across the network every four minutes telling people who shouldn't be on the trains to go home. "Hi, I'm Mike, one of the team here who are supporting journeys for critical workers only", booms the public address system at Whitechapel station opposite one of the biggest hospitals in London. "No one should be travelling," Stop. "Stay at home." Stop. "Don't travel." Stop. "Save Lives."

Morale among the staff appears good despite the bad news that morning that 14 transport workers have died after contracting the coronavirus. They feel as if they are playing their part in a war effort.

WESTMINSTER is a station that is probably used by more powerful people than any other in the network; the hub for MPs, civil servants, lobbyists, journalists along with millions of tourists a year lies virtually empty, with dozens of homeless people now taking the place of buskers and queues into Portcullis House. It is also the hub for NHS staff at it serves St Thomas' hospital, where Boris Johnson was being treated until his release on Sunday.

CANARY WHARF station is said that more people use this vast cathedral-like station at the heart of Britain's financial district, than Oxford Circus during the rush hour. But the grandeur and elegance of Lord Foster's DLR station is exposed as the hustle and bustle of this station at the heart of Britain's financial services Docklands district is replaced by an empty, eerie silence. Escalators move passenger-less. Some trains pass through without a single passenger getting on or off.

LONDON BRIDGE, one of the busiest interchanges in the country, with packed commuter trains connecting with the Northern and Jubilee Line services, is like a ghost town with shops shuttered and empty concourses."

WHITECHAPEL station in east London is the stop for NHS staff working at the Royal London, one of the biggest hospitals in London and home to London's air ambulance. We visited outside rush hours (due to TfL restrictions) and the station was near deserted.

MONUMENT station on the north bank of the Thames is linked to Bank station through a warren of underground walkways that connect the Circle, District, Northern lines, and "The Drain"; the nickname for the Waterloo & City Line which is closed during the coronavirus lockdown.

**15.04.20 EVENING STANDARD** – Pressure is growing for new rules that all passengers on the Underground and buses wear face-masks to slow the spread of coronavirus. Former health secretary Jeremy Hunt told this newspaper that masks on public transport could be a "very important" step towards rebuilding the capital's economy. Mayor Sadiq Khan has written to the Government urging updated advice on when masks and face coverings should be worn, making clear he is open to the idea of using them on the transport system if experts approve. Mr. Hunt, the chair of the Commons select committee on health said: "Face masks could be a very important part of exiting lockdown by reducing the spread on the Underground and buses. The key question is do we have enough?" His committee will question Health Secretary Matt Hancock tomorrow about the Government's plans for tackling COVID-19. He said the first priority for face masks if they were scarce was that they go to health and social care staff. Rules for passengers would require the Government to source masks for public use.