

# UNDERGROUND DIARY

## FEBRUARY 2024

Stations closed on **Thursday 1 February** were Kenton (06.20 to 07.35 – local power failure), along with Clapham South (after 22.10) and Mornington Crescent (after 23.15), both for a lack of staff. A track circuit failed at Elephant & Castle at 12.20, suspending the Bakerloo Line south of Lambeth North until 13.40 and again at 14.55. Services were once again suspended, but extended to be south of Piccadilly Circus from 15.35, fully resuming at 16.40. In both instances, a train stalled approaching Elephant & Castle had to be authorised to return to Lambeth North. Just 10 trains were in service out of the 29 scheduled at the start of the evening peak. Passenger action at Heathrow T5 suspended the Piccadilly Line west of Heathrow T2&3 from 20.55 to 21.25. During the evening, however, there were 15 trains cancelled for a lack of Train Operators. The Central Line continued with its ‘severe delay’ status throughout the day because of a lack of serviceable rolling stock, a situation that was unlikely to improve for the foreseeable future.

**Friday 2 February** was uneventful until late lunch time, when a repeat track circuit failure at Elephant & Castle suspended the Bakerloo Line south of Lambeth North from 13.35 but south of Piccadilly Circus from 14.50. One train was stalled approaching Elephant & Castle for 25 minutes. Services resumed at 15.30 with seven trains cancelled. Late in the evening, a points failure at Wembley Park necessitated northbound Metropolitan Line trains working via the fast line to Harrow until the end of traffic. Stations closed for a lack of staff were Goodge Street (before 06.40) and Mornington Crescent (before 07.10). Being under the wing of London Underground, the Elizabeth Line part of Bond Street station closed at 23.10 until the end of traffic because of insufficient staff.

On **Saturday 3 February**, Central Line apart (q.v.), the Piccadilly Line fluctuated between defective stock and a lack of Train Operators, the combination of both reaching 15 trains cancelled on the late shift. The District Line also suffered from a lack of Train Operators, with 12 trains cancelled mid-afternoon. An engineer’s train that became non-communicating with the signalling system at Ladbroke Grove caused a 45-minute late start on the Hammersmith branch of the C&H. A person spotted trackside at Wimbledon suspended the District Line west of Parsons Green from 10.10. The person was later located at Earlsfield on SWR territory, enabling services to resume at 11.20. One westbound train was stalled approaching Southfields throughout.

**Sunday 4 February** was, in the main, uneventful, with only the Central and Piccadilly lines in trouble for a lack of stock and staff respectively. The Central Line had 13 trains cancelled (but, surprisingly, avoided ‘delay’ status all day according to the TfL website), and 15 on the Piccadilly, which did declare various modes of ‘delay, during the day. Although the C&H operates less trains than the Central and Piccadilly lines, their number of trains in service (cancelled for a lack of staff) were on a par at just over 80% on all three lines. Stations closed for a lack of staff were Clapham South (06.45 to 20.50) and Mornington Crescent (19.35 to 22.15).

The Central Line service was suspended between Woodford and Hainault from the start of traffic until 06.55 on **Monday 5 February** because of a signal failure at Woodford Junction. The peaks on the Central Line were only marginally better than hitherto, with 18 trains cancelled in the morning and 15 in the evening. *Because of the ongoing rolling stock problems, dedicated Epping-Chingford and Loughton-Chingford bus services were introduced during Monday to Friday rush hours, with enhanced services on routes 20 (Debden to Walthamstow) and 150 (Hainault to Ilford), ferrying passengers across from the Central Line to alternative services. A correspondent reports that was no prior warning of the replacement buses and no information displayed outside the station as to times or destinations. It was left to drivers to explain their Rail Replacement displays.* Camden Town station remained closed until 06.00 because of insufficient staff, while a signalling problem at Golders Green at 06.00 suspended the Edgware branch of the Northern Line until 06.30. At 16.50, a London Overground train accepted the wrong signal at Gunnersbury and departed in the District Line direction. Fortunately, the train stopped in time, where it could be authorised to return to the station to ‘try again’ with the correctly signalled route. *(A previous instance of a similar event was on 25 September 1991 – see Underground News No.360, December 1991, pages 438-439).*

Apart from Victoria LU station closing from 18.35 to 19.00 because of a fire alarm activation, there was nothing operationally out of the ordinary to note for **Tuesday 6 February**.

Similarly, there was nothing operationally out of the ordinary on **Wednesday 7 February**. Colliers Wood station closed at 22.15 until the end of traffic because of a lack of staff.

Barbican station remained closed until 07.35 on **Thursday 8 February**, while a signal failure at Watford East Junction suspended the Metropolitan Line between Watford and Moor Park from 07.40 until 09.30. Two trains were stalled, the one at the junction until 08.55, while the train to the rear was authorised to return to Croxley by 08.30. Manor House station closed from 22.35 until 00.05 because of a local power failure,

The Central Line's cancellations for defective stock (q.v.) continued unchanged at 18 in each peak on **Friday 9 February**. However, the Piccadilly Line reached 18 trains cancelled for no Train Operators and the District Line 10 trains. A person under a Down (northbound) Chiltern Railways train north of Amersham near the LU/NR boundary at Mantles Wood at 09.05 suspended not only Chiltern Railways but also the Metropolitan Line north of Chalfont & Latimer. Services resumed at 11.10. The incident train was stalled until 10.50 while a stalled Up Chiltern train reached Amersham at 10.55. The West Ruislip branch of the Central Line was suspended from 19.50 to 20.30 because of a passenger altercation on an eastbound train at Greenford. Stations closed for a lack of staff were Barbican (before 07.10), Regent's Park (07.15 to 07.40) and Caledonian Road (19.15 to 23.25).

**Saturday 10 February** began with the District Line unable to start up on the Ealing branch until 07.00 because of problems with the Piccadilly Line's five-day engineering possession at Northfields. Ten District Line trains were cancelled as a result. The Central Line recorded 25 trains cancelled (out of 73) early evening for a lack of stock, while the 'shortage of trains' crept into Jubilee Line information status, but in fact comprised more cancelled for staff rather than lack of trains, with 11 in total. A lack of Train Operators also affected some other lines at various times during the day, with 21 cancelled on the District Line, 10 each on the Metropolitan and Victoria lines and 13 on the Northern Line.

**Sunday 11 February** was uneventful until 16.30, when a person ill on an eastbound train at Acton Town suspended the Ealing branch of the District Line until 17.00. A southbound Jubilee Line train stalled at Kilburn at 21.05, suspending the service through the area until 21.50. The train then stalled again at Baker Street from 22.00 until 22.15, ending up out of the way at Charing Cross at 22.25. The only station closed for a lack of staff was Goodge Street (after 18.25).

The first event on **Monday 12 February** was a westbound Piccadilly Line train at Rayners Lane at 11.20 with a defective compressor. The train was stabled in the siding, which meant that subsequent Rayners Lane reversers did so in the westbound platform or were turned short at South Harrow. A Network Rail track circuit failure at Wembley Central from 16.25 caused an initial 30-minute delay and then a service suspension north of Stonebridge Park until 20.30. Stations closed for a lack of staff were Paddington C&H (05.40 to 06.40), Mansion House (before 07.05) and Barbican (before 07.15).

**Tuesday 13 February** offered the following:

- Northern Line suspended north of Golders Green 14.35 to 15.05 for examination of a reported unsafe retaining wall.
- All SSR services suspended through Euston Square from 16.05 to 17.25 – person under a westbound Metropolitan Line train. The District Line as also suspended east of High Street Kensington to alleviate congestion at Edgware Road. One westbound train was stalled approaching King's Cross until 16.45.
- Metropolitan Line suspended west of Ruislip and Piccadilly Line suspended west of Rayners Lane 16.00 to 16.50 – track fire at Uxbridge.
- Piccadilly Line suspended west of Hyde Park Corner from 16.55 to 17.35 – report of passenger doors opening on the wrong side on a westbound train at Barons Court. Three trains were stalled between stations for the duration.
- Central Line suspended Liverpool Street – Leytonstone 21.35 to 22.50 – person under an eastbound train at Mile End, with District and Hammersmith & City Line trains non-stopping in consequence.
- Stations closed for a lack of staff were Manor House (before 07.15) and Clapham South (after 22.30).

On **Wednesday 14 February**, the westbound Piccadilly Line had a 30-minute late start at the east end because of the late running Track Recording Train (the improvised 1972 MkII Stock) from the Northern Line at King's Cross. Ongoing points problems at Rayners Lane necessitated a reduction in Rayners Lane reversers for the whole day. Uxbridge trains were unaffected, apart for those cancelled for a lack of Train Operators. A signal failure on the westbound at Fulham Broadway suspended the Wimbledon

branch of the District Line from 05.10 until 06.15. Adding to the Central Line's woes, a westbound train stalled at South Woodford at 08.10, suspending the service between Loughton and Leytonstone. The train arrived at Leytonstone at 08.55, enabling services to resume. A Network Rail signalling problem in the signalling centre at Wembley caused a 30-minute delay to the Bakerloo Line from 16.30. A smell of burning between Kennington and Oval at 18.55 caused the Northern Line to suffer from delays while the source of the problem was established. At 20.05, the service was suspended south of Camden Town (via Charing Cross) and south of Euston (via the City), having been traced to smouldering on points at Kennington. Services resumed at 21.30 but with northbound City trains not stopping at Kennington until 22.20. By late evening, 31 trains had been cancelled. Stations closed for a lack of staff were Clapham South (before 06.40 and after 22.40) and Bounds Green (16.30 to 19.35).

Stations closed for a lack of staff on **Thursday 15 February** were Clapham South (before 06.45) and Mornington Crescent (after 22.25). Operationally, the day may be summarised thus:

- Signal failure approaching King's Cross westbound from 05.50. Piccadilly Line trains continued under failure conditions with a suspension east of Hyde Park Corner from 07.25 to 08.00 and again from 09.45 to 10.15.
- Piccadilly Line suspended west of Hounslow Central from 06.45 to 07.20 – report of smoke in the tunnel west of Hounslow West (which turned out to be excessive dust).
- Piccadilly Line suspended Acton Town to Uxbridge 11.55 to 12.55 – signal failure at South Harrow. One westbound train was stalled at the South Harrow westbound home signal for the duration.
- Points failure on the westbound at Leytonstone from 14.35 – trains continued under failure conditions with delays until fixed at 16.20. In addition to the trains for cancelled for no available stock (19), there were a further eight because of the failure.

**Friday 16 February** began with the Metropolitan Line suspended south of Harrow-on-the-Hill and the Jubilee Line north of Willesden Green, both from the start of traffic, because of points run through and damaged by an engineer's train at Wembley Park during engineering hours. 37 trains out of 45 had been cancelled on the Metropolitan Line and 17 on the Jubilee Line. Once a temporary repair had been made to the points and secured for through running, services began at 07.15 but only as far as Baker Street on the Metropolitan Line, with the City service beginning at 08.30. The securing of the points meant that southbound trains had to run via the southbound fast from Harrow-on-the-Hill to Wembley Park and non-stopping Northwick Park and Preston Road all day. A report of a rail defect west of Rayners Lane suspended the Metropolitan Line's Uxbridge branch and the Piccadilly Line west of South Harrow, both from 14.25 until 15.50. Stations closed for a lack of staff were Mornington Crescent (before 07.05) and Barbican (before 07.35).

Continuing problems with points at Wembley Park on **Saturday 17 February** meant that southbound trains had again to run via the southbound fast from Harrow-on-the-Hill and non-stopping Northwick Park and Preston Road throughout the day. Tower Hill station remained closed from the start of traffic until 06.45 because of a lack of staff. A southbound Victoria Line train stalled at Warren Street at 11.55, bringing the whole line to a stand until 12.20, with two trains stalled between Euston and Warren Street throughout – 15 trains were cancelled in consequence well into the late shift not only because of the incident but because of a lack of Train Operators. Persons trackside in the Elm Park area suspended the District Line east of Barking from 23.10 until 00.15, with one westbound train stalled between Upminster and Upminster Bridge for the duration. Cannon Street, Mansion House and Temple stations closed at normal times as there was insufficient staff for them to remain open to serve the consequential late running of last trains.

Southbound Metropolitan Line trains between Harrow-on-the-Hill and Wembley Park continued to operate on the fast line all day on **Sunday 18 February**, because of the damaged points at Wembley Park (q.v.). The rest of the day belonged to the District Line. Earl's Court station closed from 10.45 to 11.50 because of a defect on the stations fire safety system. The Wimbledon branch of the District Line was suspended from 13.55 because of a signal failure at Parsons Green. Three trains were stalled between stations, two for 30 minutes and one for an hour, each being authorised to return to their respective stations in the rear. Services resumed at 15.25. The day ended with a person under a westbound train at St. James's Park at 23.35, suspending both lines through the area until the close of traffic. One eastbound train was stalled approaching St. James's Park until 00.40. All trains either side of the incident that hadn't been reversed were detrained and once the incident had concluded at 00.50, all ran empty to their stabling points. Stations closed for a lack of staff were Manor House (through

Night Tube until 12.20), Aldgate (14.50 to 19.25 – with Metropolitan Line trains terminating at Moorgate) and Goodge Street (after 18.20).

**Monday 19 February** was much of a muchness as hitherto. A passenger action incident at South Kensington on the eastbound Piccadilly Line caused a 30-minute delay from 07.10. In the early evening at 18.20, a train stabling in South Harrow Sidings stalled, having become gapped off current, suspending the Piccadilly Line between Acton Town and Uxbridge. One train in each direction was stalled at their respective home signals, reaching the platform for detrainment at 18.45 and 18.50. In the meanwhile, rail gap jumper lads were deployed to get the train moving, enabling services to resume at 20.25.



With the defect on damaged points at Wembley Park continuing, the consequential blocking back of all southbound trains using the fast line south of Harrow-on-the-Hill having to stop in platform 6 at Wembley Park and then negotiating a speed restriction just south of the station, this poster (*Left*) was produced for the event. An informed source tells us that selected trains would be cancelled in the morning peaks from **Tuesday 20 February**, to alleviate the 'quart into pint pot' syndrome.

**Photo: David Rowe**

In other news, northbound Metropolitan Line trains non-stopped Chalfont & Latimer throughout the day because of a defect with platform nosing stones.

The only notable incident on **Wednesday 21 February** was a stalled westbound District Line train in platform 4 at Earl's Court at 11.35, blocking the service from Edgware Road, which was suspended in consequence, with other westbound trains able to work through platform 3. Services resumed at 12.30. Other (rolling stock and Train Operator) matters remained status quo and no stations were closed for a lack of staff.

The combination of a lack of Train Operators and a signal failure on the eastbound at Earl's Court on **Thursday 22 February** from 13.10 resulted in 15-18 trains being cancelled on the Piccadilly Line throughout the late shift. Matters were unable to improve with a points failure at Northfields at 21.20, suspending the Heathrow branch until 21.50. A Central Line train stalled in the eastbound platform at Leytonstone at 21.05 with no movement. All eastbound trains therefore ran via middle platform 2 with no service on the inner rail between Leytonstone and Hainault until 21.55.

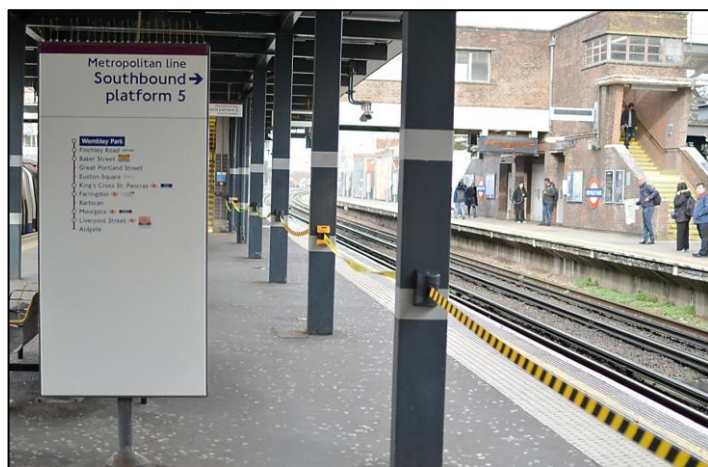
On **Friday 23 February**, southbound Metropolitan Line trains from Harrow-on-the-Hill continued to run via the southbound fast line because of damaged points at Wembley Park (q.v.) with no trains via the southbound local. However, at the start of traffic at 05.30, the first southbound train from Harrow-on-the-Hill (ex-Uxbridge) accepted a wrong signal and continued along the southbound local line to Wembley Park. With nowhere to go and once its passengers had been detrained and safety arrangements implemented, the train was authorised to return (initially) to Northwick Park, arriving at 06.10. Points at Harrow South Junction were then secured to enable the train to return platform 5 at Harrow, where it arrived at 06.50. All other southbound trains worked via platform 6 at Harrow and the southbound fast line with minimal delay. The West Ruislip branch of the Central Line was suspended from 18.25 to 19.00 because of a track circuit failure. This, combined with a number of temporary speed restrictions because of defects with the Track Recording train, saw the service status morph from trains cancelled for no Train Operators into cancellations for track defects, reaching 25 during the evening. Kennington station closed from 09.10 to 09.45 because of a fire alarm activation, and southbound Northern Line trains non-stopped Elephant & Castle from 18.10 to 20.25 while staff attended to a lift stalled in the shaft with passengers within.

**Saturday 24 February** was uneventful operationally. However, the situation on the Central Line deteriorated further with defective stock and speed restrictions (q.v.), the combination of both causing 32 trains out of 73 to be cancelled early evening. Even though the Piccadilly Line was operating a 50% service (38 trains instead of 76) because of weekend engineering work, it still managed nine cancellations for no Train Operators. Kenton northbound platform closed from 18.05 to 19.30 because of a local power failure.

**Sunday 25 February** was thus:

- District Line suspended Embankment – Whitechapel and Circle Line in its entirety 07.05 to 09.10 – points failure at Tower Hill.
- Central Line suspended Liverpool Street – Leytonstone 08.30 to 09.10 – person under an eastbound train at Bethnal Green. One train was stalled between stations for the duration.
- Network Rail signal failure at North Wembley from 19.35. Bakerloo Line suspended north of Stonebridge Park until the end of traffic.
- Stations closed for a lack of staff were Colliers Wood (06.45 to 13.00) and Covent Garden (07.20 to 08.10).

On **Monday 26 February**, a further reduced temporary 60-train timetable was introduced on the Central Line (q.v.) but even 13 of those were cancelled, not only because of a lack of stock but also the on-going speed restrictions. Nonetheless, that was still 24 out of 71 on the previous TTN or 30 out of 77 on the full service. But amazingly, the TfL status for the Underground showed the Central Line as “good service” all day ... Other incidents included a person trackside at Debden (45-minute suspension east of Woodford from 13.55), a Network Rail signal failure at Willesden Junction (suspended north of Queen’s Park from 16.05 to 18.45 with 13 trains cancelled in consequence) and a defective westbound train at Earl’s Court, suspending the District Line’s Edgware Road service from 21.45 to 22.35.



The situation with the damaged points at Wembley Park remained status quo on **Tuesday 27 February** and the revised service patterns continued on the southbound Metropolitan Line between Harrow and Wembley Park (i.e. – everything via the fast) with seven trains cancelled in consequence. This was the situation at Wembley Park (*Above*) with platform 5 taped off (*Left*) and all passenger trains using platform 6 (*Right*). A joint RAIB/ORR investigative exercise was carried out at Stratford on the Jubilee Line following the fatality on 26 December 2023. The service was suspended east of North Greenwich from 12.05 to 13.00 and again from 14.55 to 15.30. Service recovery was then hampered by a person under a southbound train at Finchley Road at 19.15, suspending the service between Willesden Green and Waterloo until 20.50. 19 trains were cancelled in consequence. Warren Street station closed from 21.05 to 22.15 because of a fire alarm activation.

***Both photos: David Rowe***