

# 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.

**31.10.19 SURREY COMET** – Automatic braking systems are being installed on Croydon's trams almost three years after the fatal crash in Sandilands. This is one of the 15 safety measures recommended by RAIB after the crash on 9 November 2016. Seven passengers were killed in the crash and 61 were injured. The automatic braking system is expected to be fully installed by the end of this year. A Driver Assessor said: "Yellow beacons are placed on the track at specific locations where there is potential for derailment or overturn". The beacons will measure the speed and if necessary brakes will be applied. A simulator has been designed by *Tram-Pro* for training purposes. The operators, Trams Operation Ltd., said: "When the tram went over it was very dark so emergency lighting will be put into trams which will happen at the beginning of 2020". TfL said: "The new automatic braking system is a "safety net" for drivers. It only activates if the tram speeds, the driver won't notice anything different in their day-to-day work. Installing a system this big and complex takes time".

**NOVEMBER 2019 MODERN RAILWAYS** – TfL is consulting on its latest plans for extending the Bakerloo Line, which include the possibility of taking over main-line services on the Hayes branch. The 10-week consultation also updates proposals on the route of the extension to Lewisham and gives potential names for the two stations planned to be built on Old Kent Road. To extend the existing line from its Elephant & Castle terminus, TfL is proposing a new more direct alignment to be built from Lambeth North to Elephant & Castle. This would allow a new Bakerloo Line station to be built at Elephant & Castle and provide a shorter quicker route for the line. A new integrated station at Elephant & Castle would see the ticket halls for the Bakerloo and Northern lines combined and offer step-free interchange between the lines, as part of a planned upgrade of the Northern Line ticket hall and delivered as part of the new shopping centre development. For the two stations on the extension on Old Kent Road, TfL suggests naming the first either Old Kent Road or Burgess Park, and the second either Old Kent Road or Asylum. TfL's consultation on the plans runs until 22 December 2019.

**01.11.19 WATFORD OBSERVER** – The Overground has had daily disruptions to the service over the past week. On 31 October commuters in the morning had difficulty travelling between Euston and Watford due to a signal failure at Willesden Junction. There have been problems on the Metropolitan Line, with regular minor and severe delays due to signal failures, faulty trains and several non-technical issues like trespassers and commuters falling ill over the past eight weeks. Since the introduction of the new signalling system, which was installed between 2 and 6 September, commuters have noticed signalling faults at least twice a week.

**01.11.19 THE TIMES** – *By columnist Ed Conway* – "The best way to glimpse the soul of a city is to travel on the subway. London's vintage but surprisingly efficient *Underground* or New York's bustling *Subway* provide a unique window in what lies above. I have barrelled through Buenos Aires's *Subte*, and been pick-pocketed in Mexico's City *Metro*, but for me by far the finest most intriguing subway system in Latin America is the one beneath Santiago.

**04.11.19 EVENING STANDARD** – Thousands of commuters are urging TfL to scrap an "unacceptable" decision to reduce peak-time Central Line services. Passengers have been told that services between Debden, Theydon Bois and Epping stations at the eastern end of the line are to be cut by two trains an hour as it begins a "modernisation programme" of the aging fleet. TfL plans to withdraw trains to install CCTV cameras, wheelchair bays and new motors to improve reliability. It says each train upgrade will take "a few weeks", and in order to keep services running on the busiest parts of the line in central London, services east of Leytonstone will be sacrificed. But, TfL said, the upgrade is likely to take "a number of years", which has left passengers furious at a cut in trains from the busy commuter belt stations. A petition calling on TfL to scrap the plans has gained more than 7,000 signatures in four days. The loop services between Hainault and Woodford are also being reduced to a shuttle service with shorter trains adding to congestion at Woodford in the mornings.

**05.11.19 METRO** – *Post by Dan* – "Pollution on the Underground has become a lot worse in recent years. I remember when TfL had a team that cleaned the tunnels. Evidently, this has been cut as air vents on the trains now throw soot at you! Other than cleaning, regenerative braking would be the best way to cut down on dangerous iron dust. This can't come sooner".

**05.11.19 METRO** – Passengers and staff on the Underground risk breathing in air pollution 18 times worse than above ground, according to scientists. They absorb toxic particles known as PM2.5 – which have a diameter of less than 2.5 millionth of a metre – through iron-based dust on brakes, wheels and rails, fragments of clothing and passengers’ dead skin cells, found the University College and King’s College London study. The Victoria Line was worst with a peak of 885 micro-grammes per cubic metre, 22 times higher than World Health Organisation limits. UCL’s Brynmor Saunders told The Sunday Times that if the health impacts are the same as surface-level pollution, a person with this exposure would have a 7% to 11% higher chance of death due to increased risks of cardiovascular diseases. He went on: “Most people don’t spend that long down there but it is potentially very worrying for train drivers or maintenance staff. The concentrations are very high even compared to somewhere like Oxford Street. TfL challenged the findings, saying people face “high concentrations” of PM2.5 at home, especially when cooking, and from exhaust fumes above ground. TfL’s Safety Chief Lilli Matson said, “TfL spends £60M a year cleaning and monitors to ensure that particle levels are well within Health & Safety Executive guidelines”. It has also commissioned new research.

**05.11.19 METRO** – Commuters can now enjoy more capacity on the Victoria Line during peak hours as a new timetable doubles the highest frequency service, with trains running every 100 seconds. The high-frequency service used to run from 08.15 to 09.45, and from 17.00 to 18.30, but the new extended timetable will now operate from around 07.15 to 10.15, and between 16.15 to 19.15. Carrying more than 250M passengers each year, the Victoria Line serves some of the capital’s busiest stations, including Oxford Circus, King’s Cross St Pancras and Victoria. The new timetable will help to reduce crowding and congestion along the line as well as improving passenger comfort and journey times. Trains will continue to arrive every 135 seconds outside of peak times.

**05.11.19 METRO** – Passengers will benefit from more regular services on the Overground between Watford Junction and Euston from 17 November. TfL will start to run four trains per hour, about every 15 minutes, throughout the day. TfL said: “A more frequent service on this route will benefit passengers whenever they are travelling. Providing a train every 15 minutes all day will offer greater capacity and make it even easier to get around”. These additional services are possible due to the ongoing introduction of Overground’s new Class 710 electric trains on this route. The new trains will operate alongside the existing trains currently in use on the route. *(Editor’s note: what seems to have been missed is that the previous service was three trains per hour with five-car trains while the new service of four trains per hour with four-car trains. More frequent, yes, but an increase in capacity ...?).*

**07.11.19 EVENING STANDARD** – Letter by Peter King – (See 04.11.19 above) – “Commiserations to fellow passengers using the eastern part of the Central Line. Despite looking to cut two trains an hour in peak times TfL maintain that they would deliver “an enhanced service on the busiest section of the line”. We in the western section had the same problem for a few years since they stopped trains at White City and North Acton to run them back through the centre. The net result has been to make peak hour trains on the West Ruislip branch, both morning and evening, infrequent and very crowded. This latest move makes a mockery of TfL’s tag line ‘Every journey matters’”.

**09.11.19 THE TIMES** – The opening of Crossrail has been put back again until at least 2021, with cost-overruns amounting to £3B taking the total bill to £19B. Businesses that have made investments in the expectation that the east-west trans-London underground route would have been completed by Christmas 2018 said that the delay would further hit the London economy. The latest delay to the line is because stations at Bond Street and Whitechapel are not ready and there are signalling problems. When the opening was delayed last year, cost overruns took the budget to £17.6B from the £15.4B. Crossrail said the latest delay would cost between £400M and £650M. When this line, which will be called the Elizabeth Line, does start operating, it is expected not to stop at Bond Street for a time because of “design and delivery” issues with contractors, Costain and Skanska.

**12.11.19 CITY AM** – There may be “significant disruption” on the Underground during the Christmas period as rail workers decide on whether to engage in strike action. 1,000 LU cleaners from the RMT union yesterday began voting on whether to take industrial action in a bid for better pay and amenities. The cleaners are demanding an increase to their £19,029 annual salary and the same access to pensions and sick pay that other Underground staff have. They are also fighting to gain free access to free TfL travel, which other Underground workers get. The RMT said: “It is scandalous that the people who do some of the hardest and dirtiest work on London’s transport network are treated differently to other Underground staff”.

**12.11.19 EVENING STANDARD** – Letter by Peter Wilson – “The delays in Crossrail show the folly of vanity infrastructure projects. Any future government must accept that the UK lacks the resources and

organisational skills to deliver such projects on time and within budget. The concept of three different digital signalling systems should have rung alarm bells at the planning stage. On this basis we can expect the HS2 line to start running sometime in the 22nd century, by which time commuters will probably be able to use their own personal drones to commute. We are constantly told that the country cannot afford a decent social care system and pension age keeps rising – UK taxpayers cannot afford this political vanity”.

**13.11.19 METRO** – Generous Londoners are being reminded to donate their old and unwanted coats to help vulnerable people to keep warm this winter. Now in its ninth year the *Wrap up London* project collects coats and distributes them across the capital to charities that support homeless people, refugees, children living in poverty, and people fleeing domestic violence. Volunteers will be collecting clothing at six Underground stations for the final time today. Last year, more than 17,000 coats were donated by Underground passengers and 138,000 in total have been collected over the last eight years.

**14.11.19 EVENING STANDARD** – Underground union leaders have ordered a 24-hour strike on the Victoria Line and threatened more to come in the run up to Christmas. The walkout by RMT train drivers will take place from 22.00 on 27 November until the same time on the following day. The strike was originally scheduled to take place in September but was suspended when the union believed it had reached a deal with LU via the conciliation service ACAS. The Victoria Line, an RMT stronghold, is used by 600,000 passengers a day. An RMT spokesman said if a dispute over a range of issues including a “fundamental breakdown in industrial relations” was not settled it “will consider further strike action in December”. Drivers from the rival ASLEF union could also refuse to cross picket lines, bringing the line from Brixton to Walthamstow to a standstill. The RMT leader Mick Cash accused LU bosses of having “reneged” on a series of pledges made at ACAS. TfL said: “We have been making progress with the RMT on these issues and are disappointed they have chosen to call this action without notice”.

**14.11.19 EVENING STANDARD** – *By Katie Strick* – “After the recent magistrates court case resulting from an incident between two people over one of them eating boiled eggs on a Greater Anglia train, it is time for a *Guide to Safe Snacking on the Underground*. Sometimes life is too busy not to sneak a quick snack on the Central Line – but there are rules. From carriage politics to what (and what not) to eat, here is the etiquette of the Underground. (1) Choose your weapon – If in doubt, assume library rules; no chit-chat, no rowdy behaviour and, crucially, no smelly or noisy food. Smoked salmon, tuna and garlic are off the menu, eggs are forbidden and avoid anything that could send crumbs tumbling into your neighbour’s lap. To the woman with a bowl of *Weetabix*, milk included, and man drinking the juice from a packet of feta cheese, we’re looking for you. (2) Location, location, location – Picking an inoffensive cheese sandwich might save you from opprobrium, but it won’t win you any friends in the Northern Line in rush hour. Choose your snack spot wisely. A burger on the Night Tube at 04.00 is fine as long as you don’t wave it in other people’s faces, and sit in the final or quietest carriage. (3) No photos, please – the rules apply to non-eaters, too; stay away from stranger-shaming, especially any *Facebook* group to do with women who eat on the Underground – or men, for that matter. Celebrities have feelings, too. If you spot *Breaking Bad*’s Bryan Cranston sneaking a sandwich on the Underground, as one lucky *Twitter* user did, at least do the decent thing and hide his face. (4) Keep it clean – Don’t forget your manners below ground level – nobody wants to sit on a half-empty crisp packet or slip on a banana skin. Keep it clean”.

**18.11.19 EVENING STANDARD** – Knife-wielding gangs are terrorising young commuters for their £200 *Apple AirPods* and mobiles on the transport network. The muggers have struck at least eight times at rail and Underground stations across London and Essex in the past month. BT Police today released CCTV images of young men they want to speak to in connection with the robberies. Detective Chief Inspector Sarah White said: “We have seen a concerning amount of robberies across both the Underground and mainline rail network in London, and we are working tirelessly to catch those responsible.” Such incidents have occurred at the following locations: Seven Sisters station, on a c2c train near Chafford Hundred, Euston, at White Hart Lane station (on two occasions), at Tottenham Court Road, on a Central Line train near Lancaster Gate and on a Victoria Line train near Finsbury Park. DCI White said: “We have plain clothes officers operating, and passengers can also expect to see highly visible reassurance patrols. Everyone should be aware of their surroundings, particularly in the evenings, and of being discreet and secure when carrying their property. Typically, we are seeing things like phones, laptops and *AirPod* earphones being targeted by groups of young men. They will usually approach people travelling on their own, but many of these incidents have still taken place in crowded and busy areas. Thankfully we police a CCTV-rich environment which has enabled us to quickly identify a number of suspects and bring them into custody”.

**21.11.19 METRO** – Horrified commuters were evacuated from a packed Underground station in central London after a man was hit by a train. The passenger fell from a Victoria Line platform at Oxford Circus at 17.30 yesterday. Ambulance crews treated him for leg injuries at the scene before he was taken to hospital. BT Police said: “At this time the incident is not being treated as suspicious”.

**22.11.19 EVENING STANDARD** – A planned strike on the Victoria Line next week has been called off ahead of fresh talks between union bosses and London Underground. The walkout by drivers was due to take place on 27 and 28 November but the Rail, Maritime and Transport union confirmed today it had suspended the action. The RMT said it had made the decision “to allow for the issues at the heart of the dispute to be addressed in detail in further talks with London Underground”.