

Ex-bus driver found dead

FORMER bus driver Henry Jackman, 82, has been found dead in a field three months after he disappeared from an old people's home.

His body was discovered in the grounds of a ski club in Ashford, Middlesex. He went missing from Heston House old people's home in Hounslow, west London, on April 29.

A post-mortem was unable to determine the cause of his death but police are not treating it as suspicious.

"It's very difficult to say where Henry was heading for," said Sergeant Sue Warren. "He was a very frail man and was possibly very confused. It is all very sad."



Arcade rises from the rubble

AN Edwardian arcade of 24 shops at Liverpool Street station, devastated by the Bishopsgate bombing two years ago, has been restored to its former glory, and was officially reopened by LT Chairman Peter Ford.

The arcade, which links Liverpool Street to Old Broad Street, has been completely

Peter Ford and Barbara Newman, chair of the Corporation of London's planning committee, at the reopening of the Liverpool Street arcade

refurbished, and is already proving popular.

Five shops are already open for business, with a further eight due to start trading soon.

Facilities

When fully let, the arcade is expected to generate an income of around £300,000 a year, and will provide a wide range of facilities for City workers, from food to fashion, as well as a dry cleaners, heel bar, film processing shop and barber.

COURT ACTION HALTS STRIKE

LONDON Underground obtained a High Court injunction on Tuesday night to prevent the ASLEF trade union from taking industrial action, granted after an evening application before a judge in chambers.

The RMT, which was also due to walk out in the first of a series of one-day strikes today (Thursday) decided to withdraw its own actions, which were not covered by the injunction.

During negotiations with the unions

By staff reporter

on Tuesday, LUL increased its pay offer from 2.75 per cent to 3 per cent, saying that, although the first offer was a fair one, the views of the unions, managers and staff had been taken into account.

Improvements to maternity and paternity leave, a joint working party to review working arrangements and extended protection of earnings for some staff – all part of the earlier package offer – were retained, as well as the improved basic increase.

But when it became clear that the unions were unlikely to call off the first strike, LUL sought the injunction against ASLEF on the grounds that the wording of the union's ballot had said that there should be no industrial action if there was an improved pay offer.

Final

LUL's Human resources Director Ann Burfitt stressed that the company's new offer was final and conditional on there being no significant disruption to Tube services. She said that the extra 0.25 per cent would increase LUL's wages bill by a £1 million.

The issue of the Make or Buy dispute, which was the subject of an RMT engineers' strike ballot, was also discussed and the company reiterated its assurances on job security already outlined.

Tunnel work gets go-ahead

ENVIRONMENT Secretary John Gummer has approved London Underground's plans to carry out repairs on the Thames Tunnel as part of wide-ranging engineering work on the East London Line.

Work was suspended on the tunnel – the first to be built under the Thames – in March, after it was given Grade II protective listing.

Classification of the tunnel, built by Sir Marc Brunel 1843, followed pressure from conservationists.

But now, Mr Gummer has ruled that LUL's proposals to restore and preserve the tunnel's four arches and safeguard the rest of the structure by re-lining, will retain its historic features as far as possible.

Announcing his decision, the Environment Secretary said he was satisfied that it is essential to strengthen and waterproof the tunnel to protect the East London and Jubilee Lines against serious flooding.

What a Carry On at Embankment



Barbara is cashing in for Barclays

EASTENDERS star Barbara Windsor was at Embankment station this week to officially open Barclays Bank's 3,000th automatic cash dispensing machine.

The bubbly former Carry On actress was joined by Embankment staff Alice Thorpe and Fred Murray to do the honours at the station, 28 years after Barclays' first machine opened for business in Enfield.

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Crews get safety booklet

A BOOKLET has been launched giving advice on how bus operators and their staff can reduce the risk of violent attacks. Protecting Bus Crews - A Practical Guide aims to help managers and staff by giving achievable safety guidance.

The booklet was produced by the Standing Advisory Panel on Assaults on Bus Staff, which has been monitoring trends in assaults since 1984.

Almost 1,600 incidents of violence on bus crews were reported last year. That figure could be higher since many more incidents have gone unreported.

"We cannot expect bus crews to put up with assaults as part of their job," said Steven Norris, the Minister for Road Safety, who launched the guide. "This booklet contains sound advice, and I commend it to all those who work in the bus industry."

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Pleased to meet you... Andre Remy-Holden, Tony Brown, BT Pc Kevin Ayton and Tony Cupoll

The King's Cross passengers meet the managers

KING'S Cross station has held its first 'meet the managers' day, in which customers had the opportunity to chat with members of staff.

Hundreds of passengers saw displays from LT's Travel Information Centre, the British Transport Police (BTP) - who gave information about travel safety - and revenue control inspectors, who issued advice on how to avoid incurring penalty fares.

In addition, Missing, an organisation which helps trace people who have disappeared, ran a video appealing for information, as King's Cross is a well-known destination for runaways.

The organiser, duty station manager Tony Brown, hailed the event as "a great success" and added: "We had a very positive response from customers. I had only about four weeks to put everything together but it worked out really well," he said.

By staff reporter

Tony added that the event wouldn't have happened were it not for assistance from other station staff.

"We hope to hold a similar event in October, which will hopefully involve contributions from all the lines which go through King's Cross and more departments from the Underground," he said.

Awards go to buses' long servers



Derrick Gunn, centre, congratulates Arnold Ramsay and Bhupendra Shukla on a half-century of service

Getting a buyer on the tracks in Essex

For sale: Four stations and six miles of line

OFFERS are being invited from commercial operators interested in buying London Underground's disused Epping to Ongar line in Essex.

The line was closed last September because of reduced passenger demand and increasing maintenance costs.

LUL business development manager Joe Burke said: "We're keeping an open mind as regards the asking price."

He added that while there had been some interest - most notably from the railway enthusiasts of the Ongar Preservation Society which owns a three-carriage Tube train - there isn't any money available from LUL to help subsidise a new operator. They would have to provide the

entire capital for works, facilities, repairs, rolling stock and equipment, and the cost of any alterations to London Underground's equipment and facilities.

Any new owner would also have to satisfy the requirements of the Railway Inspectorate and, if necessary, the Rail Regulator and other appropriate bodies.

Advertised

The Epping to Ongar line is being advertised in the national press and The Railway Gazette, which is read by transport operators in more than 120 countries.

"We've advertised it as widely as we possibly can," he explained.

On offer are four stations - Epping, North Weald, Blake Hall and Ongar - together with six miles of mostly single track.

Woodford exits' future uncertain

THE future of the westbound exits at the Central Line's Woodford and South Woodford stations is still uncertain after a six-month trial period which ended in April.

The unmanned entrances were re-opened last October in response to strong local feeling about their closure for the previous 18 months. However, after a drop in ticket sales, the exits are to remain under review while the situation is monitored.

Revenue

"The original business case which we produced when closing the gates - in terms of deterioration in revenue - still stands," said Geoff Thackway, Central Line general manager. "As yet, we cannot say that the revenue drop was specifically because the gates are open. Until the time when we have evidence that the open exits are damaging business, it would be remiss to close the entrances in the face of public demand."

The review is being conducted in partnership with representatives of Redbridge Council.

Surveyors clock up 50 years

HALF a century of loyalty to London's buses was commemorated when traffic surveyors Arnold Ramsay and Bhupendra Shukla were presented with their long-service awards after clocking up a full 25 years apiece with LTB.

The two men, who are both former conductors, received their special awards from passenger data manager Derrick Gunn, during a special ceremony at LTB's head office in Buckingham Palace Road.

News in brief

Underground poems

A NEW series of Poems on the Underground is now appearing on District, Bakerloo, Victoria and Northern Line trains. The mixture of classic and popular poems are the latest in a periodic series which began nine years ago.

Northern survey

TBV Surveying, part of Tarmac, has won a four-year commission to survey properties and structures on the Northern Line. The contract, said to be worth around £250,000, includes all the Northern Line's stations, associated structures, workshops and depot buildings.

Camden's wet look

A FOUR-strong team from Camden station made a splash in the Wobstacle Challenge at Temple Cowley swimming pool in Oxford, when they scrambled over a floating obstacle course in the name of charity.

Although they finished second to last of the eight teams taking part and dripping wet in their Underground uniforms and hi-vis, the Camden quartet - Lee Brockbank, Brian Smith, Denise Brunner and Gary Bushfield - raised £68 for Marie Curie Cancer Care.

Safety sessions

TWO LUL employees have been telling youngsters how to travel safely on the Tube, during Junior Citizen Scheme sessions held at London Zoo. Mike Watson, duty station manager at Lancaster Gate, and White City station supervisor Lee Bapoo were among representatives from several organisations, including the British Transport Police, who took part in the two-hour seminars.

Station visit

A PARTY of 60 partially-sighted and blind children from Lindon Lodge School in Putney visited White City station, to literally "get the feel" of the new Central Line trains. Their teachers felt they should touch and feel the positioning of the door-control buttons, grab poles, seating and other features in the trains, which are different from those used on other Underground lines.

Overseas interest

THE successful Harrow bus smartcard trial has attracted interest from all over the world. Recent visitors to the Bus Electronic Smartcard Ticketing (BEST) Project office have included delegations from Japan East Rail, Oslo Transport, Chicago and Montreal Transport. BEST project manager Roger Torode has also given a presentation on the trial at a seminar in Philadelphia.

Protestors blockade buses

PROTESTERS, many of them in wheelchairs, blocked Parliament Square and handcuffed themselves to buses during a demonstration against the Government's Disability Discrimination Bill which was being debated by MPs.

South London and Leaside vehicles were among the buses targeted by protesters, who caused a major traffic hold-up in the area.



Wheelchair-bound protestors chain themselves to buses in Parliament Square

LONDON SUBURBAN ACQUIRED BY MTL

By Richard Baker

MTL Trust Holdings Ltd, the Liverpool-based company which owns London Northern, has added London Suburban to its operations in the capital.

London Suburban was included as part of the deal when MTL took over the bus section of its parent company, Gemsam Holdings.

The 50-strong London Suburban fleet is based at a depot in Edmonton, north London, and covers

four routes - Nos. 4, 41, 271 and N6.

A new general manager, Paul Beyer, has been appointed to run the Edmonton depot, and he told LT News that the 100 or so drivers and support staff have adapted very well to new working practices.

"For instance, we're introducing new rotas and nominated routes so drivers can stay on the same run, and that's proving very popular," he said.

Safeway buys Peckham garage

PECKHAM bus garage has been sold by London Transport Property (LTP) to Safeway Stores for redevelopment.

Safeway bought the 2.9-acre Peckham site for what LTP calls "a substantial premium payment".

In addition, the supermarket chain will provide a new, £500,000 bus station on the site which is expected to open within 12 months.

Safeway will use the site to enlarge its existing store in the nearby Aylesham Centre to provide 35,000 square feet of retail sales floor, a coffee shop, dry cleaners, pharmacy, petrol station and parking for 420 cars.

The former bus garage was declared surplus to operational requirements when LTP acquired alternative accommodation for London Central buses in Copeland Road, Peckham.

Benefits

Philip Clarke, LTP's development surveyor responsible for surplus garage sales, said: "This is a good example of how LT Property was able to broker a deal which had financial benefits for the LT group, operational benefits for the bus company, and which has helped to regenerate an important local centre and provide improved infrastructure for LT Buses."

Stolen bus on wrecking spree

STAFF at London Northern's Holloway garage may be asked to challenge strangers wandering into the depot, after a joyrider stole a bus and went on a wrecking spree in north London.

The youth jumped into the cab of the Metrobus while it was being serviced with its engine running.

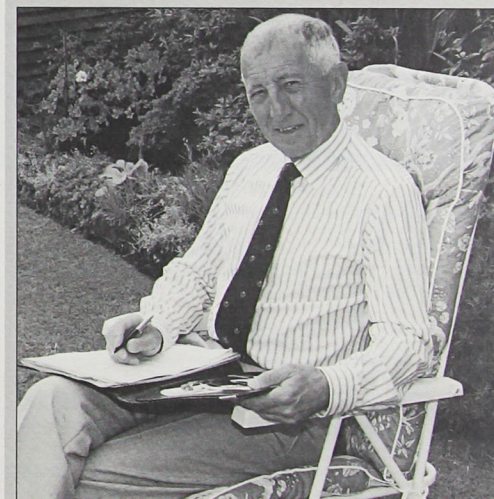
He ploughed it into six parked cars along the main A400 causing thousands of pounds worth of damage during his one-and-a-half-mile, 10-minute drive, before escaping on foot.

Kingston bus station opens

THE Mayor of Kingston, Councillor David Twigg, has officially opened the borough's new bus station.

The striking, £1.5 million building was designed by London Transport Buses architect Robert Stevenson, and is the result of detailed discussions between the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames and LTB.

The new bus station provides a convenient interchange between services, covered waiting areas, comprehensive information displays, public toilets, payphones, a shop and closed circuit television monitoring.



Phillip: has a date with the Palace later this year

Pensioner Phillip made MBE

PHILLIP HOWARD will be heading for Buckingham Palace later this year to receive the MBE he was awarded in the Queen's birthday honours.

The LT pensioner, who retired in 1986 as principal recreation manager after 35 years with the corporation, got his gong for "services to the Hospital Visiting Association (HSA) and the people of Hampshire".

Phillip joined LT as a permanent way engineer in 1951 and then worked in auditing, finance and signal engineering, before moving to the welfare

department for his final role as principal recreation manager.

Now happily retired in the Hampshire countryside, Phillip regards LT as something of a family business.

Corporation

"Both my father and mother worked for the corporation, as well as my two brothers and all four of my children at one time or another," he said.

"In fact, my younger brother, Bob, is traffic controller, while my son, Mark, is with the travel information department."

TROUBLE SHOOTERS

The Transport Benevolent Fund has been providing financial, medical and legal assistance for staff since 1923. Richard Baker tells its story...

TROUBLE is the Transport Benevolent Fund's (TBF) business. Since it was formed back in 1923, the fund has helped its members deal with just about everything from terminal illness to mortgage disputes.

These days, this self-sufficient, registered charity has about 10,500 working members, divided roughly half and half between LT and LUL staff and employees of the privatised bus companies.

For a subscription of £1 a week, they and their partners, plus any dependent children, are eligible for a range of benefits, such as financial assistance, legal advice, welfare help and convalescent care, medical facilities and having wills prepared by a solicitor.

These services are also available to the fund's 50,000 or so retired members, all former transport employees and their partners, who are exempt from the weekly contribution.

As reported in LT News,

the fund has recently been at the centre of some controversy over its decision to close the Fonthill Hotel in Torquay which was used by members for convalescent care and subsidised holidays. Chris Godbold, the fund's chief executive, said the hotel had been under-used

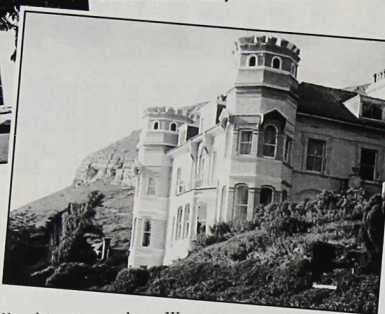
by members and had been closed because of cost.

"Convalescence has been the most expensive element we have had to provide in recent years," he said.

"The fund has recognised that it has had to change with the times, while at the same time continuing to provide the services we have always



ABOVE: Fund staff, from left: Linda Heam, Tim Southcott, Sharon Jeffery, Chris Godbold and Janis Ireland
LEFT: Bridge House in Devon
BELOW: The Old Abbey at Llandudno



'We're here to help in so many ways'

SINCE the closure of the Fonthill Hotel, convalescent care is being offered to TBF members through the Leicester Convalescent Society and RCH. Formerly known as the Railway Convalescent Homes, RCH owns three country houses, at Bridge House in Dawlish, Devon, The Old Abbey in Llandudno, North Wales, and Ascog Mansion on the Isle of Bute off the west coast of Scotland. The Leicester Convalescent Society offers a similar level of accommodation at its home in Sheringham, Norfolk. But the TBF provides more than just convalescent care, as some of its recent activities illustrate:

CASE 1

The fund provided financial support to a bus driver dying of cancer while he was off work, and paid for him, his wife and daughter to have a last holiday together. It is organising another holiday for his family to help them through their bereavement.

other benefits - which meet every quarter and report to the full council.

Locally, fund representatives can be found at most garages and groups of stations.

Its patrons include former LT Chairman Sir Wilfrid Newton, Brian Souter, Executive Chairman of Stagecoach Holdings

PLC which owns the East London and Selkent bus companies, and Peter Coombes, Chairman of MTL Trust Holdings, parent company of London Northern and London Suburban. Chris revealed that the charity is to embark on a major recruiting drive during the autumn to boost membership which has dropped in recent years.

"It's our own fault, really," he said. "We haven't been active enough in pursuing new members, particularly among the privatised bus companies."

Chris and his team of four - all of whom are seconded to the fund from London Transport - run the charity's affairs from an office near Oxford Circus. However, the fund's policy decisions are made by a council of about 40 elected trustees who meet twice a year.

Trustees also form two working committees - one to look after financial issues, the

• Letters - see page 10.

A SOARING SUCCESS



London United personnel are on hand to help passengers

New Airbus routes take off for the Heathrow passengers



AIRBUS Direct, a new service running to and from Heathrow Airport's Terminal Four, has been launched by London United.

The route, calling at the same stops visited by United's existing A1 and A2 Airbuses serving Heathrow Terminals One, Two and Three and Central Bus Station, also takes in a range of hotels in central London.

On the return journey, the service will pick up from these hotels and take passengers to any of the airport's terminals.

A new customer reception lounge has been built at Terminal Four in

By staff reporter

association with BAA to support the Airbus Direct service, with London United customer care staff on hand to provide travel information. It's similar to another London United lounge in use at Terminal Three.

Meanwhile, the A2 route is being extended beyond Russell Square to King's Cross. The A1 will continue to run its existing route between Heathrow and Victoria.

The introduction of Airbus Direct has created around 30 new jobs with London United for drivers and control staff.

In addition, says Roger Wiseman, London United's marketing manager,

The Airbus Direct service is now in operation from Heathrow

the company will be "increasing its presence" at most terminals.

"We've initially introduced the new service at Terminal Four because it's out on a bit of the limb at Heathrow. At the moment, people arriving at the terminal get a guided tour of the airport before they reach the road to London. Airbus Direct will provide them with a more door-to-door service, which is what airline passengers expect these days. The last thing they want after a long flight is to carry luggage around."

The Airbus Direct service runs between 5.30 am and 2 pm, as this is the peak time for people travelling through Terminal Four. Outside these times, people can use the A1 and A2 routes.

London United uses a 16-strong fleet of specially converted Dennis Dart midibuses on the service. Each can carry 21 passengers and has space for luggage. It is also introducing 12 new Volvo Olympian double deckers on its A1 and A2 routes to replace older vehicles.

The service will provide passengers with a more 'door-to-door service'

Kids add a transport touch to mural



Local schoolchildren celebrate the completion of the mural near North Finchley bus garage

A brush with art...

A GROUP of local schoolchildren put the finishing touches to a mural painted by artist Andrew Crummy when they added some of their own ideas on the theme of

environmentally-powered transport to his work in North Finchley.

The colourful mural was commissioned by Barnet Borough Council to brighten up a fence - generally regarded as an eyesore - which divides the market at Tally Ho Corner from North Finchley bus garage.

The cash to cover the cost of the mural was provided by London Underground, London Transport Buses and TBL Plc, the owner of the market, who each chipped in £500.

The mural was unveiled by Barnet councillor Jack Cohen.

Pair bridge a record

FOOT-weary but triumphant, LUL pair Mike Watson and Theresa Nolan took 30 minutes off the record for completing the 26-mile, 20 Bridges Challenge.

They finished criss-crossing the River Thames from Richmond to Tower Bridge in five hours 40 minutes, and managed to raise £550 for a disabled charity.

Mike, duty station manager at Lancaster Gate, and Theresa, a train operator based at White City, were among a contingent of four from LUL who took part in the annual event. The others were Theresa's brother, Antony, a train operator at Wood Green, and Joe Burke, from Commercial Opportunities at 55 Broadway.

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Priority shows put the message across

EXHIBITIONS to publicise the Bus Priority Network have been held in north-east and north-west London during the last couple of months.

They were organised by the relevant London boroughs, LT Buses and the Department of Transport, who are working together to set up the priority network.

Local residents and bus users were invited to attend and make their views known about the network, which is designed to speed up buses on around 500 miles of London's roads.

Measures

This will be achieved by introducing a variety of measures including giving buses priority at traffic lights, introducing more bus lanes and relocating traffic queues so buses can avoid them.

London Transport Buses says that all comments will be taken into account before plans are finalised, and it is anticipated that the measures will be introduced, on an experimental basis within the next 12 months.

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PASS MASTERS FOR TICKETS



Above: Rona Shird, left, and Debbie Isaac field calls on the office's helpline



Left: EPOS project manager David White with one of the electronic point-of-sale machines which will be rolled out across London next spring

GO to a high street in any part of London and the chances are you'll find at least one PASS agent. That's not too surprising considering there's a 2,300-strong network of them throughout the capital, all selling bus passes and Travelcards to London's travelling public.

Most of the agents are small, local shopkeepers - mainly newsagents - whose main stock in trade is the usual array of sweets, cigarettes and daily papers.

But while their PASS agency may be a sideline, it's an increasingly important one, as between them these outlets have sold around 30 million tickets during the past 12 months or so.

That's worth about £150 million to LT, which represents 17 per cent of the corporation's total revenue.

Supplies

Coordinating this whole, money-spinning effort is London Transport's Pass Agents Sales Service (LT PASS), which was taken over by LT five years ago. As well as its network of agents it also supplies tickets to LT's travel information centres and other transport operations like the Docklands Light Railway.

PASS controls this entire distribution operation from its offices in Greenwich, south-east London.

General manager Roger Harding is the man in charge at PASS, heading a team of 60 people, including support staff in sales, distribution, accounting and data processing, as well as 14 sales representatives who spend most of their time on the road.

"Our role is to take the ticket-selling service to

the customers and they have certainly responded, because, since LT took over PASS, the value of sales has increased by nearly 70 per cent," said Roger, who reports to LT Marketing Director Norman Cohen.

"In making the service more convenient, we believe we are growing the total market for public transport in London, particularly through impulse purchases."

"Sales of daily tickets now account for 67 per cent of PASS sales volume. However, we are not just in the business of selling tickets, as we want our network of agents to provide travel



Field office manager Lee Andrews

information to customers as well.

"That's why we kit them out with maps and other literature. Recently we've been distributing leaflets to them which explain the changes to the night bus network."

"Agents are also required to follow our code of conduct," Roger continued. "Among other things, this requires them to deal with the public in a polite and helpful manner and display



Richard Baker visits
LT's Pass Agents Sales Service which is making life easier for London's bus and Tube customers

unquestionable integrity at all times.

"The fact that the vast majority of agents are providing an excellent service is confirmed by our research, which shows that the public find them a popular and customer-friendly source for tickets."



Brixton newsagent Paul Woodley is one of PASS's 2,300-strong network of agents throughout London

"In fact they sell about 98 per cent of all bus passes used in London and around 28 per cent of all LT's weekly Travelcards. The income from these sales broadly splits 50:50 in respect of bus and railway services in London."

PASS agents earn a modest commission on all tickets they sell, with the average retailer moving around £5,000-worth a month. However, some of the agency's star performers regularly sell in excess of £20,000 over the same period.

Given a ready market like this, there is no shortage of enthusiastic shopkeepers keen to become PASS agents. The successful ones are chosen mainly on location, explained Ron Button, PASS's field operation manager.

Ron, who is responsible for the customer support operation at PASS, explained: "We carry out market research to determine where the best places are to establish an agency."

"Those we wish to recruit are given induction training on how to sell the tickets and other issues such as ticket zones. They are then tested on what they have been taught. If they fail, they have to take the training again and will not be allowed to join the network until we are sure that they can provide the service our customers need."

Refreshers

Agents also undergo refresher training each year to bring them up to date on recent developments which could affect their business. "For instance, this year they were told about the introduction of penalty fares on buses and how to issue child-rate photocards," he said.

The PASS team of sales reps call on outlets every month to check ticket stocks and sales records, as well as making sure they've got enough point-of-sale material to promote the service.

PASS also provides a telephone helpline for agents to answer any queries.

Agents' cartoon capers

PASS agents and their families from all over London met Goofy and Pluto, when they were invited along to The Odeon, Leicester Square, for a special screening of Disney's cartoon The Fox and the Hound.

The film is being re-released this year and ties in with a joint promotion between Disney, PASS, Deep Pan Pizza and London Zoo.

During the promotion, passengers who buy a Travelcard or bus pass from a PASS agent can get a leaflet offering them a free cinema pass to see The Fox and the Hound at selected Central London cinemas, generating additional leisure journeys into the heart of the capital.

They can also get a free child's pizza when they spend £5 or more on an adult meal at Deep Pan Pizza and a free child's entry to London Zoo when an adult ticket is purchased.

EPOS - the way ahead

EPOS - Electronic Point of Sale - machines will revolutionise the sale of tickets through PASS agents when they come on line over the next couple of years.

As well as cutting the time it takes to issue tickets in a PASS agent's shop, the machines will be able to recharge electronic "smart cards". EPOS will also offer security benefits since agents will no longer have to keep stocks of pre-priced tickets.

All the agent will have to do is insert the relevant blank ticket, select a customer's journey details - zone, date, etc - into the machine and it will issue the appropriate pass.

Benefit

David White, PASS's EPOS project manager, said suppliers will be invited to tender for the contract to manufacture the machines this year. "We'll expect to start rolling them out across London next spring," he said, "and it will take about a year for them to be installed throughout the network."

As well as speeding up the issuing of tickets and improving security, David said EPOS will be a great benefit during the

annual fare changes.

"At the moment, it takes us three months to change all the pre-priced tickets and then distribute them around the agents when there is a fare change," he explained. "It then takes a further three months to collect in all the old tickets."

"After the introduction of EPOS, this will no longer be necessary, as the agents will immediately be able to issue tickets at the new prices through their machines."

A prototype EPOS system is currently on trial at 80 agents' shops in Harrow, north-west London, in conjunction with a smart card pilot project on the buses - and it has been a great hit with passengers.

One of these has been installed at Raydens newsagents inside Harrow-on-the-Hill bus station, where Vijay Patel was enthusiastic about the machine.

"Not only is it fast and efficient, it also helps us to avoid mistakes when we're making out a ticket," he said.

Vijay Patel uses one of the prototype EPOS machines to issue a ticket



Ron and Roger pinpoint a PASS agent in south-east London

Chunnel your way to Paris

Two nights for just £145

THIS is your opportunity to take a break in Paris in an excursion organised exclusively for LT News readers by Macs Tours of York.

It includes return fare through the Channel Tunnel by Eurostar train, plus an escorted visit to the French capital at a special discounted price.

The Eurostar train leaves Waterloo at lunch-time on Friday, September 29, and will travel through the Kent countryside before descending into the Channel Tunnel.

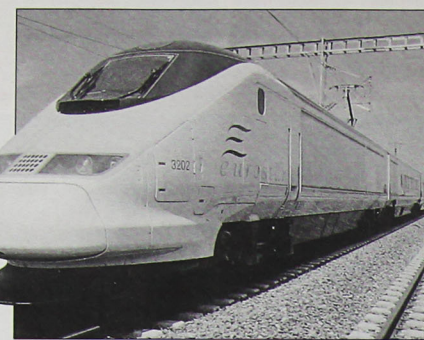
After about 20 minutes, you'll emerge in France and accelerate to a top speed of 186mph for the run to Paris, which you'll reach after a total journey time of three hours.

Accommodation is for two nights in the two-star Hotel Royal Magenta, situated within walking distance of Gare du Nord.

The trip also includes a private sightseeing tour taking in, among other things, the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame and the Louvre.

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Additional nights can be booked if required and child reductions are available.

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£12.50. Entry is free for under-4s. For that, you and your family can enjoy an unbeatable mix of rides and attractions during an unforgettable day out in the heart of the beautiful Staffordshire countryside.

To experience the magic for yourself, simply write to: Alton Towers (LT News offer), Alton, Staffordshire, ST10 4DB, enclosing your name and address, a cheque/postal order payable to Alton Towers and the date of your visit. For credit card bookings, call 0990 204060.

All ticket applications must be made at least 10 days before the date of your visit. This offer cannot be used with any other discount offer.



Grease is the word

See the hit show
- at a discount

LT NEWS readers can see the hit musical "Grease" live on stage at The Dominion Theatre in Tottenham Court Road.

It will cost you just £17.50 compared with the usual price of £27.50 to see the show, which has attracted rave reviews.

Starring Shane Richie as "Danny", it features all the songs from the film,

including "Grease Is The Word", "You're The One That I Want" and "Hopelessly Devoted To You".

Our offer covers evening performances starting at 7.30 pm on September 12, 13 and 14, and is subject to availability.

To book tickets, send your application, along with payment (cheques made payable to Applause Ltd, Visa/MasterCard/Amex also accepted) and a self-addressed, stamped envelope, to:

LT News Theatre Offer,



PO Box 177, London WC2B 5ED.

All applications must be received by August 18. Tickets cannot be guaranteed after this date.

Operation bags hundreds of fare dodgers

MORE than 370 people were issued with penalty fares at Bank and Monument stations during 'Operation Bank Account', the largest clamp-down against fare dodgers on the Underground to date.

Almost £2,000 was taken on the spot while an additional 33 passengers were reported for fraudulent travel and face possible prosecution.

Sealed

The operation involved about 100 revenue control inspectors (RCIs), British Transport Police and Tube staff, and saw all entrances and exits to both stations were sealed for more than 15 hours. Passengers who were unable to produce a valid ticket for their journey faced £10 on-the-spot penalty fares.

"It was a super exercise," said the Central Line's revenue control manager Terry Allan. "It was well planned, well organised and showed the ability of revenue control to identify problem areas and take measures to solve them."

However, the initiative also showed that despite the risk of being charged a penalty fare, many passengers are still trying to avoid paying fares, he added. "These are the people we are targeting."

Penalty

Most of the penalty fares were taken from passengers using the Waterloo and City Line, the exits from which currently have no ticket gates.

Terry said: "Because of the number of people who use the line, it is often difficult to check each ticket. We are now considering installing gates at these exits."

The exercise was organised by Central Line RCIs Vik Parmar and Pauline Moran over a three-week period, with assistance from District, Circle and Northern Line staff.

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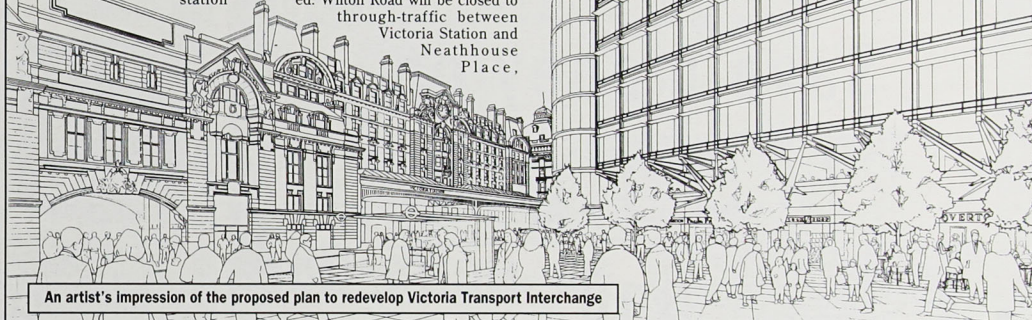
New bid to redevelop Victoria Interchange

Scheme hailed as 'extremely important' for passengers

VICTORIA Transport Interchange has been earmarked for a facelift, in a revised planning application submitted by London Transport Property (LTP) and Greycoat London Southbank Ltd.

The site, owned by LT and Greycoat, is immediately in front of Victoria Station. The new scheme, designed by Michael Hopkins and Partners, aims to remove the present unsightly approach to Victoria Station, where there is a potentially hazardous conflict between pedestrians, buses, taxis and cars.

It includes redevelopment of the bus station, the creation of two new office buildings with ground floor shops, and a package of transportation benefits. Victoria Underground station



An artist's impression of the proposed plan to redevelop Victoria Transport Interchange

will feature a new District and Circle Line ticket hall, an enlarged Victoria Line ticket hall and provision for the proposed Chelsea to Hackney Line.

The two new buildings, one on either side of the station, will provide 275,000 square feet of office and shopping space.

Michael Withers, LTP's development manager, said: "The scheme is extremely important because some 65 million passengers use this interchange each year. The development will increase the capacity of the transport infrastructure to relieve congestion and provide an improved environment for our customers."

Under the proposals, highway modifications will also be implemented. Wilton Road will be closed to through-traffic between Victoria Station and Neathhouse Place,

and will be restricted to one-way southbound for buses and taxis only. As a result, Vauxhall Bridge Road will revert to two-way traffic in line with highway proposals planned by Westminster Council.

Other developments include:
• Taxi services modified to enter from Buckingham Palace Road and set down in front of the station;
• A new pedestrian piazza created by the closure of

the north end of Wilton Road to make it safer for commuters and visitors;

• Improved safety measures for pedestrians;
• Bus stops for passengers to south and east London (north and west will be served by the new covered bus station).

Engineers awarded the seal of approval

LONDON General's engineering department has been awarded a BSEN ISO 9002 quality certificate for attaining a consistently high standard of service.

The prestigious certificate means that London General, the largest independent

bus operator in the capital, has reached the highest level of efficiency within its engineering function as specified by the British Standards Institute (BSI).

It is the first company taken over by a management-employee buyout to achieve this.

"We are very pleased," said Phil Margrave, Engineering Director of London General Transport Services.

"We couldn't have achieved it without the involvement of the entire team, particularly Roy Sayers, our quality manager. It has taken two years of hard work and it was our first attempt to gain certification."

Ceremony

At a presentation ceremony at Marble Arch, Steven Norris, the Minister for Transport in London, who handed over the certificate, said: "I congratulate London General on their achievement which recognises the company's continuing commitment to providing safe and reliable services for their customers."



Steven Norris, left, presents the certificate to Roy Sayers, centre, and Phil Margrave

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The finest design is a timeless inspiration

THE story about designs on excellence (LT News, June 22) has spurred me to observe that good design not only stands the test of time but often inspires many others years later.

In my view, the new Ashford International station for the Eurostar services to Paris and Brussels is pure Charles Holden in appearance.

What the users of the Underground experienced in the '30s comes to international travellers in the late '90s!

Tony Russell,
Tonbridge,
Kent.

My close encounter was out of this world

COULD someone please enlighten me? During the night of June 22 - 23 am to be precise - I experienced a very strange sight on the Metropolitan Line between Wembley Park and Preston Road stations.

There were large circles of light from the bridge over the Jubilee Line, stretching as far as I could see from my window.

A circle of blue lights appeared to be approximately 50 feet in the air and numerous individual lights were 'swaying' on the Met Line.

After about 15 minutes the circles of light went out but the individual lights continued to 'sway'.

Only at the end of my vigil did I hear voices and see what I presume were human beings and not something from outer space.

These people descended to the Jubilee Line and disappeared.

Had I experienced this on my own I would have thought I had been dreaming, but my husband was with me and saw all of this as well.

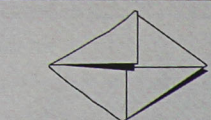
I would be most interested to know exactly what we saw.

I hope that someone can put my mind at rest that we were not

being visited by some unearthly beings.

Mrs B. M. Gouillard,
Wembley Park,
Middx

• I can reassure Mrs Gouillard that little green men weren't responsible. It was a team of workers who were painting the bridge! - Ed.



POSTBAG

If you have any views you would like to air, send them to Postbag, LT News, Citigate Publishing, 52 St John Street, London EC1M 4DT or fax us on 0171-490 8088.

Benevolent Fund will continue to provide services

I AM writing in an attempt to counter the false impression given about the Transport Benevolent Fund by letters published in LT News, June 22.

TBF has all my thanks

I AM writing to support the Transport Benevolent Fund and to disagree with the letters published in LT News about the closure of the Fonthill Hotel.

I needed a period of convalescence in June after an incident which happened to me. I, too, was disappointed at the closure of the Fonthill at the time. I was booked instead into a beautiful hotel on the same road called The Court, which is run by a lovely family. I had a most enjoyable time, met new friends and was looked after well. The meals and accommodation were first class.

All I can say is well done to the TBF for still looking after members' interests and keep up the good work.

I am happy to pay the modest membership charge for facilities which are as good, if not better, than the Fonthill but more cost-effective with more choice.

Malcolm Conlan,
Passenger Data Section,
LTB

The fund will continue to provide services to its members and beneficiaries, including convalescence. The necessary closure of Fonthill Hotel results only in the loss of the facility for people to book non-convalescent holiday accommodation.

The impression has been given that the chief executive, Chris Godbold, made the closure decision.

This is not true. He does not have the authority to do so.

The decision was taken by the fund council, which includes working members of the local fund committees.

Severe

The fact is the fund has suffered a severe reduction in membership over recent years for a number of reasons beyond its control. It can no longer afford to subsidise a hotel and the savings made will enable it to concentrate on its purpose for existing, i.e. to provide facilities for members and beneficiaries in need.

The fund does good work, deserves support and I would encourage employees to join.

Linda Arwood,
President,
Transport Benevolent Fund

BOOK REVIEWS

The engineer... and the man

'WHAT'S Left of Brunel', by Jonathan Falconer, sounds a disrespectful title to this renowned engineer. It is however, a comprehensive source of reference to the life and achievements of the man. The book's great practical value is to describe the still visible monuments to his achievements, both in engineering terms - including, typically, the East London Thames Tunnel - and in his personal life, including his residence and family grave in Kensal Green.

• Published by Dial House it costs £9.99.

Barry Le Jeune,
Head of Passenger Liaison

SPORTS news

Rapp strikes silver

LUL golfer's double triumph

By Richard Baker

RAY RAPP went home with an armful of silverware after the London Underground golf championships at Mill Hill, when he won both the LT and LUL scratch competitions.

And just for good measure, Ray, who was playing off seven, also finished runner-up in the Underground handi-

cap tournament, sponsored by Provident Mutual.

The Neasden-based Metropolitan Line train operator turned in a remarkably consistent display during the day's play, finishing the morning round in 76, and then just beating that score with 75 in the second round after lunch.

That was good enough to give him a two-stroke lead over runner-up Peter Rigby in both the LT and LUL scratch competitions, as his rival could only finish with a combined 153 after rounds of 77 and 76.

However, Ray himself had to be content with second spot in the handicap tournament, where his revised score of 139 wasn't quite enough to snatch the honours from Tony Jenkins.

Playing off nine, Tony went round in 68 during both the morning and afternoon rounds to finish on a winning 136.

Retired bus inspector Mickey Ingram had mixed feelings about the hole-in-one on the 161-yard eighth which helped him win the CRS scratch championship.

"It got me back into the tournament after a not-very-good round but it also cost me £90 to buy everyone in the bar a drink afterwards," he told LT News.

Lloyd's a 'Payne' for the Continentals

SPINNER Lloyd Payne cut a swathe through the opposition batting, during London Transport Central Road Services (CRS) triumphant, two-match cricket tour to France and Belgium.

Lloyd, a bus driver at Centrewest's Westbourne Park garage, took seven wickets in the two matches, including a hat-trick of clean bowling against Antwerp.

He finished on 24 for two in the first

match against French side Thoiry to restrict the hosts to 162 for nine off 40 overs.

In reply, Ryvan Greaves with 34 and Denzil Scott (25) were the leading scorers as the tourists comfortably passed their opponents' total with three wickets to spare.

On to Belgium and a 20-run victory over Antwerp, the highlight of which was Payne's heroics with the ball, taking five for just 14 runs.



Ray Rapp: taking the rough with the smooth

Jubil-ation, as JLE B clinch fives title



JLE B team captain Dave Sweetman receives the fives trophy from Peter Smith, LUL finance manager, Engineering Division

THE Jubilee Line Extension (JLE) retained their five-a-side soccer title for the second year, when their B team beat "Pads Lads" from Pumps and Drains 2-0 in the final at the District Line Sports Ground in Acton.

Last year it was the JLE's A team who went home with the silverware, but this time they failed to qualify for the knock-out stages of the tournament.

In fact they were drawn in the same section as JLE B, and the two sides drew 1-1 when they met in their opening game.

The B team went down 1-0 to group winners Seven Sisters in their next game but then got their qualifying hopes back on track with a 1-0 victory over Dynamo Design.

Tough

A 3-0 win over Eds in their last group match was good enough to earn JLE B a quarter-final spot as runners-up in what was definitely the competition's toughest qualifying group.

It was there they came up against Harpics Cleaners

from Project Management Services - the oldest team in the tournament, with scarcely a player under 40.

But years of experience weren't enough to stop JLE B, who ran out convincing 3-0 winners.

The semi-finals saw them triumph in a tight, 1-0 triumph over The Old School, to set up a showdown against Pads Lads, who reached the final after beating the powerful Seven Sisters side 1-0.

Injured

It was a quite a feat by the Pumps and Drains men, who got through despite having to play their injured midfielder player - Ray Wilkins - in goal from the quarter-finals onwards as they had no substitutes.

JLE weren't in the mood to be sympathetic, however, and were always in control to chalk up a comfortable victory.

Les lands a winner

LES BRANDON'S 7lb 2oz carp helped his side take the honours during the London Underground Staff Angling Society's team competition at the Royal Berkshire Fishery in Windsor.

The carp formed the bulk of the Highbury & Islington duty train manager's winning haul of 7lb 10oz, which also saw him take the prize for the day's top individual.

Les, along with Dave Marzell, John McGrath and Bob Bone, easily won the team event, with a combined catch of 11lb 9oz, well clear of the runners-up who finished with 7lb 15oz. The third-placed team weighed in with 3lb 4oz.

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Black cabs barricade VCS

HUNDREDS of black cab drivers brought traffic to a standstill when they barricaded Victoria Coach Station (VCS) to protest at the opening of a minicab office in its arrival lounge.

For more than two hours, black cab drivers from all over the capital demonstrated on roads around VCS, disrupting coach departures and bus services in the area, and causing a tailback of traffic which stretched for almost four miles.

It was the second demonstration by black cab drivers about the minicab office since it opened in May. However, Warwick Hillman, VCS's managing director, maintained that there was no question of removing the office from the station.

"For years, many of our passengers have asked for a minicab office to be opened at the station. This was mainly because minicabs tend to be cheaper and passengers are also more likely to be told in advance how much their journey will cost," he said.

"I don't believe black cabs have lost out finan-

cially. The minicabs are catering for a different market. Those who prefer taxis are still likely to use them."

But Bob Oddy, general secretary of the Licensed Taxi Drivers Association, which has around 6,000 members, said black cabs already provide an excellent service and the presence of the minicab office in the station is affecting their trade.

Angry

"Drivers are very angry and will continue to stage more demonstrations until something is done," he warned.

Another demonstration is expected within the next few weeks but VCS is prepared to weather the storm. "We have had a lot of public support," said Warwick. "We are quite happy to put a taxi information booth in the station but the black cabs don't want it as long as the minicab office is still there."

"As far as we are concerned, we have a legally binding lease with the minicab office for the next five years and that will continue."

Taxi-rank: Black cab drivers hold up traffic around Victoria Coach Station during their demonstration

LU reward for arrest of gunman

LONDON Underground has put up a £5,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of a gunman who shot a passenger at Stockwell station.

The attacker and an accomplice approached a man while he was going up a flight of stairs, and after a brief exchange of words, one of the two pulled out a gun and shot him in the arm.

Attackers

The weapon used is thought to be a semi-automatic pistol.

The two attackers are described as Afro-Caribbean and are in their mid-20s. The gunman is light-skinned and wears two large sovereign rings, while his accomplice is dark-skinned, with a distinctive jawline and a broad south London accent.

Anyone with any information should call the police on 0171-701 1212.

Trolley buses set for a comeback

LT plans could see them running in London for the first time since 1962

TROLLEY buses may return to the capital's streets, under a series of innovative ideas announced by LT in its report New Ideas for Public Transport in Outer London.

As well as trolley buses - which were last seen in London back in 1962 - enhanced bus, busway and light rail services are also being considered.

LT originally reviewed 60 schemes for improving transport links, but these were narrowed down to nine areas.

They include:

- the corridor from North Greenwich to

Woolwich and Thamesmead;

- the A23 between Croydon and Brixton via Norbury and Streatham;

- the Uxbridge Road to Shepherds Bush;

- orbital routes to Wood Green;

- services to Romford from Rainham, Harold Hill and Collier Row;

- extension of Croydon Tramlink to Purley Way, Sutton and Colliers Wood.

For the next few months, LT will be working closely with all the London boroughs concerned, carrying out case studies on the nine schemes. Their objectives will be to define specific route options and make recommendations on the most appropriate type of transport.

Schemes

This preliminary work will also allow comparisons to be made between the schemes to determine the most cost-effective and potentially successful projects.

David Bayliss, LT's Director of Planning, said: "There is a general change



Back on the road? The trolley bus, last seen in London in 1962

in policy towards limiting the use of cars and the congestion they cause, as well as a growing need for better public transport services, especially in the outer suburbs where the car has become the dominant form of transport."

Once the case studies have been completed, the more promising schemes will undergo a nine-month, detailed examination. This will include investigating their potential for private sector involvement under the Government's Private Finance Initiative.



'Teds' from Uxbridge bus garage rocking around the clock during the Hayes Carnival

Uxbridge bus staff get jiving

MEMBERS of the Uxbridge bus garage sports and social club gave a rock 'n' roll performance when they took part in the annual Hayes Carnival.

Dressed in 50s teddy boy and girl gear, the CentreWest team got on-

lookers jiving as they danced their way along the route on their specially decorated open-top bus.

It was the first major event for the social club, which was set up last month, and already boasts more than 100 members.

Fare dodger jailed for assault on RCI

FARE dodger Cliff York was sent to jail for 28 days by Clerkenwell Magistrates for common assault against revenue control inspector (RCI) David Skanlawsky at Farringdon station.

The RCI had stopped York, who was travelling without a ticket, at Farringdon, and charged him a £10 penalty fare. York

became aggressive and pushed a handful of notes in David's face before hitting him.

Aid

Four other RCIs came to David's aid and managed to restrain York until police officers arrived and arrested him.

David was taken to hospital after the assault and was off work for four weeks.

Stab hunt

POLICE are appealing for witnesses to a stabbing at Shepherds Bush Underground Station, after a 16-year-old youth was flown to hospital by air ambulance for emergency treatment.

The incident happened at about 1pm on Friday, July 21.

Anyone with information about the stabbing should call British Transport Police on 0800 252525.