



Your night is my day: London's Underground never sleeps

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I am going to look at how the Underground works now, at what goes on in the night hours to ensure that everything is ready for the next day, and to work out the system for the future. However, to start off, I shall go back, just over 50 years, to show you a little film from the British Transport film archive. It is appropriately called "Under Night Streets" and is a short documentary made in the late-1950s which describes what happened on the London Underground whilst the rest of us were tucked up in our beds. In the talk afterwards, I will compare the situation as it was then, 50 years ago, with the way things are now, what has happened in the last 50 years with the Underground and the challenges it faces now for the future.

I feel, in some ways, that I have been bound up with the Underground all my life. My earliest memories of the Underground are from the 1950s and so it seems appropriate to go back and compare life then with life now. Some of the things were not necessarily better then, but were different while some of the things suggest continuity and the way in which the Underground was, as it is today, absolutely central to the life of London.

[Recording plays]

That film is fantastically atmospheric and really takes you back to an appropriately black and white era. I love the way it has been shot because it is almost like a 1940s film noir and it seems quite appropriate that it looks like that. The astonishing thing is the complete disregard for health and safety, but, at the same time, insistence that all the chits have to be filled in before anything can be switched on!

Having said that, the system ran incredibly efficiently, and, in those days, there were hardly every overrunning engineering works, which of course, both on the Underground and on the main line system, we get all the time now. The main thing, which you may not have picked up in the soundtrack there, which I wanted to link to the present day is the really critical factor. The problem that the Underground has now, and had then, in some ways, is that they only have about four hours to do work between the last train and the first train overnight. One of the real problems is getting stuff down those deep tunnels as well to do any kind of work, which is why there is an ongoing difficulty over upgrading the system now.

Of course, the video showed that system just over 50 years ago but the deep tube was itself by then 50 years old, or more. Much of the cleaning work, repair work and maintenance that was done then had to be done in that short space of time, even then, and people had to do some pretty grotty jobs. They still do actually. There is group of fluffers coming out of the tunnels in those bins on the truck there. That is full of all the dust that they have scraped out of the tunnels - mainly brake dust - and there, top left, is a current gang of fluffers. They are not all women any longer, but it is a particularly grotty job that is being done in the Underground system. I think that employing women as fluffers started during the War, and it is one of the few areas where London Transport continued to employ women and one of the grottiest jobs as well. It is still done, it is still an extremely unpleasant job, and it has never been fully mechanised. The Underground does have an automatic tunnel cleaning unit that they put into service about 20 years ago, which is not used for everything, and I am not sure if it is used all the time now anymore or not. It was known as "the big yellow duster", but it was not really as effective as people actually scraping the stuff off.

Various other things were cleaned out of the tunnel, in those days. This is the night-going rat-catchers going off duty at three o'clock in the morning on the Circle line, carrying the night's haul. As far as I know, London Underground no longer has to employ anyone to kill rats any longer. Of course, there are lots of

mice in the Tube still, and, essentially, I do not think the Underground attempt to do anything about it. Central London is overrun with mice, both above and below ground, and stand on any platform in Central London and you will see them, after a while, coming out. However, it is probably less of a problem now than in fact it was in those days, and certainly, since the Underground has been improved and cleaned up substantially over the last 20 years, there has been far less rubbish around so there is less for the mice at least to eat.

As I say, the amount of work that still has to be done in that very short time is still there, and it is becoming more and more of a problem because, of course, the Underground is now 50 years older so there is more to do in the way of upgrading. The fact is that, between the 1950s and the first decade of the 21st Century, there was really very little investment in the Underground, and all the sort of high-level maintenance that really should have been done over all that time was just gradually reduced.

Of course, in the 1950s, the Underground was essentially the system that had been built up and inherited from the great days of London Transport and the Underground before the War. Since just before the First World War until the Second World War, two people were the great managers and supporters of, first, the Underground, and then London Transport. These were Lord Ashfield, who was the Chairman, and Frank Pick, who was his deputy. Ashfield was the wheeler-dealer who got things done and actually set up London Transport really as a deal with Herbert Morrison, the Head of the LCC later, but originally a Labour politician in the Government in the late-'20s. The creation of London Transport as an organisation was really down to Ashfield working with Herbert Morrison to get the London Passenger Transport Bill through Parliament, and the new and first major transport corporation, whilst the mainline railways were still private, London Transport, was created in 1933.

Pick was very much responsible for the very distinctive and high quality style and design of London Transport. This was probably better than any other transport organisation in the world, and created a very distinctive system which really was the envy of everywhere else in the world. By the 1930s, when London Transport was created, they were embarking on a major further programme of extension and expansion of the Underground, much of which did take place in the 1930s. In 1939, the Second World War came along and everything ground to a halt, in terms of the great days of the Underground. Frank Pick actually left. He retired from the Underground in 1940, and he died the following year. Lord Ashfield, after the War, effectively retired when the Labour Government which came in 1945 decided to nationalise both the mainline railways and London Transport. These were all merged into one organisation, the British Transport Commission. The old London Passenger Transport Board came to an end at the end of 1947, with the nationalisation of the railways in 1948.

This shows Lord Ashfield probably in his final year with London Transport, taking a group round. I love it where it says "Here come the boys" and you see a show coming on there. Ashfield is actually taking round Mayor La Guardia, who was the famous Mayor in New York, just after the War, who looks pretty grim there, in his Stetson. It seems a bit inappropriate for New York, even though he is an American. Ashfield is taking him round the Underground on a visit, and it must have been, I should think, for any Americans coming over to Britain just after the War, quite a shock really to see what an impoverished country we had become, having withstood the Blitz.

I am not going to draw comparisons with The New York Subway, but it was already a built-up system by then, and Mayor La Guardia would have been responsible for it. He must have got quite a shock in seeing the way in which the London Underground System had, in comparison to New York at that time, become pretty rundown as it was really struggling to build itself up again after the War.

The problem was that the post-War Attlee Government had to start spending money primarily on other areas, such as housing. A certain amount was spent on the mainline railways, which they were about to nationalise, but it was felt that London Transport had had its share in the 1930s, so effectively, from 1948 onwards London was starved of money for its infrastructure, particularly for its transport infrastructure. Therefore, even though, at that time, London Transport was carrying more people than it ever had before, on buses, trams, trolley-buses and the Underground, very little cash was put in to improving the system and maintaining it.

This is the London Underground map in 1948. You will probably know that the first version of the famous Harry Beck diagrammatic map had come out in 1933, so this was 15 years later. It was still designed by Harry Beck, but the interesting thing is that it shows the extensions, which, at that time, just after the War, they were still planning to make. However, in the end, these were abandoned because they did not have the money to finish it all off. They included various extensions to the Northern Line, which you can see

dotted on the right hand side. The Northern Line was going to be extended beyond Edgware, right out to Bushey Heath. There was going to be a link across from Mill Hill East to Edgware, and they were going to electrify the line from Finsbury Park up to the Ally Pally, through Muswell Hill. All of that was going to become part of the Northern Line, but in fact, although they had done quite a lot of the work and you can still go on the route of the Ally Pally line today and see where they had fixed all the stands for taking the power lines, it was never completely, so, sadly, Muswell Hill would never be on the Underground. However, I sometimes think that the Northern Line, difficult and complicated as it is, it might have become just a complete nightmare to run if they had added all those bits in. The only bits that were completed of the great plans from the 1930s were the extensions to the Central Line, which, like the Northern Line, was taking over overground parts of old steam lines of the London North-Eastern Railway.

As I say, this is all began to grind to a halt just after nationalisation. Ashfield, who had been the great administrator of the system and the great wheeler and dealer in terms of getting things done for London Transport, had retired in 1947 and, as so many people did in those days, died within a year of retiring so London Transport did not have any champions at that time. One or two things were finished off, like the Central Line and the style that had been developed by Pick and his architect, Charles Holden, in the 1930s, was still applied in the 1950s, but in an increasingly watered down form. That is the new White City Station, which was completed in about 1950. Remember that image because, right at the very end, I will come to one of the latest station re-buildings, and you will see the similarities and that very distinctive continuity of London Underground's design style, which is still with us today, and which, even then, was a very strong feature of London.

The next event in London history, which I suppose was a celebration of the beginning of the end of rationing and everything else, just after the War, was the Festival of Britain, held on the Southbank in 1951. As a Festival baby myself, I feel nostalgic for something I never knew, but that was the year I was born, so I always like to think it was a big event that year.

London Transport actually displayed there, and although they were not able to build any new lines at the time, they were able to begin to introduce new rolling stock, new underground cars. They had learned a lot from what had happened during the War, when as well as being rather rundown and being unable to build any new trains or anything else, amazingly enough, they had actually built bomber aircraft. They built Halifax Bombers in their Underground factories, working with organisations like Chrysler Motors and Duple Coachworks. They learnt various things about aircraft production, with a team of people, and many of them were women who had had no previous engineering experience but managed to turn out over 700 of these bombers during the War. They had learnt some of the benefits of applying new construction techniques, which you have to with aircraft. You have to be very precise in your construction and you also use new materials, principally things like lightweight metals like aluminium. Therefore, after the war they applied this new technology of using lightweight aluminium alloys and precision engineering to build trains and buses. Therefore, the new bus they started developing, which became the Route Master, in the 1950s, was based on aircraft technology that used aluminium panels for the body construction. It was very lightweight and was really a huge step forward. They did the same with their new Underground cars, and built the bodies almost entirely out of lightweight aluminium, so they saved a lot of weight, they saved power in the cars, and they displayed one of them at the Southbank Exhibition.

There, you can see one, which is only half-painted. At that time, I do not think that they had thought this was what they would do permanently, but later, in the 1950s, they decided that, as an additional way of saving money, actually, if they had a lightweight train made of aluminium, which did not rust, you did not actually need to paint it, so you could save a bit of money on that as well, and save a little bit of weight too.

Therefore, from the 1950s onwards, all of London Underground's new trains were supplied unpainted. In some ways, that was a shame because I think, after a couple of years, nearly all of them were no longer silver. They were a dull grey colour. That remained the case, right up until the 1980s, when London Underground was hit by the scourge of graffiti sprays. They discovered that trying to clean off graffiti from an unpainted surface was virtually impossible, and so, in the 1990s, London Underground went back to painting all its trains. Now, of course, they are all painted in a corporate livery. Previously, they had all been a dark red colour, which is what this black and white photograph of the train shows.

Anyway, London Transport were doing their best, clearly, at the Festival which was an attempt to look forward, as well as a celebration of what Britain had achieved in the past. Of course, it also gave us probably the best 1950s buildings of London in the Festival Hall, which you can see on the left of that model there.

The problem was that, as I say, London Transport had no money to do anything new, and they were pretty well starved of cash at this time, certainly for capital projects. Although there were plans drawn up right after the War to start building some new tube lines, and principally, what was originally called Route C – drawn up in 1949 to provide another tube line right across London, which eventually became the Victoria Line – we then got into a rhythm which we have been in ever since; there are plans for a new tube line, it grinds through the mill, has to be Government-funded, and takes at least 10, and possibly 20, years to open and complete. In 1949, they planned the Victoria Line. They did not actually get the authority to start building for another 15 years, and the Queen opened the Victoria Line in 1969. It had taken a long time to get it approved, but London Transport was justifiably proud of the Victoria Line, and it was a huge step forward. It is probably, I suppose, in retrospect, the last time that we led the world in metro construction, because it was the most advanced, automated Underground railway in the world. It is computer-controlled – a primitive computer system compared with what one can have today – and the drivers are guards on the Victoria Line. It would have been possible to have trains which were fully automated, but it was thought, at the time, that people would be a little scared to see their trains coming into the platforms with no one in the cab. In fact, all the person in the cab does is control the doors when the train stops and press two buttons on the cab fascia – the train accelerates and then brakes automatically. They can take over the train with a manual control, but essentially, it is all done in an automated way from a control room.

As well as having automation on the driving of the train, the Victoria Line also had automated tickets. That was when we first had an automated ticket system, with gates at the entrance to each of the stations. There is the Queen taking her first trip. This was the first time the Queen had been on the Underground since 1939. There are some wonderful photographs of her when she was taken on the Underground with her sister Margaret by Crawfie, her famous nanny, in 1939, which was to giving them an experience of what life in London was really like. 30 years later, she came back, and she was also able to go in the cab. There you see her talking to Eric Wilkins, who was the Chief Public Relations Officer for London Transport at the time. When she had arrived at the station upstairs, Eric Wilkins stepped forward with a sixpence to get her to try the automatic ticket machines. Inevitably, sod's law, a bit like today, when he gave her the sixpence, she put it in the machine and it did not work! Of course, the embarrassing thing was then they had to scrub around for another sixpence because the Queen does not carry any money with her! Anyway, she opened the line successfully, and they were particularly proud of it because the Victoria Line was pretty special. I remember when the Victoria Line was new it seemed like a wonderful bit of new technology almost. It was the sort of thing that Harold Wilson was always talking about – 'the white heat of technology' applied to the Underground, and it was quite a contrast to the rest of the Underground, which was beginning, at this stage, to decay really. What one saw, with the Victoria Line, I think very quickly, was that, actually, it had been built on the cheap. It had taken a long time to get it agreed; they were always trying to cut costs on it in lots of detailed ways such as with the finishes in the stations which were all done much more cheaply than the pre-War stations. So, within a few years actually, all these tiles on the stations were falling off the wall because they were bathroom-quality tiles rather than the really well-constructed ones that London Transport had always used before.

From the end of the 1960s through the 1970s, it appeared for a while as though London Underground was at last going to get some resources to do things. There was a significant change of administration in 1970, the year after the Queen opened the Victoria Line, when the control of London Underground, or London Transport as a whole, was transferred to the GLC. The Greater London Council had been set up in 1965, it covered a much wider area than the old London County Council, and it was now felt appropriate to go in for a bit of localism, as we would now call it, and transfer London Transport's responsibility to the new Authority. Inevitably, this set up a sort of tension, which has existed ever since, been Local Government in London, and the administration of the transport system, and Central Government, because, in the end, Central Government always had control over the money, particularly with regards capital investment.

For a while, the fact that the Underground was already in deficit finance was disguised by some new projects, none of which were as huge as the Victoria Line, but came in quick succession: the Victoria Line was extended in 1971 from Victoria down to Brixton; and we had then, in the 1970s, three successive royal openings, following on the Queen's opening of the Victoria Line. There is Princess Alexandra opening the extension to Brixton. There is Eric Wilkins again, over on the right. She got off the train at Pimlico and this has been something which has been characteristic ever since: nothing is ever quite finished on time. They opened the extension down to Brixton, but Pimlico Station which serves the Tate Gallery had not been authorised until quite late in the day, because they did not want to give the money so was opened a little bit later. The deep level bit of the station was open, so they were able to stop the train at Pimlico, and take

Princess Alexandra out and show her the station, but they could not go upstairs because it was not finished at the top level.

Shortly afterwards, in 1977, the Queen was back on the tube again – she was really gaining a lot of new experience in the 1970s! - to open the Underground extension to Heathrow. You can see her in the cab, on the right there. Again, that was a pretty impressive new development, and London was boasting at the time that it was the first city in the world to be linked to its main international airport by rail. We all agree that Heathrow Airport is in the wrong place anyway, but actually getting there by tube is a pretty clunky way. Even if you go by Heathrow Express, which is much quicker, it does not bring you into Central London. All the plans that have developed for the Underground since have never quite delivered what they should have.

By the end of the 1970s, the next partially new line had been authorised and built. That was phase one, at this stage, of what was originally called the Fleet Line, and was then renamed the Jubilee Line. It was opened by another royal, by Prince Charles, in 1979, and there you see him at Charing Cross Station. Charing Cross Station has only had a life of 20 years, so that is the original terminus of the Jubilee Line, which closed when, finally, they authorised phase two of the Jubilee Line, which was not opened for another 20 years after that. We actually do have, at Charing Cross, a ghost station, a completely modern Underground station, which is never used, except for filming, and turns up from time to time on the TV.

So, London went through, in the 1970s, the beginnings of a jerky move towards moving its Underground infrastructure, even though it was happening in a very bitty way. It was not an overall plan which was being rolled out, and in that sense, it is a complete contrast to somewhere like Moscow. London Underground – their first overseas consultancy - advised the Soviets in the 1930s about the construction of a metro system for Moscow - they built their system and have been building it ever since. The Moscow Underground is on continuous expansion and is now the busiest system in the world, but they open new stations and new lines practically every year.

In London, we have never quite managed that, and so, even though, during the 1980s, there was a lot of talk about how the Underground was going to be the saviour of London. People thought that we could not go on having increasing traffic in Central London, but there was still a sort of equivocal view about the tube. There were still, at that time, some people who were thinking that London needed a motorway box, which was partly constructed with the West Way, but fortunately, was abandoned. The alternative, of improving the Underground progressively, never quite happened, and during the 1980s, the Underground really began to look pretty grubby.

This was the time when the scourge of graffiti first struck. However, the whole infrastructure of the Underground began to deteriorate, and looked pretty grim. People felt unsafe on the Underground, and this was partly encouraged by the fact that it just looked so awful at that time. People still write to the Evening Standard and say, "Oh, the Underground is so dirty!" It is not dirty. It is pin-clean these days, compared to what it was 25 years ago, as I am sure many of you remember when the suicide pits, at that time, in the stations, used to be full of rubbish all the time. Nowadays the Underground looks much cleaner than the streets. At that time, it did not feel like a particularly great system and there was not enough money being put into it. One of the best impressions of what the Underground was like at the very end of the 1970s is in that wonderful American film, "An American Werewolf in London". There is a whole sequence in that film where a man is chased through Tottenham Court Road Station, just before it was rebuilt at the end of the 1970s, and you can just see how grubby the place looks!

At another level, the 1980s was also the time when there was a huge fight which I am sure many of you remember between the GLC and the Government over who ran London and, in particular, the transport system, which is the key to governing London. In 1981, Ken Livingstone got in as head of the GLC, and there was, very rapidly, in 1983, a huge fight over the subsidy of the Underground. He wanted to reduce the fares, which were gradually going increasing and you may remember, there was a big court case about "Fair's Fare", because it was challenged and went to the Law Lords to decide. The London Borough of Bromley is in the South-East of London and does not have an Underground line in it. Therefore it is not on the Underground map and it is one of these places that nobody really knows is part of London. Bromley challenged the fact that they were being expected to levy an extra rate in order to fund, for London, this reduction of the fares, and they took the GLC to court. They won the case, and they had to put the fares up again.

The only benefit that came out of all this was the simplification of what had become a ridiculously complicated fare system in London and the introduction of things like Travelcards. It is odd to remember now that there were so many different fare structures in London at the time, but that was the benefit that came out of it.

At the same time, this just heightened the conflict between Central Government and Local Government over running London Transport. There was a battle, on the airwaves and everywhere else, between County Hall on the Southbank and the Houses of Parliament at Westminster on the North Bank, and, at the time, the winners were the Government. If you remember, Margaret Thatcher abolished the GLC – she was not going to have any more of this truculence from Livingstone. Of course, 'events, dear boy' and all, Margaret Thatcher suffered a coup and she resigned in 1990. That very difficult period in London's history seemed to come to an end, but there still was not a solution. The GLC had been abolished and London Transport was being run directly from Central London, but still was not receiving the money it needed to improve the system. One of the things that Margaret Thatcher had always insisted on, before she would agree to the construction of yet another Underground line, the extension of the Jubilee Line, phase two, which should have happened straight after phase one, but did not, is that she felt there should be a private contribution to it.

At the time, the Docklands were being refurbished through Canary Wharf largely through private development, although there was also the London Docklands Development Corporation. A lot of this was priced by Michael Heseltine at the time, and key to this, to the development of Canary Wharf, and the revitalisation of Docklands, was a decent transport system. By the 1990s, they were actually able to get agreement to take the Jubilee Line there, and, you can see, this is a poster from 1996, on the left there, which is promising that actually the Jubilee Line extension will be open in Spring 1998. Actually, it was opened at the end of 1999. As ever, it took longer than people expected. However, the problem was not the lack of engineering skills. It would have been quite possible to have built the Jubilee Line more quickly had the money been authorised earlier. What actually happened was that the money from the private sector never did materialise. The original owners of Canary Wharf went bankrupt so the money that they were going to put in actually never did materialise.

The Line was gradually built, and, to begin with, it was hoped by the Government, that Docklands could get away with having what, at the time, everyone saw as a little Mickey Mouse railway system, the Docklands Light Railway, which opened in 1987. Now, at the time, the DLR was a bit of a joke. It was always breaking down. Although it was fully automated, it was not a very efficient system, and it did not seem to work very well. Actually, over the years, the DLR has fought back, and it is now the most efficient and effective and expanding railway in the whole country. It has been in and out of a relationship with Transport for London ever since – sometimes it has been run by them and sometimes it has not – but it has actually proved very successful. The critical thing is that it could not possibly have been enough to serve Docklands on its own.

It was essential to extend the Jubilee Line there as well, and so, finally, in the 1990s, it was built. The great thing about the Jubilee Line is that, for the first time, because of the spaces it was going into, and the space that was available, they were able to build some of the stations, and particularly those around Canary Wharf, as really quite enormous complexes. One of the problems that London Underground has always had is that the system is physically too small. The tunnels are very tight and small, they are impossible to expand, and the stations are really small and crowded, so there is not a lot of room to increase capacity. At Canary Wharf, exceptionally, there was. The picture on the left there is all part of the old West India Docks complex. There is the main tower of Canary Wharf, in the middle, and just to the left there is one of the huge former dock areas that could be opened out to form the basis of the box of Canary Wharf Station, which is the only really nice big station on the whole system - a brilliant design by Norman Foster.

In fact, all of the stations on the Jubilee Line extension are really a return to that vision of creating something for London's built environment which is worthwhile, well-designed, and built in a quality way. It is a return to what London Transport were doing in Frank Pick's time, in the 1930s, and even though people said, "Well, it is late," it was only late, as I say, because the money had not been there. The other unfortunate thing was that the money was not there to put in a new signalling system either. That was cut back on, and of course, we have been suffering from that ever since, because, once you try and put a new signalling system into a working railway, then you are back to that problem which we all experience all the time now – that the Underground is practically shut down every weekend in order for these improvements to be done.

I am not blaming the politicians for this, but, inevitably, you start to look at why we have never actually got a proper transport policy together, either nationally or indeed for London. They have each tried to do their bit, and I suppose it is encouraging that, at last, the present Government seems to recognise that improving the transport, and particularly the rail infrastructure, for the whole country is an important thing to do.

I will not go into all the business about the PPP because it is too long and tedious to go into it. You will recall that, when Transport for London was set up, and the new Mayorality was set up in 2000, Ken Livingstone became the first elected Mayor of London. He always said at the time that transport was the most important issue, and I think a lot of people voted for him on that basis. He instantly got plunged into a vicious debate and argument with Central Government, which was also Labour at that time of course, about how the Underground's improvements were going to be financed.

It is not just the Conservatives who were difficult about this; Labour were just as bad! Of course, the man who really should be fingered about this is the person who later became Prime Minister because the whole PPP debacle, of trying to part-privatise the Underground, through this absurd system, which has now of course been abandoned completely, actually came from and was insisted upon by the Treasury and Gordon Brown was in charge of the Treasury at that time.

We now have the irony that a system set up by a Labour Government, opposed by a Labour Mayor of London who wanted a completely different system, was forced onto Transport for London. In due course, it has all unravelled and collapsed, and we now have a Conservative Mayor, Boris, who is in charge of Transport for London. He has actually taken the whole thing back into public control and ownership. We have a Conservative Mayor running the only bit of the transport system which is, effectively, fully nationalised again, because it has never happened on the mainline railways.

Although I do not think that we will have a new tube line under London, the thing that has been confirmed, and that work has started on now, is Crossrail. You could say Crossrail is something that we should have had years ago. Crossrail will give London, when it is eventually completed – they have already put the date back to 2018, and I will be surprised if it even makes that - what Paris has had for the last 30 years, which is a mainline-sized railway going right under the city, below the tubes and having direct connection to it.

I am not sure, in the end, whether it will actually solve the problem of the increasing number of people using the Underground. If you go back to 1951, where we started, the number of people using the Underground, and of course it was a smaller system then, was 640 million per year. Now, as you probably know, just a couple of years ago, the Underground carried over a billion people in a year, for the first time. The increase has been huge – it has nearly doubled, it will continue to rise, and actually, we have never planned for that continuing growth. Trying to increase capacity on an already crowded and constricted system is virtually impossible.

On the other hand, there are no plans for any new Underground lines. There was talk, 10 years ago, in Ken Livingstone's first Transport Plan, for a Chelsea-Hackney Line. No one talks about that anymore. Boris occasionally talks about extending a branch off the Northern Line to a new development in Battersea, where the new American Embassy is going to be, but, frankly, I do not see how they will ever have the money to do it. It has been difficult enough to persuade both the last Government and now this Government to provide the money for the infrastructure improvements that are necessary to the running of the main part of the Underground. They have also guaranteed the money, at last, for Crossrail, which, again, has been planned for about the last 20 years, and will take another 10 years probably to complete.

This picture shows the ideal. That is the wonderful new Crossrail Station that there is going to be opening in about 2020, I should think, at Canary Wharf. That is the planners' vision of it, and it even has a little forest on top there! It would be wonderful if it did, because, for all its faults and difficulties, and everybody slags off the Underground all the time, I am a great supporter of it, and I cannot imagine London without it, but will take a while.

That is my final slide. You will remember that shot of White City back in 1951. There is Brixton, as it has recently been refurbished. The thing about stations like this is that there is still quality architecture applied to them. The other brilliant thing about it is that the Underground is still the symbol of London. That bar and circle is the most well-known symbol in the world, outside the M of McDonalds, but this has, I think, made a much greater contribution actually to humanity generally! It has become the symbol of London. London does not really have a symbol, other than that, but in all sorts of ways, people use that Underground bar and circle to mean London and everyone recognises it, internationally. Of course London is now said to be the most internationally visited city in the world and that is what we use as our symbol. They do not have

anything like that in New York, Paris or Moscow for that matter, so, however much people say, "Oh well, we are nothing compared to the Metro," I think we are. If you go on the Metro these days, you never even see any members of staff, but at least, in London, you have people there to help you, and for all the problems that we have, and for all the fact that we have to put up with closed systems at the weekend, and probably will do for I do not know how many years – it will certainly go on beyond the Olympics – I think it is a wonderful system. Do not take that as my criticism of the Underground. It is something that I have a lot of time for and I hope it will continue to improve, if a little slowly, in the future. Thank you very much.

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