

[For your diary] KATA meetings are on Wednesdays; 2nd Dec 2009, 3rd March 2010, 2nd June 2010, 1st Sept 2010, 1st Dec 2010.
At 15:00 (3pm) in former 'Public Bar' Driuds Head, Market Place (not Meerkat!)

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TWIN TOWERS & TWO ANSWERS FROM BOJO EQUALS DOUBLE DUTCH !

The saga of the widespread plea to keep open New Malden Station's south entrance (by Twin Towers) continues as there are now two contradictory replies from Mayor BoJo:-

1. Mayor's answer to KATA and Assembly Member Darren Johnson (Green) :-
'The installation of gates at New Malden station has been planned and funded for by (?) South West Trains under the terms of the franchise that they have with the Department for Transport. As this is not a TfL project, I'm afraid that any review of the gateline installation is a matter for South West Trains'.
2. Mayor's answer to Assembly Members Val Shawcross (Lab) & Tony Arbour (Tory):-
'I am fully supportive of the plight of commuters regarding the closure of the south entrance to New Malden Station. I would be happy to lend my support to the campaign by writing to the Managing Director of South West Trains'.

Presumably, BoJo's reconsideration is due to fellow Tory joining the throng as did local Tory councillors, but the situation is far from clear, because despite Kingston's Lib-Dem MP's claim that the Twin Towers entrance is to remain open some of the time it is rather more complicated, especially for Freedom Pass holders. SWT state that while the south gate will be open in the peaks (06:30-09:40 & 16:30-20:00), with tickets checked by an inspector, a buzzer will be on the outside for use between the peaks (09:40-16:30) for "those with mobility problems only".

They will then judge by CCTV if the person has problems and release the new gate.

Even if admitted at this gate they then have to walk etc to the north-side to have their pass checked, and if going to Kingston etc will have to make their way back through the tunnel to the south-side down platform. Plus of course, those 'disabled' alighting at the Down platform from Waterloo etc will have to go through the tunnel to have their tickets checked at the north-side and back again to exit through the new gate, except that there is no buzzer on the inside.

To this KATA is seeking clarification from SWT.

Meanwhile, our assumption that SWT did want to have to staff the south-entrance was true enough except that they are now obliged to do so for almost 7hours a day (Mon-Fri) . So the question we have now put to SWT is why can't there be gates on the south-side as well since there is space?

All this fiasco was down to SWT not submitting a formal application to brick-up the Twin-Towers side, despite TfL claiming they did! Instead when discovered it lead to petitions by both Lib-Dem MPs and local Tories. However, BoJo's response to KATA begs the question; "What is Mayor BoJo elected to do then? Because on that basis when South West Trains one day plough through the buffers at Waterloo can we expect to hear BoJo say "Er, it's not my problem" ?

Equally, KATA never received answers from our Assembly Member Tony Arbour or indeed from MPs Ed Davey and Susan Kramer!

In fact the only people we got any sense out of were AM's Darren Johnson and Val Shawcross who submitted official questions to the mayor. (*Answers above*)

Apart from seeking clarification on these contradictory answers from BoJo we are now asking; 'As ex Mayor Livingstone had agreed to pay for the Oyster Ticket gates, ie public money, for National Rail operators in London did that include installation costs, and has there been any change to these arrangements since BoJo was elected ?

Meanwhile, the majority of users will be funnelled through the narrow and low tunnel, which in the event of a fire will be catastrophic, especially with no escape button on the inside of the south-side. Equally, all three bus stops including for the 213 are on the south-side and especially the K1 stand, adjacent to the south entrance, which will be pretty useless for a good many users.

Lastly, the new arrangements commence in mid-October and all gates will open between 20:00 & 06:30 seven days a week.

KATAList – Bus route changes

(NB: Routes are in numerical order rather than date order, but let me know what is preferable)
 (57 (blue) = 24hr) [* not a TfL service] numerals = past date / 2009 / 2010

Sat 30th January 2010

- 10** ([St. Pancras] – King's Cross – Hammersmith - *Richmond*) Withdrawn between Hammersmith & Richmond but effectively replaced by 24hr 33 albeit via Hammersmith Bridge rather than Putney Bridge. Also extended at night to St Pancras. Tendered to Transdev instead of First London.

* *Interestingly it was the other way around 5 years ago except that since First start their duties on a Saturday they failed to run a service on that first Friday night such was the mix up! You do have to wonder.*

Sat 05/09/09

- 33** (Hammersmith - Fulwell) Improved timetable for reliability, ie depart Fulwell 2mins earlier. Plus another 5yr contract to NSL Services (formerly known as NCP)

- 33** **Sat 30th January 2010** To become 24hr.

* *KATA had sought a rerouteing at Teddington Hospital to Hampton Station.*

2010

- 65** (Ealing – Kingston > Chessington) Because the timings through the night are almost the same as the 281 from Kingston **to** Surbiton, which produces gaps of half-hour rather than x15min, we are seeking spaced timings. This has been agreed but have to wait until new schedule is needed for other reasons. Meanwhile, the daytime service is very unreliable!

2010

- 85** (Kingston - Putney) Despite much confusion between web timetables and bus stop timetables etc this currently ceases at Guildhall - albeit commences in Kingston Hall Rd/College 'UK'. But KATA has pointed out that as all buses have to reach KHR to stand since the High St stand was converted to a Coach stop (primarily for Rose Theatre) then the last stop could/should be KHR. This has been agreed in principle and will be implemented eventually as it will for 371 (*below*).

Sat 1st May 2010

- 110** (Twickenham – Hounslow > West Middx Hospital) This is a rare inclusion because as the routeing is already a horse-shoe shape will become even more so by an extension beyond Hounslow to West Middx Hospital via H37 & our 481, (not via 117 as reported elsewhere). Also introducing earlier and later journeys towards Twickenham to connect with trains there.

Same single-deckers (up 4 to 5) and retained by Transdev (AV).

* *WMH is reported to be one of the worst managed hospitals in the UK!*

Sat 1st May 2010

- 111** (Kingston – Heathrow) Increasing Mon-Fri daytimes to every 8-9 mins instead of x10min. And additional journeys from Hounslow to Heathrow and to Kingston on Mon-Fri mornings. Plus, at a request from KATA timings in the evenings to be separated from the 216 which currently run together from Kingston **to** Hampton Station. Retained by Transdev (AV) with 23 new double-decks (now 20).

Sat 31st Oct 2009

- 152** (New Malden – East Mitcham) New timetable to improve reliability.

Sat 29/08/09

- 200** (Raynes Park – Mitcham) New Timetable for Mon-Fri.

Sun 27/09/09

- 267** (Hammersmith-Fulwell>Hampton Court) Last day of Sunday extension to Hampton Court Station. Resumes on **Sun 2nd May 2010**. (*also see Bus Stops p4*)

- 371** **Spring 2010** (delayed from 2008)

(Kingston – Richmond) This is the latest projected date for the extension away from Dee Rd to North Sheen Sainsburys (opp Homebase). Also when this occurs it will be extended in service from Guildhall to Kingston Hall Road - as will the 85 er, sooner or later.

Sat 07/09/09

- 451*/461*** (Kingston - Staines) Some early morning journeys run 10mins earlier.

Sat 3rd Oct 2009

- 465** (Kingston – Dorking) Route taken over by Metrobus of Crawley (owned by Go-Ahead) after they bought the Arriva operations at Warnham Station, south of Horsham, provisionally on 1st Sept for £5million. This consists of 19 buses and a few SCC routes. The Arriva operation had been a very dodgy service not least terminating many 465s in Surbiton and now hope for better things but with Crawley being almost as far away from the route we will have to watch things. New timetable only to indicate change of operator with no timing changes.

Oct 2009

- 481** (Kingston – West Middx Hospital) The long-awaited 481 stops in **Hampton Wick** etc are now imminent. There will be five; by Church Grove/Bushy Park gate to WMH and at Church Grove/opp Park Road and one in between near the Church, both towards Kingston. Plus, a pair just this side of the main Teddington traffic gate.

Thur 03/09/09

- 613/627** (Worcester Park Station - Glenthorn High School/Wallington High School) Both now depart from main road stop with 668* etc instead of station forecourt.

Wed 02/09/09

- 661*** (Hampton Court - Hinchley Wood Sch) SCC contract to Lon Gen instead of T&GM.

Sat 7th Nov 2009 to Sun 17th Jan 2010 inc

- K50 P&R** (Chessington WofA - Kingston stop I) Resurrected for over 2 months with 10 buses. Transdev also awarded another 5 year contract by TfL/RBK.
 *The Bromley B99 Park & Ride is not running this year so that we have the only P&R in London.

Tue 15/09/09

- KU1*/2*/3*** (Kingston University Shuttles) Travel Surrey have lost these to the dreaded Tellings&Golden&Miller whom we thought had seen the back of in 2005, but have been owned by Arriva since 2008. The publicity now spells out that only staff and student passes accepted wherein visitors and parents etc were permitted to use it to University sites!
 Operation/terms are:- 15/28 Sep-18Dec '09, 4Jan-16Mar '10, 12Apr-9Jul '10.

Sat 10th April 2010

- S3** (Malden Manor – Sutton Hospital) Coming after the Malden Manor extension is a rerouting via Kimpton Industrial Park Sutton. It would traverse Tesco Road, Wealdstone Rd, Kimpton Rd instead of small section of Oldfields Rd and Gander Green Lane. The numerous requests for a Sunday and later evenings service have been rejected due to costs! Retained by Quality Line with same single-decks.

For all London's proper bus timetables go to the marvellous and independent:-
<http://www.londonbusroutes.net/routes.htm> or <http://www.busmap.org/>

Request for new route...K6 ? (Kingston circular)

Following on from Cllr. Griffin's failed request for either the K2 or K3 to be rerouted via Cambridge Rd instead of Coombe Rd to/from Hospital KATA has suggested the infrequent K4 which TfL are looking at.

However, we have also suggested to TfL a new circular route linking important Kingston locations thus:- (**roads currently unserved*)

START: Sury Basin 965 stand, Richmond Rd (V), Cromwell Road (A3), [as per K1 routing>] Eden St (D1 & H), High Street (J), Kingston Hall Road (UL), Fairfield South then Hawkes Rd*, Bonner Hill Rd*, Cemetery* (with new bus gate), Hampden Road*, Gloucester Road*, Hospital/Galsworthy Road, Kingston Hill, Queens Road*, Richmond Park/Kingston Gate* (with imminent parking charges), Kings Road*, (middle section served by K5), Richmond Rd and Sury Basin/ Sainburys.

The journey time we envisage is around 21 mins and so could provide a half-hourly service. If time needs to be saved then routing can be amended via Brook Street instead of High Street etc, thus reducing running time to 19mins.

The routing is anti-clockwise but alternate journeys could be clockwise as a K9(?), and would be a bit shorter. Operating times envisaged as 06:00 – 21:00 Mon-Sat and every 2hours on Sundays. Plus, through fares as a circular service.

BUS STOPS

65 stops in Kingston are a puzzling product of the experiment to not show the 'N' prefix for the night extension to Chessington. There have already been subsequent changes to 'A3', 'D1' & 'F' (from Ealing) affecting the extra info panel under the route numbers. However, 'D1', the penultimate stop in Eden Street has :-

"ROUTE 65 BUSES TERMINATING AT BROOK STREET ALIGHT HERE" which wrongly implies that you can't board here when in fact you can, but is to be modified. The adjacent 'D2' has the blue E-tile "65 Nights Only" while at Cromwell Rd 'A3' and Brook St 'F' it has both "65 Alighting Point" on white as well as "65 Nights Only" on blue.

Stop 'UK' in **Kingston Hall Road/College** (first stop for 85 & 371 etc) has the puzzling "Towards TOWN CENTRE, KINGSTON and HAM" which we are suggesting amending 'Kingston' to read 'Kingston Hill'.

TfL have bizarrely announced that timetables are to be removed from bus routes' **penultimate** stop despite them still existing on the TfL website and thus won't save any money. It will also cost £thousands to have thousands of timetables removed and KATA has opposed this barmy move

Due to the refurbishment of **Hampton Court Station** forecourt all through routes permanently removed with the 411 & 641 going straight to Creek Road/Chu Chin Chow. While the 513 could be now be serving the ex 715 lay-by stop just beyond? The terminating R68 will be the only route to go there which could be soon, but the Summer Sunday 267 might, from next May, simply turn by way off Creek Road and Bridge Road or via Riverbank by the 451/461 stop?

The reason is due to removing the dangerous offside stand and 'making all stops wheelchair friendly', except that users will now have to make an inconvenient crossing over a busy main road mfor the 411! (albeit they have to do that in the other direction already.)

One stops that is not wheelchair-friendly is on Hampton Court Road/opp River, which has three steps down to the kerb level! This is for 111,216,267\$,R68.

Hampton Wick stops for 481 – see *KATAList*.

PUBLICITY

ATOC's **London Connections Map** strangely did not appear in May which seems to have something to do with arguments about including Watford Junction in Zone 9, as proposed two years ago when TfL took over the four Silverlink lines. This will now happen with the 13th December edition with TfL's London Overground but wait and see if it applies to both London Midland and Southern.

Meanwhile, some poster versions appeared at stations in September which included changes like the addition, from 27th, of the new Imperial Wharf Station (Chelsea Harbour) between Clapham Junction and West Brompton – managed by Overground but also served by Southern. This map, also on the web, gives for the first time the address etc of Heathrow Connect, which unsurprisingly is the same as Heathrow Express, except that only the former is FREEPOST !

And Nat Ex East Anglia have moved just down the road to 'Norwich Station, Station Approach, NR1 1EF' when it might be thought to be Station End?

While BoJo was in his birthplace New York TfL reissued the **Tube Map** without the zones and the Thames! Unsure if this applies to both the poster and pocket versions but BoJo has ordered that the river is put back. But as regards the confusing omission of the Zones it is obvious that users can be more easily be caught out, and er, receive a penalty fare.

However, the TfL website shows the original complete version dated March!

There is a new **Toilet Tube Map**, available on the TfL website only, that details all Male, Female, accessible toilets and if they have baby-changing facilities – dated July.

SCC reissued their **#3 Woking** and **#10 Guildford** timetable books dated September.

In October we expect to see **#10 Redhill** but not a new **#1 Staines** and **#2 Esher** as expected as there have not been any significant changes.

FARES & PASSES

TfL are due to announce their **2010 fares** any day now but with the Capitalist Crash removing many thousands of Yuppies from the Tube there is a hole in the fares revenue. In August there was a 6.4% fall in Tube use amounting to 200,000 less passengers a day. The Tube constitutes 58% of TfL's revenue but claim that they need to increase all TfL fares by a whacking 7.4%, despite inflation at zero.

Significantly, there maybe a U turn by Mayor BoJo on abolishing the Western Congestion Charge Zone to maintain revenue. Not to mention undoing the all the extra bus routes and services that were introduced to cope with extra passengers that duly left their cars at home.

Rail Fares from 3rd January 2010 are expected to see 'regulated' peak fares come down as inflation is zero but 'unregulated' Off-peak, Advance and 1st Class will go up. Something tells me that overall the rail companies will be increasing their revenue.

Belatedly, we report that all Ticket Stops (Pass Agents) now issue **Oyster Card** top-ups instead of some only being able to issue paper passes, which are now only available for Daily versions the Bus Pass and the Travelcard.

Since 6th September TfL have started to introduce **Oyster Route Validators***. These are pink card readers and are located at nine joint Underground/Overground stations and by touching-in it establishes that you have not travelled through Zone 1.

Hitherto users of single Oyster fares are assumed to have travelled through zone 1 on most central London journeys and therefore have the maximum deducted.

Additionally, some £32million is deducted from users who fail to tap-out at the end of a journey, and thus assumed to have travelled further than they have and are charged an extra £4. However, some £14million of this is by those who forget while the other £18million is a failed attempt at fraudulent travel, say TfL.

**Current stations with 'pinkos' are: Blackhorse Road, Gospel Oak, Gunnersbury, Highbury & Islington, Kensington Olympia, Rayners Lane, Stratford, West Brompton, and Willesden Junction.*

The English Concessionary Fares Scheme, ie Freedom Pass etc, has been looked into by consultancy firm OXERA on behalf of the Local Government Assn. In August it stated that the 'bus pass' system does not offer value for money and local authorities would be better off targeting those in need .

It also talks about the predicted problems of sea-side towns etc that get the heaviest usage but without the proper Government funding. Well, we could have told them that in the beginning.

It does acknowledge however that 'to end the national schemes would prove problematic'. Or as LOTS-TLB correctly puts it 'more like political suicide'.

And KATA adds that Gordon Brown won't be ending the scheme he introduced in April 2008, but a Cameron government might well!

Meanwhile, **RBK** claim that it could be short of £1million to pay for the Freedom Pass holders in the borough because the government is considering cutting £50million to the 33 London boroughs.

However, TfL say there is enough dosh in the system to cover the 1million Freedom Pass holders in London.

In the UK there are 11million concessionary pass holders.

SCC announced on 22 September that it was to 'survey users' on whether to cut underused routes. It currently spends £11million per year on subsidising bus services.

The Hertfordshire etc **EXPLORER** all day bus ticket is now £10 for 4 people or £3.50/£7 for one person, see: www.intalink.org.uk

OMNIBUS

All's not well at Fulwell

Drivers at Transdev's Fulwell Garage had a mass meeting on 9th Sept over harassment and victimisation of drivers belonging to the RMT. As a campaign for better pay and conditions gets underway RMT's General Secretary Bob Crow stated; *"This protest will send out a clear message the RMT is growing fast among London bus workers, who've had a lousy deal in recent years. It will send a signal we will not tolerate the victimisation of our reps and members"*. Transdev reportedly said that *"We encourage our staff to belong to a trade union but we do not recognise the RMT"*.

Er, well they are legally obliged to recognise union representation but clearly don't want to deal with one that does anything for its members.

The traditional T&GWU lost its credibility when privatisation was unleashed by the Thatcher regime and the union sat back and allowed bus drivers on the same roads to be paid differing lower and lower rates of pay, with ever increasing deterioration in services not least due to the bus companies employing anyone who could drive regardless of ability.

London buses' ramps remain lethal!

The saga of the very dangerous bus ramp floors (ie exit door) has taken a strange turn as letters from TfL are alarmingly contradictory. Operations Director Mike Weston states that *"The metal flap is not a dangerous design fault"*, but bizarrely adds that: *"Newer ramps now have a flap-variation"*! ie an improvement.

While Nick Farrow, TfL's Appeals Officer, refers to *"potentially hazardous ramps"* and *'solutions were being made known to the operators'*. All this rather confirms that they are very dodgy, except that two-years on there has been no sign of repairs etc.

Mr. Weston bizarrely adds that *"We have conducted a separate examination at Cromwell Rd Bus Stn with TravelWatch"* er, at which yours truly was also there, and moreover TfL's chief engineer admitted *"This is a major problem which needs to be rectified"*?

The problems being that; **1.** Passengers 'ride' the top of the flap when they alight and **2.** There are many cases where the whole ramp mount has sunk by up to 3" below the floor level which exacerbates the problem and means that many ramps are jammed and cannot be used by wheelchair users.

Despite all this Mr Weston states: *"We feel steps taken to date are appropriate etc"*, er, when there have been no steps taken!

Accordingly, KATA has now written to TfL asking, under the Freedom Of Information Act, how many incidents of this type have been reported to TfL and to the operators. Noting that yours truly fell off one these Transdev ramps only last week and it must be common.

Some 200 ramps were indicated by TfL as in need of repairs, but assume they and the operators are playing for time and are just waiting for new buses as per the recent new vehicles on routes 65 & 71. Meanwhile, we await a fatality or similar.

Again we have referred this case back to London TravelWatch to look at the claims made by TfL.

TfL Bus Cuts

LOTS-TLB reports that KPMG consultancy have compiled a lengthy report for the Mayor on how TfL could make cuts. It suggests that TfL's specifications for buses could be reduced by £13,000 for a single deck or £19,000 for a double-decker. This comes as some surprise as most new buses, ie on 65,71,285 have such badly laid-out seating etc that they don't seem to have too many specifications.

It also bizarrely criticises the need for upper-deck cooling at under £5,000 and therefore implies says we should all fry as global warming increases. It also suggests that TfL could lease buses direct to the operators, thus transferring buses to the next operator upon winning the contracts. Plus, TfL should provide garage sites for new operators. Well, all this would be another case of a public body talking all the risks with the privateer bus operator making all the profit with no risk!

KATA says that what would make things cheaper is for all London's buses to be brought back under public ownership as per the old LT, rather than the privateers taking around 8% of the money out of the network as 'profit' and shoving it into their bank accounts at no commercial risk.

IN BRIEF

Surbiton - As you read this RBK launch an 'exhibition' (at Surbiton Library until 31 Oct) of the Surbiton Town proposals*, ie to pedestrianise the Station forecourt and some improvements to street furniture. But this is only cosmetic instead of the radical need to make Victoria Road "BUSES ONLY", ie between the Station and St. Andrew's Road, especially as TfL are paying for it all.

Without these measures Surbiton will remain the very poor cousin of Kingston Town Centre forever more. As one Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov famously said "You can't make omelettes without cracking eggs".

Make your views known via : kingston.gov.uk/surbiton_town_consultation

BoJo's sell-off of TfL's **East Thames Buses** to London General (Go-Ahead) has been held up for reasons unknown. KATA says that it should not have been undertaken since it was set-up to fill the void left by bus operators going bust over night.

The sale is around £5m for 113 buses on nine routes. (Source LOTS-TLB)

Outside London the **OFT** have announced that there is very little competition in the bus industry with the big four; FirstGroup, Stagecoach, Arriva and Go-Ahead running 65% of routes. These predatory companies eliminate the smaller ones so that a quarter of all tendered bids come from only a single company, with of course higher fares. The OFT has now referred the industry to the Competition Commission. (Source LOTS-TLB)

Travel London and Travel Surrey, having been bought out by the Dutch state owned Ned-Railways in June for £32m from National Express are about to be renamed Abellio (!) which is the name of Ned-Rail's bus operations in Germany. (Source LOTS-TLB)

*Routes include: 152, 481, R68, R70 and 218, 451, 461, 471, 514, 515, 515A.

National Express could be bought out as their debt is around £1,000 million.

Potential buyers include Arriva, Stagecoach or the Spanish Cosmen family.

Greyhound Buses of the USA, as now owned by FirstGroup, have additionally been running two routes since 14 September from, Victoria's Green Line Coach Station to Portsmouth and Southampton, albeit using Scania's. Fares start at £1. (Source LOTS-TLB)

Transdev's new Scania's on route 65 etc are a metre longer (10.8m) than the previous vehicles at so that three will no longer fit on the Brook Street stand. (Source LOTS-TLB)

London Overground's new Electrostar trains, costing £260m, are only slowly appearing on the Richmond line due to problems with the computer controls. These are three-car walk through (like trams) but with Tube style seating on each side. By late 2010 a fourth car will be added to each of the 54 trains.

The LO has introduced 20 uniformed Travel Safe Officers, working closely with the BTP, to issue Penalty Notices for graffiti, damage and littering.

LO has also taken over responsibility for 10 Southern stations from New Cross Gate to West Croydon as well as Crystal Palace, and are all due for refurbishment.

* *The new Imperial Wharf station is now open - see Publicity.*

SWT received a £1m grant from the DfT in 2008 to make New Malden Station step-free but it won't be done until 2012 at the earliest!

Meanwhile, SWT are installing their own Smartcard readers at stations outside Greater London.

London Tramlink car 2534 that was clobbered by a bus a year ago in George Street, Croydon is now due back from Crewe Railway Works, but not before the good end of the car was damaged after being shunted into a class 66 locomotive. We shouldn't laugh really. (Source LOTS-TLB)

* *Contrary to SWT audio announcements this has not been 'Croydon' Tramlink for over a year now since taken over by TfL.*

And Finally, the *Financial Times* reports (via LOTS-TLB) that at the Volvo bus factory in Bangalore in India a large toy tiger has been affixed to the gate so as to deter marauding monkeys who break in and smash the fittings and eat the seating upholstery. Not quite urban guerrillas then?