

Archway - the alternative

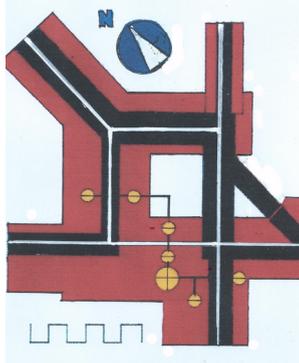
Some 54 years ago, the then Minister of Transport, Ernest Marples, decided to take 'firm' action to 'get London's traffic moving', naturally without spending too much money.

This was done by one-way traffic schemes and gyratory (roundabout) junctions, at the very time of the 1963 Buchanan Report which roundly condemned such crude ad hoc measures. The report said that it was wholly unjust to speed 'traffic' (mainly private cars) to inconvenience or endanger pedestrians, cyclists and bus passengers. **ALL** these schemes were meant to be temporary. Most of them lasted 40-50 years until Boris Johnson and the GLA decided to replace 30 of the worst. This had been urged by the Green Party members for a long time. It is a welcome move and deserves support by the Campaign for Better Transport (CBT) in the light of its published primary aim to: 'put people and the environment first in transport decisions and to find sustainable transport solutions'.

CBT are not alone in criticising the few gyratory-removal schemes so far designed. These include Archway, Highbury, Old Street, Kings Cross and Parliament Square. The Kings Cross scheme was strongly opposed by local groups in the following terms: 'Transport for London (TfL) has a problem. In the public eye its design choices are often felt to be rather odd. For example, interim changes to



Archway: Where are the buses?



the junction of Gray's Inn-Euston-Pentonville Roads and York Way, completed earlier this year, were supposed specifically to improve safety for cyclists', (but did not).

CBT (London Group) objected to the Archway scheme during its consultation period. It felt that the 1963 gyratory, designed for Marples, ignored pedestrian convenience, cyclist security and bus-tube interchange. The 2015 TfL scheme is, if anything, even worse. This is critical since the 1976 GLC Structure Plan identified Archway as a preferred office location and a 'major transport interchange'.

The diagram on the left, drawn for CBT (London Group), is based on TfL traffic counts. It assigns movement to an alternative post-gyratory (two-way) layout. It shows future movement in terms of people (rather than vehicles) travelling through the new junction. Bus passengers and cyclists (TfL did not count pedestrian movements) are shown in red and car users in black. Widths are proportionate to estimated flows. All flows are derived from peak hour vehicle movements as surveyed by TfL consultants. These were converted to person movements by car, cycle and service buses. The small yellow circles show CBT preferred bus stops and the large yellow circle the Northern Line station. It was reckoned that, in terms of people, flows through the old junction were 2:1 in favour of public transport. It seemed right to allocate the NE and SE arms of the new layout to mainly car movements and the NW

and SW arms to mainly bus and cycle traffic. TfL oddly allocates the SW arm entirely to cyclists and pedestrians in a sort of precinct.

The CBT scheme was duly submitted to TfL but was dismissed without any analysis or explanation. Later pleas to the (former) Chair of the GLA Transport Committee were also rebuffed, without any reference to the TfL consultants as was specifically requested by CBT. The most disturbing thing is that several similar designs (eg Highbury Corner) are now in course of being implemented. These typically show dangerous defects like fragmented cycle lanes. Such lanes might well have been more fully integrated with continuous kerbside bus lanes. Bus stops should also provide 'same stop interchange'. This last is vital to Archway where several radial and orbital bus routes converge.

John MacBryde ARIBA
MRTPI MCILT

Our Newsletter is sent out to our London members and other contacts. The group exists to campaign for sustainable transport solutions in London and to support the work of the Campaign nationally. If you have not already done so we would be pleased if you would also join our group and take part in our London based activities.

To contact the group write to Chris Barker, Campaign for Better Transport, 46 Redston Road, London N8 7HJ. E-mail: chrisbarker46@gmail.com; phone 020 8347 7684. Regular meetings of the group are held in central London. The Newsletter is edited by Chris Barker. Contributors are welcomed. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Campaign for Better Transport. Previous issues of the newsletter can be found at <http://bettertransport-london.org.uk>.

Oxford Street pedestrians or buses?

In the past many bus routes were of considerable length, and indeed one of the attractions of driving a London bus was the fact that a daily duty might involve just one return journey.

Most were operated out of two garages at either end of the route where land values are lower. Ironically the advent of shorter routes has come when land values have escalated, leading to the sale of central garages like Chalk Farm and Gillingham Road, Victoria.

Privatisation in 1987 meant that the two garages were often transferred to different owners and it was deemed inappropriate for two companies to run the same bus route. I am sure that, had the GLC been around, Ken Livingstone would have found a way round this, but he was not and consequently routes were chopped in half. This meant many routes terminating around Oxford Circus. Buses are empty at the start and end of their route, and the sea of empty buses prompted repeated criticism from politicians. As the decline in bus use was reversed in the 1990s and the first decade of this century, frequencies improved, so the number of buses on Oxford Street increased still further.

For many years Peter Hendy resisted the call to pedestrianise Oxford Street. Its shops sprang up because it was a main thoroughfare, the A40. Alternative east-west routes are less suitable for buses. However, the decline in bus use in central London, plus the imminent arrival of Crossrail, has given cause to reduce the level of bus operation. Rather than simply cut back existing services, TfL has embarked on a wholesale review which could result in some new links not currently provided. The piecemeal changes of recent years have included the loss of a link from Oxford Street to Covent Garden (route 176) used by many tourists who do not have a say in consultation exercis-

es. Proposals currently under consultation could be tweaked further. In particular, a reduction in routes terminating at Oxford Circus rather than running through would reduce the need to change buses and the number of empty buses, surely a win-win option.

No serious advocate of public transport should support the total exclusion of buses. However capacious Crossrail may be, there will always be people for whom the bus is the only means of public transport available by virtue of their physical or mental health. For them, changing buses can be a major inconvenience, and holders of a freedom pass gain nothing from the one hour hopper ticket which has removed a financial penalty associated with changing buses. It should not be beyond the wit of TfL to design a street that is safe for bus users and pedestrians. Shops without rear servicing will need deliveries which can only be made via Oxford Street. Taxis could be confined to crossing Oxford Street rather than traversing it, but even then there are issues for people with severe mobility restrictions.

Andrew Bosi

Note. Since this article was written TfL have confirmed their plan to reduce the number of buses on Oxford Street by 40 per cent.



Southeastern rail franchise consultation

The government is currently considering the shape of the new Southeastern rail franchise.

CBT nationally have published a charter making the case for people and communities across the south east to have a reliable, affordable and high-quality rail service, and sets out what this means in practice.

Currently Southeastern has some of the worst passenger satisfaction in the UK. CBT wants the minister to use the re-franchising as an opportunity to radically improve passengers' experiences.

- A fairer deal for part-time commuters. More and more of us work flexibly. Five-day a week commuters get a third off their travel with a season ticket, but part-time commuters and others with flexible work patterns face much higher costs to travel. It's time for a part-time ticketing option that gives a fair and equitable discount.

- Value for money. The franchise should include a commitment to always sell the cheapest ticket for a journey, with a promise to refund double the difference if a passenger discovers they have been overcharged. Multi-modal smartcards should be fully integrated and compatible with all TfL services and local buses in Kent, and include pay-as-you-go with capping, so that passengers are always charged the minimum fare for the end-to-end journey.

- Better stations. Many stations are not the attractive, accessible, well-lit places that they should be. The new franchise should include a package of investment including accessibility upgrades; improved

integration with cycling, local buses and TfL services. Toilets should be well maintained and cleaned regularly, and should be open throughout the hours of rail service.

- Better train services. There should be extra carriages on shoulder peak services to reduce overcrowding. Services should run later in the day and on Boxing Day. Accurate, up to date and actionable information about current and future services should be provided consistently online, at the station and on the train.

- Excellent customer service. The new franchise should protect ticket office opening hours and the presence of trained, visible staff on trains and at stations to provide assistance and give passengers security. Where stations are staffed, disabled and older passengers should always be guaranteed 'turn-up-and-go' assistance, without booking ahead.

- Monitoring and enforcement. Franchise commitments mean nothing unless they are actively monitored and enforced. The Government must hold the train operator to account, with fines when necessary, if it fails to deliver on promises (for example, ticket office opening hours), and provide real incentives for providing reliable, on-time trains that don't skip stations. There must also be local accountability – the operator should be required to meet at least twice a year with each rail user group, and to include them on its timetables and website.

Lianna Etkind
CBT Public Transport Campaigner

Buses into the future

There are more journeys on London's buses than on its trains. Both services can get very crowded, but buses are Cinderellas: while trains keep pretty good time, a bus journey during the peak is likely to take twice as long as the same journey off-peak. The source of the problem is obvious: trains have their dedicated tracks but buses share the public roads with pedestrians, cyclists, taxis, commercial vehicles, and above all a multitude of private cars.

London is an old city and many of its roads are relatively narrow. Thus, while the newer radial roads (like the A41) are wide enough for continuous bus lanes in both directions, older ones (like the A5 within Inner London) are not quite wide enough and bus lanes get broken into discontinuous sections. The roads carrying orbital bus routes are generally even narrower. Land in London is so expensive that road widening on the scale necessary to separate buses and general traffic would be too costly. The existing road system is effectively a given.

However, a technological transformation of vehicular transport generally is underway - targeted principally at cars and heavy goods vehicles. Hopefully these

technologies will also beneficially impact bus services. Three particular automation technologies are relevant, as follows.

Electric power provides a superior platform for automation - almost a precondition - and all road vehicles will soon be battery powered despite the cost and weight of batteries (typically accounting for half the weight and half the cost of cars equipped with them). Automatic charging of bus batteries while paused at bus stops, already in use in some cities, mitigates the cost and weight penalty.

Trams have their own guide path in the form of rails, but the development of non-contact guide paths for buses is especially interesting - the metamorphosis of bus lanes into busways where buses would have the kind of priority customarily given to trams. If bus lanes were fitted with these embedded guide rails, and buses with underside sensors, the achievable lane discipline (accuracy in cms instead of 10s of cms) could make busways significantly narrower than current bus lanes. This width difference would allow continuous busways in both directions on older radial roads, rather than the current series of discontinuous sections of bus lane. Busways mean priority for buses



Bus lanes: could they be narrower?

- but they would be narrower than bus lanes - so other radial road users would get some benefit too. However, busways would still be too wide for inner London's orbital roads and would only be feasible with narrower buses, after all traditional trams were significantly narrower than London's current buses.

Over the next decade all new motorised vehicles are likely to be battery powered and equipped with communication subsystems enabling reliable communication between vehicles and traffic man-

agement systems, supporting at least partial automation. Guidance and navigation will be possible with better accuracy and reliability than SATNAV. With management of speed and direction and safe lane changing buses would be able to travel in virtual trains of vehicles - close together at all speeds without physical contact - thereby reducing congestion or permitting more vehicles in the same road space.

Peter Osmon
Fellow of the Institute of Engineering and Technology

More cyclists die

The deaths of three cyclists in one week in early February drew attention to the continuing toll on cyclists, many from heavy goods vehicles, on the streets of London. Although there are an increasing number of cycle lanes, work to make the more dangerous junctions safer, more 20mph limits and plans to remove the most dangerous lorries from the streets, nevertheless, as Simon Munk of the London Cycling Campaign says, 'We think it's very important now that the mayor and his team and the new Walking and Cycling Commissioner press on urgently with making London safer for cycling'.

Transport for All held demonstrations on 28th April at eight London stations to protest against the government's decision to defer £50m worth of Access for All funding for five years. Around a fifth of National Rail stations and a quarter of TfL's stations are step-free and the majority of stations do not have lifts, tactile paving, audio visual information, induction loops or the other fixtures that enable disabled people to use them. This was the demonstration at Seven Sisters station.



NEWS ROUNDUP

Road pricing for London

The GLA Transport Committee are recommending that the central London congestion charge is replaced with a more sophisticated charge which would better reflect the impact of vehicles on congestion. It should also cover a wider area, possibly the whole of London. Such a charge would vary according to location, the time of day and how long the vehicle is in the zone. The exemption in place for private hire vehicles might be removed. They point out that the number of private hire vehicles in London has increased by 70 per cent since 2015.

The committee is also concerned about the proliferation of delivery vans and recommends that efforts should be made to encourage people to accept deliveries in more sustainable ways. Boroughs are encouraged to bid for TfL money to pilot workplace parking levies.

Encouraging walking

February saw the launch of two documents to encourage more walking and physical activity amongst London's population. In place of Boris Johnson's Cycling Commissioner Sadiq Khan has appointed a Walking and Cycling Commissioner (Will Norman) and the mayor and TfL have published 'Healthy Streets for London' to prioritise 'walking, cycling and public transport to create a healthy city'. He has identified 73 junctions with the worst safety record unveiling a new approach to delivering improvements for pedestrians and cyclists.

TfL's new approach focuses on three main areas:

- Street level – improving local environments by providing more space for walking and cycling, and better public spaces where people can interact.
- Transport network level – prioritising better and more affordable public transport and safer and more appealing routes for walking and cycling, reducing the dominance of motor vehicles and developing creative approaches to managing freight and deliveries.
- Strategic level – planning new developments so people can walk or cycle to local shops, schools and workplaces, and have good public transport links for longer journeys.

In the same period Living Streets published their manifesto for walking in London entitled 'Liveable London – Time for a

Transport Revolution'. They have declared May as National Walking Month, recommending walking for 20 minutes each day and dispensing with the car for those short journeys.

Living Streets' demands include:

- People before traffic (redistribution of road space away from cars and the introduction of road pricing),
- Safer streets (implementation of a Vision Zero approach to reduce road danger and implementing 20mph limits),
- Cleaner air (banning diesel vehicles and the early introduction of London's ultra low emission zone),
- Increase of pedestrianisation, an end to gyratories and the reclaiming of streets for pedestrians.

Safer streets for children

Traffic and children don't mix well. Parking restrictions outside schools are often strongly enforced. Many schools encourage pupils to design posters to highlight the danger. A school near Covent Garden, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, has gone further and persuaded Camden Council to erect barriers to prevent a neighbouring road from being used during times when pupils are entering or leaving the school. The school said it had made the combination of 'small children and really narrow pavements' much safer. One result is a 50 per cent drop in the number of parents bring children to school by car. Hackney council is also acting to protect children from traffic. Traffic in streets bordering two schools is being banned during school opening and closing times with exemptions for residents and businesses. There will be a £130 fine for violators detected by automatic number plate recognition technology.

More electric buses

Ridding London's streets of fossil fuelled vehicles is one of the mayor's most urgent aims. TfL's buses are a major contributor to pollution from this source so measures to reduce emissions from buses are crucial. The mayor has already announced that all new buses are to be hybrids from 2018 but he is also pressing ahead with hydrogen fuelled and all electric buses. Routes 312, 507 and 521 are already all electric. Routes 70, 360 and C1 are to

follow later this year or in 2018. Route RV1 is operated by hydrogen fuelled buses and a prototype double deck bus has now been produced and will be trialled in London soon.

Putney High Street

Putney High Street was in the news when, a mere five days into 2017, it became one of the first streets in London to exceed its annual air pollution limit. It is now to become one of the first of mayor Sadiq Khan's Low Emission Bus Zones. All buses using the street will have to be hybrids or have exhaust systems that meet the Euro VI standard.

The borough of Wandsworth wants to add to that with such measures as one-way working (with wide pavements), restricting access to lorries or making the street bus only. They also want to experiment with installing photocatalytic concrete paving to break down air pollutants.

GOBLIN trouble

Electrification of the Barking to Gospel Oak line, colloquially known as GOBLIN, is suffering from the same kind of problems as electrification elsewhere. The work was due to be completed in February but wiring is yet to appear. As elsewhere much of the problem seems to be due to lack of preparation and sloppy design work. Masts in two places had to be moved because they breached sewers and a road bridge had to be raised when it was belatedly found that there was insufficient clearance.

The line reopened for diesel trains on 27th February but will have to be closed again on a number of occasions to finish the work which is now due in July. Passengers will be upset that, after all this upheaval, they will still have to content with two car die-

sel trains. The new electric trains are not due until 2018.

Heat from the tube

In the 1920s the tube was advertised as the place to go to cool down in the summer as the latent heat of the earth a few metres down is a steady 14 degrees. But the heat generated by the trains over the years has gradually warmed the tunnels so it can at times top 30 degrees. The problem of how to dissipate this heat can only get worse particularly with the increase in train frequencies. On present day trains the largest source of heat derives from braking. Methods of mitigation therefore include the fitting of regenerative brakes to absorb this energy. Increasing line voltage also helps so as to minimise energy loss. Meanwhile extractor fans and cooling units have been installed at a number of stations.

But does all this heat have to be wasted? The borough of Islington is preparing to install fans to extract heat via the lift shaft of the disused Northern Line station at City Road and will direct the heat to their Bunhill Energy Centre where it is helping to power a district-wide heat network.

Correction

Apologies for a couple of errors which crept into our report about the end of the Boris bus in the last issue. The original order was for 2000. In January there were 870 in service and the present order stops at 1000. If Sadiq Khan orders no more that will be that.

We also said that the rear platform is now permanently closed. This is not correct but will now open only at stops under the control of the driver instead of being permanently open and under the control of a guard, as was the original intention.

