

# TERROR ON THE TUBE

## New blasts bring chaos to capital

Minor explosions on three trains brought further chaos to London's Tube network on 21 July, two weeks to the day after the train and bus blasts that killed 56 people.

The incidents, which happened as *Rail Professional* went to press, were at about 12.30pm at Warren Street, Shepherd's Bush and Oval Underground stations. A device also went off on a bus in Shoreditch. There were no reports of any serious injuries.

Police are working on the theory that the blasts were caused by detonators going off that failed to detonate the bombs themselves.

Eyewitnesses talked of hearing bangs and seeing abandoned rucksacks. An eyewitness at Oval station said there had been a small bang on a train, and a man had then run off when the train reached the station.

Following the incidents the whole of the Northern Line was suspended, along with the Victoria Line, the Hammersmith and City line, Piccadilly and the Bakerloo line. Large areas around all four sites were cordoned off. Overground train services continued running normally.

London Underground went to an amber alert with trains taken to the next station and evacuated.

## We draw together some personal accounts of how the rail industry came together in an act of defiance against the bombers

### THE TUBE BOSS

**Tim O'Toole is managing director of London Underground. On 13 July he reported to the board of Transport for London on the events of 7 July.**

#### This is an edited version

It was really professionalism that took us through the day and an obligation to London and to the country to bring the network back...we had to consider what we would do with all those trains which were scattered across the network – how were we going to get drivers to them and get them back to the depot to prepare them for next day?

We had to determine what we were going to do about station staff – it would be one thing to perform miracles and get trains running but what if we couldn't open any stations and provide services? All those people had to be relieved and new people brought in.

And so we began a series of hourly conference calls with our general managers who did all the heavy lifting, sorting these problems out, reporting on the state of the network throughout the day and planning recovery of the service.

But of course the story is not about management. It's



Tim O'Toole, MD of London Underground: 'Professionalism took us through the day.'

really about the professionalism of people in the field...we had station staff and local management who plunged into tunnels unhesitatingly to deal with horrific circumstances. They went onto trains seeing people with limbs severed, with the most horrific injuries, clothes blown off bodies, only parts of chest cavities remaining, really horrific stuff.

Yet they went in unhesitatingly following their training, and moved people out within two minutes.

Even station staff that didn't go into tunnels were receiving injured, comforting them, giving them tea, holding them and applying basic first aid.

In short it was an awful day and the staff did a magnificent job.

### THE TUBE WORKER

Olaniyi Falayi, 37, a station assistant at Moorgate, was at Tower Hill station on his way to work when a bomb exploded in an Underground train near Aldgate station.

At first he thought there had been a power failure causing problems on the line and decided to walk to Aldgate station.

When he arrived he saw dozens of injured people coming up from the platforms below, although at this stage – less than 10 minutes after the bomb went off – staff still didn't realise what had happened.

He offered to help and with colleagues went down into the station. After walking down the tunnel they came to where the wrecked train had come to a halt. More injured people were walking towards them, many covered in dust, some with blood pouring from wounds.

'When we got to the train we saw bodies on the tracks and a lot of wounded. We saw the damaged carriage. There were still

people in there screaming. We were able to calm them down.'

Passengers were marshalled down to the end of the train where they could get off.

The scene resembled a battlefield. 'It was just carnage everywhere, blood everywhere. It was horrible.' One woman had a metal handrail through her stomach and protruding through the other side of her body.

Falayi radioed the station supervisor: 'Send the paramedics down here. There are people dying on the train.'

Directing the walking wounded along the tracks to the station, Falayi and his colleagues waited for medical assistance for what seemed like forever although he says it was probably only 10 minutes.

He spent more than an hour underground helping people out of the carriages; some of whom were lifted away on makeshift stretchers made using blankets and ladders.

'When I first got to the damaged train I think I just lost all feelings,' he recalls. 'I just

went numb. It was hours after that before I started feeling anything.'

Later he went to St Botolph's Church next door, where people were being looked after. It was then that the realisation of what had happened really hit him. 'I was really devastated. I shed tears. I was shaking and crying.'

One woman who had been thrown from the train by the force of the blast appeared to have broken her back. Paramedics were trying to keep her talking as she seemed to be slipping out of consciousness.

'She was still alive when she went up on a stretcher. I hope she survived,' said Falayi.

He went back to work the next day. He wanted to make sure his colleagues were all right. He also felt the need to throw himself back into the job.

Did he consider himself a hero? 'Not at all. There was no way I would see myself as a hero. I have been trained in evacuation by the London Underground. That is just what I do. That is my job.'

## THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

**Christopher Garnett**  
is chief executive of train operator GNER

I was in my office at King's Cross when an alarm went off, apparently caused by a power surge. After so many previous false alarms, I thought this was yet another overreaction, but it soon became clear it was the real thing.

King's Cross was promptly evacuated, myself included.

At first the scale of the attacks around London was unclear, but news quickly filtered through, despite mobile phone reception being cut off.

I was let back into King's Cross to liaise with BTP, Network Rail and the emergency services, and to help station staff. The station by then had been cleared of passengers, and GNER's principal action was to implement agreed contingency arrangements with Network Rail. This involved getting trains and crews out of King's Cross whilst reassuring worried train crews, who again

rose to the challenge magnificently. We also introduced a special timetable that involved turning southbound trains around at Peterborough.

We instigated our Incident Care Service whereby trained GNER counsellors from across the route visited Peterborough and travelled on trains to offer comfort and help both to GNER passengers and staff.

King's Cross managers and operations staff from GNER, Network Rail and Wagn helped the emergency services and organised refreshments for survivors. The horror underground was apparent as survivors emerged from the Tube. The travel centre at the front of the station was used for triage purposes, as the emergency services, helped by GNER first aiders, looked after the shocked and injured. The seriously injured were taken by ambulance or helicopter to hospital.

The way that everyone just got stuck in and helped each other was magnificent – and I can't praise highly enough the

professionalism, calm and care shown by the BTP, the Met Police, the London Ambulance Service and its rapid response helicopter team, the Fire Service and London Underground. Their response was clearly well-planned and orchestrated. It established order out of carnage and chaos.

By about mid-afternoon, there was suddenly a different

from Platform 8 at about 18:30, carrying foot-weary passengers to Peterborough where they could connect to GNER services north.

Having done all I felt I could, I then headed home, reflecting on the day's awful events and the tragic waste of life. However, I also felt a sense of enormous pride in the calm, dignified response shown by people of all

## 'The resilience and kindness shown by everyone was hugely impressive'

cacophony of noise to the sirens heard earlier that morning, when mobile phone reception returned and phones started ringing everywhere.

Later that evening, thanks to the BTP, the suburban platforms and Platform 8 opened, allowing passengers back in. Wagn brilliantly organised 12-car trains to move out as many people as possible in a single movement. The first service out departed

creeds, colours and backgrounds. The resilience and kindness shown by everyone was hugely impressive.

The following morning the first GNER departure out of King's Cross was at 09:00, much to the amazement of many passengers who had assumed that it would take much longer. It showed that the railways can sometimes over-deliver on passenger expectations!

## THE STATION TEAM

Peter Armstrong-Cribb, Paul Chippington and Dean Nicholson are members of the Network Rail team at King's Cross

'We had to adapt our response to what the emergency services were telling us,' said Network Rail's station manager at King's Cross, Peter Armstrong-Cribb. 'Initially we responded to casualties, and once we'd contained the incident, we held progress review meetings with the British Transport Police and Metropolitan Police, London Ambulance, the Fire Brigade and London Underground every 45 minutes or so to co-ordinate resources.'

About eight Network Rail staff used radios to keep in contact. Among them was duty station manager Paul Chippington. 'We set up a first aid point on the forecourt, which was soon full of injured people,' he said. 'London Ambulance crews set up an emergency triage centre in the travel centre, where GNER staff helped. We moved the walking wounded to buses outside, which also became triage centres.'

The station was evacuated and all mainline services were suspended within about four minutes of the order being given. Chippington was among those who took equipment down to the underground, carrying people up on the way

## 'Wherever you looked were injured people. But it was when I saw a temporary morgue that it hit home'

back. 'Some casualties were in severe distress and had serious medical conditions. It was hell,' he said.

Dean Nicholson, a team leader, helped find equipment and administered first aid.

'We were on category two alert after hearing about the explosions at Liverpool Street. I was helping to carry out searches on the concourse when I saw the Metropolitan Police running tape across the front of the station. They said there had been an accident downstairs, and people were injured.

'I asked, "Right, what is it you need?" and then went to find masks, overalls, and anything to make stretchers out of. Walking wounded were

first to emerge from the underground, followed by people with more serious injuries – lacerations and cuts.

'The underground staff asked for more emergency equipment, which we took downstairs, and came back up with injured people. The smell and state of the underground at the time – you can't describe it. I helped a fireman carry a young girl with a large injury to her leg. I've since learned she lost her leg, but we managed to save her.

'I used my first aid kit to treat cuts and bruises. Although important, first aid in a sense was just being there, picking people up, holding someone's hand and helping the paramedics while they treated survivors for smoke inhalation and other injuries.

'Wherever you looked were injured people. But it was when I saw a temporary morgue that it hit home.

'Midland Mainline staff were brilliant, bringing food and supplies. I was amazed at how quickly about 200 of us came together to get the situation under control – including underground staff and contractual workers. And colleagues came in early to help out. We're like the fourth emergency service – helping is what we're here for.'