

It's 'dog eat dog' on London's overcrowded Tube

倫敦通勤族一上地鐵變身「衣冠禽獸」



Chronic overcrowding on London's Tube network turns people into animals who adopt a "dog eat dog" attitude to fellow passengers, according to a recent report.

Travellers ignore pregnant women or parents with babies in a "survival of the fittest" atmosphere on the underground train system, which is struggling to cope with never-ending tides of commuters and tourists.

"I'm a different animal on the Tube to normal life. I'm not me. I'm a bit less interested in others," one person told researchers for the study, compiled for City Hall bosses.

The British capital's vast underground network — embodied in the iconic London Tube map, much pored-over by tourists — is a perennial source of grumbling for London's weary workers.

Some parts draw more gripes than others. The Northern Line has the worst reputation, but many others can be hellish at rush hour, with packed platforms and even more sardine-can-like trains, often so full that no-one else can get on.

Other examples of how people cope with the daily Tube grind include:

- Suspension of the normal codes of behavior — for example, going after a seat regardless of who else might want it, ignoring pregnant women and people carrying babies.
- Adopting a Tube persona, more ruthless and selfish.
- Switching off/shutting down — going into an automatic pilot routine, listening to music, turning one's back.
- Developing strategies to reduce the impact of overcrowding — for example, by go-

ing one or two stops in the opposite direction in order to get a seat.

Transport for London, which runs the Tube network as well as London's buses and other travel infrastructure, insisted it welcomed the report.

"More and more people are traveling on the Tube, which is why it is so crucial that we deliver the much-needed improvements," said a spokesman.

"We are spending billions to increase capacity on the Tube by 30 percent, in what is the biggest investment seen in decades. This will mean more trains, able to carry more passengers, with faster journeys and larger stations."

But the report's authors said: "The overwhelming majority of passengers perceive the experience of overcrowding as a highly unpleasant and abnormal situation... Some com-

muters are left feeling tired and stressed out. "It can take an hour or two to calm down," it said.

最近一份報告指出，倫敦地鐵長期過度擁擠，讓人變得跟動物一樣，出現「狗咬狗」心態，對其他乘客置之不理。

倫敦地鐵要不斷消化絡繹不絕的通勤者和旅客，乘客在「適者生存」的氛圍下，只好對懷孕婦女或抱小孩的父母視若無睹。

一名乘客向研究人員表示：「搭地鐵時的我和日常生活中的我截然不同。我變得不是我，對別人比較不關心。」該研究是應市政府高層要求而編寫。

英國首都龐大的地鐵網絡——正如具指標性、被遊客熟讀的倫敦地鐵圖所示——常招來倫敦疲倦上班族的抱怨。

有些路線更是令人抱怨不斷。「北線」最為人所詬病，但其他路線在尖峰時間也是令人十分不悅，月台上擠滿了人，車廂裡更是擠得像沙丁魚一樣，常擠到讓乘客上不了車。

關於這個每天必須面對的苦差事，人們的因應之道還包括：

—暫停日常行為規範——例如：不顧他人需要，看到位子就搶，對懷孕婦女和抱嬰兒的人視而不見。

—換上地鐵假面：更冷酷、自私。

—放空／毫無反應——進入自動導航模式，聽音樂，不理睬他人。

—發展減少過度擁擠帶來的衝擊之策略——例如：為了有位子坐，先往反方向坐一或兩站。

負責管理倫敦地鐵、公車和其他交通基礎建設的倫敦交通局堅稱，他們樂見這份報告出爐。

一位發言人表示：「越來越多人搭地鐵，這也是為甚麼我們的當務之急，就是要針對有迫切需要之處提出改進。」

「我們將投入數十億英鎊來提高地鐵三成容量，這是過去幾十年來所投入的最大一筆資金。這意味著將有更多列車運載更多乘客，列車行進速度將增快，地鐵車站也會變得更寬廣。」

但該報告作者表示：「絕大多數乘客都認為搭乘過度擁擠的地鐵是種令人極度不悅的經驗，也有違常理...有些通勤者搭完地鐵後會產生疲倦或緊張的情緒。」

該報告指出：「這種情緒可能要花一到兩個小時才能平復。」

(法新社／翻譯：袁星塵)

Above: Tube passengers wait for a train in London on April 28, 2009.

PHOTO: EPA

上圖：四月二十八日，倫敦地鐵乘客等候列車。 照片：歐新社

TODAY'S WORDS

今日單字

1. perennial /pə'reniəl/ adj.

常在的 (chang2 zai4 de5)

例：Overcrowding is a perennial source of complaints during the holiday season.

(過度擁擠是連續假期常見的抱怨之一。)

2. gripe /graɪp/ n.

抱怨 (bao4 yuan4)

例：The customer's major gripe was about the quality of the service.

(那名顧客主要是抱怨服務品質不佳。)

3. persona /pə'sonə/ n.

假面 (jia3 mian4)

例：Simon's on-stage persona is completely different to his real life personality.

(賽門在舞台上的形象和他真實生活中的性格迥異。)



A photo of the sign at an unidentified underground station in London on Jan. 29, 2009.

PHOTO: EPA

一月二十九日，倫敦某地鐵車站的招牌。

照片：歐新社

IDIOM POINT

重要片語

dog eat dog

狗咬狗、自私自利

In a dog-eat-dog situation there is intense competition and people think only about themselves. According to the research, passengers on the Tube adopt a dog-eat-dog attitude to survive the poor conditions.

Example: "You'll need to be tough to survive the auditions. It's dog eat dog out there."

若用「dog eat dog」來形容一個情況，就表示競爭很激烈，讓人只考慮到自己的需要。上文中的研究顯示，地鐵乘客在這種惡劣的環境下，變得自私自利。

例如：「你必須強悍起來才能在那場試鏡中脫穎而出。外面是個狗咬狗的世界。」