

SEPTEMBER 07

40 YEARS OF UNDERGROUND PHOTOGRAPHY

by Fred Ivey

**A report of the Society Meeting held on Tuesday 13 February 2007
at All Souls Club House**

This was the first Society meeting held at All Souls Club House. Fred Ivey gave a slide presentation "40 Years of Underground Photography", which spanned the period from 1961 to 2000. The enormity of the subject meant that some years were covered in more depth than others. For the same reasons, only a summary can be attempted here.

The presentation began with examples of rolling stock in service in 1961, beginning with the 'surface' lines. The F stock was illustrated on the Metropolitan Line, where it had operated since the early-1950s, mostly as "rush-hour" trains on the Uxbridge line. It did, however, work occasionally to Watford (and Amersham when electrified) especially at the time of homeward schools traffic. One such working was seen north of Pinner. Its appetite to swallow up passengers in great numbers also made it a favourite to be used clearing football crowds at Wembley. The F stock acquired the nickname of 'tanks' because of its 'solid' construction and powerful performance and also worked on the East London Line from December 1953 in four-car formations. Examples were seen near Canal Junction (where the New Cross and New Cross Gate services diverge – the cranes of the long-abandoned Surrey 'Docks' were seen in the background).

The District Line's variety of Q stock was shown, beginning with the oldest, the Q23 and known as 'horse boxes' because of their cramped cab conditions for motormen. These had a flat-ended clerestory, whereas the next batch, the Q27, had a clerestory roof line which gently tapered down at their ends. In addition to similar-looking Q31 and Q35 trailers, the final batch comprised the flare-sided Q38 stock, which really gave a hotchpotch appearance when formed up in a mixed formation. Q stock replaced the F stock on the East London Line in September 1963 – a train with a Q27 motor car was seen from the abandoned freight line south of Surrey Docks, framed by a cable gantry.

Metropolitan 'main line' stock at the time included the locomotive-hauled 'Dreadnought' coaches, built between 1910 and 1923. The brake coaches were given red ends in their last few years of service, but this colour soon faded with wear, as did the 'brown' livery on the coaches. These trains operated the Aylesbury service, which required a locomotive change at Rickmansworth – electric to steam on the northbound and vice-versa southbound. The locomotive-changing process was described and illustrated, four minutes being allowed for the operation. The steam locomotives were held over in sidings just north of the station to await their next working and the electric locomotives in sidings south of the station. One unusual electric/steam changeover took place early on Sunday mornings, when the Chesham push-pull shuttle of three Ashbury coaches worked in passenger service to and from Wembley Park to and from Neasden depot for maintenance. Fred then described the arrangements for locomotive-hauled trains at Baker Street and

Liverpool Street, where a spare locomotive was waiting to take the coaches back to Metroland. The arriving locomotive would therefore become available to take the next train away. It was completely by coincidence that the two surviving locomotives (Nos.5 and 12) featured so often back in 1961!

The mainstay of the Watford line was the compartment T Stock, seen at various locations, including Wembley Park (with the train starting wires still in situ) and Farringdon, on a rush hour working. Although the T Stock was withdrawn in October 1962, overhauls were still done at Acton Works until late-1961 – a northbound train at Northwood Hills showed an immaculate rear motor car with a very shabby rest of the train. Other photographs illustrated the four-tracking, which was finally completed in June 1962, having been started as part of the 1935-40 New Works Programme, but deferred during the Second World War. At Northwood, it was explained that the original two lines lay on the alignment of the future 'main' lines and therefore new tracks and platforms were provided for what became the 'local' services. During the construction period at Northwood, we saw the new signals and tracks in place but not yet commissioned, along with the old signal box, semaphore signals and three-aspect colour light signals, all of Metropolitan Railway vintage.

The Underground Centenary was a major event in 1963 and probably nothing so grand has ever been staged on the Underground since. Although the first section of the Metropolitan Railway opened on 10 January 1863, the celebrations were arranged for the better weather, which held good for all the events, which spanned four days. On Thursday 23 May a 'parade' of rolling stock took place in Neasden depot, from the oldest surviving to the most modern. In all there were 15 exhibits, which made their way from the south shunting neck at Neasden and along the 'Klondyke' tracks (the lines at the side of Neasden depot) in front of invited guests from countries far and wide with Underground systems. The star of the show was undoubtedly the original steam locomotive No.23. In London Transport days it had become L45 in the service fleet. It had been restored to 1903 condition and was the first and last of 15 exhibits in the parade. On Friday 24 May the 'opening' of the Metropolitan Railway was re-enacted, with 0-4-4T steam locomotives L44 and L48 being used to haul the specially-painted wagons to and from Moorgate respectively. A brand-new A62 stock unit (5196) carried invited guests from Baker Street to Neasden – it was in almost 'mint' condition, having only entered passenger service on 4 May 1963. On Saturday and Sunday 25/26 May there was an open day at Neasden depot, with the various stocks used in the parade being on display to the public. On Sunday, however, the Dreadnought coaches and electric locomotive No.5 were used to haul a special train in the afternoon between Baker Street and Aylesbury. The six coaches had been retained beyond their withdrawal (in September 1961) and because there were no longer locomotive changing facilities at Rickmansworth, this was done instead at Amersham.

There were also some other steam tours after the centenary, which included the Stanmore branch – another original Metropolitan Railway branch. The withdrawal of so much 'surface' stock led to some temporary storage off the Metropolitan Line while the disposal process was under way. Fred was lucky to catch an F stock train heading to Upminster for storage on its original territory, passing Bromley (as it was then). Later, the scrapping of the F stock was seen at Birds yard in Risca, Monmouthshire.

Of course, the 'tube' rolling stock in the early 1960s was the multi-batch Pre-1938 Tube Stock, which was still the mainstay of the Piccadilly Line. This had the newer

batches, while the older cars had been on the Central Line, by now almost gone, and on the Northern City Line. A snow scene west of Hillingdon looking east saw a Pre-1938 train bound for Uxbridge. Of note was the long shunting neck of Hillingdon goods yard next to the westbound line. In the goods yard, much activity took place in transferring cranes in and out of Butter's yard. Pre-1938 Tube Stock was also employed on the Bakerloo Line Stores Train, which operated regularly between Neasden, London Road and Queen's Park, seen passing West Hampstead. Also seen passing West Hampstead on the northbound Bakerloo Line was an empty Metropolitan Line train (of T Stock). After the morning peak, a number of Metropolitan Line trains ran empty from Baker Street to Neasden via the Bakerloo Line from Finchley Road – these survived until 30 April 1979, when the opening of the Jubilee Line and its more frequent service precluded such regular workings. Fred was also available to record the changeover of the Pre-1938 Tube Stock from and to the Northern City Line, where four-car sets of 1931/34 stock replaced the six-car trains of 1923-29 stock in October 1964. On the closed section of line that once served Alexandra Palace, trains were seen leaving the south end of Highgate tunnels, at Crouch End (where the station – closed in 1954 – was still substantially complete) and at Finsbury Park (main line station) all hauled by D82xx BTH diesel locomotives. Stock transfers to and from the Northern City Line were later done via the City Widened Lines and King's Cross main line, after the route via Crouch End had been closed.

This conveniently took us into the close working relationships between London Transport and British Railways. On the City Widened Lines, for example, we saw diesel-hauled Eastern Region "quad-art" stock at Farringdon and a Southern Region train at Olympia next to a District Line train (the former was a single working in each peak to and from Clapham Junction – then steam hauled). Then, a crossover existed at Olympia, which provided a connection between LT and the main line. Moving on in time, then last day of semaphore signalling on the Richmond branch on 22 February 1980 was recorded. In the meanwhile, the Bakerloo Line service to Watford on (then) London Midland metals was then featured. Since 1965, the service had been restricted to peak hours only but in 1982 the service was withdrawn completely. However, before the final workings in September 1982, there had been two previous aborted attempts to withdraw the four remaining trains – in March and June. Before this, the 1972 MkII Tube Stock, which came to the Bakerloo in 1977, also reached Watford Junction later that same year. An evocative shot of a northbound train arriving at Willesden Junction (passing the d.c. lines signal box, branded "Willesden New Line", for that what it was – the d.c. lines were the last to be built through Willesden Junction in 1912, hence were the 'newest', even 55 years later!). Outside Watford Junction in 1974, we were able to compare the old station signs (an LT Underground bullseye with large 'U' and 'D', and an LMR British Railways 'squashed sausage' sign on one post) and, a little further away on another post, a 'dumb' Underground roundel, the double-arrow British Rail symbol and the double 'N' for the National bus services.

Going back to the early-1970s, the end of the Q stock on the District and East London lines was featured. The vast majority of Q stock was scrapped and we saw a Q38 motor car in Bird's scrapyards with a Southern Railway 2-HAL unit. Fred pointed out that both types of trains originated from around the same time (late-1930s) but the Q38 was futuristic with its flared sides. The Southern stock, however, was far from a period design classic and, of course, had slam doors, as did new stock even nearly 30 years later. London Transport had not used handworked door

trains since 1962 but in comparison it was only very recently that BR had achieved the same status.

The changeover of East London Line stock (again!) from 1938 Tube to A stock in June 1977 was featured. The A stock was described on publicity posters as being 'modern' (even though they were by then some 16 years old). At that time it was still possible to see Southern Region 4-SUB stock stabled in sidings at New Cross Gate next to the East London Line platform. The returning 1938 Tube Stock from the East London to Neasden also coincided with the day Bakerloo Line trains were running into Baker Street (Metropolitan) because of engineering work in connection with the (then) Fleet Line. The last transfer train of 1938 Tube Stock from the East London Line had "THE END" chalked on the rear roof dome and a friendly Metropolitan Line motorman ensured that Fred was able to catch the train up and photograph it when passing Willesden Green!

On 1 May 1979 the Jubilee Line opened. It took over the Stanmore branch of the Bakerloo and included three new stations, terminating at Charing Cross. One of the posters devoted the Stanmore branch depicted three "all change" destination blinds, from "Bakerloo" to "Jubilee". Inside a 1938 Tube Stock train at the time, many trains had been remapped to show side by side the 'new' Bakerloo (Watford – Elephant & Castle) and the old (which included the Stanmore branch).

In April 1980, the collapse of a building near Paddington resulted in a suspension of Circle and District Line services while an engineers train (captured by Fred in Paddington station) removed the debris from the track. In fact, the only part of the line to be 'suspended' was between Edgware Road and Paddington, for a single line shuttle was set up to run between Paddington and High Street Kensington on the inner rail. At High Street Kensington, District Line trains reversed in bay platforms 3 and 4, while a truncated Circle Line reversed in platform No.1. This was in the days when every effort was made to keep some sort of service running in adversity during emergencies, rather than to completely shut down and substitute buses (if you are lucky!).

The London Transport Golden Jubilee In 1983 also involved an open day at Neasden but was nowhere near such a big event as the Underground Centenary 20 years before. Also there was an open day at Acton Works – when the latter was a busy place and still thriving.

In summary, a selection of the other topics included pictures of the following –

- The two Metropolitan brake van tours in 1972, using locomotives 5 and 12 in 'top and tail' mode.
- A former "Gate" tube stock car of 1906/07 vintage discovered in a garden at the end of Edgwarebury Lane.
- The erstwhile 1960 Tube Stock unit used for experimental purposes, including track recording, with its Pre-1938 trailers.
- The end of headlight destination code displays on the last line (District) in 1977.
- Early-morning Circle Line workings from Wembley Park via the Bakerloo Line all stations to Finchley Road – best done on Sunday mornings in the summer.
- The end of CO/CP stock on the District in March 1981 and the rail tour the following month (which also covered parts of the Metropolitan and East London lines).
- The first day in service of the 1983 Tube Stock, which was launched at Stanmore. It was sobering to reflect that many of the London Transport hierarchy in

attendance were no longer with us – Gordon Hafter OBE, Philip Greenslade (then the Met/Jubilee Manager) and Robin Allen-Smith (a Society member, but with his “Press office” hat on).

- Gauging with a BR MkII coach ‘top and tailed’ by battery locomotives prior to a rail tour using BR stock on some sub-surface lines. The use of BR stock on subsequent tours, involving Sarah Siddons and later, during *Steam on the Met.*, which began in 1989 as a result of the occasion of the Chesham branch centenary and paved the way for an almost annual *Steam on the Met.* event until the last in 2000. Sarah Siddons also made a number of trips on the Southern’s third rail system, visiting Brighton and Eastleigh (for open days), and a round trip to and from Portsmouth hauling BR MkI coaches. Sarah Siddons was also not averse to hauling the heritage Southern Region 4-SUB unit from time to time.
- The last days of 1938 Tube Stock on both the Bakerloo and Northern lines, and their new ‘home’ on the Isle of Wight.
- The renaming of “Surrey Docks” to Surrey Quays” on 24 October 1989 and then the introduction of painted A stock trains on the East London.
- The delivery of the 1992 Tube Stock – one ‘new’ consignment was seen passing through Slough station on 27 September 2004. This was in fact a re-delivery because the train, first delivered to Ruislip in July 1992, had been returned to Derby for modifications. The same train was seen at Loughton three days later on 30 September on its first day in service, which was the same day that the Epping-Ongar branch closed. Deliveries also included the Waterloo & City Line’s trains and a test trip with the NSE-liveried trains was seen passing Leyton on the westbound – without passengers!
- The VE Day celebrations of 1995, when many trains had Union Jack flag stickers applied on the cab fronts.
- The final year – 2000 – included the last delivery of the 1995 Tube Stock for the Northern Line seen approaching West Ruislip on main line metals, and then the last day of 1959 Tube Stock on the Northern Line on 27 January 2000, attended by many enthusiasts. This marked the end of guards on the Underground, the subject of which was a rather political hot potato – there was thus no official event to mark the occasion.

Throughout the evening, Fred mentioned that on occasions he stood near to the “official (LT) photographer” and regarded himself as the “unofficial photographer”, which often produced more imaginative and interesting results than the ‘posed’ views, which was confirmed this evening.

The meeting heartily thanked Fred for providing such an interesting and comprehensive review. Our first meeting at All Souls Club House was almost a “full house” event, perhaps reflecting our speaker and his subject, and also perhaps the change to the more centrally-located venue.

Brian Hardy