

HOW TO CELEBRATE A CENTENARY

It was originally planned to republish this article in either the January or May 2008 issue of Underground News, marking 145 years of the Underground but lack of space precluded this.

Some 45 years ago, back in 1963, the then London Transport celebrated the Centenary of its Underground. The first section was opened on 10 January 1863 and now forms part of today's Hammersmith & City Line, between Paddington and Farringdon. Being then the oldest Underground system in the world, London Transport was the first company eligible to celebrate such an event. Very wisely, the special programme of events was arranged in the late-spring of 1963, rather than in the cold and dark winter months – early-1963 was no exception!

Other companies have similarly celebrated their centenaries since – Budapest in 1996, Glasgow in 1997 (for the centenary in 1996), Paris in 2000 and Berlin in 2002. But none were as grand as the very first in 1963, although the four aforementioned were without doubt memorable events. Perhaps the Berlin U-Bahn (in 2002) ranks as No.2 in the pecking order of grand centenary celebrations!

The following is a reprint of what was published at the time, updated (with the 24-hour clock, for example), edited (very slightly), with additional notes (where appropriate) and with minor corrections (where necessary!).

FROM UNDERGROUND No.17 – MAY 1963

The London Transport Board have now announced the full arrangements for commemorating the centenary of the London Underground system, and it seems that, although the actual centenary day (10 January) was allowed to pass without official notice, the occasion is being very fittingly celebrated during the next few months.

The forthcoming attractions may be summarised as follows:

EXHIBITIONS

Centenary Exhibition of Metropolitan Locomotives and Rolling Stock at Neasden LT Depot. Open to the public Saturday 25 May from 10.00 to 16.00 and Sunday 26 May from 14.00 to 17.00¹ (on the Sunday, visitors will also be allowed to view Neasden Power Station). Admission 2/- for adults, 1/- for children, including a souvenir brochure.

Poster Art Exhibition at the Royal Institute Galleries, Piccadilly, W.1, open for the whole of July.

Rail Tour. Commemorative train on Sunday 26 May, with Metropolitan Steam Stock and an Electric Locomotive hauling the train to Amersham. The itinerary is: depart Baker Street 14.15, Amersham 15.18 (where the loco will be changed for a BR 2-6-4T²), arrive Aylesbury 15.40. On the return, departure from Aylesbury will be at 16.15, Amersham 16.40, then via Watford North Curve to Watford, arrive 17.07, reverse and via the South Curve to Moor Park, arriving back at Baker Street at 17.38. Return Fare (including Souvenir Ticket) will be £1 and the majority of tickets will be sold through Railway Societies. Tickets must be ordered at once.

¹ The Sunday opening times were changed at the last minute – q.v.

² A different steam locomotive was used than intended – q.v.

Film Shows. Free Cinema Shows about London Transport will be given daily in the cinema at Charing Cross LT station (*today's Embankment – Ed.*), from 27 May to 31 August. Programme details are not yet available.

Books. The following books are appearing during the celebrations:

“The Story of London's Underground” by John R. Day, 5/- (25p).

“How the Underground Works” by Paul Garbutt, 5/- (25p).

FROM UNDERGROUND No.18 – JUNE 1963

1863 – UNDERGROUND CENTENARY WEEK – 1963

Celebrations were prefaced by a dress rehearsal of the parade on Sunday 19 May – this attracted some sightseers itself, but officially the first public event was the parade at Neasden on Thursday 23 May. A special train of A stock left Baker Street at 10.45 and ran to the Grandstand specially erected alongside Klondyke siding No.23. After detraining, guests did not have long to wait – a bouquet was presented to the Chairman's wife by the grand-daughter of the driver of the first train to Uxbridge in 1904, then after a few words of welcome by Mr. A.B.B. Valentine himself, commentator Huw Thomas³ took over and the programme commenced. There were 15 exhibits, beginning with No.23 heading two trucks, replicas of Smith & Knight (S&K) contractor's wagons 29 and 23, with the inspection party of 1862 represented by costumed members of London Transport Musical & Dramatic Society. Following were 0-4-4T L44 with the excellently restored Metropolitan milk van No.5 and four Chesham coaches, electric loco No.1 with six steam stock coaches, a three-coach T stock train, trains of F, P and A stock, and of Pre-1938, 1938, and 1959 tube stock. Then came 0-6-2T L52 with engineer's train, 0-6-0PT L98 with cable laying train, battery loco L57 and long-welded rail train, whose crew gave a demonstration of loading and unloading a 500ft length of rail, the Instruction Train and, finally, No.23 again, this time heading (via a match wagon) a train of A62 stock. This was an excellent display, which was followed by an equally excellent buffet lunch, before the special train returned to Baker Street at 14.28.

On Friday 25 May, the Lord Mayor rode over the route of the original Metropolitan .Railway line from Paddington to Farringdon, and on to Moorgate in the cab of an A62 stock train. At Moorgate L46 and the two S&K wagons – with occupants – were in No.5 bay road. After viewing the tableau, the party of about 500 left by special staircase to embark on five Routemaster buses for the Mansion House and lunch.

On Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 May, the rolling stock used in the parade was displayed at Neasden depot to the general public (except that the steam stock train was not on show on Sunday, being in use elsewhere on the special train). This display was enormously popular. All the exhibits were crowded, the bookstall besieged, and the stewards much overworked. During Sunday afternoon, parties of visitors to the display were taken by minibus to view Neasden Power Station – another very popular attraction which was well patronised.

Sunday afternoon also saw the running of the special Commemorative train from Baker Street to Aylesbury direct and return via Watford, thus taking enthusiasts over the Watford North Curve.

³ Huw Thomas was a well-known broadcaster and journalist at the time. He presented the national news on ITV for many years.

The surprise was motive power. LT used No.5 “John Hampden”, when enthusiasts expected the restored No.1 on show at Neasden, while BR provided, not the advertised 2-6-4T, but “Jubilee” 4-6-0 45709 “Implacable”, which hauled the train north from Amersham⁴ tender first. A most enjoyable run, which proved that steam stock can still give a more comfortable ride at speed than A stock. Incidentally, this tour was a model one – it ran to time! In fact, it ended three minutes early!

FROM UNDERGROUND No.19 – JULY 1963

CENTENARY DETAILS

Pressure of time precluded a detailed report of the centenary events in our last issue, but readers will, we feel sure, want to have the fullest possible information placed on record. This article appears with the intention of doing just that, as factually as possible.

Stock began to gather early in the year – steam locomotive No.23 was brought back from the Museum of British Transport at Clapham on the evening of Tuesday 12 March – by road we regret to say, T stock cars 2711 and 9724 were noted at Neasden on 22 March, the steam stock coaches had been brought there from Upminster depot where they had been stored⁵ by 2 May, and the Chesham set had arrived from the Bluebell Railway by 14 May⁶. Electric locomotive No.1 had been overhauled by 15 May, and the 4-car Pre-1938 tube stock had arrived by the 16 May. The ex-Metropolitan milk van had been restored, and was more or less completed by 20 April.

SUNDAY 19 MAY – REHEARSAL SPECIAL TRAIN AND PARADE

The dress rehearsal went very well and, according to reports, the only noticeable hitch was the sticking of the whistle on T stock motor car 2734, as it ran into the headshunt at the south end of Neasden depot yard. This took several minutes to free – but for such a small fault to be the most prominent hitch of what was, after all, only a rehearsal, is a remarkable tribute to all concerned.

THURSDAY 23 MAY – SPECIAL TRAIN TO NEASDEN

The special train to convey guests to Neasden for the parade comprised a 4-car A62 stock unit, numbers from the Baker Street end of the train being 5198-6198-6199-5199, and ran as train No.451. The schedule was as follows:

OUTWARD JOURNEY

Neasden	dep	10.17	<i>Empty</i>
Baker Street	arr	10.32	
(No.4 platform)			
Baker Street	dep	10.45	Special
Neasden depot	arr	11.00	
(Klondyke			

RETURN JOURNEY

Neasden	No.23	dep	14.28	Special Road
Baker Street		arr	14.42	
Baker Street		dep	14.48	<i>Empty</i>
Neasden depot		arr	15.07	

The stock for the return journey was

⁴ In pre-electrification days, locomotive changeovers took place at Rickmansworth. This facility was removed after the end of normal locomotive-hauled working on 9 September 1961, hence the need to change locomotives at Amersham on this occasion.

⁵ The Dreadnought and F Stock exhibits had been stored at Upminster after withdrawal until just before the centenary. They would otherwise have been scrapped.

⁶ The four coaches from the Bluebell Railway had previously left Neasden for their new home on 1 March 1961.

siding
No.23)

5196-6196-6197-5197

On the forward journey, the train left Baker Street about one minute late, travelled down from Finchley Road on the Bakerloo northbound track until through Neasden station, then via No.35 and 36 points to Klondyke No.23 road, where the grandstand had been erected – passengers detrained direct on to the stand which was at platform level. When empty, the train proceeded to the yard via the north shunting neck. In each direction, a uniformed member of the operating staff travelled, on each car, in addition to the normal train crew – these additional men acted as guides, and also as stewards on the grandstand after arrival there. The arrival at the grandstand was approximately 4 minutes late.

THURSDAY 23 MAY – CENTENARY PARADE

Shortly after the arrival of the special train, Delia, the granddaughter of the driver of the first train to Uxbridge in 1904, presented a bouquet to Mrs. Valentine, wife of the Chairman. Mr. A.B.B. Valentine, Chairman of the London Transport Board, made a short speech referring to the birthday celebrations in the Underground family, and welcoming old Metropolitan staff, friends and representatives of overseas underground systems.

Huw Thomas then took over as commentator – a function that he performed with skill and humour. The exhibits were paraded in front of the stand on Klondyke Sidings 21 and 22 alternately, starting with exhibit 1 on siding 22. The exceptions to this alternate order were the last few exhibits which ran as follows – No.13 on 21, No.14 on 22 and No.15 on 22. All exhibits were allowed two minutes in front of the stand, except No.1 (5 minutes) and 13 (12 minutes). The actual parade commenced at 11.15 and the items and the stock used were as below. Stock numbers are in north to south order.

1. Locomotive No 23 and Contractors wagons, with Tableau by members of the London Transport Musical & Dramatic Society. 4-4-0T No.23 (not in steam) – S&K 29 – S&K 25. Both the last were replicas, propelled by battery locomotive L76. The engine crew of No.23 were in original costume, and those who were represented in the wagons, all of whom had been in an inspection run over the unfinished line on 24th May 1862, included Mr. & Mrs. W.E. Gladstone, John Fowler (Engineer), George Knight (Contractor), the Duke of Sutherland, Lord Richard and Lady Constance Grosvenor, and Lord Macclesfield. The replica contractors' wagons were made up from current wagons in LT's Ealing Common depot, to represent trucks of Smith & Knight, builders of the Paddington – Gower Street section of the original line.
2. E Class Locomotive, Milk Van and Chesham Shuttle Coaches. 0-4-4T L44 – Milk Van No.3 (recently tool van 700 in service fleet) – 512 (formerly 2761) – 515 (formerly 9702) – 516 (formerly 9705) – 518 (formerly 6702).
3. Electric Locomotive and 1910 stock. Electric Loco No.1 (John Lyon) – 448-509-440-469-465-427.⁷
4. T Stock⁸. 2711-9724-2734.
5. F Stock⁹. 4606-8530-8513-4603.

⁷ Three of the six remaining coaches were scrapped after the centenary, but three (427, 465 and 509) went on to be preserved on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, where they are today.

⁸ The last T Stock had run in service on 5 October 1962.

⁹ F Stock was still working on the East London Line but had been withdrawn from the Uxbridge line in March 1963.

6. P Stock¹⁰. 13220-013261-14264.
7. A Stock. 5197-6197-6196-5196.
8. Pre-1938 Tube Stock¹¹. 3380-7453-7184-3219.
9. 1938 Tube Stock. 10124-012165-12445-11124.
10. 1959 Tube Stock¹². 1140-2140-9141-1141.
11. Works Train. 0-6-2T L52 – F341 – J689 – DE618 – F333 – RW464 – BW244 – HW422 – B560. This train was made up ready for the replacement of a junction north of Chalfont during the weekend following the parade.
12. Cable-laying Train. 0-6-0PT L98 – F3355 – CW1052 – CW1050 – CW1051 – B582.
13. Long Welded Rail Train. Battery locomotive L57 – RW494 – RW493 – RW492 – RW491 – RW490. The crew of this train gave a demonstration of unloading and loading 500ft lengths of rail.
14. Instruction Train. Ballast Motor Car L66 – IC1075 – IC1076 – IC1077 – IC1078 – IC1079 – Ballast Motor Car L71.
15. Locomotive No.23 and A Stock. 4-4-0T No.23 – MW541 – 5199-6199-6198-5198.

All the items in the Parade passed from the south end of the depot, stopped opposite the grandstand, and then proceeded to the Inspection Shed via the north shunting neck.

At the conclusion of the Parade, an excellent Buffet Lunch was provided for guests in the marquee erected to the south of the grandstand, where a press tent was also situated. As the parade ended about 12.50, there was adequate time to enjoy the refreshment and company before the return of the special train to Baker Street at 14.15. It is only to be regretted that LT were not more fortunate with the weather, which was very dull and cold for the time of year.

FRIDAY 24 MAY – LORD MAYOR’S COMMEMORATIVE TRAIN

Sir Ralph Perring, Lord Mayor of London, rode in the cab of this train, which comprised eight cars of A62 stock, the actual cars being 5196-6196-6197-5197+5198-6198-6199-5199¹³. The driver was motorman James Stone of Baker Street, who joined the staff of the Metropolitan Railway Company in 1915 and, now aged 65, has been driving Underground trains for 26 years. There were over 500 other guests in the train, including the Minister of Transport (Mr. Ernest Marples), the Sheriffs of the City, Members of Parliament, the Chairman of the London County Council, Mayors of London Boroughs, and heads of Underground railways in Barcelona, Berlin¹⁴, Boston, Glasgow, Hamburg, Lisbon, Madrid, Milan, Moscow, New York, Oslo, Paris, Rome, Rotterdam, Stockholm, Tokyo, And Toronto.

¹⁰ A small number of P Stock trains were still at work on the Metropolitan Line’s Uxbridge service. They had all been replaced by A60/62 stock by the end of 1963.

¹¹ This came from the Piccadilly Line and although not in overhauled condition, was specially cleaned for the event.

¹² This unit was transferred from the Central to the Piccadilly Line the previous month.

¹³ These were very new units and both had first entered passenger service as a complete train on 4 May 1963.

¹⁴ London Transport had presented the Berlin Transport Authority (BVG) a station name bullseye sign for Wittenbergplatz for the BVG’s 50th anniversary in 1952 which is still proudly on display today on the westbound platform served by line U2.

The train started from platform No.14 at Paddington suburban station¹⁵ (on the site of the original Bishop's Road station), at 12.07 and ran to Moorgate, arrival there being in platform road No.4 at 12.25. Drawn up to the buffers on platform road No.5 were the two Smith & Knight wagon replicas, with their period passengers re-enacting the tableau presented the previous day at Neasden. The two wagons were headed by 0-4-4T L46, while L44 and a brake van were standing at the far end of the road to platforms 7 and 8 – waiting to take the replica wagons away after the tableau had finished – this it did very promptly, and was closely followed up the line by L46 running light.

After the passengers in the special had detrained and seen the tableau (which incidentally was being presented on the 101st anniversary of the trip by Mr. Gladstone it depicted), they left the station by a special staircase built at the end of platform 4, and embarked for the Mansion House in a fleet of five LT Routemaster buses. At the Mansion House a luncheon was held.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY 25 & 26 MAY – DISPLAY OF ROLLING STOCK

On these two days, the items used in the Parade on the Thursday were placed on display to the public in the Inspection Shed at Neasden depot, together with a few smaller items, such as the under-floor wheel lathe, a metadyne machine, and various motors and items of smaller nature. Admission was 2/- (equivalent 10p today) for adults and 1/- (5p) for children, but this did not deter anyone – at times it seemed almost as popular a show as the Cup Final taking place next door! There was a refreshment tent, and a stall for the sale of books and postcards – both were extremely popular, and outside the shed the Emergency Tenders 852J, 925B, 111J and 1274ED were on view.

On the Sunday, the steam stock coaches were not on view, being used on the enthusiasts' special, but parties were taken by minibus to view the adjacent power station¹⁶. Coach excursions were run from Crawley, Stevenage and Hemel Hempstead on the Sunday afternoon, at an all-in fare which included admission to the exhibition. The display was open from 10.00 to 17.00 on the Saturday, and should have been open from 14.00 till 18.00 on the Sunday, but had proved so popular the first day that it was in fact open on Sunday from 11.30 to 18.00.

SUNDAY 26 MAY – ENTHUSIASTS' COMMEMORATIVE TRAIN

This comprised steam stock coaches (from Baker Street end on the outward journey) 427-465-469-440-509-448. The motive power from Baker Street to Amersham on the outward journey, and from Amersham to Watford and then to Baker Street on the return, was electric locomotive No.5 "John Hampden". From Amersham out to Aylesbury and return, British Railways steam provided the motive power – most surprisingly, a Jubilee 4-6-0 No 45709 "Implacable". This hauled the train tender first on the outward journey, and bore the shed plate 21A – Saltley (Birmingham).

¹⁵ Is this the only time that an A Stock train has ventured on the Hammersmith & City Line, albeit only as far as Paddington, apart from trains that have had to work to and from Edgware Road in emergency situations?

¹⁶ Even though Neasden Power House was diagonally opposite the main depot buildings, it would have meant crossing live tracks – as far as your Editor can recall, the north end of the depot was still a working area and thus visits to the Power Station were by minibus. Leaving the depot by Neasden station, we were taken around the local roads to reach the Power Station, the entrance being through the "Metropolitan Village" with its Met. Railway street names, which was then a revelation to your Editor, who was then still at school!

The weather was fine, the run interesting and comfortable, and not overcrowded (the fare of £1 may have restricted support), so those who went had a thoroughly enjoyable, if sad, afternoon.

The published itinerary and times were as follows, actual times being shown also:

		Published Time	Actual Time	Remarks
Baker Street	dep	14.15	14.16	Platform 3
Harrow	dep	14.32	14.33½	
Amersham	dep	15.15	15.15	Arrive 14.55. Loco change
Aylesbury	arr	15.37	15.37	Platform 3
Aylesbury	dep	16.15	16.15	Platform 4
Amersham	dep	16.48	16.50	Arrive 16.41. Loco change
Watford	dep	17.14	17.15	Arrive 17.06. Loco run-round
Baker Street	arr	17.48	17.45	Platform 3

A large number of the enthusiast passengers on the train waited to see it depart empty for Neasden depot, the extension line¹⁷ platforms at Baker Street remaining quite crowded until the steam stock had rolled away into the tunnel for the last time. Needless to say, cameras and tape-recorders were very prominent at this time – as they had been all afternoon.

MISCELLANEA

Publications – The books “The Story of London’s Underground” and “How the Underground Works” were published by the LTB on Saturday 25 May to coincide with the exhibition. An attractively illustrated booklet was also issued to visitors to the exhibition, and the Programme for the Parade on Thursday 23 May took the form of an elongated playbill in 19th-century style. This last was available in various languages. “The Times” published a special supplement covering the Centenary story also.

Plaque – On Friday 25 May, a plaque was unveiled at Baker Street station, in Marylebone Road, commemorating the opening of “the world’s first underground passenger railway”.

Tickets – Special tickets were issued for the train to the parade on 23 May (black on dark red card, slightly larger than a normal ticket), for the Lord Mayor’s special train on 24 May (black and gold on white card) and for the commemoration train on 26 May (a rover-sized ticket printed in deep red on pale grey card). Special tickets for adults (2/-) and children (1/-) were also printed for admission to the display at Neasden on 25/26 May.

Films – The film show, which is being presented daily at the Charing Cross station cinema¹⁸ from 27 May to 31st August (except Sundays), comprises two films –

¹⁷ When the Metropolitan was first opened from Baker Street to Swiss Cottage, it became known as the “Extension Line”, as it was one of the early extensions from the pioneer route. Because it was also the Baker Street & St. John’s Wood Railway, it was also known as “the Wood Line”. These two unofficial names have stuck for many years and are still occasionally referred to as such by “old timers” today!

¹⁸ For many years in the post-war period, London Transport held small exhibitions and showed films at Charing Cross Underground station (today’s Embankment station). Your Editor recalls an exhibition on signalling and train equipment, and was able to fulfil a young childhood ambition to operate signal push buttons and seeing the signal aspects change, and also operating push

“Underground Centenary” and “Experiment under London”, the latter showing the new type of tunnels on the stretch of the Victoria Line already built. Times of showing these films were each hour from 11.00 to 19.00, except 16.00.

Postmark – A commemorative postmark was authorised by the Postmaster General, and was used at certain London offices while the celebrations were on. This read “1863-1963 Underground A Century in London's Service” in four lines, and with the London Transport “bar-and-circle” symbol to the left of “Underground”.

buttons to open and close train doors. The cinema was certainly still flourishing in 1965. Have any other readers any recollections of the Charing Cross cinema and when did it close?