

CENTRAL LONDON RAILWAY TRAFFIC STAFF: PART 1

by David Millard, TfL Archives Volunteer

BACKGROUND

In comparison with the registers of salaried staff and booking clerks, the Central London Railway register of Traffic Staff No.3 is a substantial volume: it has 303 double pages, and 1,272 staff. Traffic Staff included station staff (except booking clerks), train staff (except drivers) and signalmen.

Traffic Staff Register No.3 records no resignations before 23 April 1904, apart from two, in 1901 and 1903. In both cases, the staff later re-joined the company. This suggests that the register was prepared in April 1904, copying the records of staff who were still employed from an earlier version. The register lasted until 1913.

Page 1 is shown below. The first entry is for Mr. George Ravening, the Chief Inspector, the most senior official in the register, whose pay rose from 52/6d (£2.62½) per week in 1900 to 75/- (£3.75) in 1911.

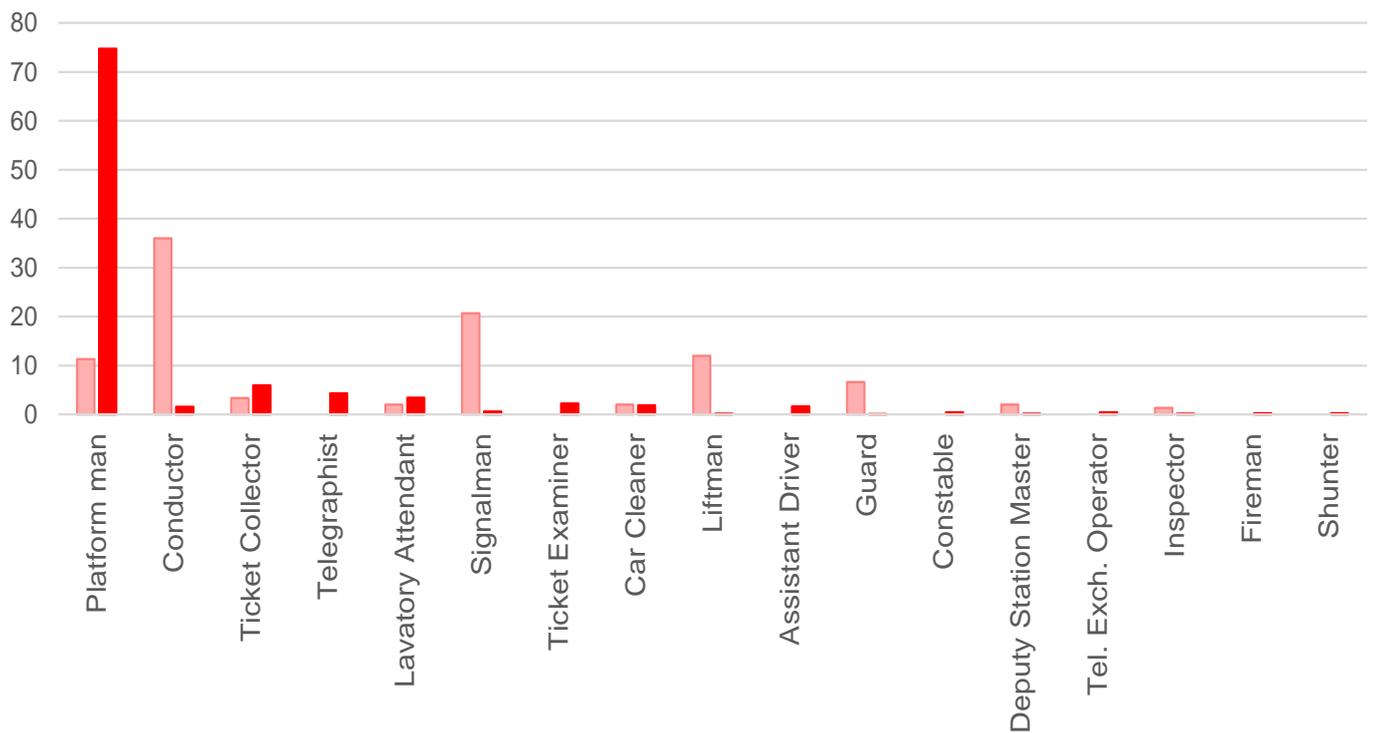
Badge Number	Name (Surname First)	Date of Birth	ENTERED SERVICE			PROMOTION			Offences and how dealt with
			Date	Position	Rate of Pay	Date	Position	Rate of Pay	
1	Ravening George Charles	April 15 th 1850 Height 5ft 9ins	September 1900	Chief Inspector	52/6 per week	January 1902	Chief Inspector	54/6 per week	
2	Cole Edward Alfred	1850 August 23 Height 5ft 10ins	1900 Dec 30	Platform man	4/6 per hour	1908 November	Dismissed	Dismissed for bad time keeping	
7	Reese Henry Thomas	1859 May 12 Height 5ft 11ins	1900 May 12 1909 Oct 12	Inspector Ticket Collector	5/6 per week 5/6 per week				1901 Reprimanded for having been a mail thief as seen at British Museum 1901 Reprimanded for having been a mail thief as seen at British Museum 1901 Reprimanded for having been a mail thief as seen at British Museum 1901 Reprimanded for having been a mail thief as seen at British Museum 1901 Reprimanded for having been a mail thief as seen at British Museum
3	Sturmer Edward Henry	July 20 th 1879 Height 5ft 11ins	July 25 th 1900	Platform Man	4/6 per hour	October 1900	Conductor	7/6 per week	Overtook his annual leave on September 20 th 1903. Rep. reprimanded.
3	Drazer Frank	1891 December 15 Height 5ft 6ins	Feb 27 1908	Telegraphist	5/6 per week	July 25 1910	Telegraphist and Telephone Operator	7/6 per week	1902 May 12. Transferred to Booking Office Staff

RECRUITMENT BEFORE AND AFTER OPENING IN 1900

As shown below, staff were appointed to a variety of grades prior to line opening, with conductors, signalmen and liftmen being the most recruited. After this time, three-quarters of all appointments were platform men, with internal promotions to conductors, liftmen, ticket collectors and signalmen.

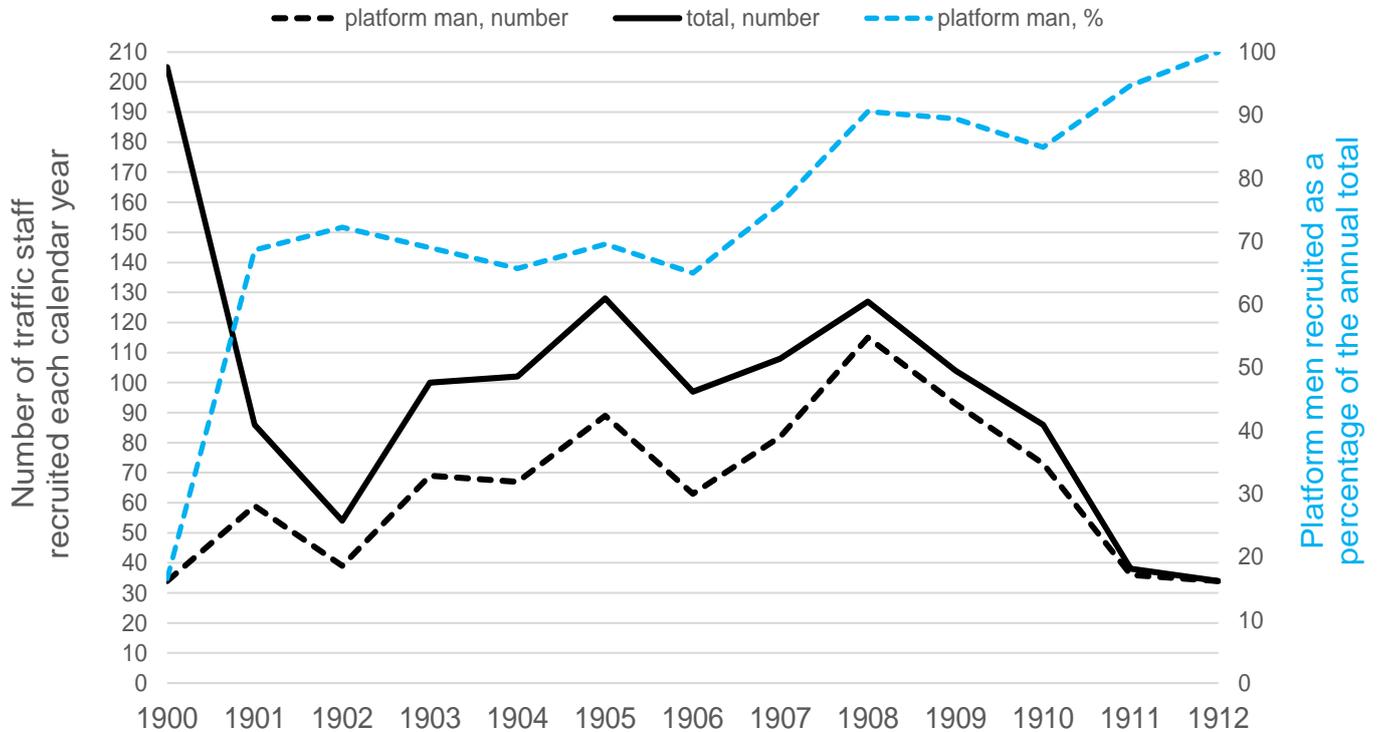
Central London Railway traffic staff: % of appointments to individual grades

■ prior to opening: 30 July 1900: (150)
■ from opening until 1913: (1122)



The year-on-year increase in platform men as a percentage of total recruitment is shown below. The % of platform men appointments rose sharply in 1901 to two-thirds, reaching 100% by 1912.

Central London Railway, platform man and traffic staff recruitment



There were also appointments to other grades:

Chief Inspector

Lampman

Police Inspector

Chief Lavatory Attendant

Lost Property Attendant

Station Man

Cycle Porter

Messenger

Timekeeper

Deputy Yardmaster

Motor Cleaner Engineering Dept

Train Recorder

Driver

Office Boy Stores Department

Training Inspector

Interpreter

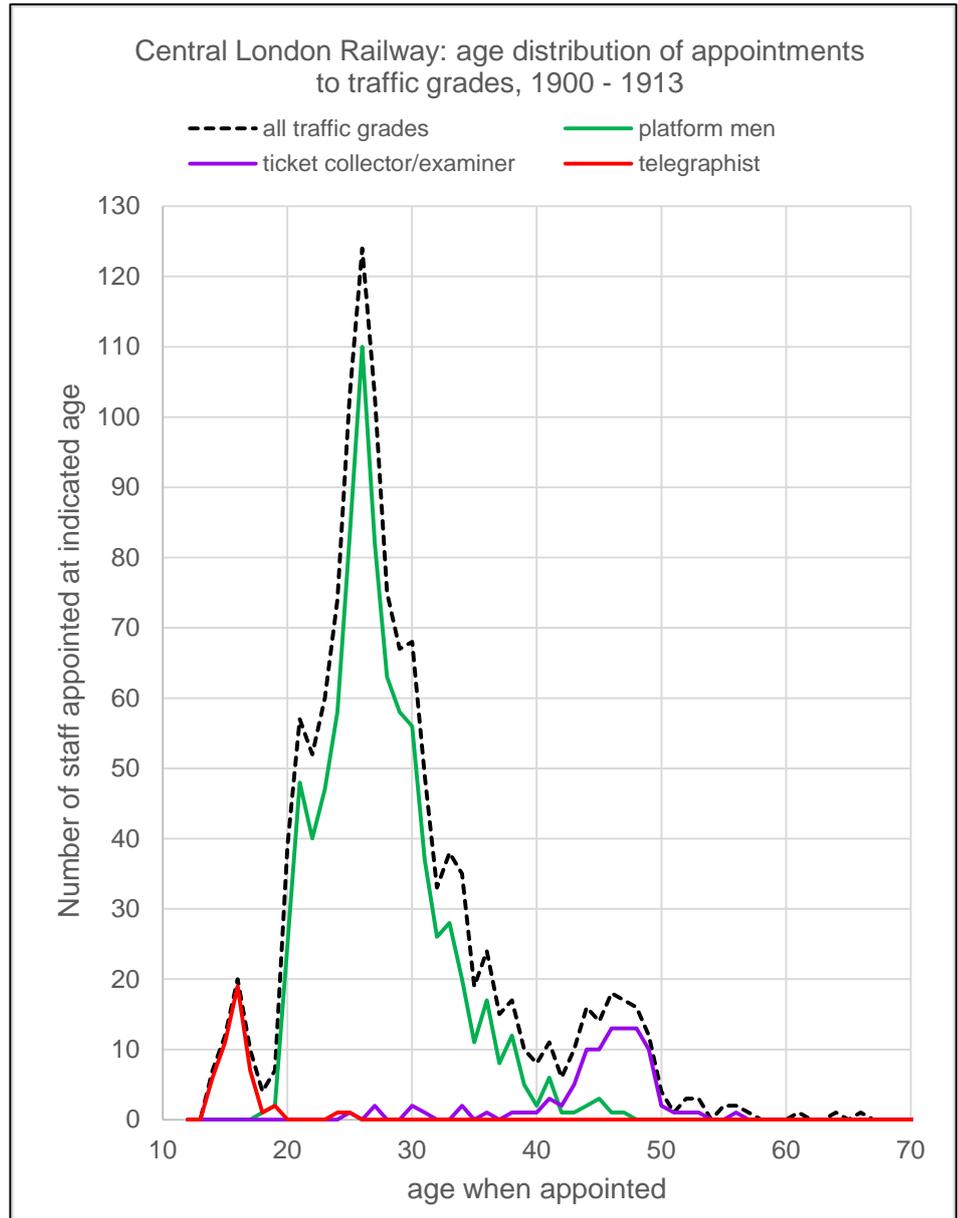
Platform Man & Telegraphist

Yardmaster

The graph (*Right*) shows how old staff were on appointment. The dotted black line, for all traffic grades, shows small peaks at 16, and 46 – 48, with a much larger peak at 26 years. The small peak at 16 aligns with that for telegraphists, recruited to record the passage of trains in signal boxes. The small peak in the late 40s matches the profile for ticket collector/examiner. The large central peak is dominated by platform men.

RECRUITMENT AND WASTAGE

The dates of appointment and (for some staff) departure have been collected for each month from 1900 – 1914. Monthly rates of recruitment and resignation/dismissal are shown below. The excess of recruitment over departure has been accumulated to give a figure for the overall number of traffic staff. Given the earlier point regarding staff who departed before April 1904 being omitted, the graph of overall number of staff between 1900 and 1904 may not be representative. The figures in the



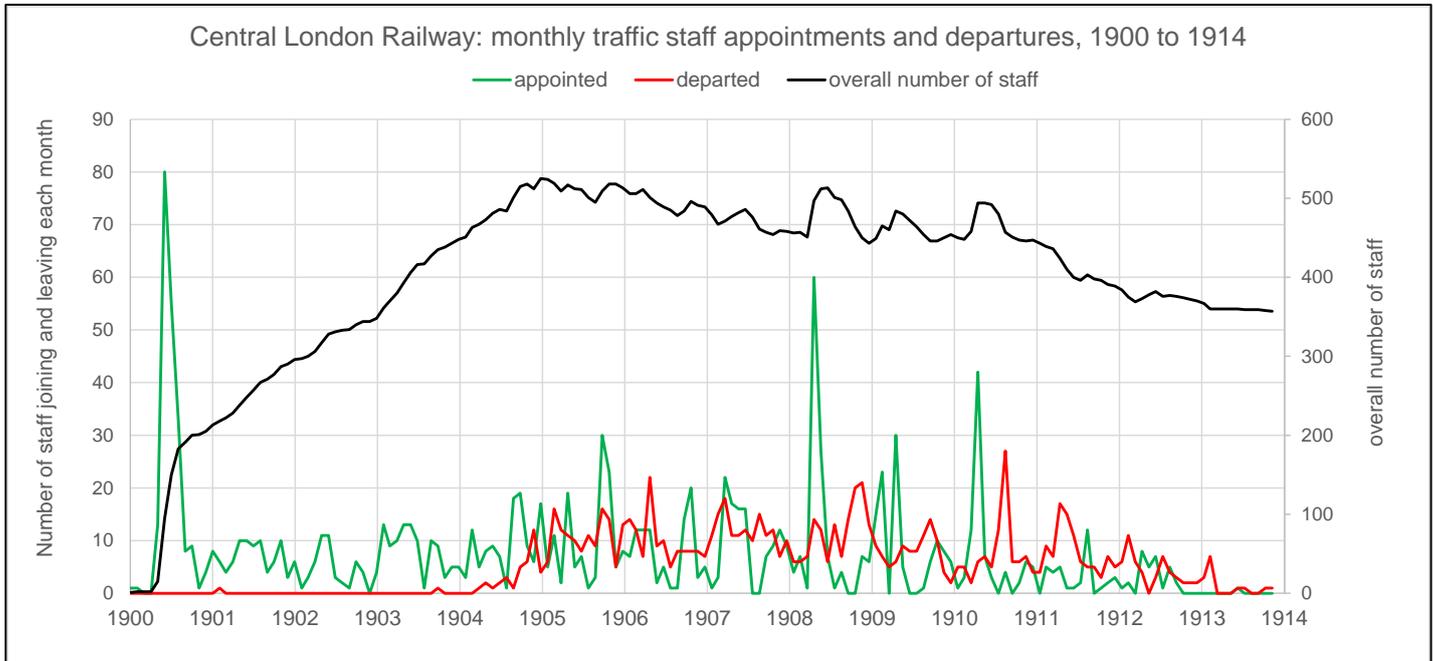
graph suggest that the total number of traffic staff when the line opened on 30 July 1900 were 150. This seems to be well below the number of traffic staff (nearly 300, see below) that might be needed to operate all the 12 stations and operate a nominal 10 trains.

(Nominal estimate: on average, per station, with no allowance for leave or sickness:

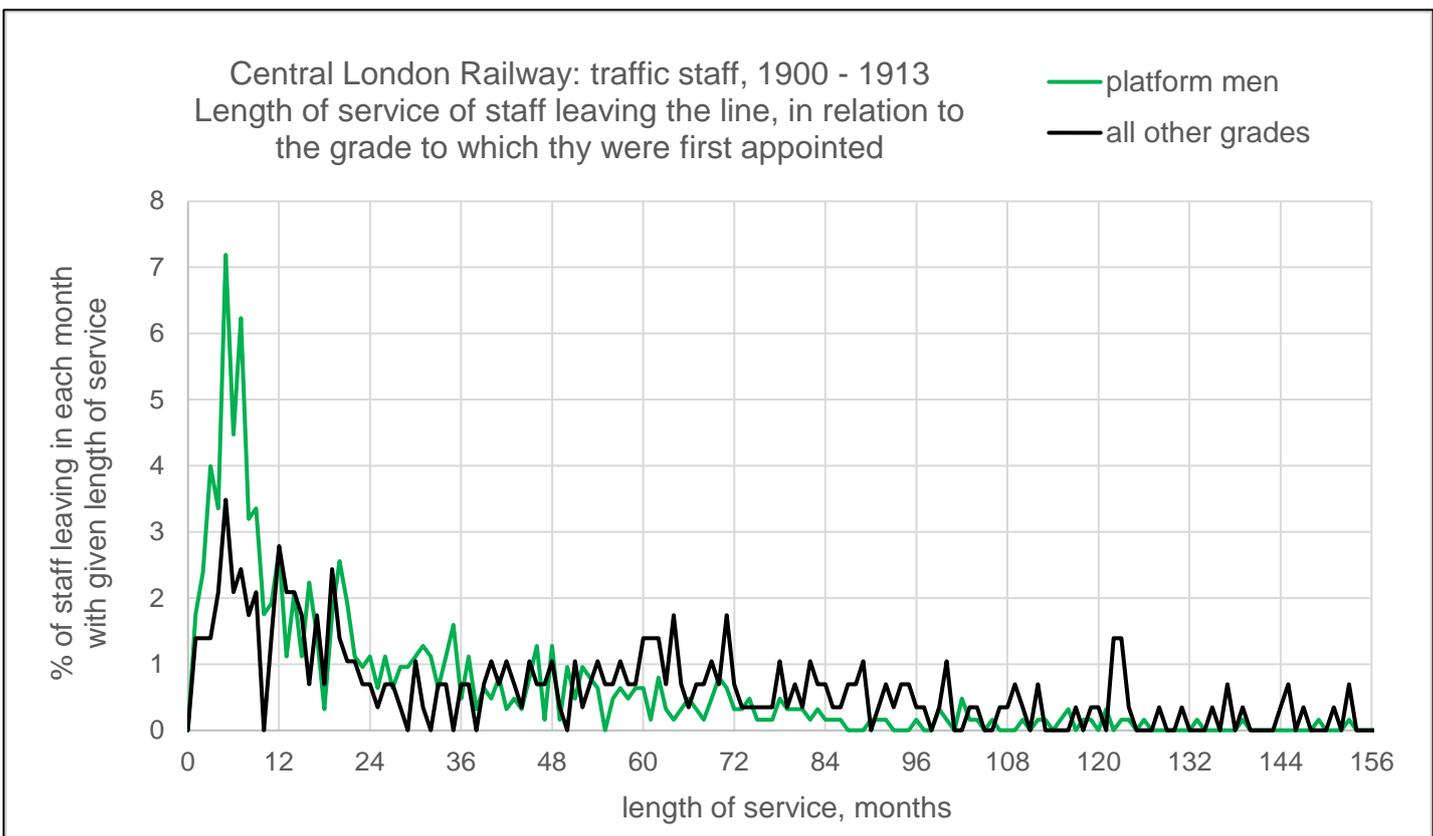
- Platform man: 1 early, 1 late
- Liftman: 2 early, 2 late
- Ticket Coll/Ex: 2 early, 2 late
- Signalman: 1 early, 1 late, 1 night
- Station Master/Deputy: 1 early, 1 middle, 1 late

Total for 12 stations: $16 \times 12 = 192$.
 Per train: 3 conductors, 1 Front Guard, 1 Rear Guard, all early and late
 Total for nominal 10 trains: $5 \times 2 \times 10 = 100$
 Total Traffic Staff: $192 + 100 = 292$

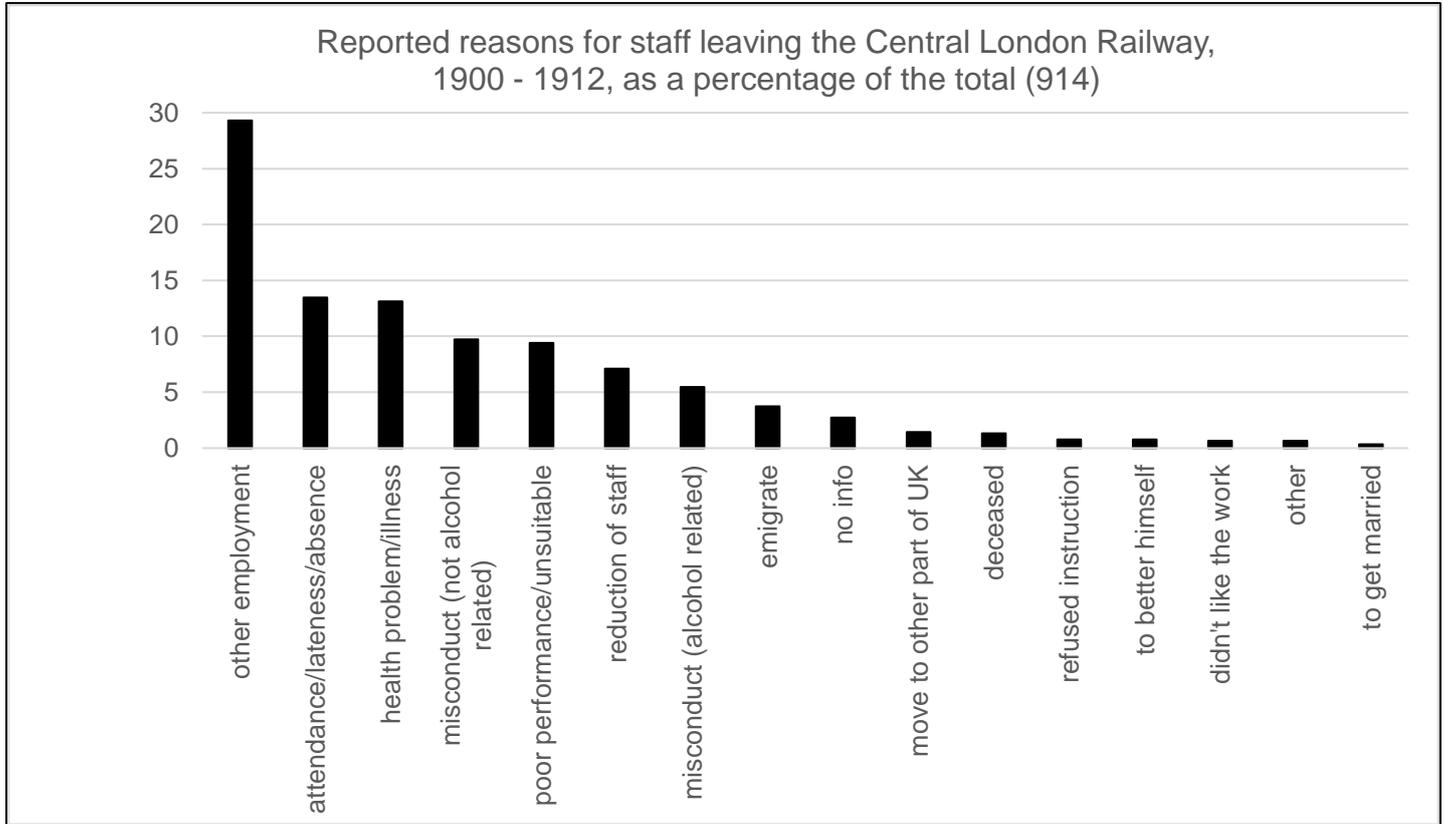
There are peaks of recruitment around 1906 (some staff did depart for the three tube railways that opened in 1906/07). There was also a larger 'spike' in 1908, possibly to fill vacancies, possibly also for the International Exhibition at Wood Lane, which attracted 8 million visitors. The falling profile may also reflect the posts lost with the abolition of Assistant Drivers in 1908 and the closure of many signal boxes when automatic signalling was introduced from 1912.



The graph below shows the % of staff who left with a given number of months' service. 42% of staff appointed as platform men left with a year's service or less. The corresponding figure for all other grades being 22%. This reflects the fact that, from 1901, most people were appointed initially as a platform man.

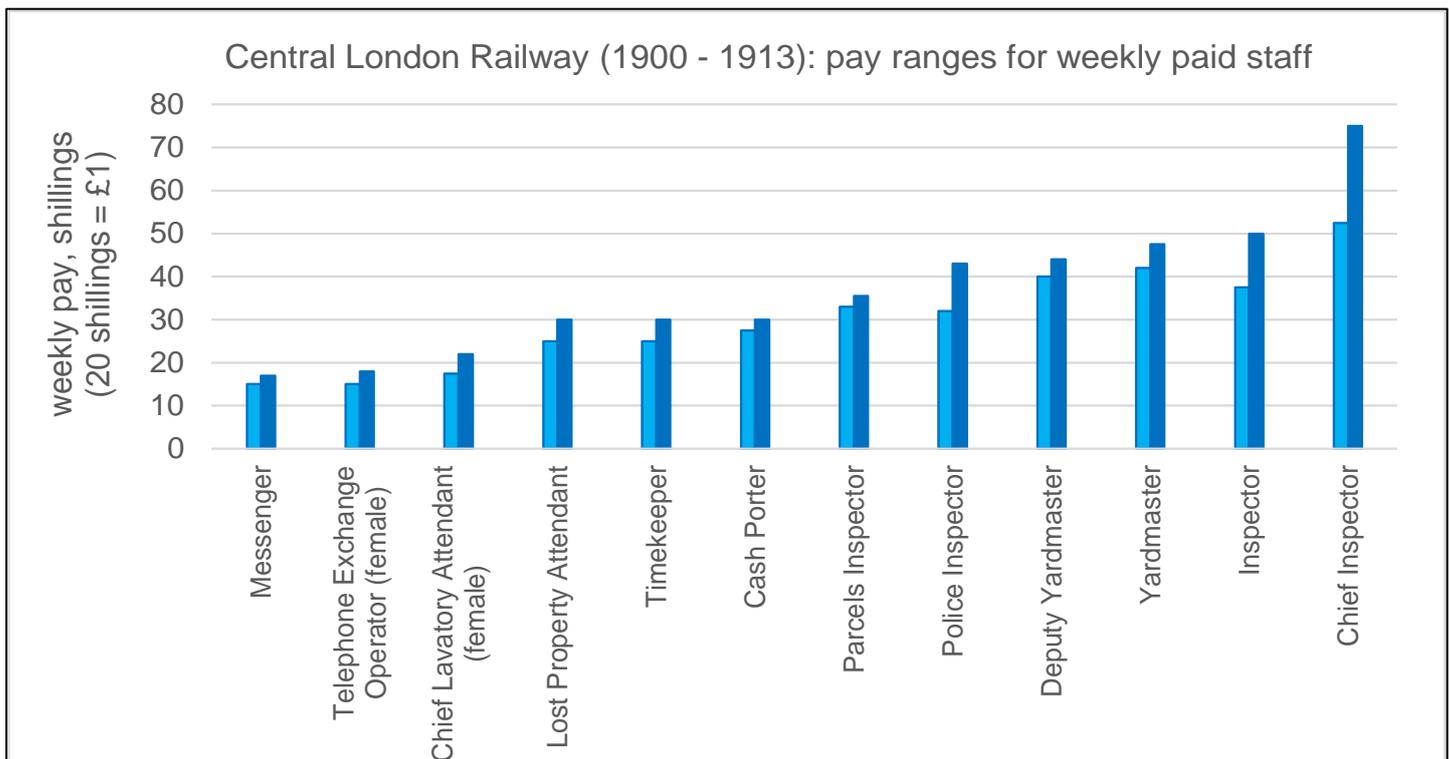


The graph (*Previous Page, Lower*) reflects the reported reason for each person leaving the railway. This will be somewhat approximate, as several reasons were sometimes given, any one of which might have been the dominant one. Platform men were the most frequently affected by reduction of staff: as often as not they were reinstated a few weeks later. No distinction is drawn between resignations and dismissals: 'allowed to resign, rather than be investigated for a disciplinary matter' was a frequent comment. Health problems, particularly defective eyesight, and persistent lateness, were also prevalent. Although not common overall, (female staff were only employed as lavatory attendants and exchange telephone operators,) three female staff resigned in order to get married.



RATES OF PAY

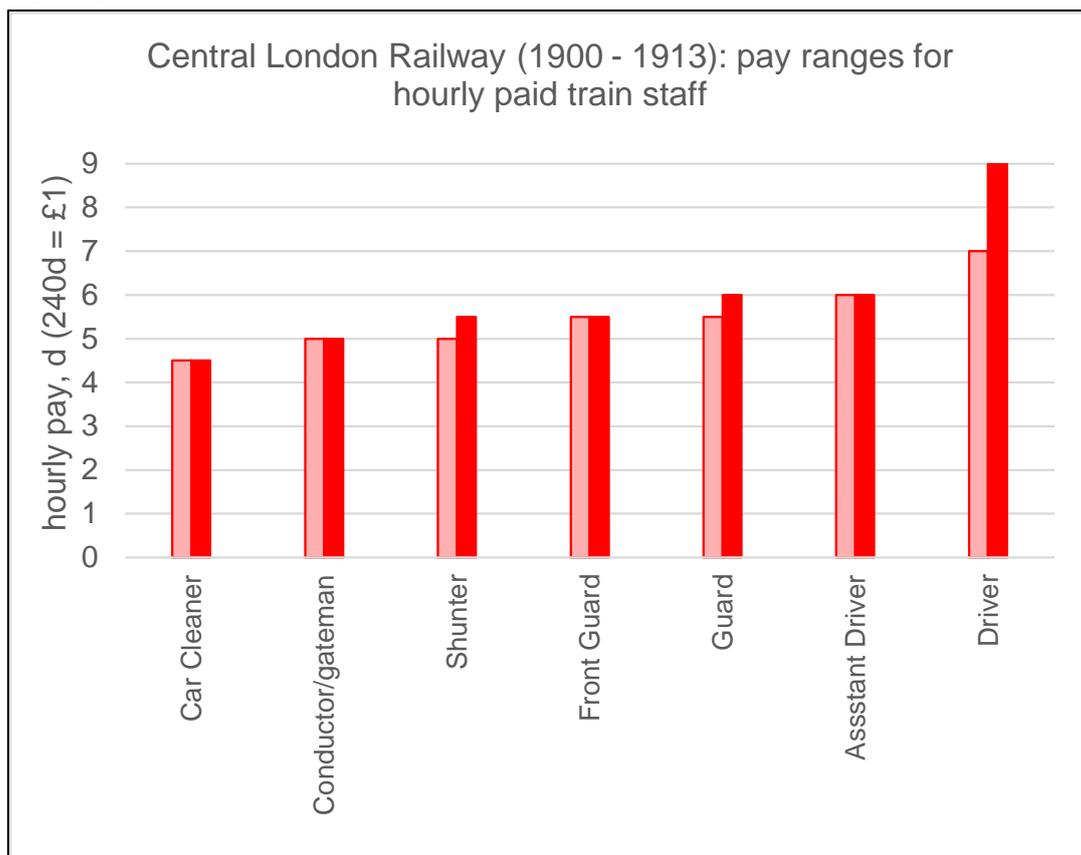
An insight into the status of staff can be inferred from their pay. Yardmaster, Inspector and Chief Inspector were at the top end of the scale of weekly paid staff, with messengers and female roles at the other.



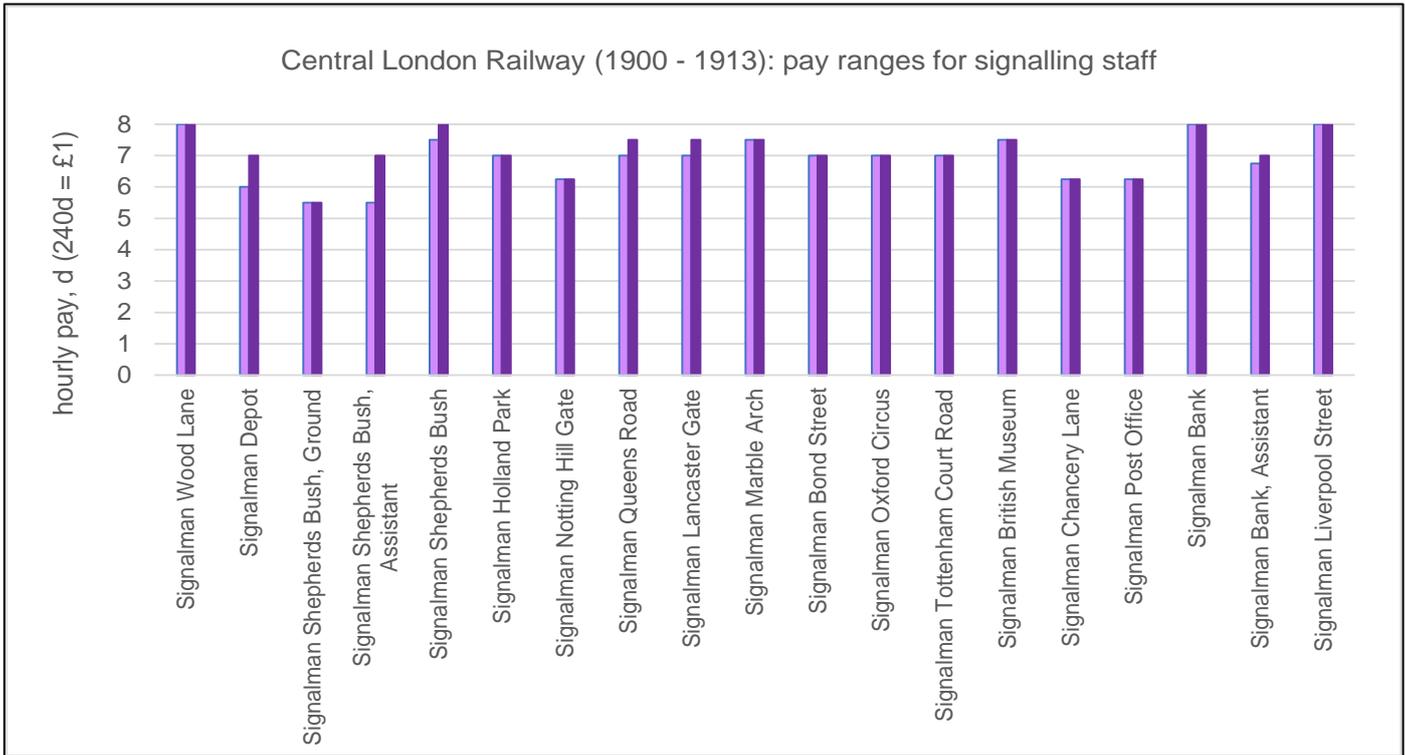
Amongst hourly paid station staff, young and female staff also featured near the bottom of the pay scale. Male staff were occasionally employed as lavatory attendants, being paid 4d per hour, 60% more than females were paid for the same job. The Escalator Attendant was provided for the extension to Liverpool Street in 1912. The relatively few Constables had their pay reduced from 6¹/₄ to 5¹/₂d per hour in February 1907. Most station staff were paid in the range of 4 – 5d per hour.



Most train staff were paid between 5 – 6d per hour. The usual entry grade was Conductor/gateman, with promotion initially to Front Guard, who gave the signal for the driver to start from a station. The next step was to (rear) Guard, who was in charge of the train, and the one who authorised the Front Guard to give the departure signal. Traffic Staff Drivers and Assistant Drivers were rare, most being in the Engineering Department.

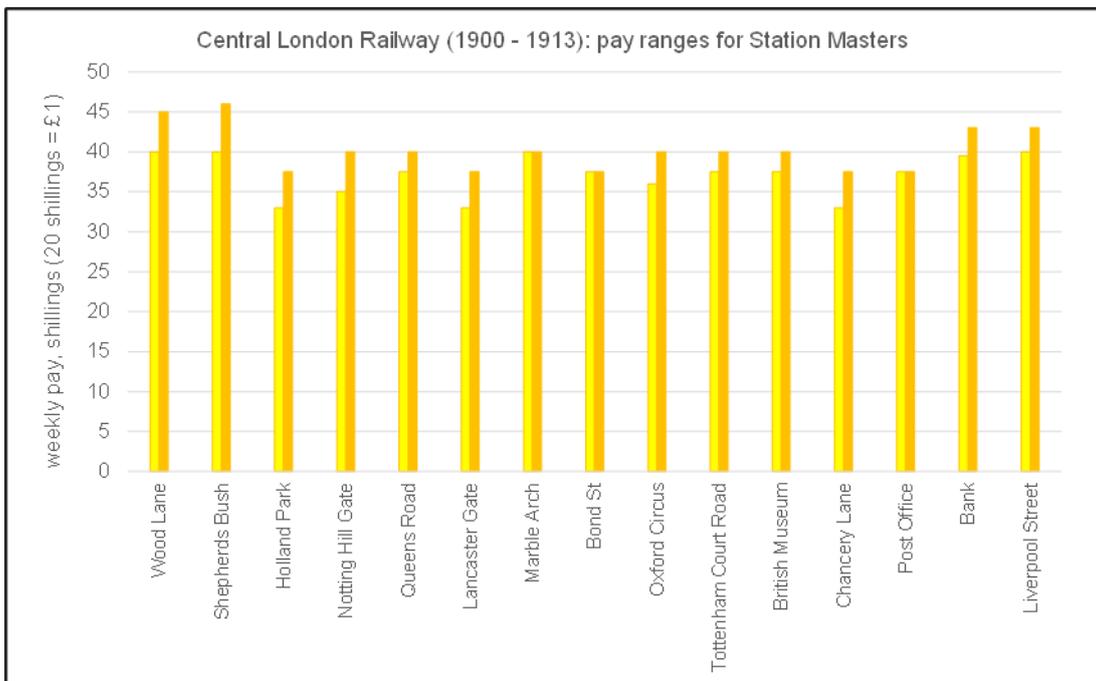


Pay for signalling staff was broadly based on the workload and complexity of the signal box.



Location	d per hour	Description
Notting Hill Gate	6.25	One signal box for each line
Chancery Lane	6.25	at each station
Post Office	6.25	Platforms vertically separated
Holland Park	7	One signal box for a pair
Lancaster Gate	7 - 7.5	of lines
Bond Street	7	No sidings or
Oxford Circus	7	crossovers
Tottenham Court Road	7	
Queens Road	7 - 7.5	One signal box for a pair
Marble Arch	7.5	of lines
British Museum	7.5	Siding at each station
Wood Lane	8	Terminus (from 1908)
Shepherd's Bush	7.5 - 8	Terminus (until 1908)
Bank	8	Terminus (until 1912)
Liverpool Street	8	Terminus (until 1912)

There was some variability in the pay for individual Station Masters working at the same location. The graph (*Left*) also shows pay varying a little with the likely operational challenge and customer demand: terminal stations paid slightly higher, and relatively quiet stations slightly lower. The level of pay for Deputy Station Masters at a location was consistently around 90% of that for the Station Master.



CONCLUDING REMARKS

The above analysis provides an insight into when Central London Railway Traffic staff arrived, and how they were paid, promoted and departed. At this time, the railway was the first substantial tube railway to cross the centre of London. Alongside its pioneering nature, there seems to have been a rational basis for the staff's weekly and hourly pay rates, noting that gender equality was several decades into the future. In later articles, I will be exploring reported incidents, using staff register entries to show how stations, trains and signals were operated.

The information in this article has been taken from Central London Railway Traffic Staff Register No.3 (reference LT 449 33), held by Transport for London Archives. As a result of Covid-19 the TfL Corporate Archives Search room is currently closed but the Archives Team can provide a limited enquiry service and can be contacted at **CorporateArchives@tfl.gov.uk**