

REPORTS OF SOCIETY MEETING

“THE TUBEMAPPER PROJECT – THE STORY CONTINUES”

by Luke Agbaimoni

A report of the presentation given to the Society at the Gallery at Alan Baxter, Cowcross Street, London, E.C.1 on Tuesday 7 January 2025

There are currently 272 Underground stations, 113 Overground stations, 45 Docklands Light Railway, 39 Tram stops and 41 stations on the Elizabeth Line. The aim of the Tubemapper Project is to capture visual moments at each and every one of them.

Luke is a photographer and has recently published his third book “Contrast” which is 50:50 between colour and black and white photography, and a calendar for 2025. He studied at Camberwell College of Art and subsequently worked in the field of Graphic Design. He entered, and subsequently, won a competition run by TfL for an image of the Docklands, and the prize was a professional level camera. He started taking pictures on his commute into work and posting them online. The reception was so positive that the Tubemapper Project was born. Eventually, Luke hopes to have mapped every subway system in the World!

Glasgow Subway

He visited Glasgow in 2024 for an arranged visit and meet the moquette designer Anna Campbell-Jones. Their rolling stock is similar, but smaller than London Underground's, and it is just one circular, line – so it feels like you are on an overgrown train set. The system recently celebrated its 128th anniversary. Luke shared a selection of his photographs showing a selection of the old and its replacement Stadler stock and the island platforms at stations, which are very narrow. Luke plans to revisit Glasgow and publish a calendar or possibly, a limited edition book.

Underground / Overground

Only about 45% of the London Underground is actually Underground so Luke has been “wombling” around, in the majority at above ground locations in his project, alternating with underground shots as well.

At Woodside Tram Stop, there is an old station house, and Luke likes to get shots of trams passing under this. However, to his horror, just as he was lining up his shot, a white cat strolled across the tracks in front of the Tram, which slowed down to allow the moggy safe passage.

The north end of the Bakerloo platforms at Piccadilly Circus gives a shot of two trains heading in different directions.

A plane above Boston Manor tower, which Luke calls “Boston to Boston” as the Airbus A380 pictured could actually be on that route.

Showing how tight the clearance is between trains and tunnel walls at Hendon. There are similar situations at Morden and looking down onto the Piccadilly Line, from the bridge near M&S in Southgate.

Sunset at Hillingdon, with a Routemaster bus going over the road bridge.

A driver illuminated by the tunnel lights at Kennington.

Finally, the DLR going underground at Cutty Sark and then overground at Canary Wharf.

FUTURISTIC / TIMELESS

The London Underground grants every user the ability to become a time traveller. Walking down a hallway surrounded by old signage and original features can magically transport you back to the early 1900s. We can taste a world that existed over 100 years ago, and see hints of how our society functioned before today's technological advances. But once we ride a few stops on a train or walk to a different station area, we can suddenly feel like we are roaming a futuristic society with shiny walls, metallic buttons and modern architecture. Heritage sites, such as Baker Street; Hampstead with its portal decorations; Tooting Bec and its chandeliers; and Covent Garden.

More Futuristic, like Pimlico with the floor and ceiling roundels, which appear to be a transportation device as on Star Trek; reflective, spaceship like, walls at Southwark; the “Rainbow” tunnel near King's Cross; and Heron Quays.

NIGHT LIGHT / DAY LIGHT

The London Underground is a visual spectacle no matter what time you travel. During the day, Luke likes observing how the shadows and sunlight interact with the architecture, introducing light and highlighting features that are easy to disregard. Meanwhile, the city takes on a new life at night, like it's wearing its 'going out' clothing. The artificial lights welcome new colours to architecture, giving structures new meaning in their transformed appearance. Heavy rainfall further enhances this nocturnal transformation.

- Colliers Wood.
- Cyprus DLR, when the sun is in the exact point to cast shadows of the concrete supports onto the wall, which only lasts for about 3 minutes.
- Euston, at night in the rain.
- Crystal Palace overground station, with its stunning architecture.
- Reflections of North Wembley.
- Therapia Lane tram stop at sunset.
- Harrow-on-the-Hill rear entrance, which was originally to have a building on top, but the project was cancelled.
- Projected reflections of roundels at Victoria, (Cardinal Place Entrance) and at Nine Elms.
- Shadwell, with a cyclist going past.

CURVES / STRAIGHT LINES

The Tube map is a complex maze of intricate intersecting lines and curves, with each train line guiding you to locations that have unique identities and historical relevance. The architectural structures of the stations you'll encounter on your journeys can vary quite dramatically depending on where you are on the network. Luke loves the contrast between the sharp angular lines of long square pathways and the sweeping curves of spiral staircases and round tunnels.

- Elizabeth Line passageway at Bond Street.
- Waterloo Underground station entrance on York Way, looking up at the building and roundel.
- Bow Road, with its green and yellow pillars.
- New Central Line moquette with its circles and lines.
- Platform tiling at Waterloo, which looks like a piano keyboard.
- Shelter at East Finchley, showing lines of symmetry, even the passengers.
- The Greathead Shield at Bank station, which is Luke's favourite station as it mixes old and new.
- The IFS Cloud Cable Car.

LONG EXPOSURE / SHORT EXPOSURE

As we stand on station platforms waiting for our trains to arrive, our minds focus on the passing of time. Seconds, minutes and hours rush by, like trains zooming down a platform. The camera, however, perceives time differently from humans, they capture moments. These can be short or prolonged. Short exposures freeze time, capturing fleeting instances, such as stopping a bird in motion or slowing down a speeding vehicle. Long exposures display the passing of time, visually conveying any changes, movements that occur within the duration of the exposure, like a blurry train travelling down a platform for half a second.

Trams zooming off from Church Street and Wellesley Road tram stops; Heron Gull captured in flight at West India Quay DLR; Embankment; Rotherhithe: making use of the wall art; an angel at Angel; "Archie" the Archer at East Finchley; "Seven Birds for Seven Sisters": seven pigeons at Seven Sisters, Luke is thankful for cropping tools as the original shot had an eighth bird; Cutty Sark from the front seat.

PHOTOGRAPHY PUNS

To finish, Luke showed some funnies, including –

- James Bond, (with an Oyster card instead of a gun) at Bond Street on the opening day for the Elizabeth Line platforms.
- Barbie at Barbican.
- A stuffed Paddington Bear at Paddington Circle Line, heading off with his Oyster Card.
- "Train, Set and Match" at Southfields, during a Wimbledon fortnight.
- "Storm Tuber": someone dressed up as a Star Wars Storm Trooper on a train at Canning Town, heading to a Comic Com event at EXCEL.

Luke finished by giving a short sales pitch for his 2025 calendar and his three books: The Tubemapper Project; Symmetry & Imperfections; and Contrast, which are all available on-line.

There were no questions, so the meeting thanked Luke heartily in the usual manner.

Amanda Griffiths

"AT LONDON'S SERVICE"

by Kim Rennie

An illustrated talk to the Society given on Tuesday 4 March 2025
at The Gallery at Alan Baxter, Cowcross Street, London, E.C.1

The March 2025 Society meeting welcomed back Kim Rennie, who presented his review of TfL (principally LU) activities during 2023 and 2024. Kim started by saying he had deliberately reduced the number of slides to be shown this time, and capped them at 250, to avoid the risk of proceedings overrunning, as had sometimes occurred in the past.

Among subjects covered were:

- 'Love the Tube' station roundels and pin badges 2023.
- 1972 Tube Stock refurbishment for RVAR compliance.
- 1992 Tube Stock refurbishment for RVAR compliance and CLIP.
- 2009 Tube Stock car with PlayStation advertising moquette late-2024.
- Advertising wraps at various stations.
- *Art on the Underground* installations at Bethnal Green, Gloucester Road, Notting Hill Gate and Stratford.
- Bank new entrance in Cannon Street February 2023.
- Bond Street renamed Burberry Street in sponsorship deal September 2023.
- Canary Wharf (XR) new escalators to shopping mall November 2023.
- Class 313 units withdrawn by Southern (formerly used over parts of the Bakerloo Line, District Line, and on the ex-LT Northern City Line) May 2023.

- Colindale closed for rebuilding June 2024.
- Colindale reopened December 2024.
- Coronation 'Crownrels' May 2023.
- Kentish Town closed for escalator replacement June 2023.
- Kentish Town reopened December 2024.
- King's Cross Pentonville Road entrance hoarded-off October 2023.
- London Overground line re-naming November 2024.
- LTM 1938 Tube Stock runs May 2023, June 2023, and July 2024.
- Maps – new issues of the leaflet 'Tube map' dated May 2023, December 2023, September 2023, and December 2024.
- Old Street new surface entrance under construction February 2024.
- Old Street renamed Fold Street in sponsorship deal July 2024.
- Paddington new Bakerloo Line entrance September 2024.
- Poppy station roundels 2023.
- Posters – including various TfL 'improvement' schemes, the Superloop bus routes, several 1930s designs reissued to encourage West End theatre traffic, various safety campaigns, LT Museum events and Christmas gifts.
- Richmond station refurbishment and uncovering of Southern Railway 1930s signage 2024.
- Signalling – Two extensions of the CBTC system, from Stepney Green to Becontree January 2023 and from Becontree to Upminster March 2023 (there were no further advances in 2024).
- Stratford new Gibbins Road entrance July 2024.
- TfL Covid Memorial in Aldgate 2023.
- The Coronation – posters, the special central area map leaflet, and three either official or unofficial commemorative pin badges May 2023.
- Victoria Station Arcade reopened September 2024.

Kim concluded with a tribute to the late Fred Ivey – including images of him with Chief Clerk John Barrie and Guard David Lane at Uxbridge from *London Transport Magazine*, collecting a 'Best Kept Station' award from LT Chairman Sir Richard Way at 55 Broadway in 1971 (which Fred had then left early in order to be on the last public run of the BR double-deck 4DD units!), being captured by chance in an official LT photo of a CP Stock enthusiasts' rail tour at Uxbridge c.1976 (an early example of 'photobombing'?), launching the book '*London's Transport Photographers – Fred Ivey*' in 1979, his retirement 'Certificate of Service' signed by Chairman Sir Wilfred Newton in 1993, his WW2 Bevin Boy medal, and floral tributes on display at his funeral in 2024.

At the culmination of proceedings, the audience gave an enthusiastic vote of thanks for a comprehensive record of the last two years' events throughout much of the TfL rail system.