

GOODBYE A STOCK

The A Stock had a long and distinguished career, with most trains surviving in service for 48-49 years, some for 50 years, and even two units (5022 and 5034) achieving 51 years in passenger service, despite the latter comprising cars from two separate units.

The 58-train fleet comprised two batches – 31 trains of A60 Stock and 27 trains of A62 Stock, the latter originally being conceived as A61 Stock. All units of all trains were fully interchangeable and with the complete flexibility that the stock originally had, made it possible to couple to any end of another unit and, in one case, one unit was even temporarily formed with two 'D' end motor cars as their 'A' end partners had been involved in a collision (see below).

EARLY YEARS

Having said that, the A Stock could be said to have led a 'charmed' and leisurely life. Even though 53 trains were required for peak service when the stock was new, the off-peak service (from October 1964) required just 16x4-car trains (6x4 Uxbridge, 7x4 Watford, 2x4 Amersham and 1x4 Chesham shuttle), which translated to 8x8-car trains, meaning that 50 full-length trains sat idle during off peak periods and at weekends. Moreover, the peak requirement dropped to 40 in the 1980s (although 6x4 were required for the East London Line from 1977 – 5x4 for service and 1x4 spare), creating far more spare trains than was originally envisaged.

It is only in later years, with increased off-peak services, that more has been demanded of the A Stock, ironically in its latter stages of life, with 35x8-car trains being required off-peak daily. This still gave 21½ trains idle, but a far cry from the 50 trains sitting around in the 1960s and 1970s. The number of trains for peak periods also started to increase again, albeit gradually, and it was only in December 2011 that 50 trains were required for peak service once again.

In the meantime, the flexibility of the A Stock was lost when the trains were converted to One Person Operation in 1985-86, when designated 'A'-end units, 'D' end units and double-ended units were formed, which saved the cost of fully converting every driving cab. After taking into account cars written off, damaged units awaiting a decision on their fate, and the reinstatement of some of them, the OPO fleet of A Stock in the 1990s settled at 56½ trains, comprising 44 'A'-end units, 43 'D'-end units and 26 double-ended units.

The first 'casualty' was back on 27 August 1975, when unit 5170-6170-6171-5171 was involved in a 'spectacular' collision on the 'Klondyke' roads in Neasden depot with a three-car unit of 1938 Tube Stock. Such was the force of the collision that DM 5170 and 1938 Stock DM 10149 were virtually destroyed. Most of the A Stock unit was thrown sideways through a cable run and fouled the southbound Metropolitan Line track¹. In the event, cars 5170 and 6170 never ran again, but 6171 and 5171 were retained for some years, the latter running in service in place of 5091 between April 1977 and July 1978.

¹ The other units involved (but not damaged) were A Stock 5042 and 1938 Stock 11214.



Above: What had become a spare DM, 5171 is seen coupled to 6091 in Neasden depot, while 5091 was at Acton Works being repaired. Once 5171 had been displaced by 5091 after repair, it did not see passenger service again, although it was used for some experiments until it was scrapped in 1987.

Below: Standing in platform 5 at Upminster is A62 Stock unit 5218 on a test trip to and from Upminster. DM 5218 was fitted with air metacone suspension and trial bogies at various times and when tests were concluded it was replaced by 5208, suitably renumbered.

Both photos: Brian Hardy



The next 'casualty' as such was unit 5036-6036-6037-5037 on 19 July 1977. Although not damaged in any incident, it was 'stopped' for maintenance. With spares even then being at a premium, the unit was 'robbed' for spares to keep other units going and it languished in Neasden depot for many years. Rather than being scrapped, it was finally reinstated to service in May 1993, having spent some two years at Derby 'being put back together'².

Unit 5218-6218-6219-5219 was used as a test bed and was fitted with air metacone suspension on 5218. During testing, the unit also visited Upminster which was the first time that an A Stock had visited the east end of the District Line. Although it saw intermittent passenger service, the unit was 'stopped' in April 1989. Unit 5208-6208-6209-5209 had been converted to OPO in 1986 but never re-entered service as a complete OPO unit. DM car 5218 was replaced by 5208 and renumbered in 1992 while 5209 had replaced 5121 (damaged at Neasden in October 1986) and was renumbered.

In December 1984, units 5028 and 5116 were involved in a fatal collision on the northbound at Kilburn with three cars being written off in consequence.

In summary, the early cars of A Stock that were scrapped were as listed below (all being original numbers), which reduced the fleet from 58 to 56½ trains.

Withdrawn	Scrap	Cars	Withdrawn	Scrap	Cars
27.08.75	03.06.81	6170	07.10.86	17.10.94	5121
27.08.75	05.06.81	5170	11.12.84	17.10.94	6029
11.12.84	03.10.86	5029	27.08.75	17.10.94	6171
11.12.84	14.07.87	5116	28.07.86	17.10.94	6208 6209
27.08.75	14.07.87	5171			

REFORMATIONS

The earliest recorded change to unit formations was in November 1963 when units 5038 and 5162 were involved in a collision, with one good unit (5038-6038-6163-5163) being formed for service while the other cars were repaired. Records do not survive that show when they reverted to normal. Other reformations are shown below, but exclude the temporary changes where the Sandite car was involved, which was from 1986.

From				To				Date	Notes
5090	6090	6091	5091	5090	6090	6091	5171	04.77	5091 collision
5090	6090	6091	5171	5090	6090	6091	5091	07.78	
5042	6042	6043	5043	5043	6056	6057	5057	04.81	5042/5056 collision
5056	6056	6057	5057						
5008	6008	5009	5009	5008	6034	6035	5035	09.81) 5034 derailment) 5009 collision
5034	6034	6035	5035						
5043	6056	6057	5057	5042	6042	6043	5043	10.82	5042/5056 ex-repair
				5056	6056	6057	5057	10.82	
5092	6092	6093	5093	5138	6092	6093	5093	03.84	5092/5139 collision
5138	6138	6139	5139						
5028	6028	6029	5029	5028	6028	6117	5117	06.85) 5029/5116/6029) collision
5116	6116	6117	5117						
5008	6034	6035	5035	5034	6034	6035	5035	07.85	5008 reno 5034
5034	6008	6009	5009	5008	6008	6009	5009	07.85	5034 reno 5008 and whole unit to store
5028	6028	6117	5117	5232	6232	6233	5233	08.85	Renumbered
5138	6092	6093	5093	5092	6092	6093	5093	04.86	5092/5139 ex-repair
				5138	6138	6139	5139	04.86	
5120	6120	6121	5121	5120	6120	6121	5209	10.86) 5121 collision
5208	6208	6209	5209) later stored ex-repair
From				To				Date	Notes

² 5036-6037-5037 was renumbered 5116-6117-5117, with 6116 being the trailer from the Kilburn collision of December 1984. The original trailer 6036 by this time had been converted for use as a Sandite car as it was then thought unlikely that the unit would run again.

5122	6122	6123	5123	5122	6122	6233	5233	07.87	5123/5232 collision
5232	6232	6233	5233						
5122	6122	6233	5233	5122	6122	6123	5123	05.88	5123/5232 ex-collision
				5232	6232	6233	5233	05.88	
5070	6070	6071	5071	5070	6070	6231	5231	08.88) 5071/6071
5230	6230	6231	5231) fusing incident
5070	6070	6231	5231	5070	6070	6071	5071	07.89	5071/6071 ex-repair
				5230	6230	6231	5231	07.89	
5208	6208	6209	5121	5208	6218	6219	5219	07.92	For service
5218	6218	6219	5219	5218	6208	6209	5121	07.92	For scrap
5208	6218	6219	5219	5218	6218	6219	5219	08.92	5208 reno 5218
5120	6120	6121	5209	5120	6120	6121	5121	03.93	5209 reno 5121
5036	6116	6037	5037	5116	6116	6117	5117	03.93	Renumbered (except for 6116 – original number)
5008	6008	6009	5009	5234	6234	6235	5235	09.94	Renumbered after reinstatement and refurbishment

THE END

From the remaining fleet of 56½ trains, disposal of the A Stock began in October 2010 after the first S Stock trains began entering service.

Most of the fleet had achieved 48-49 years' service but a handful actually made 50 years in service, being 5000, 5004, 5010, 5012, 5014, 5016, 5018, 5020, 5024, 5026, 5030, 5032, 5034, 5038, 5040, 5042, 5044, 5046, 5050, 5052, 5056, 5060, 5062, 5088, 5090, 5092, 5094, 5096, 5098, 5100, 5102, 5104, 5106, 5108, 5112, 5114, 5116 (second) 5118, 5120 and 5122.

Unit 5022 also made 51 years in service, as did the whole of unit 5034, despite the fact that its cars came from two different units.

With just four operational trains left at the start of the Olympic Games and with 57 out of 58 S Stock trains commissioned, it was the intention that A Stock would not be used during the Games periods as the 15% spare S Stock (57 trains for a 50-train service) should be adequate. To that end, what was hoped (by LU!) to have been the last normal run was in the morning peak on Friday 27 July – the morning before the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games.

However, LU failed to achieve its desire not to run any A Stock trains during the Olympic Games period, but only just. The two trains that ran on Monday 20 August (not Olympic days) have already been reported (see inside front cover, this issue) but on Wednesday evening 5 September, one train managed a couple of late evening trips working train 445 (units 5118+5189). The original S Stock train 445 went out of service with a problem and was replaced by the A Stock, entering service on the southbound at Finchley Road at 21.37. From there it worked Baker Street (depart 21.52) – Watford (22.50) – Baker Street (23.41) – Uxbridge (00.35) – Wembley Park.

The same train also made late evening trips on Thursday 6 September, working train 403. S Stock train 403 also had a defect and was taken out of service at Harrow on the southbound. The replacement (A Stock) train 403 went into service on the northbound at Wembley Park but because it was late, was short-tripped at Ruislip to pick up its scheduled working on the eastbound at 21.25.

By 7 September units 5090, 5022, 5094 and 5102 were all declared 'withdrawn', as 5090 required a replacement coupler and the other three required 'maintenance'. It was thus decided that no more A Stock would operate in normal service, save for a 'last running day', which was set for Wednesday 26 September 2012 and a farewell tour on Saturday 29 September 2012. The honours for these workings fell to units 5034 and 5062/63, which were specially prepared for the event, a test trip operating on 25 September to prove all was well. It is fair to say that Neasden depot staff did a magnificent job on getting these units presentable, especially 5034, as the front of this was more white than red (through graffiti removal) last time it was in normal service.

On Wednesday 26 September, the train was scheduled to work set 412 and the following trips:

From	To
08.02 Wembley Park	08.30 Watford (fast Wembley Park – Harrow)

08.40	Watford	09.22	Baker Street (fast Harrow – Finchley Road)
09.28	Baker Street	10.26	Amersham †
10.47	Amersham	11.59	Aldgate
12.11	Aldgate	13.26	Amersham
13.47	Amersham	14.59	Aldgate
15.11	Aldgate	16.16	Amersham
16.46	Amersham	18.01	Aldgate
18.08	Aldgate	19.07	Watford (fast Wembley Park – Harrow)
19.17	Watford	19.39	Harrow-on-the-Hill

† Scheduled “all stations” but ran fast Finchley Road – Harrow – Moor Park.

The final tour, on Saturday 29 September, began at Moorgate at 09.55 and was scheduled to finish at Wembley Park at 15.52.

From	To		
09.55	Moorgate	10.44	Watford (fast line Wembley Park – Harrow)
10.47	Watford	11.18	Chesham
11.24	Chesham	11.55	Harrow-on-the-Hill platform 2 (via main line)
12.15	Harrow-on-the-Hill	12.43	Amersham platform 1 (via main line)
13.36	Amersham	14.06	Harrow-on-the-Hill platform 6 (via local line)
14.07	Harrow-on-the-Hill	14.24	Uxbridge
14.27	Uxbridge	15.19	Aldgate
15.21	Aldgate	15.52	Wembley Park platform 1

Because the tour train would be occupying the single line to and from Chesham, the scheduled Metropolitan Line service at that time was diverted to and from Amersham, with a replacement road service provided between Amersham and Chesham. A rather nice touch was that a number of retired Metropolitan Line staff were invited to join the train at Rickmansworth. The train lost a little time from mid-morning and arrived back at Wembley Park at 16.12. The final run from Finchley Road to Wembley Park was rather ‘lively’ to say the least, ending what had been a perfect and enjoyable day – even the weather ‘played ball’ with the sun out for most of the time.

The only disappointment of the day was the way in which the LT Museum’s Sales Stand at Amersham was organised, originally having been set up at the north end of the southbound platform, which is rather narrow at that point, especially with lots of people around intending to purchase items with trains arriving and departing.



Quite why this spot was chosen is unclear – a lack of thought and planning comes to mind. In the end, if only for safety reasons, the sales stand was closed down for some 20 minutes while it was moved, lock, stock and barrel, to an area further down the platform which offered more space and a safer environment. Not only that, it was totally under-resourced and many people went away un-served and disappointed – trying to accommodate 300 people in the 40 minutes left just didn’t work.

Left: DM 5043 temporarily took the place of 5056 and is seen coupled to trailer 6056 at Harrow-on-the-Hill, meaning that this unit had two ‘D’-end DMs for a short period.