

GOING UNDERGROUND

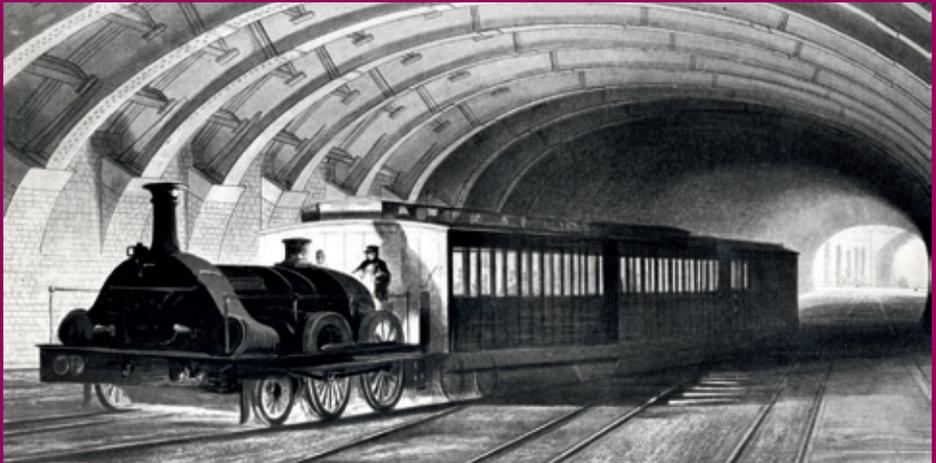
tales from the tube



The First Underground Railway

The population of Victorian London grew quickly with the central area becoming very busy. Public transport included horse drawn buses, but traffic congestion became a serious problem and one solution was the construction of the first underground railways.

Many Irish 'Navvies' worked in dangerous conditions using a 'cut and cover' technique to build the Metropolitan Line, but with some fatal accidents. It opened on the 9th January 1863 with guests, including the Chancellor of the Exchequer, William Gladstone and his wife, Mrs Gladstone, taking a journey from Paddington to Farringdon station in an open carriage drawn by a steam train.



The Metropolitan line was built in 1863,
now I'm talking so everyone listen to me.
It runs alongside the Hammersmith & City,
before it goes into Metroland.
The Circle line goes around and around,
it's not always on time, but the service is sound.
The District line is green and pleasant,
you should get to work on time and present.
The Piccadilly line was built in '05,
that was before you or I were alive.
The Waterloo & City is a one-stop train,
maybe that's why they call it The Drain.
The Bakerloo line is old and brown,
yet still reliable – up and down.
The Central line is the red one in the middle,
this is a rap not a riddle.
The Northern line gets very busy,
the heat and the people make me feel dizzy.
The Victoria line was named after a queen,
a wonderful route that has to be seen.
The DLR has no driver,
maybe he's at home, what a skiver!
Oh I forgot about the Jubilee
it's connected to every line you see.
BRAAAP!

The American Tube

In 1904, the American tycoon, Charles Yerkes, took over the running of a large part of the underground through his company, The Underground Electric Railway Company of London. Stations were being built for the new Piccadilly Line with the waste from tunnelling used to build Stamford Bridge home today of Chelsea F.C.

Yerkes raised millions of pounds in mysterious deals to finance the electrification of the new tube network. Passengers would spend two pennies on the Central London Railway (Central Line) known as the 'Tuppenny Tube'.

When we go to my cousin's house my family usually catch a train from Russell Square station to Canary Wharf. Russell Square station is old and was built in the 1920s with dark red tiles on the outside and cream tiling on the inside. It has two lifts to bring passengers from the trains to the outside and gets very busy with tourists at weekends. This is when we visit our cousins and it's really boring because the carriages are very crowded and there is nothing to do and nothing to look at except people's feet. In the summer the train gets very hot with all these people packed like sardines. Leaving the noisy train into the sunshine the smell of the hot air is like being in Bangladesh.



THE AMERICAN TUBE

The Tube Girls Strike 1918

While the First World War was reaching its climax in France, women who had been hired to work on the London Underground to replace men who went off to war took part in the Equal Pay strike. There were over 4,000 striking women workers demanding the same pay as men and to keep their jobs once the men returned from the war.

Though some of their demands were granted, equal pay with men would continue as an issue into the Second World War when many women were again employed on the underground to replace men who had gone to war.

Evelyn Roberts, from Barbados, was a station cleaner and recalls, “It was not a glamorous job, and in fact I had to clean up vomit from the night before”. Then she became ‘A Fluffer’.

Women tunnel cleaners or ‘fluffers’ remove fluff made up from our hair and fibres from our clothes and dirt. They usually worked at night during Engineering Hours when the power for the rail tracks was switched off.

Evelyn was part of a team of nine women who brought in home-made food and someone took in whiskey. They would have a little party and work through the night. “One weekend Mertle had too much whiskey...She carried on working not realising she had lost her teeth...my other friend Rosie found them the next morning...”



I get really bored when I travel on the tube
so I put my headphones into my ears
and look at people
I see people playing on iPhones and having fun
I see noses that are big and small
I see small people
I see tall people
I see big people
I see dirty Nike trainers, high heels,
nice shoes and lots of dirty shoes
I see people wearing jeans, trousers
and track suit bottoms
I see people eating food from Marks & Spencer
And KFC
I see different faces and different complexions
Square faces
Round faces
Oval faces
People laughing
People shouting
People whispering
People swearing
Sometimes crying
Sometimes sleeping
One person got so drunk
that they smashed a bottle.

The Blitz

The bombing raids on London during the Second World War was called 'the Blitz' and like the First World War the underground provided safe shelter for many. By 1940, London Transport had banned people from sheltering in the tubes, but the sheer volume of those pressing to enter stations during air raids could not be stopped. Once people were allowed to use the underground for shelter bunk beds and toilet facilities for many women and children were provided.

There were tragedies, such as 173 people, mainly women and children crushed to death during the panicked descent into Bethnal Green station because everyone thought a bombing raid was coming. It was a false alarm.





AND WEEK
**LOSE YOUR
PARTNER**
ANA TURNER
JOAN BLONDELL
GEORGE MURPHY
REHEARSAL
**GEORGE
& IN BOLTON**
production
HESTRA
The Best of Hestras



The heat of the day
burnt my skin.
Walking back home
I kicked a dirty bin.

I spotted my house
running down the road.
The piercing sound of an angry siren
descended on my feeble ear.

I was frozen on the spot.
The atmosphere was tense.
I was blown back
by a white flash.

I kept on running
all the way there.
My mum was screaming
I really did care.

We entered the station
out of breath.
This was not a vacation;
the fear was real.

The stench built and built;
the people became restless.
Me and my mum were nervous;
the rest were too.

Suddenly I felt
sweaty with heat.
Lying down on the floor,
feeling not at all neat.

The floor was cold
and I was too.
I saw loads of mould
I think I have the flu.

My mother sleeps deeply
and I doze off.
I yawn sleepily
and shut my eyes.

The station rumbles;
fear is growing.
Sounds bumble and bounce
and my fear diminishes.

My soul recovers.
A boy comes over.
A friend he seems,
not an enemy.

The First Female Driver

On the underground, women usually worked as cleaners and sometimes guards, but it wasn't until 1978 that Hannah Dadds became London Transport's first female driver on the District Line. Even though she was qualified there was still resistance from many of her male colleagues. There are at least 150 women drivers out of over 3,000 train drivers on the London Underground today.

I started as a ticket collector in 1969.
After eight and a half years I applied to become a guard
and after six months as a guard,
I applied to be a train driver.
I was the only woman in the class,
but I was asked more questions than the men.
It was unfair but I passed anyway
and became a tube driver in 1978.
I had to hold my own and ignore a lot of taunts
and some sexist remarks from the men I worked with.
There are a lot more women tube drivers today,
but it's still only a fraction of the thousands of men drivers.



THE FIRST FEMALE DRIVER

Post War Migration

After the Second World War, labour shortages meant that London Transport had to recruit from British colonies, such as the West Indies and began a recruiting drive from the Caribbean in 1956. Many thousands emigrated from the Caribbean to begin working lives on London's public transport system. These migrants were joined by many other employees from: Ireland, South Asia, Cyprus, Malta and Eastern Europe amongst other countries.

Many recruits were skilled and well educated but accepted low status jobs, such as cleaning and catering, hoping to gain promotion or to move to other employment. Despite the many vacancies some white staff felt threatened by the newcomers and there were many instances of racism. Black, Asian and other ethnic minorities make a large proportion of staff on the underground and London Transport as a whole.





POST WAR MIGRATION

At first I didn't know what it meant and then I realised.
A friend told me to buy a plane ticket from Barbados to London.
This was going to be amazing.
The plane landed and I got through immigration.
I got a cab to a bedsit in Hackney.
It was £6 a week.
I started work the next day.
Some white people made racist comments,
but I didn't care because I was going to work on London Transport.
After a few months doing cleaning,
I was promoted to ticket collector.
I got a lot of abuse and one time a gang of youths tried to rob me.
I hated my job but I didn't want to quit
because I needed the money.
I stuck with it and after two years
I was training to be a train driver.
The instructor never chose me to answer any questions in the classes.
He would always choose the white men.
But when it got to the difficult questions
they didn't have an answer.
I got all the questions right and they were shocked.
Later that evening,
I was told that I was going to be a driver.
I was so excited that I got the job.
I was promoted to a driver the next day.
And I drove the tube on the Metropolitan Line.



POST WAR MIGRATION

A New World

I spoke creole (broken English).
I was from a different country.
I knew no one or anything.
I was new.
I never harmed or troubled anyone,
but yet still you treat me differently.

Was it because I was black?
Or the fact I wasn't your kind?
Any reason why is not enough
to explain how you made me feel.
You always made me feel like the odd one out.

My workmates from the Caribbean understood
my pain and misery.
We were workmates, not enemies.
So why do you and I fight, tell me why?
All I need is a little respect.
Is that too much to ask for?
Is it?

I came a far distance to work,
not to make friends.
If you don't want my friendship
that is fine, as each day I will
hold my head up high and walk
into work with my dignity and pride.



POST WAR MIGRATION

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The film consists of interviews developed, conducted and shot by the **St George the Martyr Year 6 film group**: Reja A, Samira A, Saima B, Ummarah B, Riasah C, Sean C, Ryan F, Ridwan K, Roberto L, Antonia M, Jabir M, Melchi M, Nahed M, Raheem M, Morgan S, Rahana Y and the **Gateway Year 6 film group**: Amnah A, Jubair A, Mohamed M, Sarah A, Al-Hassan J, Kafi A, Soufian M, Aadil Ahmed W, Mohamed Ishaq A, Luma Al-J, Waheeda R, Imad H, Mohammed Jahin A, Shavae F, Zainab Khanom A, Noor El-B.

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