

CENTRAL LONDON RAILWAY TRAFFIC STAFF – PART 3

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LAVATORY ATTENDANTS, CONSTABLES, LOST PROPERTY ATTENDANTS AND PLATFORM MEN

BACKGROUND

In the January 2022 issue, I examined the Central London Railway Register of Traffic Staff No.3 (1900-1912) for the disciplinary entries of Liftmen. This provided an insight into the manual nature of lift operation, and the 'ups and downs' of liftmen, with passengers and their supervisors. This article covers Lavatory Attendants, Constables, Lost Property Attendants and Platform Men.

LAVATORY ATTENDANTS

Lavatory Attendants were at the 'bottom' of the organisation, and were usually female. Their pay was 2½d (just over 1p) per hour. The few male lavatory attendants seem to have been moved to the role as a punishment, but were paid 4d (1½p) per hour. This caused some friction.

1. For irregular dealing with lost property a tobacco pouch found by platform man (Herbert F. 321), was reduced to a Lavatory Attendant (Cycle Porter Charles Bellamy, 30 May 1904, page 167). This involved a reduction in pay from 4½d to 4d per hour.
2. Dismissed for remarking to passengers that the lavatory at Tottenham Court Road was not conducted in a proper manner, and suggesting to other attendants, that they should strike for 3d per hour (Lavatory Attendant Mrs Ada Taylor (widow), 23 Sep 1905, page 163).

Mrs Versey and Mrs Mace were 63 and 62 years old on appointment. Mrs Versey lasted only 40 days in the job, and Mrs Mace was dismissed on her 66th birthday. Their entries were to the point:

1. Dismissed, generally unsuitable, too old and slow (Lavatory Attendant Mrs Anne Versey, 04 Mar 1905. page 2).
2. Dismissed. Reduction of staff. Too old for duty (Lavatory Attendant Mrs Henrietta Mace, 16 Oct 1909, page 24).

Frederick Bailey was appointed a lavatory attendant on 26 October 1904, just before his 35th birthday. His brief record suggests that he was not afraid to 'test the boundaries' (page 27 of register):

- 05 Nov 04 Warned for bad timekeeping. Bank.
- 08 Nov 04 Severely reprimanded for having the Lavatory in a very dirty condition. Bank.
- 11 Nov 04 Reprimanded for opening inspection chamber in Lavatory causing drains to be blocked through some substance falling in. Bank.
- 07 Apr 05 Severely reprimanded and suspended 3 days for leaving Station premises without permission. Bank.
- 01 Jul 05 The lavatory receipts shew a very serious decrease compared with previous year, warned that if they did not improve quickly he would not be kept in the service, he was also requested to keep himself smarter and pay greater attention to the passengers using the lavatories. Bank.
- 02 May 06 Dismissed for having betting transactions while on duty.

Generally, penalties for Lavatory Attendants were similar to those for other staff.

1. Reprimanded for inattention to duty – found asleep, snoring while on duty in lavatory at Bank Saturday 3pm (Lavatory Attendant Charles Every, 02 Sep 1902, page 43).
2. Cautioned for gossiping with the staff. (Lavatory Attendant Miss Kate Cook, 14 Sep 1904, page 4).
3. Suspended from Sunday work for one month for refusing to do extra Sunday duty December 11/04 (Lavatory Attendant Mrs A. Haynes, 15 Dec 1904, page 32).
4. Dismissed for reporting herself for duty slightly under the influence of drink. (Lavatory Attendant Mrs Katherine Holley (widow), 11 Mar 1905, page 135).
5. Reprimanded for not having her badge in her possession and making improper remark to ticket examiner when called upon to produce it (Lavatory Attendant Mrs Kathleen Leach, 06 Dec 1910, page 7).

The post of Chief Lavatory Attendant is recorded from 1904. This was filled by the promotion of Mrs Caroline Jenkins, who started as a Lavatory Attendant on the opening day of the railway in 1900. Mrs Jenkins was paid 20/- (£1.00) per week, equivalent to 4d per hour, assuming a 60-hour week. This was increased to 22/- (£1.10) from 1906. On 29 June 1909, Mrs Jenkins resigned, 'to reside with her daughter in the Country'. She was nearly 63 years old. Her place was taken by Mrs Emily Westwick, who was a direct appointment, and was paid 17/6 (£0.85½) per week. Mrs Jenkins and Mrs Westwick each had a single disciplinary entry:

1. Complaint was made of the dirty and flooded condition of the Ladies Lavatory at Notting Hill Gate by the Borough Sanitary Inspector. Mrs Jenkins failed to visit the station on this morning and was cautioned (Chief Lavatory Attendant Mrs Caroline Jenkins, 08 Jan 1908, page 4).
2. Reported to have been under the influence of drink while on duty on Bank Holiday 27 Dec 1910 which she denied. The attendant's statements against Mrs Westwick did not agree and she was given the benefit of the doubt but severely cautioned for the future (Chief Lavatory Attendant Mrs Emily Westwick, 03 Jan 1911, page 11).

CONSTABLES

A few appointments were made to the grade of Constable. These were mostly direct appointments, but there were examples of promotion from Ticket Collector and Gateman. Unusually, the rate of pay for the grade was reduced from 6¼ to 5½d (2.6 to 2.3p) per hour in February 1907.

Their disciplinary entries often reflected their duties. Constable James Bass's record contains just two entries.

1. Severely warned for his hasty and improper treatment to a gentleman passenger (Mr Fraser's complaint) told this was not the first instance in which he had through want of discretion annoyed passengers, and that if he did not at all times and under all circumstances treat passengers with the civility and courtesy that they are entitled to, Mr Partridge would have to deal seriously with him (Constable James Bass, 03 Aug 1904, page 212).
2. Resigned and left without notice for using obscene language in mess room at Shepherd's Bush station before other members of the staff and suggesting that Inspector Tucker was bribed to retain certain duties for constables (Constable James Bass, 09 Aug 1905, page 212).

Penalties for Constables were generally similar to those for other staff.

1. Mr E.A. Bennett called her to make strong complaint on behalf of his fiancée, Miss Agnes Thomas, who took very great exception to being asked to stand away from the entrance to the booking hall at Oxford Circus Station. Holmes was seen but was positive that he spoke in a very respectful way when addressing Miss Thomas, but as she and Mr Bennett were very upset he was sent to explain the case and offer an apology which was accepted (Constable Henry Holmes, 23 Jun 1905, page 207).
2. Severely reprimanded and suspended one week for leaving station premises at Marble Arch while on duty and visiting a public house (Constable Jonathon Smith, 14 Oct 1905, page 261).
3. Lost property – picked up a gold plated bracelet in booking hall at Shepherd's Bush station at 11.30pm on Saturday July 14.1906 and failed to give it up until enquiries were made when he stated he could see no one to give it to and put it in his uniform coat pocket intending to give it up on Monday but he did not wear the coat again and forgot about the bracelet. Told that in view of his previous good record his explanation was accepted but was warned for future (Constable William Waller, 23 Jul 1906, page 235).
4. Left in consequence of continued absence from duty through fractured thigh caused through slipping in messroom Oxford Circus Station April 14. 1906 (Constable Michael Hosey, 31 Dec 1906, page 159).

LOST PROPERTY ATTENDANT

The Register records that Lost Property Attendant Dennis Warnett was appointed in August 1900, aged 50. Given the consistent theme of the entries, it was perhaps surprising that he lasted five years, and just eleven days after what turned out to be a final warning from Mr Partridge. His record (page 166) is as follows.

- 23 Oct 1902 Reported for discourtesy to a gentleman who had lost a pair of gold rimmed spectacles (Mr A. Coopers complaint) he was sent to apologise to Mr Cooper and that gentleman accepted it.

- 27 Aug 1903 Reported to the General Manager (Mr Drew's complaint) for inattention and rudeness in not delivering a package found in train until the gentleman called a third time.
- 24 Mar 1904 Reported for being 25 minutes late on duty, three passengers called between 9.0 and 9.20 am and could not obtain them.
- 08 Jan 1905 Dealt with a passenger (Mr Powis Jones) who left one glove in train very indiscreetly, demanded the fee of -/6 (2.5p) which upset Mr Jones tremendously.
- 12 Aug 1905 Mr Partridge saw Warnett in connection with his interference in the lift working at Shepherd's Bush station, and making remarks about overcrowding in the presence and hearing of passengers. He was severely spoken to about his indiscretion in this case, and also about the many reports of his rude and abrupt treatment to passengers and the staff, and was told that he must alter his manner and treat people in all circumstances with civility and respect.
- 23 Aug 1905 Dismissed for general incivility and abruptness to passengers and the staff.

On the date of Dennis Warnett's dismissal, Ticket Collector Edward Gudgin (page 156) was appointed, at the same rate of pay, 27/6 (£1.37½p). On 03 Oct 1905, he was given a pay rise, to 30/- (£1.50p) per week. There were no further entries on his record, suggesting that he was a better suited to the role than his predecessor.

PLATFORM MAN

As mentioned in an earlier article, the vast majority of appointments made after the Railway opened in 1900, were as a platform man. This grade therefore saw a lot of entries associated with availability, sobriety and integrity.

1. Reported by guard "Patience" as being intoxicated, this was disproved by Inspector Payne and Station Masters Wardell and Hodge (Platform Man William Griffiths, 25 Aug 1903, page 155).
2. Dismissed for being absent from duty without leave, supposed to have been ill, but was seen out on August Bank Holiday (7th inst) enjoying himself (Platform Man Frederick Briggs, 08 Aug 1905, page 258).
3. Dismissed for refusing to give an explanation of an absence from duty (Platform Man Henry Thompson, 28 Sep 1905, page 252).
4. Cautioned for leaning against the platform wall at British Museum apparently half asleep while an Up train was running into the station. Said he had a slight bilious attack (Platform Man Robert Nicol, 23 Oct 1906, page 56).
5. Summarily dismissed for leaving station premises at Bank after being relieved for breakfast and obtaining intoxicating liquor and coming to the office to be dealt with while under the influence of drink. He stated that he had been to a party the previous evening and was drugged. (Platform Man George Withers, 24 Oct 1906, page 174).
6. Told if late or absent again would not be kept in the Service. Absent from duty 5am to 3pm on Mon & Tues 7/8 Sept 1908 with cramp in leg but seen in Queens Road after 10pm on the Sunday apparently well (Platform Man Leonard Radway, 08 Sep 1908, page 69).
7. Summarily dismissed for absenting himself from duty without explanation since 29 September 1910 and behaving in a most insolent manner when spoken to about it (Platform Man Henry Watson 03 Oct 1910, page 156).
8. Summarily dismissed for absenting himself from duty to attend Police Court having been charged with being drunk and disorderly on December 24 1910. He booked off sick 12.30 on December 25 1910 and on 27 December 1910. A certificate was received stating he was suffering from influenza. (Platform Man Frank Smith, 30 Dec 1910, page 74).
9. Summarily dismissed for having beer in his possession and misconducting himself with a female on the staircase at Oxford Circus Station during his turn of duty. (Platform Man James Caseley, 09 Sep 1911, page 162).
10. Summarily dismissed for being absent from duty on Boxing Day without any explanation after being given special leave on Christmas Day. He stated he had been out with friends had drink and forgot about his duty (Platform Man Henry Griffin, 27 Dec 1911, page 285).
11. Dismissed on account of absence from duty without explanation after being granted Special Leave on Christmas and Boxing Days (Platform Man Montague Cassam, 11 Jan 1912, page 46).
12. Given notice to leave the service for being absent from duty 27 Dec 1912 without explanation. Said his wife was ill with Rheumatic Fever and sent a letter to station master explaining his absence

but it was never received. Given another trial, notice withdrawn, but finally warned (Platform Man William Alsop, 10 Jan 1913, page 198).

The details of some cases were left unsaid:

1. Left without notice. Resented being spoken to by Inspector Williams about the Ladies' Lavatory Window being found open at Chancery Lane Station (Platform Man William Shotter, 27 Sep 1907, page 78).

There are several references to 'trafficking in newspapers': a bookstall lad would sell a newspaper to a passenger, this would be left behind in the train (often at a terminus), picked up by a platform man or gateman, and returned to a bookstall lad for resale. Dismissal was a frequent penalty for being involved in this type of recycling.

1. Warned for handing newspapers to one of "Willings" Bookstall lads at Oxford Circus (Platform Man Frederick Murphy, 01 Jul 1903, page 173).
2. Dismissed for trafficking in newspapers with Bookstall Lad at Lancaster Gate (Platform Man Thomas Hambrook, 17 May 1906, page 89).
3. Summarily dismissed for giving Bookstall lad at Post Office newspapers found in train and receiving from him money in exchange (Platform Man Arthur Asling, 28 Jan 1907, page 303).

The following cases have a 'thread' of conduct running through them, but not much else. Taken together, they paint a picture of the boundaries that, when crossed, resulted in a reprimand, or 'promotion (from railway servant) to customer':

1. Summarily dismissed, paid two weeks wages in lieu of notice for making improper remarks to a passenger and using vindictive language in connection with the services of the Company (Platform Man John Broughton, 31 Jan 1906, page 300).
2. Dismissed for inattention to duty insubordination to Station Master and failing to attend Office for inquiry after being suspended (Platform Man Edward Carter, 18 Apr 1906, page 188).
3. Dismissed for complicity in D.S.M. Lewis's dereliction of duty. He returned to Post Office station at 5pm to relieve Platform Man and Ticket Collector for tea so that the absence of the Station Master might not be noticed and refused to give any explanation of his conduct (Platform Man William Rowe, 25 March 1907, page 299).
4. Permitted to resign and leave without notice after absenting himself from duty without explanation for four days. He afterwards stated that he was called to Lancashire to see his mother who was seriously ill and on his arrival there was fought by his eldest brother and had both eyes discoloured (Platform Man John Watson, 08 Jul 1907, page 216).
5. This man relieved Ticket Collector J. Bodger 58 Bond Street from 11.45am to 12.5pm on 12 Sep 1907 and during the day the 'Excess Fare Voucher Book' was lost. Bodger and Whitehead were both given a fortnights' notice to leave the Service as they could not give a satisfactory explanation but as this was the first occasion on which Whitehead had relieved the Ticket Collector and there was no evidence to prove that he had seen the book or knew of its existence the notice was withdrawn but he was warned for the future (Platform Man Arthur Whitehead, 26 Sep 1907, page 283).
6. Summarily dismissed for being absent from duty and sending a Medical Certificate for "Gastric Catarrh" when he was charged and convicted at the West London Police Court for disorderly conduct and using obscene language the previous evening. Fined 20/- or in default 14 days' imprisonment (Platform Man Henry Breeze, 05 Nov 1907, page 229).
7. Severely reprimanded for demanding four shillings out of a half sovereign which the Bookstall Lad had picked up in the Booking Hall at British Museum Station. Suspended half day and called upon to pay the 4/- to the funds of the Railwaymen's Convalescent Home Herne Bay (Platform Man John Lawson, 25 Jan 1908, page 278).
8. Dismissed for having to go to prison for 14 days for refusing to maintain his wife (Platform Man Richard Collins, 06 Aug 1908, page 45).
9. Severely reprimanded for acting in a manner (horseplay) with Ticket Examiner Saggars 702 in the Booking Hall at Notting Hill Gate station that caused a passenger to complain that they were fighting (Platform Man George Kay, 03 Dec 1908, page 136).
10. Dismissed for finding a key when opening Bank station with which he opened the Booking Office and when he found this was possible threw it away and endeavoured to conceal reporting the incident (Platform Man George Jones, 01 Jan 1909, page 70).

11. Reported insolence to a Passenger – Mr Hoare's complaint. Told by Mr Partridge there was evidently something about his manner, which did not fit him to come in contact with the general Public. Given a fortnight's notice (Platform Man Frederick Gregory, 09 May 1910, page 287).
12. Reprimanded for lolling about the Platform (Bond Street) in a most unbusinesslike manner (Platform Man Thomas Sherratt, 21 Aug 1910, page 146).
13. While acting as Porter Liftman at Notting Hill Gate, a passenger (Mr Beaufort) told him to take the name and address of a passenger who would insist on smoking in the Lift. Bond did this but failed to verify it and it turned out to be false. He made no report of the incident or mentioned it to the Station Master. Severely reprimanded and transferred to Platform duty again (Platform Man Cyril Bond, 06 Jul 1910, page 107).
14. Instructed to distribute hand-bills (Season Tickets) outside Queens Road Metropolitan station but went to our (CLR) Queens Road station and distributed them in a most foolish and indiscriminate manner. Severely reprimanded and given notice to leave the Service – afterwards given another trial temporarily (Platform Man William Mills, 20 Jun 1911, page 205).
15. Failed to obtain a towel for a passenger who desired a wash at Oxford Circus. Told Constable Nickel, to whom passenger complained, that he had something else to do. Severely reprimanded and warned for the future (Platform Man Richard Billingham, 20 Jul 1911, page 193).

It seems that a little water was applied to floor surfaces before cleaning.

1. Cautioned for over watering the platform at Bank. Passenger narrowly escaped accident. Warned for the future (Platform Man Henry Wadman, 15 Nov 1911, page 47).

In addition to the above example, City & South London Railway Working Timetable No.33 (27 Nov 1916), page 17, contains the following.

WATERING LIFT FLOORS

Complaint has been made of too much water having been sprinkled on the floor of the lifts, thereby affecting the cables and wiring underneath car floor. In several cases, it has been noted that the floors of lifts have been watered with cans without roses.

Station Masters must see that the floors of lifts are watered with cans fitted with proper roses, and that as small an amount of water as possible (just sufficient to lay the dust) is put down.

Recycling tickets, or failing to account for money received, resulted in dismissal:

1. Summarily dismissed for collecting an excess fare from a passenger from the Charing Cross Euston & Hampstead Railway at Tottenham Court Road and not accounting for it (Platform Man Frederick Sargent, 25 Jan 1909, page 78).
2. Permitted to resign and leave the service at once. Received 1d from Booking Clerk at Oxford Circus Subway for ticket Oxford Circus to Lancaster Gate which had been left behind by a passenger (Platform Man Henry Newens, 16 Jun 1909, page 115).
3. Summarily dismissed for asking the Booking Clerk at Marble Arch to give him 2d for a ticket (Marble Arch to Bank) which passenger had handed to him saying he did not intend using it. He was also irregular in his attendance to duty (Platform Man Frederick Milne, 14 Oct 1909, page 160).
4. Summarily dismissed for having in his possession a number of un-nipped book tickets which he had collected from passengers. He stated that he had kept them for his wife and child to use to avoid paying the fare (Platform Man Frank Waite, 02 Feb 1912, page 99).

Fighting was usually met with a reprimand and/or suspension for a few days, in the following case, for both parties:

1. Severely reprimanded and suspended to 2 January 1911 (4½ days) for fighting Porter Liftman Bacon in the Men's Messroom at Marble Arch station. Transferred to Notting Hill Gate station (Platform Man Albert Ledford, 28 Dec 1910, page 248).
2. Severely reprimanded for provoking Porter Liftman Ledford 505 Marble Arch to strike him causing his left eye to be very much discoloured. Both men were suspended until 2 January 1910 but Bacon was not well enough to resume until 9 January 1911 (Platform Man James Bacon, 29 Dec 1910, page 101).

PERFORMANCE

The following items relate to performance of duties, compliance with the rules, and obeying instructions.

1. Reprimanded for using an improper expression to a Miss McLean, who was in charge of a party of Japanese Sailors (Platform Man William Griffiths, 08 Jul 1902, page 155).
2. Severely reprimanded and suspended one day for using obscene and threatening language to Inspector Rayner when spoken to about the slovenly manner in which he performed his duties. Transferred to Museum (Platform Man Alfred Mills, 15 Apr 1903, page 39).
3. Severely reprimanded for attempting to throw a ticket bag on No.25 Train. It fell on the P.W. (permanent way) and was run over by the train (Platform Man Henry Andrews, 06 Apr 1904, page 206).
4. When brought up for appointment as Conductor, an unsatisfactory report was received from his Station Master Darvill at Bond Street as to the fashion he performed certain of his duties, which prevented his reinstatement as a Conductor, finally warned (Platform Man Sydney Lee, 20 Oct 1904, page 155).
5. Reprimanded for failing to put 25 tickets he collected from passengers while acting as Liftman at Marble Arch on Sunday 3 Nov 1907 into the Ticket Cancellor but put them in his pocket and took them home with him (Platform Man Charles Leeson, 04 Nov 1907, page 104).
6. Dismissed for insubordination and refusing to work extra time in case of emergency. Women's Suffrage Meeting Hyde Park Sun 21 Jun 1908 (Platform Man Ralph Page, 23 Jun 1908, page 8).
7. Told if he did not pay more attention to his duties would not be kept in the Service. Given to gossiping (Platform Man Edward Scully, 02 Dec 1908, page 253).
8. When placing ticket bags on No 11/x Train, complained that the guard Ticehurst shut the collapsible gate on his arm, slightly injuring it. Told he was evidently too slow and warned for the future (Platform Man John Imrie, 03 Mar 1910, page 200).
9. Summarily dismissed for insubordination. Instructed to take duty as Platform Man temporarily and refused (Platform Man Richard Ford, 06 May 1911, page 53).
10. Reported to have shown temper when ordered to work an extra duty at Marble Arch station from 8-9pm and told could not have Supper Relief during this time which he asked for. Severely reprimanded and warned for the future (Platform Man Arthur Mynott, 27 Jul 1911, page 117).
11. Left without notice. Proceedings taken at Westminster County Court for wages in lieu of notice. Registrar ordered him to pay 20/- and 3/- costs to be paid at 2/- per month (Platform Man Charles Dyson, 25 Jan 1912, page 160).
12. A Mr Christie complained that 'Gibson' who was relieving ticket collector, had refused to allow him to pass barrier, he had purchased a ticket the previous day but did not board as traffic was interrupted. 'Gibson' told to use more discretion in these cases (Platform Man William Gibson, 25 Feb 1908, page 56).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Saying bad things about the company, dishonesty, refusing an instruction, recycling newspapers, or failing to account for money received, usually resulted in dismissal. In contrast, the first instance of inattention to duties, poor performance, verbal abuse, and fighting was often dealt with by way of a reprimand and/or suspension.

The process was usually concluded in two or three days: apart from the occasional local inquiry to confirm the sequence of events, there were no formal hearings prior to dismissal, and no formal appeals process. Not attending an inquiry, or failing to provide information regarding an absence, usually marked the end of a person's employment. Several entries indicate that, while Station Masters gave reprimands and recommendations, the Traffic Superintendent was the decision maker on matters of dismissal.

In the next article, I plan to conclude the analysis of station operating staff incidents with Ticket Examiners/Collectors and Deputy/Station Masters.

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**