

THE LONDON UNDERGROUND UNIFORM

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PART 2

THE POST-WAR EXPANSION

The Second World War Victory celebrations were held in London in June 1946 and the LPTB played a major part in keeping the crowds moving during this busy period. With non-uniformed senior Underground staff being on duty at key locations a special badge was introduced to enable them to be identified. Based on the bullseye, the ring was chrome yellow and the bar silver and lettered 'LONDON TRANSPORT' in blue, with the customary under- and overlining and large initial/final letters. Separate semi-circular metal infill plates carried the word 'OFFICIAL' (above the bar) and an ID number (below the bar), both in black enamel. The badge was in un-hallmarked silver and designed to be worn in a lapel buttonhole, being flat and with a clip on the reverse. The design was almost certainly inspired by the circular Official's 'Plates' in use by plain clothes Central Buses staff and first introduced by the LGOC in the 1920s. The Underground 'plates' were withdrawn after the celebrations but reissued again in 1953 for the Coronation and retained by the holders afterwards. As staff retired or otherwise left the service the use of the 'plates' declined until all were out of use.

The Transport Act 1947 nationalised the LPTB, which from 1 January 1948 now came under the British Transport Commission as the London Transport Executive, but there were no changes to staff badges or insignia in consequence. In the same year, specific badges were introduced for uniformed instructional staff on the Underground. The LPTB had provided training on vehicle maintenance and driving to thousands of forces' personnel during the war and in 1942 revised cap badges were devised for Central Buses instructors. This was a version of the standard Central Buses supervisory badge with the addition of semi-circular light blue infills and the word 'INSTRUCTOR' on the lower infill. The new badges for the Underground were of the same basic design, but with the ring enamelled in ochre instead of dark blue. The badges were produced in silver for Stock Trainers and gilt-on-silver for Railway Instructors. The Stock Trainer grade was later abolished, and the silver versions withdrawn. Some later issues of the gilt-on-silver badge used chrome yellow enamel instead of ochre and this colour variation occurred on other badges produced over the years. Another post-war change was on the non-supervisory caps, which no longer had wire stiffening fitted in the crown and now presented a softer appearance.

For some time, it had been found that after frequent polishing, the gilding could wear off on the 'gold' supervisory badges, giving a silver image and making the Station Master and Station Inspector grades indistinguishable. Therefore in 1952 the black braid on the peaks of Station Master caps was changed to gold wire. It is believed the change was also part-influenced by the desire of staff to have parity in appearance with the Station Masters of British Railways (BR). This change also applied to Yard Masters, the grade title used where LT had a train crew depot based at a station operated by BR – i.e. Barking, Queen's Park, Upminster and West Ruislip.

A consequence of this change was that in visual appearance the Station Master grade, with their gold cap badge and shiny peak with gold wire braid, now seemed to outrank the higher Divisional Inspector position, which used the same gold cap badge but only had a cloth peak with black braid. So, to assuage feelings, two new badges were introduced for the highest unformed grades. Both were stitched in metal wire onto a black padded background. The new badge for Divisional Inspectors (DI) consisted of a bullseye with a gold ring and blue cloth bar lettered 'LONDON TRANSPORT'. Above this was a griffin *passant* in silver, and both were surrounded by a gold laurel wreath. The other version was similar but had extra bay leaves at the base and was for use by the new grade of Assistants to Divisional Superintendents (A-to-DS) which was now the most senior railway position in uniform. Caps with a cloth peak and black braid were retained by the DIs and extended to the A-to-DSs. The Divisional Inspector pattern of badge was also issued to the Chief Instructor, Chief Fire Inspector and Assistant Chief Travelling Ticket Inspector.,

In the late-1940s staff of the Central Buses Fire Department had been provided with a distinctive cap badge. Rather than commission a new die it was made by adapting the nickel-silver blue & white standard bullseye as issued to bus Drivers and Conductors. The design was modified by the

addition of red infills and a red scroll attached to the lower ring lettered '• FIREMAN •'. Peer pressure no doubt lead to the Railways Fire Department lobbying for a similar badge and in the late-1940s or early-1950s one was produced. This clearly used the Central Buses die but was finished with a yellow ring instead of white. Like the bus badge, the infills were red, the bar enamelled blue and lettered 'LONDON TRANSPORT' with full lining-out, and the red scroll below was braised-on as a separate item. Later in the 1950s a new die was cut to produce a revised design unique to the Underground. Now the circle was unlined and in chrome yellow, whilst the bar was finished in plain metal and lettered 'LONDON TRANSPORT' in dark blue with full lining above and below. The metal infills were left unenamelled, producing a frosted effect. Like the Central Buses badge, there was a red scroll below the lower ring which read '• FIREMAN •' but integral to the main body of the item.



Above: The Official's ID plate first introduced for the 1946 Victory Celebrations and reissued for the Coronation.

Below: The gilt-on-silver badge used by Railway Instructors and Trainmen's Inspectors.



Above: A silver Instructor badge as issued to Stock Trainers from 1948.

Below: The first badge for Fire Department staff in metal and which was derived from the Central Buses' design.



The post-war years had seen women employees dismissed as men returned from the armed forces, but as a staff shortage began to affect operations, 1950 saw LT recruit female staff again. On the

Underground, they were accepted into the station grades of Porter and Ticket Collector, but train and supervisory positions remained out-of-bounds. The female uniform jackets were now four-button single-breasted, with lower patch pockets, and were worn with skirts or slacks, both in dark blue serge, and with yellow braid or piping around the cuffs and collars. A yellow griffin *passant*, facing outwards, was embroidered onto collars. This was not the first time the symbol had been used in this way, as it had appeared in blue on the collars of the pre-war white 'dustcoats' of Central Buses Drivers. Headgear was a beret-style dark blue hat with yellow piping and carried a 'numbered' badge. Circa-1950, the archaic and inaccurate name of 'Porter', which was hitherto given to the lowest grade of station staff, was renamed as Stationman or Stationwoman.



Above: The revised Fire Department cap badge issued later which had a design unique to the Underground.

Above: Traffic Guides wore a version of the basic 'numbered' badge but that carried the word 'INFORMATION' on the bar instead of a number.

Below: From 1952 Divisional Inspectors gained a padded cloth badge with details stitched in gold and silver wire.

Below: Also introduced in 1952 was a cloth badge for Assistants to Divisional Superintendents and whose higher status was indicated by the additional bay leaves at the bottom of the design.



Lightweight summer jackets were first introduced for bus crews in 1950. These were three-button single-breasted and made of a light grey 'duck' material. Collars and cuffs were coloured blue for Central Road Services (CRS) and green for Country Buses & Coaches. Because the pockets could not be reinforced to carry coins, Conductors were now issued leather cash bags. At the same time, Bus Drivers were provided with a full serge uniform suit for the first time. Prior to this they were only given a cap, overcoat and the dustcoat that had originated in LGOC days. Summer uniform jackets were later designed for Underground train and station staff. However, instead of adapting the CRS pattern, it was decided to use the standard Railways serge jacket as the basis. The new garments were therefore six-button double-breasted, with yellow piping around the collar and yellow braid across the cuffs, but made in a light grey cloth. They were never universally popular and were soon dubbed "the ice cream salesman jacket", owing to their alleged similarity to the clothing worn by mobile ice cream sellers. A single-breasted version was produced for female staff.

At some point in the 1950s raincoats were introduced. These were of the long black rubberised gaberdine type as later worn by 'Blakey' in the *On The Buses* TV series. Their water-repellent qualities were confirmed by those staff who told the author how they would sometimes get a 'belt' from the 'juice' when crossing electrified tracks due to the amount of rain cascading off the bottom of the coat.

A Senior Station Master was a person who supervised one large station or a group of several stations, or a train staff depot, or a combination of stations and a train staff depot and/or a signal cabin; and to whom subordinate Station Masters, Yard Masters, Station Inspectors and Station Foreman reported. Unofficially they were also referred to as the "No.1" or the "Boss Man". They had been left out of the uniform changes of 1952, when the DI and A-to-DS roles gained their own embroidered padded cloth badges, and so were indistinguishable from the basic grade of Station Master. Thus in 1959 a new badge for Senior Station Masters was introduced. This was of the standard supervisory design, but in slightly larger dimensions, and had a metal laurel wreath within the open infills.

Similar badges in green were brought out for Country Buses & Coaches Chief Inspectors in 1960 but made of gold-coloured basemetal instead of gilt-on-silver to cut costs. The same year the Railway A-to-DS role was reorganised and split into three new uniformed grades – Operating Assistant, Staff Assistant and Traffic Assistant (by 1972 the latter two positions had been regraded to non-uniformed).

One of the more unusual positions on the Underground was that of Traffic Guide. Based at some of the busiest central London stations, and not to be confused with LT Travel Enquiries staff, they combined general duties with giving advice and assistance to passengers. Their first known insignia was a cap band in supervisory style – i.e. with the black oak leaf & acorn woven pattern – onto which was embroidered the word 'INFORMATION' in yellow. In late-1962 a metal cap badge replaced this and was based on the 'numbered' badge used by Stationmen, Ticket Collectors and Guards etc, but with the word 'INFORMATION' across the nickel-silver bar in blue instead of a staff number. The new badge was worn on a supervisory-style cap. There was still a Traffic Guide employed at Embankment when the author started with LT in 1978.

LT had traditionally sourced its badges from J.R. Gaunt & Son Ltd., who were London-registered but based production in the jewellery quarter of Birmingham. However, between 1962 and 1964, the firm of W.J. Dingley Ltd. of Birmingham was favoured instead. Though there were no changes to the basic design of badges, there were very slight differences in appearance due to the use of new dies. Some supervisory badges were produced at this time in a gold-coloured basemetal instead of gilt-on-silver. A separate unrelated change involved the griffin uniform buttons which were now chrome or black plastic.

ALL CHANGE?

The British Transport Commission was abolished by the Transport Act 1962 and the London Transport Executive became the London Transport Board on 1 January 1963. As with the demise of the LPTB, apart from the legal address lettering on vehicles, and on official signs outside premises, there was no change to the visual identity of the organisation.

Nevertheless, by the early-1960s the designs of most LT cap badges in use were some thirty years' old and beginning to look dated. The amount of lining-out on the bullseyes used on signs and publicity was steadily being reduced or removed altogether, yet staff uniforms perpetuated the 1934 design. In 1964 LT commissioned a set of samples from J.R. Gaunt as possible replacements for badges of the three remaining Operating Departments (Trams & Trolleybuses having merged with Central Buses to form Central Road Services in 1950). Three separate badge designs were devised, which depending on the amount of areas enamelled or left bare enabled further sub-variants to be created. They had ochre, green, red or blue enamel rings; and for the first time were finished in chrome. Clearly, consideration was being given to giving red badges to Central Buses crews instead of blue or blue & white designs. This would have been logical as Central Buses Inspectors had adopted the red-ringed supervisory badge of Trams & Trolleybuses in 1950. If all possible combinations were produced it would mean there were twenty variations. But the Railway version with the chrome bar came in two versions, meaning that there would be twenty-one types in all. The badges were to the same dimensions as the existing Motorman's badge but devoid of lining-out and underlining etc. The design details of the Railways sample badges were as follows:

| 1964 EXPERIMENTAL SAMPLES | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Ring | Bar | Lettering | Script on bar |
| Ochre enamel | Chrome | Black enamel | LONDON TRANSPORT or 0000 |
| Ochre enamel | White enamel | Chrome | LONDON TRANSPORT |
| Ochre enamel | White enamel | Black enamel | LONDON TRANSPORT |
| Ochre enamel | White enamel | Unenamelled * | LONDON TRANSPORT |
| Ochre enamel | Unenamelled * | Black enamel | LONDON TRANSPORT |

* The unenamelled metal areas gave a 'frosted' appearance

At the same time, two further experimental chrome badges were produced. These were both an updating of the existing 'numbered' design. One had a staff ID number ('0000') in a more modern non-serifed typeface, the other was lettered 'TRAIN OPERATOR'; in both cases in blue. LT had introduced a new grade of Automatic Train Operator (ATO) in 1964 for the staff of the Hainault – Woodford 1960 Tube Stock 'Autotrains' and the same role was to be employed on the Victoria Line. Though the attempt to provide a distinctive ATO badge was laudable, the overall similarity to those used by station staff and Guards meant it was never likely to find favour with the senior Motorman coming into the ATO grade. In the end neither the simplified bullseyes nor the ATO badge were adopted. There was always a conflict between the traditionalists and the modernisers within LT, and on this occasion the former had ended up in the ascendant.

NORMAL SERVICE RESUMED

The mid-1960s thus saw the range of LT cap badges carry on effectively unchanged, the one alteration agreed being the use of chrome finishes on those previously made of nickel-silver (e.g. the 'numbered' badge, Fireman, Traffic Guide and Motorman). This was said to be a more hard-wearing finish, better in appearance and cheaper to produce. There was also a slight change in the appearance of new supervisory badges. The small open areas where the tails of the griffins met the support bar and lower ring were no longer cut out. This gave the badges a slightly 'heavier' look but saved time and money in the manufacturing process. Whilst the use of silver for all Railways supervisory badges was reintroduced, the Inspector and Instructor badges of Central Buses and Country Buses & Coaches were now issued in chrome-plated basemetal only.

In 1964, Acton Town District Line Guard Amar Singh demanded the right to wear a turban as required by his religion, having cut his hair upon originally applying for employment with LT. Although initially suspended from duty for refusing to wear a standard cap, LT later agreed to this, providing the turban was black and carried an official badge. They also curmudgeonly stated that they were not setting a precedent. Some of the more reactionary and long-standing staff of LT staged protests due to this – e.g. coming to work sporting 'unusual' headgear, or throwing away their uniform caps, but the subject soon became a non-issue. In any case, the custom of males wearing hats in all sorts of social situations had started to decline following (it is said) the hatless inauguration of John F. Kennedy in 1961. By the late-1960s, bus and train crews had often stopped

wearing uniform caps, with the badge sometimes worn on a lapel instead. The station staff of the Underground were under a less-relaxed regime and were still required to wear uniform caps right up until the mid-2000s.

The male non-supervisory uniforms underwent minor changes in the mid-1960s. The jackets were restyled as four-button double-breasted and the trousers narrowed. The yellow braid was removed from the cuffs of jackets and overcoats and the use of chrome buttons ceased. Motormen had traditionally always had black griffin buttons, and this was now extended to other grades.

A new and more stylish hat was introduced for female uniformed staff in 1967. Described as being of an 'air-hostess' design, dark blue versions with either yellow or light blue piping were provided for the Underground and Central Buses respectively. A variant in dark green with light green piping was produced for Country Buses & Coaches.



Above: A distinctive, larger, badge for Senior Station Masters was created in 1959 and carried a laurel wreath inside the open infills.

Below: One of the experimental cap badges produced in 1964, this version with a chrome bar lettered in black enamel.



Above: Following the abortive 1964 experiments, the existing badge range was retained but with some modification. Non-supervisory designs were now finished in chrome and an updated font used on the 'numbered' badges.

Below: The proposed design for Automatic Train Operators which was an adaption of the existing 'numbered' badge for Guards and station staff and thus did not find favour amongst senior Motormen.



The uniforms for both male and female non-supervisory staff were updated in 1968, the female jacket losing its mock cloth belt and the male jacket becoming three-button single-breasted. The male uniform also gained embroidered griffin flashes on the collars. These changes, with some detail variations, were applied across the Railways, Central Buses and Country Buses & Coaches departments. Some male rail staff took against the addition of the griffins and carefully unpicked the embroidery, whilst leaving the collar piping intact. I never understood the reasons for this, unless they perhaps considered the new look too 'feminine', the griffins having been associated with the women's uniforms for so many years. The male summer uniform jackets were also made single-breasted but omitted the griffin collar flashes. The uniform jackets of supervisory staff were also changed to three-button single-breasted. Railway supervisors were issued the same summer jackets as Bus Inspectors. These had patch pockets, and with the top one extra deep to accommodate a Bus Inspector's 'time book'. As an indication of their then status, the supervisory summer jackets were also made part of the Motorman's uniform.

Between the end of the 1960s and at the start of the 1970s many grade titles were altered. On 12 August 1968, the grades of Engine Cleaner, Stationman, Gent's Lavatory Attendant, Mess Room Attendant, Station Cleaner, Stationman (Lamp Duties) and Boiler Washer were changed to Railman or, for female staff, Railman (W). At the same time, the grades of Cloakroom Attendant, Ticket Collector Class 2, Ticket Collector Class 1, Fireman (Fire Appliances), Train Checker, Traffic Guide and Shunter (Station) became Leading Railman or Leading Railman (W). The small number of Porter-Signalmen remaining became Signaller (Station Duties).

In 1972, Station Master and Yard Master became Station Manager and Station Manager (Running) respectively, Senior Station Master became Senior Station Manager, Divisional Inspector became Area Manager and Operating Assistant became Traffic Manager. The changes did not affect the appearance of uniforms or badges. There were also a number of Station Inspector (Running) positions at very small train staff depots – e.g. Euston and Drayton Park.

To be continued ...