

## PASSENGER DOOR CONTROL – A POSTSCRIPT

The story of the more recent (and unsuccessful) use of passenger door control, which was resurrected on D Stock when it was new, was noted in the previous issue of *Underground News*. Subsequent new stocks were fitted with it in some form or another (the 1983, 1992, 1995 and 1996 Tube Stocks) but its misuse led it to be abandoned again. On the refurbished D Stock and 1995 Tube Stock it has been decommissioned and the button spaces plated over or removed, whereas on the 1992 and 1996 Tube Stocks the buttons remain in position but are isolated and longer operational and maintained.

Going forward a few years, the Victoria Line's 2009 Tube Stock was not fitted with passenger door control (the all-underground line didn't need such facilities) but it was reintroduced on the S Stock but at present it is used only in a limited way. Under present procedures, all doors are opened and closed by the Train Operator but at terminal stations, and stations where there is additional dwell time built into the timetable, doors close automatically after approximately 45 seconds of non-use, but can be opened by passengers – by the push of a button!

All this leads us back to where it all began.

In **PENNYFARE** (the LPTB's in-house magazine) for **August 1938**, there is an item '**PUSH-BUTTON DOORS**'. We are told –

*The decision to adopt individual push-button door controls on all sections of the Board's railways should result in greater comfort for passengers, for no longer will it be necessary to open all the doors of a surface line train in wintry weather if only a few are being used.*

*In addition to the £9M worth of new rolling-stock which will be fitted with decentralised door control, the 883 cars on the Northern, Bakerloo and Central lines will be similarly equipped, while alterations to the Piccadilly Line stock will be carried out later. Designs for conversion of District Line doors to automatic control are now being prepared.*

*The new type of door is dual in operation; in tube and busy stations, door control will be operated by the guard, but at surface stations, passengers will be able to open the doors.*

*The advantage of decentralised door control will be appreciated more fully when it is stated that only 73 of the Board's 220 miles of railway are in tube, while 65 miles of extension now being built comprises 13 miles of tube track and 52 miles of surface line.*

Prior to this in 1936, two new trains of M Stock on the Hammersmith & City Line were provided with push-to-open buttons, enabling passengers to open the doors themselves but with the Guard having an option to override the system and open the doors himself. This was perpetuated on the Metadyne O Stock introduced from September 1937, but with modifications, and was to be included on the following P and Q38 Stock and on the 1938 Tube Stock. Plans had also been formulated for much of the older fleets to be so converted which became part of the 1935-40 New Works Programme.

To that end and in April 1938, the history books tell us that the first seven-car train of Standard Stock was in service Northern Line with passenger door control on a specific working Mondays to Fridays (train 23) and Saturdays (train 14). We are also told that the nominated train could uncouple and couple as normal, but could not be coupled to any other train not fitted with PDC.

For the sub-surface lines, the first PDC conversion was an F Stock train which began running in service on the District in August 1938.

But the threat of war intervened and what trains had been fitted with PDC had the equipment disabled in January 1939. A further trial (with further modifications) took place on the Northern Line in February 1940 but after the system had been proved it was disconnected and it wasn't until after the Second World War that Passenger Door Control began to appear again. It was a long and drawn-out process to get it up and running – well over eight years on the lines and stocks that it was destined for. But it was by no means universal. The Piccadilly Line never did get PDC and neither did the Northern City Line.

The first line to operate PDC post-war was the Central Line from 25 October 1948 and then the Bakerloo Line from 19 December 1949. The Northern Line followed from 18 April 1950. Of course, the line fleets were not all ready from 'day one' and certainly on the Central Line, four trains per day were introduced until the fleet had been completed.

Although the first R Stock entered service on the District Line from 27 March 1950, PDC had not been enabled – this was to follow *much* later. The P Stock working the Metropolitan Line's Uxbridge branch

then introduced PDC from 20 November 1950 and on the west end of the Hammersmith & City Line from 8 August 1952. On 25 February 1954 the F Stock on the Uxbridge line was commissioned for PDC.

The District Line began PDC on 6 June 1955 but on six-car Q Stock trains only. The rest of the District Line fleet (R6, R8 and Q8 train formations) were PDC-operative from 7 May 1956 which brought on board the Hammersmith & City Line east of Bow Road at the same time.

But Passenger Door Control was not meant to be operational throughout each line, only in certain open sections and not necessarily throughout the traffic day, and instructions were issued to staff as to the locations, sections of line applicable and exceptions! This is summarised below, when all stocks involved had been completed.

LINE/STOCK	USE OF PDC	EXCEPTIONS
District (all)	West of Earl's Court and east of Bow Road.	Hammersmith and Acton Town.
Metropolitan (P and F Stocks)	West Hampstead – Hillingdon.	Wembley Park, Harrow-on-the-Hill and Rayners Lane.
Hammersmith & City Line O Stock	Royal Oak – Goldhawk Road and (later) east of Bow Road.	
Northern Line 1938 Tube Stock	Golders Green – Burnt Oak and East Finchley – Totteridge.	Golders Green all trains peak hours and all trains terminating. Colindale and Finchley Central terminating trains.
Bakerloo Line 1938 Tube Stock	West Hampstead – Canons Park and Kensal Green – Watford High Street.	Wembley Park and Neasden. Terminating trains at Harrow and Bushey.
Central Line Pre-1938 Tube Stock	Newbury Park – Roding Valley. White City, East Acton – Ruislip Gardens and West Acton.	Hainault all trains. Debden, Loughton, Woodford, Newbury Park, Greenford and Ruislip Gardens terminating trains. White City during peak hours.

Confused? Well, the passengers must have been! Whilst staff had the instructions to interpret, passengers were none the wiser as to which station operated PDC. Their only way of finding out was probably when their doors didn't open! Therefore, it perhaps wasn't surprising that PDC was abolished on all lines with effect from 16 March 1959 – and for a variety of reasons.



**Left:** OP Stock trailer 014081 on an inner rail Circle Line working at High Street Kensington in the early-1950s. As well as the passenger door open buttons (which were in yellow surrounds), labels were attached to the glass on passenger doors pointing to the button to be pushed. At that time, as well as bullseye no-smoking labels, white-on-blue no-smoking labels were also to be found on some window toplights.

**Photo: LURS Collection**



**Above:** A four-car train of Pre-1938 Tube Stock arrives at Acton Town in the early-1950s. The Piccadilly Line's trains were never converted to passenger door control but because of line transfers over the years, some cars had PDC but isolated. The leading 1926/27 motor car is one such car to have the buttons fitted.

**Photo:** LURS Collection



**Left:** An officially posed photograph demonstrating the use of passenger door control from a passenger's point of view. Note the label pointing to the push button, which incorporates the LT 'bullseye'.



**Left:** Another posed photograph, showing unpainted aluminium R49 NDM car 23567 at Acton Town adjacent to an R38 motor car on the left. When new, 23567 ran with red-painted R Stock. The only colour relief was a thin red band at waist level (which carried an inconspicuous gilt car number) – and the red surrounds to the push-to-open buttons. The yellow surrounds on red-painted cars may be seen on the left. Also visible through the open Guard's door are the controls that were unique to the R Stock – doors operated by a key-operated rotary switch and other controls comprising 'trigger' switches instead of conventional 'buttons'.

**Both photos:** LT Museum