

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Brian,

22 March 2023

R STOCK – UNDERGROUND NEWS No.735

All photos © Basil Hancock

Although many people may not have been aware, the R49 Driving Motor cars differed in layout from their R38 equivalents.



The centre section between the two sets of passenger doors was shorter on the R49 DMs than on the R38 DMs, with an equivalent increase in length of the section between the forward doors and the driver's cab. This resulted in a large blank panel between the driver's cab door and the first side window on the R49s, whereas on the R38s the door and side window were adjacent. This can be seen by comparing the views of R38 21142 at Chiswick Park (*Left*) on 8 September 1975 with R49 21146 (*Below*) at Stamford Brook the following day. The shadow

of the red V and stripe are clearly seen on 21146, as is the painted canopy over the end windows.





As another comparison, R38 22673 is seen at Ealing Broadway on 10 September 1975 in white livery alongside R49 22681 in painted silver livery (*Above, Left*), which not only contrasts the differences in the window layout between the two cars, but also the two different painted liveries. The first unpainted car, 23567 is seen towards the end of its life at Wimbledon (*Above, Right*) on 4 September 1982. Interestingly, it is coupled to R49 DM 22681, this time in white livery, which appears again.

A little-known celebrity was unpainted R59 NDM 23584 seen at Ealing Broadway (*Below, Left*). This was the car which went to the Aluminium Railway Vehicle exhibition in Strasbourg in France in June 1960. With the exception of the Metropolitan Railway rigid 8-wheelers which went to France, was this the first Underground car to go overseas? An interior view (*Below, Right*) shows that, at least in 1975, it did not seem to have any commemorative plaque inside, unlike 23567. Was there one originally?



As a comparison (*Left*), here is a view of R38 22606 alongside CP Stock 54244 at Ealing Broadway on 10 September 1975, which demonstrates the differences between the two types. By coincidence, 54244 was one of the two P stock cars which, as 14244, played its part in the development of the R-Stock. Along with its partner, 13244, it was fitted with florescent lighting between 1946 and 1955 as a trial for the R-Stock. Its leading bogie was also equipped as a trial with retractable shoe gear, which was adopted for, but later removed from, the R Stock.

*Yours sincerely, Basil Hancock.
By E-Mail.*

Dear Brian,

11 April 2023

A STOCK ROOF COLOURS

Regarding the footnote 10 on page 260 of the April 2023 issue of *Underground News*, the roof paint used on the red and maroon roofs on A Stock at Neasden was not a standard LT colour, but one purchased from one of the normal suppliers to LT. To get the maroon colour, two cups of black gloss and a cup of varnish were added to each five litre tin – the cup measure was an LT catering tea cup!

After a few units had been done, it was noted that the maroon seemed to get darker, and the Depot Engineer at the time told us to do some units with red roofs, so the paint on these did not have the black added.

After the few units with red roofs, we were told to go back to the maroon but, as you stated, the corporate identity people were objecting.

We were told to make sure we had plenty of maroon paint, and to start painting grey roofs only when the maroon had all been used up.

One of the Neasden's material staff and myself were trying to persuade the corporate identity man that we already had a corporate livery – i.e., Train Red, Chiswick Cream window pillars, Brown roof and gold lettering. We didn't get anywhere, but it did wind him up quite a lot and at least we tried! I wonder what the A Stock would have looked like in that livery?

The black painting of the panel at the bottom of the train operators window to improve the appearance was suggested to me by the late Bob Greenaway. It seemed like a good idea, so I had a unit done on overhaul and it was obviously liked, as it continued in dark grey on the refurbished units.

The raising of the car numbers above the windows was my idea as this area was less likely to be graffitied, so the numbers generally stayed on the cars.

Yours sincerely, Steve Smith.

By E-Mail.

Dear Brian,

15 April 2023

MERCURY TUBES AND NORTHERN CITY TRANSFERS

All photos © Basil Hancock

After the extension of the Bakerloo Line through Finchley Road in 1939, there was a risk that a Metropolitan or Circle Line train on the southbound Bakerloo Line track might accept an incorrect signal for the Bakerloo Line platform and tunnel, with obvious potential damage at the entry to the tube tunnel.

As a result, the signal gantry on the approach to Finchley Road was equipped with three glass U-tubes filled with mercury, designed to break and therefore return the signal to danger, if a surface stock train attempted to enter the Bakerloo Line platform. The gantry and U-tubes can just be seen in the background of the bottom photo on page 224.



A better view is in the photo (*Left*) which also shows battery loco L44 (BR Doncaster 1973) approaching the southbound Metropolitan Line platform on 11 September 1975 with a three-car train of 1938 Tube Stock being transferred from Neasden depot to Drayton Park on the Northern City Line. I believe that this was the penultimate such working before LT operation of the Northern City Line ceased in October. The train is coming off the loop which

existed between the Metropolitan and Bakerloo Line tracks between West Hampstead and Finchley Road, having evidently travelled on the Bakerloo track from Neasden, and the points giving access to both lines from the loop can be seen. Battery loco L56 (Pickering 1952) was at the rear.

The same train was photographed a little later (*Below, Left*) passing through the Down suburban platform at King's Cross, having climbed the curve from the Widened Lines with L56 now leading and with a Class 46 Peak diesel and the now-preserved Deltic 55002 "The King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry" also present, and then leaving Kings Cross main line station (*Below, Right*). On the left are Class 47 diesel locos, with another Class 55 Deltic behind the train and a Cravens Class 105 DMU arriving.



Yours sincerely, Basil Hancock.
By E-Mail.

Editor's notes:

There were U-tubes (officially known as Surface Stock Train Detectors) at other locations and are summarised thus in order of installation:

05.06.1932	Hammersmith – Barons Court eastbound Piccadilly Line	To prevent eastbound District Line trains proceeding to the Piccadilly Line tunnel.
29.10.1939	Southbound approach to Finchley Road southbound Bakerloo/Jubilee Line.	Since decommissioned following TBTC signalling on the Jubilee Line.
01.04.1940	Southbound approach to East Finchley Northern Line.	Decommissioned after the cessation of BR freight trains. It is suggested that the apparatus was removed and afterwards installed between Hounslow Central and Hounslow West.
14.07.1975	Westbound between Hounslow Central and Hounslow West.	Possibly from East Finchley (q.v.). Provided to prevent (errant) westbound District Line trains proceeding west of Hounslow Central to the Piccadilly Line tunnel on the then new Hatton Cross alignment.

These days, the tubes are painted with a silver conductive paint, as mercury is now prohibited on Health & Safety grounds. The breaking of the tubes would cause the protective trainstop to remain up (and the signal, if there was one, would return to danger). There is a popular myth that the breaking of the tubes would also take current off – this is not so. (It was always taught at the Railway Training Centre that taking current off would not stop a train). Regarding the detector at Finchley Road, Fred Ivey related a story to me about when he was on duty at Finchley Road as Station Manager, assisting with the return football traffic from Wembley. He received a telephone call from Wembley Park saying that a football supporter's flag pole was sticking up between a pair of communicating doors on a southbound Jubilee Line train. But, too late, the train arrived and smashed the tubes, putting the service into chaos.

It should be noted that there were also 'electric train detectors' (as opposed to Surface Stock Train Detectors), for example at Leyton (westbound), Leytonstone (eastbound) and Newbury Park (outer rail/westbound), where the signal to a tube tunnel would only clear when the detector had detected the shoes of an Underground train.