

# HIDDEN LONDON



## 3 – ALDWYCH

This collection of photos were taken on one of the LT Museum's 'Hidden London' tours, which took in both platforms and accessible subways and passageways. There were some areas, of course, that were out of bounds for health and safety reasons.

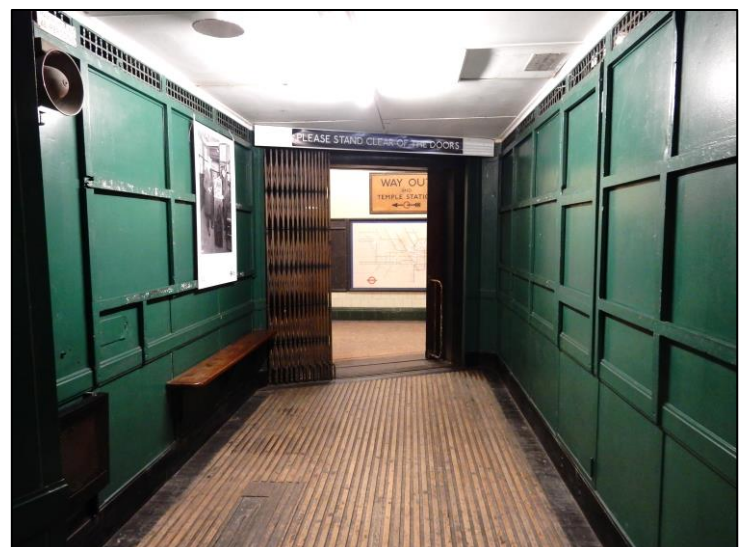


**Above:** The two entrances to Aldwych station, in the Strand (Left) and in Surrey Street (Right).

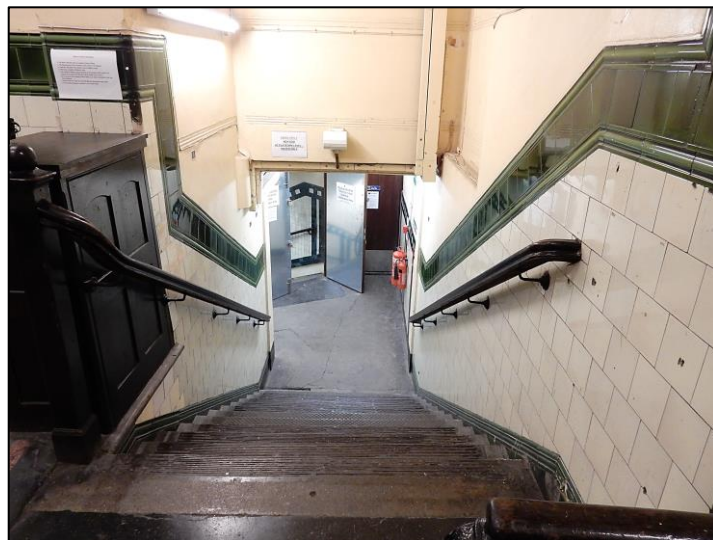
**Both photos:** LURS Collection

Some 26 years ago, the Holborn – Aldwych branch of the Piccadilly Line permanently closed to passengers. Although it was in central London, it was always a quiet backwater and little used, despite having a daily service until 8 April 1917, after which Sunday services were withdrawn. The run-down of the service has been well documented elsewhere and these photos take a look around the station – disused for the travelling public, but used for training and, more recently, 'Hidden London' tours organised by the London Transport Museum.

**All photos:** Rick Griffiths unless noted otherwise



**Above:** Two views of the lifts at Aldwych, now anchored down. They remained in original condition until the early-1950s, when they were upgraded, one by one, to more modern standards, as prototypes for other stations. But they were still essentially 1907 vintage and it was their age that was one of the contributing factors in the line's closure – replacing them at great cost with meagre passenger traffic was out of the question.



**Left:** When the Underground Ticketing System (UTS) was being set up, new facilities were provided at Aldwych. The original ticket office facilities were replaced from 17 October 1921 by mini facilities in the lift, with tickets operated by the lift operator, known as 'pedestal booking'. However, during the evening rush hour and certainly in the 1960s, there was a small free-standing ticket office 'box', which was opened for the sale of tickets – it was one of the duties of the booking clerks at Holborn. When UTS was

introduced at Aldwych on 26 February 1988, pedestal facilities were abolished in favour of ticket machines and an 'Assistance' window was provided in sympathetic 'heritage' style with replica tilework in the area.

Opposite/Previous Page:(Lower Right) Lift stations were also provided with spiral stairs for use in emergency and some of these had 'normal' steps for a short distance down, as seen here. In the centre of the photo can be seen the start of the spiral stairs to lower lift landing level.



**Above:** At platform level, the four-car unit of 1972 Mk1 Tube Stock is normally stabled. Because the station is used for filming from time to time, the name changes to suit the film subject.

**Above:** There was a fairly long passageway between the lower lift landing and the platforms, this having just basic Leslie Green tile décor

**Photo: Chris Wakeman**

**Below:** Interior of the 1972 Mk1 Tube Stock based at Aldwych, this being the interior of one of the trailer cars with its all longitudinal seating and in 'as withdrawn' (2 October 1998) condition.

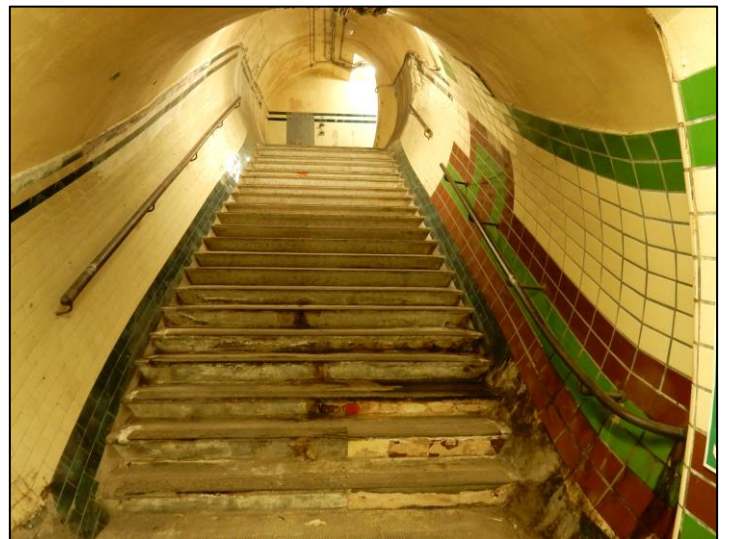


**Below:** The eastbound platform survived until closure, this looking east. The mirror was provided for OPO working. This section of the station, showing its tunnel segments, was originally in darkness, as single or two-car trains were originally operated.



**Left:** Being used for filming, appropriate period advertisements are used. Because the platform at Aldwych was only 250 ft long, and some of that at the east end was never tiled, the scheme employed here is minimal as seen in the passageway above and at platform level. Part of the original station name of 'Strand' may be seen.

**Overleaf:** (Top) Access to the little-used (since 1910) second (westbound) platform was via a subway over the eastbound platform (Left) and then down stairs (Right) to the platform. This little used platform was later used for experiments in station modernisation design, the tiles to the right being a trial for what was eventually adopted at Piccadilly Circus.





**Above:** This is the westbound platform that was abandoned in the early years, looking west to the overrun tunnels, this now blocked off (both tracks continued for a short distance into overrun tunnels). Some of the original tile pattern remains as seen left of centre. This platform was abandoned long before suicide pits had been introduced, the first in 1926.

Piccadilly Line for many years – maybe belonging to the LT Museum? For a station that was built with short platforms from the beginning, anticipating low rate of passenger traffic, it is difficult to understand why Aldwych was built with three lift shafts – only one was ever used with a pair of lifts, the others remaining in this state some 113 years after opening.



**Above:** The east end of the 1910 disused platform looking east. The tunnel access towards Holborn is now sealed, as can be seen.

**Photo: Chris Wakeman**

**Below:** Some oddities at Aldwych and seen at the east end of the remaining operational platform, a light box train indicator (Left), so common on the

