

# LAST TRAINS ON THE DISTRICT

## 40 YEARS AGO

It is difficult to believe that 40 years ago, on 31 March 1981, the remaining trains of CO and CP Stock on the District Line were withdrawn from service, although some of their 'family' lived on for a further two years in the form of R Stock driving motors. There were three basic types, the O and P Stock entering service from 16 September 1937 and 17 July 1939 respectively, with both types having Metadyne equipment. Between the two types was the Q38 Stock, which entered service from 14 November 1938 and worked with older stock on the District Line. Between 1955 and 1965, all of the O and P Stock was converted to the more reliable PCM control, the Circle Line first (1955-1958), followed by the Hammersmith & City Line (1960-1962) and finally those on the Metropolitan Line (1962-1965) which were transferred to the District Line after conversion. They were reclassified CO and CP Stocks on PCM conversion.



**Above:** The O Stock was first used on the District Line, being based at Ealing Common Depot, where they were commissioned for service. In turn, they were transferred to the Hammersmith & City Line, replacing the Metropolitan Railway 'Saloon' Stock of 1906 vintage. One feature of the O Stock, which was formed into six-car trains, was that the guard and his controls were located in the rear cab. At what was then named Aldersgate & Barbican, an eastbound train is seen departing (Left). Note that the 'A'-end motor cars did not have ventilation above the front cab door, where, which as the 'D' end and all P Stock motor cars did. A further difference between O and P Stock was that O Stock had a raised lens red tail light, whereas the P Stock had an unfancy tail light surround. Approaching Westbourne Park (Right) is an eastbound train about to pass over the flat crossing which linked the different Western Region goods yards on both sides of the line. On the right is Westbourne Park signal cabin which was closed on 14 March 1970.

**Below:** More distant views of O Stock, but both with great historical interest, nonetheless. An eastbound train heading for Whitechapel (as confirmed by the correct headlight code) approaches Liverpool Street (Left). On the extreme right is the original Metropolitan Railway signal box, which still stands today albeit not in use in that capacity. Just beyond the signal box on the right is where the connection to the main line station was for a short period (six months in 1875), now mostly obstructed by new buildings. In the loco spur is Metropolitan electric loco No.6 "William Penn" awaiting its next turn of duty. Loco working ended on 9 September 1961 and the loco spur at Liverpool Street was abolished on 6 December 1964. Looking west at Moorgate (Right) long before the realignment of tracks towards Aldersgate in the mid-1960s, with a Hammersmith & City Line train of O Stock approaching. The realignment took the tracks straight ahead. At top right can be seen part of Moorgate substation. The City Widened Lines are to the left and out of the photo.

**All photos: LURS Collection**





**Above:** A six-car train of P Stock arrives at Ickenham (Left), long before the station's halt-like facilities were lost to rebuilding in 1971. Like the O Stock (and indeed the similar-looking Q38 Stock) all trailer cars were built with a locked cab door at one end, should the need arise to convert them to driving motor cars, as did happen in some cases. A six-car train is seen heading northbound for Uxbridge at Willesden Green, just before their withdrawal from the Metropolitan Line (Right). Although there was provision made in the June 1963 timetable for six trains of P Stock to be used on the Uxbridge branch – their mainstay since 1939 – they were soon replaced for conversion to CP Stock when sufficient trains of A Stock were available. The last run of P Stock is undocumented as far as we know and best guess is that the last one ran on the Metropolitan Line in the early-autumn of 1963. Of course, both CO and CP Stocks worked on the Circle Line for some years to come and with some stabling overnight at Neasden, worked limited passenger trips to and from Wembley Park at the extremes of the day.



In later days and off its normal line of route, a six-car train of CO/CP Stock is seen approaching Northwood on the northbound local line (Left) and departing Northwood heading south after reversing in the northbound platform (Below, Left). The train bears a Circle Line set number and we can only speculate that this may have been a test run from Neasden Depot after the repair of a defect. Although Northwood goods yard still has some of its tracks, the yard had closed by then. In the photo below can be seen one of the yellow distant disc signals below the southbound starting signal, provided for BR freight trains with their lesser braking capacity, and also the wrong road starting signal (JF21) on the right,





which was an 'approach-lit' functioning signal. Note the electrified siding to the left of the train, which is available for use to this day. The north- and southbound 'main' lines (without platforms) are on the right. At far right is the Interlocking Machine Room (IMR) which is for Northwood area signalling, with control from the signal cabin at Harrow-on-the-Hill.

**All photos: LURS Collection**



West-end CO Stock motor cars in the bay platform at Putney Bridge, that (Above, Left) being in original Underground red livery with gilt car numbers and LT transfers. From November 1973, CO/CP units outshopped from Acton Works were painted in the lighter shade of bus red (Above) and were given white car numbers and roundels. However, between January and October 1973, nine units were outshopped with white car numbers and roundels, but retained the Underground red livery. None of these nine were repainted again (in bus red livery) before their withdrawal.

**Above:** A six-car train is seen reversing at Wimbledon while working the Edgware Road service, which was limited to six-car formations because of shorter platform lengths between Notting Hill Gate and Paddington. Nearest the camera is a CP Stock motor car.

**Below:** These two views of trailer cars, in Underground red livery (Left) at Putney Bridge and in bus red livery (Right) at Ealing Common, clearly shows the sealed door which would have been a cab door if converted to a motor car at a later date. Note the lighter patch by the single door in the left-hand photograph – this is where the passenger door control button was originally located and the patch has obviously worn off.





**Overleaf:** (Photos 1-6) Two CP Stock DMs received rainstrips over the doors (1), 54202 (seen here at Dagenham East) and 53247. CP DM 53196 had the passenger door windows replaced with sealed units which didn't extend up to the tops (2) seen at Ealing Broadway, COP trailer 013089 had window 'flares' as a trial for R Stock, at Ealing Common (3) in original livery and at Ealing Broadway (4) after repainting in bus red. O Stock (and later CO Stock) motor cars were not provided with outside door butterfly cocks, apart from 54014 (5) seen in Ealing Common Depot. Trailer 013144 was one of several Q38 conversions to COP trailers, this at Stamford Brook (6) being a de-icing trailer and also one that took part in outside door indicator light trials in 1948, hence the 'diamond'-shaped housing.







**Opposite:** (Photos 7-8) At Barking early on a summer Sunday morning with one of the early-morning trains departing that terminated at Aldgate East to serve Petticoat Lane market traffic (7). The trains had no 'Aldgate East' destination plates, so 'Aldgate' had to suffice. From 1926 to 1990, the District Line provided two (or four, according to the timetable then in use) trains for the Circle Line on Sundays and were crewed by motormen and guards from Parsons Green. An 'A'-end CO Stock motor car leads a District Line inner rail Circle Line train at High Street Kensington (8).

**All photos pages 211 and 212: Brian Hardy**

**Below:** CO Stock DM 54039 in the middle of a train formation at Ealing Broadway. Note on the side cab door the exterior number bracket that had been fitted for trials with Positive Train Identification which, like on the Northern and Piccadilly lines, wasn't followed through.

**Photo: Kim Rennie**





**Above:** Examples of restored interior car number plates. That (Left) is from an O Stock mounted on the wing-shaped grille (note, number not in Johnston font), while those (Right) are from P Stock. 13257 and 14217 would have had '5' replace the first '1' on PCM conversion but 014271 was converted to a motor car in 1949 and became 14271 and then latterly 54271.

**Both photos: Kim Rennie**





**Left:** The guard's controls on O Stock was located in the driving cabs and the guard operated in the rear cab. When formations became seven cars on the District Line from 1971, care had to be taken to ensure that a CO Stock motor car wasn't at the outer ends of a seven-car train because of some short platforms.

**Below:** On P Stock, the guard was located at the trailing end of the motor car saloon. In addition to the control panels, there was a small drop-down desk (to the left of the communicating door). The emergency stop handle, which when operated vented air and applied the brakes, is to the right of the door and the single pilot light in the centre beneath the ventilation grille above. Tip up seats were also provided.



**Above:** (Left) Interior of a COP trailer, showing the two bays of transverse seats in the centre section of the saloon. Note also the partitions, which were provided because the District had some first class accommodation in each train, until the facility was withdrawn at the beginning of the Second World War. The partitions were also fitted with doors to keep the first and third classes separate.

**Above:** (Right) The interiors of some CO/CP Stock (and also R Stock) were painted grey during overhaul in their later years, this being a CP Stock motor car looking towards the guard's control panels. The pilot light may be seen illuminated above the communicating door.



**All photos: Kim Rennie**

## 50 YEARS AGO

Just ten years prior to the CO and CP Stocks being withdrawn, London Transport said goodbye to the Q Stock, the last running on the District Line on 30 June 1971 and on the East London Line on 17 September 1971.



The Q Stock comprised different classes built between 1923 and 1938 – the G, K, L, M and N classes spanning the 1923-35 period and all having clerestory roofs, and the Q38 cars which were almost identical in appearance to the O and P Stocks we have just seen. The newest cars, of course, looked very different to their contemporaries but all had similar (older) equipment to work together in a train formation. To see a mixed Q Stock train was a sight to behold in terms of a uniform appearance!

The Q38 Stock was delivered with the older train equipment and the earlier stocks were converted to run with them, being fitted with air doors, guards' controls, e.p. brakes, passenger door control, etc. The motor cars were converted 1938-40 but the trailers, which continued to run as H Stock with C, D and E classes, were converted post-war, from 1948.



**Above:** Q23 motor car 4200 leads a mixed formation Q Stock on the westbound at Wimbledon Park. This was one of the cars that was part of the centre-guard experiment in 1948 and was also fitted with outside door indicator lights, the diamond housing still being visible but not in use.



**Above:** This photo of a six-car mixed Q Stock train leaving Plaistow shows the varying design styles this group of stock embraced. On the left is a Q23 motor car (known as 'horse boxes') and to the right a Q38 trailer, just 15 years younger – how the designs changed. Next is a Q31 or Q35 trailer, a Q27 motor car, another Q31/35 trailer, and a Q27 motor car bringing up the rear. Above the second car can be seen an LT-style signal but not yet commissioned (having white crosses on them), which dates prior to the October 1959 resignalling and BR/LT track segregation.

**Overleaf:** The G (Q23) and K (Q27) class comprised all motor cars. However, 14 Q23 motor cars were converted to trailers in 1959-60 as part of the R59 Programme but all were among the first Q Stock cars to be withdrawn in 1964-66. A Q23 motor car leads a six-car train waiting to depart Upminster (Top Left). Note on the front at bottom right a vertical patch – this was where two headlights were originally, relocated immediately left of the front cab door. A Q27 motor car leads a six-car into West Brompton (Top Right) on a Putney Bridge – Edgware Road working.





**Above:** A Q27 motor car leads an eastbound train into Chiswick Park with a Pre-1938 Tube Stock passing westbound on the left. Note the remains of the support brackets hanging from the canopy, which were for "train ready to start" wires, used by the guard in hand-worked door stock days.

**Below:** A six-car formation of Q Stock is seen arriving at Wimbledon with a Q38 motor car leading. Note that the third car from the right is a Q23 trailer. Semaphore signals then controlled District Line train movements.

**Above:** An interior of a Q Stock trailer. This shows the partition that was fitted to composite cars to separate first and third class passengers.

**Below:** When the future of the remaining Q Stock was being decided, the plan was for the East London Line to be worked with all Q38 Stock. This began to be implemented with two trains so formed, one of them being seen approaching New Cross Gate. However, with sufficient CO/CP Stock being available, this plan was abandoned and the remaining Q Stock scrapped.



**Opposite:** (Top Left) Q Stock operated on the East London Line in four-car formations from 1963 until 1971, apart from a short break between October 1964 and May 1965. A Q27 is at the rear of a train leaving Surrey Docks (as it was then) but without displaying an oil tail lamp. Note the emergency crossover to the right of the train, which was controlled from a ground frame and but in latter days was hardly ever used until the line's refurbishment by LUL in 1995-1998.



**Below:** (Right) The oddity in the fleet was the two double ended motor cars of G class for the South Acton shuttle, which became G23 when converted to double-ended operation in 1941. These operated singly (one in service and one spare) and the South Acton shuttle was the first to have one-man-operation, with the guard for the duty being spare at Acton Town. This is the east end of DM 4167, which had a basic head and tail light as this was the converted cab end. The South Acton branch service was withdrawn on 28 February 1959, although its Sunday service ended the year before.

**All photos: LURS Collection**



Two photos of Q Stock trailers, at Stamford Brook (Far Left) and in Ealing Common Depot (Left). The Q31 and Q35 cars were almost indistinguishable, but the Q35 had an exact 90° squareness of the corners of the saloon windows, making it look rather stark. However, the Q31 wasn't quite as brutal as the Q35 and the corners of the windows appeared to me to have a just discernible softening of the corners. The

Q27 type on the other hand had very nice radiused corners which gave them a softer look which was lost on both the Q31 and Q35.

**Both photos: Brian Hardy**