

# REPORTS OF MONTHLY MEETINGS HERITAGE TRAIN OPERATIONS ON THE LONDON UNDERGROUND

by Andy Barr MBE

**A report of the LURS meeting at All Souls Club House  
on Tuesday 9 April 2019**

Andy is the Head of Heritage Operations at the London Transport Museum and has been since 2013. He works closely with London Underground to run heritage tours as every event now requires a Safety Plan which includes subjects such as:

- The effect upon Museum vehicles.
- That they have been maintained fully.
- That they can work on the current railway system and can fit in with scheduled services.
- Volunteers training and certification that they are competent to operate the stock.
- Briefing for Station Staff so they are aware of the heritage operation and how to control potential crowds of photographers.
- Briefing for other Train Operators, especially when steam is involved.
- Emergency plans if the heritage stock breaks down, causes a trackside fire or there is another incident on the line.
- Training for stewards and how to deal with safety issues such as people leaning out of windows to take video, even if they seem like kill-joys.
- The impact upon the normal daily services and commuters.

This stock includes 1938 Tube Stock, Q Stock, Coach 353, Sarah Siddons, the 4-TC set, the Directors' Saloon and Met No.1 (which is actually owned by the Quanton Railway Society). Andy also has access to a number of road vehicles including the Battle Bus and Routemasters.

The planning for every event takes 12 months (for steam operation); six months (for diesel and electric) and four months (for electric services).

Andy oversaw the overhaul of Met. No.1 before it could steam again. This included dealing with boiler cracks, axle testing, cleaning and straightening frames, relining cylinders and fitting new piston heads.

Coach 353 was a wreck and its refurbishment was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and sponsored by the London Transport Museum at a cost of around £400,000. It was rebuilt by the Ffestiniog Railway from a derelict state and the first test run was on the Great Central where it reached 50mph (!) to ensure it was fit for operation for the faster speeds on the Met. It is currently on the Kent & East Sussex Railway but will return to LU for June's trips.

Sarah Siddons is a well-known and well-loved engine. She is now the only original locomotive remaining with its original purchaser. Major refurbishment took place in the 1990s and she can now reach 50mph (or more downhill). Sarah is currently in Eastleigh works having an overhaul and inspection. *(It returned on 16 May 2019 – Ed.)*

The 1938 Tube Stock four-car unit was last overhauled in 1999 but an inspection in 2005 found issues, including all trucks being badly fractured, the motor suspension bearings needed to be repaired, all motors needed overhaul and the traction equipment needed inspection. The work on the bogies alone took nearly 18 months and £250,000!

The 4-TC unit was bought from National Rail in 1991 and had operated Steam on the Met. until 2001. However, it now had vinyls which were hiding a rust issue. It also has been converted for modern door indicator systems on slam door stock as it did not conform to modern door legislation. The work was done at Eastleigh and is currently touring on other railways. Andy hopes to run this from Marylebone for the Quanton anniversary celebration on August Bank Holiday Saturday and Sunday in conjunction with UK Railtours, who are selling the tickets.

Steam Heritage runs have a number of issues including:

- Modification of smoke alarms.

- How to deal with limited vision from the amount of steam when going uphill.
- Dealing with crowds.
- That vacuum brakes are quick to apply but take 5 to 6 seconds to release along the train.
- How to stop accurately at terminal stations and control crowds.
- How to safely water the engine without spillage, falls or crowd issues.
- How to get the engine onto a low loader without breaking the springs.
- How to see modern signals which are on the opposite side to the driver on a steam engine.

The Harrow to Amersham runs led to separate issues including that the trains had to run at the main line speed of 50mph; crews required to have additional training and medicals; trip cocks had to be fitted; and coupling had to be done over non-electrified tracks.

Planning has started for 2019 and 2020 events and Andy hopes to run at least one tour per month. However, this will require a heightened maintenance regime to prevent any adverse effects upon the rolling stock which is all over 80 years old. Also, the introduction of the 4LM (4 Line Modernisation) signalling system will mean that 1938 Tube Stock unit is no longer able to run anywhere on the sub-service lines or anyway south of Harrow. The cost to modify the 1938 Stock would be around £1million so this is financially impossible. However, a set-up using a battery loco, which have been fitted for 4LM, could be instigated and is being investigated.

Q Stock may be able to run between Rayners Lane and Acton Town in the future once it is refurbished by the volunteer team and cab signalling is in place. A lot of these works have been funded by the Bob Greenaway legacy (ex LURS Chair and Editor of *Underground News* 1993-97).

Two trains were due to run at the Amersham Heritage Day but there is a signalling closure on the Rayners Lane branch and Neasden Depot cannot accommodate more than one train.

The Upminster trip went well. Andy is discussing idea of running Oakwood on the Piccadilly. (*Subsequent to the presentation, the Unit ran successfully to Oakwood and T4 at Heathrow*).

Next year (2020) there are plans to remove the points to Aldwych which would cut off that station from the rest of the network. Andy is considering running trips with the 1938 Stock (with limited capacity due to evacuation issues) for a week.

Sadly, no steam trains will run on the Underground after 2021. This is because the locomotive's certificate will have expired and it would cost over £100,000 to renew, which is not financially viable. The 4LM signalling would also prevent this.

The final steam loco trips through Central London will be the 150th Anniversary of the District Railway events on 22 and 23 June 2019. The run is between Ealing Broadway and High Street Kensington and should feature Sarah Siddons, Met No.1, the Chesham Set (loan from the Bluebell Railway) and the Kent & East Sussex District Line Coach 100. The tickets are on sale at £150.

After a period of question and answer, the meeting thanked Andy in the usual manner.

**Amanda Griffiths**