



All change please: A Q38 stock train on the District line at Charing Cross in 1956

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THE trains that ran in the 1920s and 1930s were known as the Q stock trains. They ran on the District line, including throughout World War II, and were taken out of service in the late 1960s. They are a rare and distinctive part of London's transport heritage.

Just five classic Q stock cars survive today, preserved in London Transport Museum's collection. When they entered service on the Underground, they initiated a new era of modern design.

Older Q stock cars that were built between 1923 and 1935 all had roofs with high windows and a raised section running down the middle of the carriage, a design feature brought to British railways in the 1870s by American engineer George Mortimer Pullman.

In contrast, new Q stock cars were distinctly modern. They had smooth, curved roofs and sleek, flared sides. This stylish new look was designed by another American, William Graff-Baker, who became London Transport's chief mechanical engineer in 1935.

Unlike the sleek uniform design of trains today, passengers never knew what formation would pull into their platform when a Q stock train arrived. They were the last Underground trains to be made



Fixing up: London Transport Museum is restoring three 1930s trains

up of a mix of cars from both the new Q stock and the older type. The different styles show the evolution over the years of engineering, technology and design.

CHANGING USES

Q stock trains became a familiar part of daily life for Londoners and tourists travelling in and out of the city, from the newly built estates in Barking and Dagenham, to the suburbs of Ealing, Hounslow, Richmond and Wimbledon.

When war began in 1939, life in London changed. The trains were no longer used for commuters, and instead prioritised to help evacuate children from the city to the countryside. This was organised under the direction of the chief executive of London Transport, Frank Pick.

During the post-war years as London was rebuilt, international visitors and Londoners would have travelled on Q stock trains to events such as the 1948 Olympics. They would have used the trains to get to West End theatres and museums, out to visit Kew Gardens and Richmond Park, and to cheer on their football teams at the Boleyn, Craven Cottage and Stamford Bridge grounds.

RESTORING THE Q STOCK

Three of the five surviving Q stock cars, dating from the 1930s, are soon to be restored to their former glory at London Transport Museum's Depot. Once again in full operational condition, the Q stock will run for passengers on heritage railways, transporting history and train enthusiasts to a London from an era long ago.

The interiors of the cars will be restored to reflect different moments from their extensive history on the tracks, making each one a unique experience. One will explore life in wartime London, the second will reflect life during the post-war years of austerity and the third will illustrate the growing optimism and prosperity of the 1950s.

For more information about the project, including the history of the District line and where the Q stock trains ran in the capital, visit London Transport Museum's page at www.ltmuseum.co.uk/q-stock



Sleek design: A Q35 stock train sitting at Ealing Common depot in 1936

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