

LONDON UNDERGROUND DESTINATION DISPLAYS

(Before World War 2)

By Mike Horne

Steam stock days

From the earliest days of the Underground it has been considered helpful to provide some information on the front of the train to indicate to passengers where it was going. Two observations might be made. First the practice was not universal, and was at various times considered quite unnecessary where all trains operated from one end of the line to the other along a single route. Secondly, until the 1960s trains usually carried lamps on the front that could be configured to form a distinctive pattern, one for each possible destination; these were called headcodes. Headcodes were primarily intended for the use of signalmen, but at various times the codes were repeated in information supplied to passengers, but it is not clear in all cases whether this was in addition to or instead of a painted destination display.

The Metropolitan and District Railways both made use of large wooden boards that sat in brackets above the front buffer beam and on the rear coal bunker; each had a centrally fixed carrying handle. A small supply of such boards was provided each of which carried two destinations. The lettering was either painted in white on a black ground, or black on a white ground. It has not yet been determined whether this variation was related to different ages or some other reason. There is no longer any way of knowing which destinations were paired up together and as the boards were simply painted both destinations, lettering style and pairings may have varied. On some photographs it is evident that at two or three boards could be carried in the brackets (only one face visible); other boards not in use were carried in a box in the cab. It is suggested that on all locomotives the size of boards was standard and they were interchangeable, but this cannot be proved.

On the District, electrification put paid to steam locomotives altogether on the passenger trains. On the Metropolitan, steam locomotives were displaced south of Wembley Park, later Harrow. At some point (perhaps when steam traction no longer ran through to Baker Street and the City) the use of destination boards ceased completely even though some of the remaining locomotives would still have had brackets. In practice they would have been very much less useful on the sparse services north of Harrow when it was fairly obvious which train was which; in town, where confusion could have arisen, the electric locomotives still carried destinations.

Finally a photograph has been seen of what looks like a standard destination board on the rear of a train, reading CIRCLE TRAIN in black lettering on white ground. Whether all trains carried these or just Inner Circle trains is not known but only one such photo has been seen.

Table 0A. List of District boards seen

HAMMERSMITH
HOUNSLOW-BARRACKS
MANSION - HOUSE
PUTNEY-BRIDGE
RICHMOND
WINDSOR
WHITECHAPEL
WIMBLEDON

Table 0B. List of Metropolitan boards seen

BAKER ST
CHESHAM
HAMMERSMITH
HAMMERSMITH
HARROW
INNER CIRCLE
MOORGATE ST
NEASDEN
NEW CROSS
RICKMANSWORTH
RICKMANSWORTH
WILLESDEN
VERNEY JUNCTN

DESTINATION PLATES ON THE METROPOLITAN LINE

Early Electric

The destination signs used on steam locomotives have been covered at the beginning of this article. Early electric trains comprised a fleet of twenty electric locomotives which, though of two very different designs, each had huge destination blind boxes at each end. Hammersmith & City Railway rolling stock, owned jointly with the Great western, also had destination blinds. The electric stock used on Circle and short distance suburban workings was fitted with enamelled destination plates.

Electric Locomotives

There were originally two batches of electric locomotive. One batch of ten (built by British Westinghouse) had a central cab and sloping ends at the end of which were full width destination blind boxes at least five feet wide. The destinations actually identified from photographs are given in the following table and show destinations to have been printed in bold white letters on a black ground. The destination displays do not seem to have had a long life — perhaps five or six years — and the boxes were then removed. Photographs show trains either with no destination indicators at all, or the enamelled plates used on car stock which are covered later.

Table 60 – BWE locomotives

AYLESBURY.
BAKER STREET
BAKER STREET.
HARROW.
INNER CIRCLE
NEASDEN.
WEST HAMPSTEAD

The second batch of locomotives (ten built by BTH) had much smaller blind boxes — perhaps three feet wide — mounted high up beneath the cab windows of the box body. The only destinations seen in use are shown below and like the BWE locomotives they did not last long.

Table 61 – BTH locomotives

BAKER STREET
NEASDEN

One can conjecture that each series of locomotives could show the same destinations and that although they only hauled trains between Baker Street and Wembley Park they would have had destinations available for services further north though steam locomotives would have taken over. This implies at least destinations Willesden Green, Wembley Park, Harrow, Rickmansworth, Chesham, Aylesbury and Verney Junction; perhaps other intermediate points were included too. It seems possible the destination boxes were removed before through services were resumed to the City, but if that is not the case then Aldgate and Liverpool Street would have been needed.

Hammersmith & City stock

These cars were joint with the GWR and operated mainly between Hammersmith and Aldgate, with a shuttle from Addison Road to Latimer Road (later Aldgate, then Edgware Road only). These trains were originally fitted with a blind box over the centre cab door. These blinds had only a very short life and were soon replaced by destination plates under the nearside cab window. The following is the only known destination shown in any photo.

Table 62 – Met & GWR stock

HAMMERSMITH

It is conjectured that the destinations Addison Road, Edgware Road and Aldgate (at least) were also supplied.

Metropolitan saloon stock

These cars (dating from 1904-5) were not originally fitted with destination equipment as far as can be seen, but from a second batch of 1905 cars some were equipped with overhead blind boxes similar to those used on the Hammersmith & City (these are thought to be cars 57-82 and 126-165). These also seem to have had a very brief life and very few photos exist. Only the following is definitely known.

Table 63 – Met saloon stock

HARROW

It may be conjectured that other required destinations might have been Uxbridge, Wembley Park, Neasden, Willesden Green, West Hampstead, Baker Street, Aldgate, Inner Circle, Edgware Road.

Metropolitan Railway Plates

Destination Plates on Electric Locomotives and Car Stock

The Metropolitan Railway didn't stay with destination blinds for very long, and at some time prior to 1912 destination blinds were removed from the locomotives and rolling stock; the first plates appear to have been installed from about 1910. The Metropolitan installed brackets on locomotives and electric multiple unit stock that held enamelled destination plates some 28 inches long. These plates had end irons to stop the enamel surfaces rubbing and to act as guides into the holders. Lettering was invariably black lettering on white ground but lettering styles (though a hand painted 'grot' face) varied considerably. To aid selection from the storage box, small initials were painted at each end showing what the plate was (eg H.H.-UX), though a number of plates have been seen without these markings. Sometimes destinations went out of regular use and new ones were painted over the top. In addition to plate position on the ends of trains, additional plates of the same designs were fitted to each carriage at about eye level in brackets one per carriage side.

The following tables set out what is known, but (again) no attempt has yet been made to rationalise what has been found. Some of the plates are marked as being made by Wild & Meguyer. The groupings come from the Met Railway timetable appendix (1920) which explains what plates each grouping of trains must carry (large numbers of plates were carried as the same plates were used on carriage sides as well as train fronts). All these plates have actually been seen. It may be noted that there is some duplication between different train groups. These have still been listed as individual plates for different stocks might have been procured in different batches or at different times.

The actual wording represents plates seen in collections or on photographs, but variations in names and abbreviations are known (eg WEMBLEY and WEMBLEY PARK, BAKER STREET and BAKER ST).

The following schedules of plates were provided. Where plates have actually been seen they are produced facsimile, otherwise in outline only. An ‘A’ suffix indicates plates already in existence with such destinations, though additional batches may have been ordered.

Table 64 – Met electric “main line” stock

6401	ALDGATE	LIVERPOOL STREET	?	
6402	BAKER STREET	NEASDEN	BK-N	
6403	BAKER STREET	WILLESDEN GREEN	?	
6404	HARROW	UXBRIDGE	H.H.-UX	
6405	MOORGATE STREET	WEMBLEY PARK	?	Later batches just Moorgate
6406	NON STOP	WEST HAMPSTEAD	?	

Instructions relating to the latter plate (6406) indicate that the NON-STOP face was to be displayed on trains that did not call at all stations in addition to the main destination plate. The brackets were designed to be large enough to accommodate two plates, and NON-STOP was always to be displayed in the lower position.

Table 65 – Met steam stock and electric locomotives

1912 Arrangements

6401A	ALDGATE	LIVERPOOL STREET	?	
6502	AYLESBURY	QUAINTON ROAD	?	
6402A	BAKER STREET	NEASDEN	BK-N	
6504	CHESHAM	GREAT MISSENDEN	?	
6505	CHORLEY WOOD	RICKMANSWORTH	-	
6506	VERNEY JUNCTION	MOORGATE STREET		

Changes by 1921 (Additional to above)

6404A	HARROW	UXBRIDGE	H.H.-UX	PLATE ADDED TO SET
6403A	BAKER STREET	WILLESDEN GREEN	?	PLATE ADDED TO SET
6507	CHORLEY WOOD & CHENIES	RICKMANSWORTH	?	REPLACES CHORLEY WOOD 6505
6404A	HARROW	UXBRIDGE	H.H.-UX	PLATE ADDED TO SET
6508	VERNEY JUNCTION	WEMBLEY PARK	?	REPLACED PLATE 6506

In addition there were four plates marked AMERSHAM and four marked WENDOVER which were used only on particular workings and on the reverse side of which they carried the legend “To be returned to Liverpool Street”, where they were kept.

NOTE – Destination plates were only carried at leading end of train south of Rickmansworth as steam locomotives didn’t carry plates after around 1910. Plates for destinations north of Rickmansworth were therefore only needed for destinations farther north where trains reversed north to south.

Table 66 – Met Circle stock

6601	ALDERSGATE	MOORGATE STREET	
6602	ALDGATE	LIVERPOOL STREET	?
6402A	BAKER STREET	NEASDEN	BK-N
6604	GLOUCESTER ROAD	INNER CIRCLE	
6605	INNER CIRCLE	SOUTH KENSINGTON	CIR-S.K.

Table 67 – Hammersmith & City stock

1912 Arrangements

6701	ADDISON ROAD	EDGWARE ROAD	
6702	ALDGATE	HAMMERSMITH	
6703	HAMMERSMITH	WHITECHAPEL	
6704	LIVERPOOL STREET	MOORGATE STREET	

1921 Arrangements

6701	ADDISON ROAD	EDGWARE ROAD	
6702	ALDGATE	HAMMERSMITH	
6705	HAMMERSMITH	NEW CROSS (SE)	BEFORE 1923
6706	HAMMERSMITH	NEW CROSS	AFTER 1923
6707	LIVERPOOL STREET	NEW CROSS (LB&SC)	BEFORE 1923
6708	LIVERPOOL STREET	NEW X GATE	AFTER 1923

Note, through services Hammersmith to New Cross (instead of Whitechapel) began in 1914. Some plates were altered by repainting, but plates with new destinations appeared when new batches were required.

It is not known what the local trains (New Cross to Shoreditch) carried, if anything, prior to London Transport days.

After the date of the 1921 schedule some alterations were needed to cater for electrification to Rickmansworth, and the opening of the Watford and Stanmore branches. The following plates have been noted in collections.

Table 68 – Other plates (more information needed)

6801X	AMERSHAM	WEMBLEY (OR WENDOVER??)	AM-W
6802X	BAKER STREET	STANMORE	STAN-BK (in red)
6803X	LIVERPOOL STREET	MOORGATE ST	
6805X	RICKMANSWORTH	WATFORD	
6806X	NORTHWOOD	CHALFONT? RAYNERS LANE?	
6807X	GW MAIN LINE	BISHOPS ROAD	

District Line electric stock plates

Prior to electrification an experimental train was put into service between Earl's Court and High Street Kensington. Photographs suggest that brackets were provided at each end of the train to receive a standard steam locomotive destination board. The destinations HIGH ST. KENSINGTON (white on dark ground) and EARL'S - COURT (dark on white ground) have been seen (it cannot be assumed one was on the reverse of the other). However, the larger initial letters are not a feature of steam loco boards and may have been painted especially for this train.

When the District was electrified two 7-car prototype trains were ordered for use on the Ealing & South Harrow line. These do not appear to have been fitted with any form of destination display at the outset, and arguably none was needed given the limited workings envisaged (they were equipped later when the cars were used on several different branches).

The first District stock to be produced in large numbers was the fleet that entered service in 1905/6 (later known as B stock). On these trains destinations were displayed on enamelled iron plates, with the destination spelt out in white lettering. The background colour cannot be confirmed with certainty but it has been suggested the very earliest plates had a dark blue background (common with enamelling), with a black background coming along at some point later. (Both black and blue plates have survived but it is not possible to be certain beyond doubt which came first or whether new plates obtained at the same time could be either colour.) Each plate carried a destination on each side. The plate actually in service was dropped into brackets on the front of the train immediately above the central cab door, and beneath one of the five headcode marker lights. When not in use the signs were stored horizontally in a pair of containers in the rear of the driver's cab.

During 1909 the District began to practice the non-stopping of certain stations. To advise which trains might not call everywhere a circular 'target' was carried below the offside cab window with the words 'NON STOP' in dark lettering on a light ground; the colours have not been determined but the lettering does not look black. A photograph has also been seen of a second 'non stop' board hung below the destination board with the words 'non stop' (white on dark ground) on the top line and something undecipherable underneath (black on white) that might have given some clue as to where it was that was being non-stopped. The scarcity of photographs of this second board suggests it might not have lasted long, which is consistent with the District's complicated and varying non-stopping pattern. From about 1910-11 Non Stop indicators were carried on the sides of trains and it may have been felt fruitless to provide anything complicated on the fronts.

At around the time of the First World War the destination displays on this early stock was shifted to a point below the driver's (ie the nearside) window. This time pairs of brackets, one above the other, were mounted externally that could carry the destination plate in the upper slot. The lower position was occupied by a plate reading 'NON STOP' on one side and 'ALL STATIONS' on the other. The words 'NON STOP' appear usually to have been white on dark ground, but 'ALL STATIONS' was dark on a light ground. A small number of early photographs show NON STOP to have been white on a coloured ground, perhaps red, and it is suggested that the corresponding all stations lettering was white (or at least a light colour) out of red, but it has not been possible to confirm this.

Between 1910 and 1914 additional cars were brought into use. In the case of what were later to be known as the C and D stock cars (built 1910 and 1912 respectively) the same pattern of destination plate displays were adopted, initially over the cab doors then later moved to below the driver's windows. The third batch (E stock around 1914) appears to have been the first actually delivered with the displays below the driver's window (though photos suggest it also retained at first the brackets over the cab door). In all cases the displays under the cab windows could accommodate two plates, the non stop plate usually being the lower one. By this time, and probably from the outset, the plates are known to have been 2 feet 4¼ inches long and four inches high. At each extreme end of the plates a strip of metal was folded round the end and riveted in place, and these strips served to protect the enamel ends, act as slides into the brackets on the train, and prevented the lettered surfaces of adjacent plates from rubbing against each other.

While the motor cars built in 1923 (later G stock) adopted what was by then the standard practice of a double board display below the cab windows, the cars that entered service in 1920 (later known as 'F' stock) were slightly different. These had only a single exterior destination plate bracket but below it was a glass window into which the ALL STATIONS/NON STOP plate fitted – this could evidently be changed from within the cab, and was shorter than the destination plate. It also appears to have had white lettering on black on both sides. After the Second World War these windows were blanked over. The G stock cars were the last ones to use the long plates.

From the stock delivered in 1927 (K stock) both the destination plate and non stop plates were mounted inside the cab, this time beneath the offside cab window (furthest away from most platforms, but perhaps more visible when there was crowding). The marker lights were also concentrated into a panel immediately below, and by tilting the plates forward very slightly light from the marker light bulbs floodlit the plates. From this point onwards destination plates were necessarily shorter (at about 2 ft long) and the ALL STATIONS/NON STOP plates were permanently fitted, this time on end hinges so they could be swivelled from one position to the other (this meant the legend on one side was upside down compared to the other).

So far as can be established, from C stock onwards the older, long destination plates were stored vertically in containers in the cabs. To help traincrews select the plates required each end of each plate received in quite small lettering various code letters for the two destinations (one or two letters for each). These codes seem either to have been painted and enamelled or punched into the end irons (from LT days these were brass; some other railways did something similar by enamelling small code letters near the ends as they couldn't be punched onto the enamelling and there were not usually end irons). The shorter plates presented a different problem. These were stored within the destination plate boxes themselves, the active plate being brought to the front. To help drivers select the correct plate each was provided with two small metal tabs along the top edge upon which the abbreviated destinations (one or two letters) were engraved. So the driver could see all the tabs without one obscuring the other each different type of plate had the tabs located a different distance from the ends. The reason for duplicating the tabs was so that the destination on one face was shown on one tab and the alternate destination on the other (with the converse showing on the other sides of the tabs).

Just before the Second World War a policy decision was made that with so much interworking and uncertainty over the future of the Circle Line all surface line trains would

henceforth carry destination plates for all destinations that type of train could reach. A side effect was the need to indicate to passengers whether the train was a District or a Metropolitan train. The new O, P and Q stock were delivered with similar destination boxes to the 1927-35 type trains but with the lower (swivel) plate reading METROPOLITAN on one side and DISTRICT on the reverse. In due course older trains had the ALL STATIONS/NON STOP lettering altered to METROPOLITAN and DISTRICT (this was probably done using paper labels, at least at first). On the surface lines these line plates were always black lettering on a yellow ground.

During the late 1950s it became increasingly difficult to ensure that every cab always had a complete set of every type of plate. In addition there was inconsistency (covered shortly) about the destinations that were paired up together. To reduce the effort needed to guarantee every train would have a correct complement of plates, sets of plates were brought together into coherent 'books' that were consistent within themselves. This was a method that had been successful on other lines and was achieved by drilling two holes in the upper part of the plate and threading the set of plates onto a pair of large metal rings. Unfortunately the need to allow the plates to be rotated about the ring meant the metal tabs along the top were now in the way and had to be removed, leaving the problem of finding the right plate down to the traincrews, which was a source of delay.

There was not only scope for some considerable variation between destination plates but evidence from examining real plates reinforces the view that variation was rampant. The evidence of rolling stock contract documents clearly indicates that the supply of destination plates was usually the responsibility of the car builders. They were sometimes supplied with no more than sample plates and a schedule of destinations though in later years (probably when the Johnston typeface began to be deployed, perhaps in the early 1930s) lettering drawings were supplied. Variations in the enamelled finishes were considerable. Finishes were usually fairly glossy until interior plates were adopted when matt finishes were latterly used as it reduced reflective glare. Sometimes the lettering was raised, implying it was the second colour to be applied; some plates had sunken lettering implying white was the first colour. It depended on the lettering process. Similarly lettering varied considerably. 3-inch lettering was usually required so when particularly long names were needed partial or highly condensed lettering was needed, sometimes only affecting a few letters; some names were heavily abbreviated, not always consistently. Once the Underground began using lettering drawings they usually (but not always) shunned condensed lettering and made some or all of the lettering smaller (2¼ inch letters were usual). Occasionally names were split into two lines instead. These variations are of no great moment in themselves except they help differentiate batches of plates and can be an aid to dating.

Given the large number of rolling stock orders, sometimes for fairly small batches of cars, it may perhaps be presumed that there were many different batches of destination plates delivered, many of which were subtly or perhaps not so subtly different from other batches. For example the 1905 District stock was built by two different English manufacturers and a French one, the latter using several different works. There is evidence that the Underground sometimes supplied plates for new stock itself; it cannot be known that they necessarily provided new plates – perhaps it is more plausible that they were recovered from scrap stock, in which case it may be inferred that it was possible for very old plates to remain in service for many years.

District Railway long plates

A list of destination plates is shown in the 1912 rules and provides a convenient starting point for a review (these would all have been long plates). It should be noted that even between 1905 and 1912 there must have been changes - ACTON TOWN was a renaming of MILL HILL PARK and presumably required the plates to be altered (with the new name probably sign-written). Before 1908 no trains operated east of East Ham and one is entitled to be suspicious that the BARKING plate was part of the original batch; on the other hand Bow Road was a frequent destination in 1907 so possibly the plate was original and Barking was provided on the reverse as a destination the District knew it would be serving soon. Uxbridge was not a destination until 1910, but it is reasonable to assume the District didn't know it would be so long before it reached there. Local trains (that is the trains operating on the western branches) only carried the plates denoted below the double line in Table 1; from the pairings it may be inferred this allowed these particular trains to carry only the minimum number of plates.

One might imagine that the destination on the reverse of plates would have followed the same pairings as those on steam locomotives, but no evidence now exists either way. There does not seem to be any pattern that suggests how the destinations were paired up. It is tempting to infer that generally there is often an east-facing and a west-facing destination in each pair and PUTNEY/HIGH STREET is an obvious pairing – if trains operated between these pairs it would merely have been necessary to flip the plate over at the terminus.

Table 1

ACTON TOWN	HOUNSLOW
BARKING	BOW ROAD
EARLS COURT	RICHMOND
HIGH STREET	PUTNEY BRIDGE
EALING	EAST HAM
GLOUCESTER ROAD	PARSONS GREEN
INNER CIRCLE	SOUTH KENSINGTON
MANSION HOUSE	HAMMERSMITH
WHITECHAPEL	WIMBLEDON
SOUTH ACTON	SOUTH HARROW
ACTON TOWN	UXBRIDGE

On the basis that the earliest plates were designed with white lettering on blue enamel, the following examples are known. These conform to the rule book list above. It must be noted that in each case the destination on the reverse is upside down compared with that on the front. There is no reason to suppose that the remaining plates indicated in the rule book were not also produced, but as yet they remain to be found.

The question of having the destination on one side inverted, with respect to the destination on the other, calls for some small comment. Though it may seem odd, it did make handling these heavy plates somewhat easier. If the plate showed one face when the other was required, then the member of staff had simply to turn the plate over, a simple job. Had the plates had the lettering the same way up on each side then the job requires turning the whole plate around, a more difficult job in the confines of a small cab or whilst leaning out of the train.

Note that the ▲ and ▼ symbols denote (respectively) whether the lettering is raised or lowered below the background colour.

Table 2

201	ACTON TOWN	UXBRIDGE	▼
202	BARKING	BOW ROAD	▼
203	INNER CIRCLE	SOUTH KENSINGTON	▼
204	GLOUCESTER ROAD	PARSONS GREEN	▼
205	WHITECHAPEL	WIMBLEDON	▼

Except as noted below the plates above do **not** carry any codes stamped into the end irons and the lettering is in very heavy, mainly condensed, ‘grot’ face recessed into the enamel. They may be from the 1905, later known as ‘B’, stock where codes on the end irons were unnecessary as the plates were stored horizontally when not in use. Plate 203 carries the code 39 punched into the end iron next to the ‘I’ of ‘Inner’ at that end of that side only, the tops of the figures being next to the ‘I’.

The following plates have been identified and differ from the previous ones mainly in that the reverse is not inverted (ie the lettering is the same way up on each side) and the enamelling is black. They appear to be very early and the lettering is a very heavy, mainly condensed, ‘grot’ face recessed into the enamel. The plates may relate to B stock, or perhaps the C and D

stocks. It is possible the colour change and non-inversion simply represents a different batch of plates produced, probably later than those in Table 2.

Table 3

301	BARKING	BOW ROAD	▼
302	CHARING CROSS	PARSONS GREEN	▼
303	EARLS COURT	RICHMOND	▼
304	HAMMERSMITH	MANSION HOUSE	▼
305	HIGH STREET	PUTNEY BRIDGE	▼

These plates do not carry punched codes on the end irons. The ones seen do carry painted codes but some of these relate to later destinations painted over the original ones and are quite probably late additions. It should be noted that with the arrival of the need for a CHARING CROSS destination (on plate 302, presumably at some time after 1912 but before 1915 when that station was known as a reversing point) it was for some reason paired with PARSONS GREEN, knocking off GLOUCESTER ROAD. The latter was still needed as a destination and was presumably paired with something else, unknown.

The following plates (Table 4) likewise conform to the 1912 rule book standard (as amended by the CHARING CROSS changes) and are also produced with black enamel replacing the blue. This time the reverse destinations are again inverted. Although not seen, as yet, it might be inferred that a complete set was made this way. The following represent those known to exist.

Table 4

401	ACTON TOWN	UXBRIDGE	▼
402	CHARING CROSS	PARSONS GREEN	▼
403	HIGH STREET	PUTNEY BRIDGE	▼
404	INNER CIRCLE	SOUTH KENSINGTON	▼
405	INNER CIRCLE	S ^H KEN	▼
406	WHITECHAPEL	WIMBLEDON	▼

The lettering on these plates is a 'grot' face, usually in a condensed style and (so far as can be seen) invariably recessed into the enamel. The extreme abbreviation of the alternate SOUTH KENSINGTON plate is of some interest given it was not difficult to accommodate the full name (these words do not use condensed lettering). It may simply be a different batch where the order book shorthand succeeded in getting through to production! Each of these plates carries end codes punched into the end irons with evidence of the depressed letters having been filled with white paint and enamelled.

Over the years the destinations varied slightly. EDGWARE ROAD was required from 1926 and UPMINSTER and DAGENHAM from 1932. Destinations were also considered necessary for NORTHFIELDS and RAYNERS LANE. The following table indicates plates that are known to exist but which do not conform to the 1912 rule book standard (original or as amended) but are nevertheless reasonably early plates. Again the reverse side is inverted and they carry codes stamped into the end irons in the manner of those referred to in Table 3.

Table 5

501	ACTON	STH HARROW	▼
502	ALDGATE EAST	PLAISTOW	▼
503	BOW ROAD	HOUNSLOW	▼
504	EARLS COURT	GLOUCESTER RD	▼
505	EARL'S COURT	GLOUCESTER RD	▼
506	EAST HAM	PLAISTOW	▼
507	EDGWARE ROAD	PUTNEY	▼
508	HIGH STREET	PARSONS GREEN	▼

It may be noted that there are two versions of the EARL'S COURT plate (above), one with and one without the apostrophe (use of the apostrophe in Earl's Court prior to the 1960s is very unusual). Puzzlingly both EAST HAM (506) and ALDGATE EAST (502) are found backed up with PLAISTOW. The latter is a later destination than that in use in 1912 but it is very odd to find two plates with it on. What happened later is not known as no later plates with any of these three destination on them have been seen. ALDGATE EAST was a very unusual destination indeed, though ST MARY'S was used between 1906 and 1914 as there were sidings there; no plate has been seen for this latter destination.

The need to abbreviate HIGH STREET is a well-known District Railway affectation but the need to abbreviate ACTON [TOWN] or PUTNEY [BRIDGE] is curious. The lettering on these plates is a 'grot' face, usually in a condensed style except for the very short names. Plate 504 does **not** carry the usual end stampings. The end stampings on all the other plates are unpainted, as is the case on all plates referred to subsequently. It might be inferred that these plates are either from F or G stocks, or from small batches of plates that might have been necessary to purchase to replace those damaged over the years.

The next set of plates (Table 6) incorporate the Johnston typeface, and probably date from the late 1920s or early 1930s. These plates still have iron ends with stamped codes. All have the lettering on the reverse side the same way up as that on the front. Lettering is remains 3-inch high. All these plates post-date the last batches of stock to be delivered with long plates and were presumably ordered as replacements for earlier damaged or missing plates. On that basis one would not expect them to have been produced in huge numbers. Most plates have raised lettering (marked ▲), but some have sunken letters (▼).

Table 6

601	ACTON	STH HARROW	▲
602	BOW ROAD	HOUNSLOW	▲
603	CHARING CROSS	HAMMERSMITH	▲
604	DAGENHAM	UPMINSTER	▲
605	EARLS COURT	GLOUCESTER RD	▲
606	HIGH STREET	PARSONS GREEN	▲
607	HIGH STREET	PARSONS GREEN	▼
608	INNER CIRCLE	STH KEN	▲
609	RAYNERS LANE	UXBRIDGE	▲

The next set of plates (Table 7) are presumed to be later than those just described as they have brass ends rather than iron. They are otherwise very similar.

Table 7

701	BOW ROAD	HOUNSLOW	▼
702	CHARING CROSS	HAMMERSMITH	▼
703	EDGWARE ROAD	PUTNEY	▲
704	EDGWARE RD.	PUTNEY	▼
705	EARLS COURT	GLOUCESTER RD.	▼
706	RICHMOND	WHITECHAPEL	▼

It should be noted that all plates in Tables 6 and 7 have lettering the same way round on both sides except plate 704 where the reverse is inverted. The phenomenon of raised or sunken letters probably reflects different manufacturers and hence different batches.

It should be noted that the destination pairings in Tables 6 and 7 follow precisely the pairings apparent in Table 5.

The following destinations are not represented in Tables 5, 6 or 7: Northfields, Ealing, South Acton, Wimbledon, Mansion House and Barking. With no plates recorded one can't be certain about the pairings. However a photograph of a box of plates in the late 1920s shows a set of end codes (B–E and MH–W) that suggests BARKING/EALING and MANSION HOUSE/WIMBLEDON pairs. With one exception the further sets of codes visible conform to the pairings in Tables 5-7. The exception is the code AT–N that suggests the existence of an ACTON TOWN/NORTHFIELDS plate (the latter displacing SOUTH HARROW). Since short plates paired SOUTH HARROW with SOUTH ACTON the existence of such a pairing with the District's long plates is also inferred and a survivor is now sought.

In addition an enamelled DISTRICT/METROPOLITAN 'long' plate has been recorded (raised black Johnston lettering on yellow ground). This probably dates to the late 1930s and although the reverse is inverted it has brass ends designed to slide into brackets. The ends are not stamped with anything probably because the plate was intended to be permanently on display. The 'F' stock never had long 'non stop' plates, just short ones within the cars and visible through a window underneath the destination plate. At about the same time as the long plates were altered to DISTRICT/METROPOLITAN these plates were certainly altered to show DISTRICT. What was on the back is anybody's guess.

F Stock trains provided some unusual workings where westbound trains uncoupled at Acton Town into a Hounslow portion and an Ealing or South Harrow portion. Special destination plates were provided (presumably for use on the outside of carriages on relevant portions) saying Front Portion X or rear portion Y. What was carried on the front of these trains is quite unknown. [diagram of these plates to be added].

NB need to mention Aldgate via Edgware Road, transfer. Seemed initially to have used paper stickers in side windows and diagonally in offside. Yellow out of black.

Southend Through Trains

The District Railway was involved in the operation of through trains between Southend and Ealing Broadway that were hauled west of Barking by the District's electric locomotives. These, as with the 1905 electric stock, had destination display holders at roof level over the cab door, though holders were seemingly added in the conventional position underneath the driver's cab window, and trains are to be noted with the boards in either position. The service operated between 1910 and 1939, and except during the First World War amounted to five or six trips a day.

Photographic evidence suggests that special destination boards were provided that were two or three times the height of a normal board, with dark lettering on a light ground (possibly black or blue on white). The boards were a little shorter than conventional boards, but about half way up short extension pieces are visible so that they could slide into conventional plate holders. It is possible that the boards were in fact attached to conventional redundant or blank plates. Photos suggest an early type of board was used for a while, and although photos are very indistinct the lettering looks like a block letter with serifs. Most photos show two later types of board not obviously used at any particular date, viz: SOUTHEND CORRIDOR EXPRESS in three lines, or SOUTHEND & EALING THROUGH TRAIN, in condensed type in two lines. Most views show trains proceeding towards Southend, but a westbound view shows a train showing a perfectly standard Ealing destination and it must be said that there would not be much benefit to be gained in showing the special display in that direction. This invites the thought that the special signs were only single-sided. No photos have been seen showing what displays were shown on the LTSR/LMSR locomotives east of Barking.

A drawing dated June 1924 exists of a (single-sided) plate showing SOUTHEND & EALING THROUGH TRAIN in three lines, black on white, in Johnston type. As of yet no such sign has been seen on any photograph, and its existence in real life is to be doubted. The three styles are shown below.

Table 9

901	THROUGH TRAIN EALING & SOUTHEND	Style 1
902	SOUTHEND CORRIDOR EXPRESS	Style 2
903	SOUTHEND & EALING THROUGH TRAIN	Style 3
904	SOUTHEND & EALING THROUGH TRAIN	MDR 1924 drawing; board 2 ft 1 ins wide with width over bracket slides 2 ft 4½ ins.

District Railway short plates.

The numbering used in this section is temporary

The first District Railway short plates were provided with the new 'K' stock cars of 1927 origin and built by BRCW. So far as can be ascertained the destination plates were all black gloss enamel with white Johnston-type lettering on plates 2 ft 0½ ins long by 4 ins high, with brass end pieces. The destination boxes were inside the cabs on the offside and carried two displays, visible from the front of the train through a glass window. The top display comprised a pair of substantial brackets that carried a complete set of destination plates, the active one at the front. The lower display comprised a single rotatable plate carrying the legends 'ALL STATIONS' and 'NON STOP'. The latter legend would seem to have been white on a black ground while 'ALL STATIONS' was a light colour on dark (but not black) ground (yellow on red has been suggested but has not yet shown itself provable). 110 motor cars were built and by implication a similar number of sets of plates must have been provided.

When the District extended to Upminster in 1932 eight further motor cars were ordered from the Underground's UCC works at Feltham (known as 'L' stock). While similar destination plates might have been ordered to earlier stock one cannot be certain the plates came from the same enamelled iron source and might therefore display variation. In addition to the new sets there was a requirement for additional destination plates showing DAGENHAM and UPMINSTER for distribution within the 'K' stock. This plate would have been provided in the 'L' stock set but these were not necessarily from the same source as the additional plates for 'K' stock. Another feature of the 'L' cars was that the non stop plates seem to have had 'NON STOP' in light letters on a dark (but not black) ground¹ (the colour of the other side is not known).

At points between 1927 and 1933 many motor cars of C, D, and E stocks were modified to run with the K and L cars and received new front ends with 'K' type destination indicator displays. This again would have meant purchasing large numbers of new destination plates, this time ordered by the District itself, rather than via carbuilders. All in all, it is to be expected that at the very least two types of short plate are likely to be found in quantity with the possibility of a third type in small numbers.

The following lists plates that have actually been recorded. This table (10) represents plates with gloss enamel finish that may well predate London Transport and are therefore probably of District Railway origin. Those marked with a green flag follow the same pairings that appear to have been in use on long plates from 1905 to the 1920s. An orange flag represents a pairing similar to a later amendment to the long plate system but still in 1920s form. Red represents a novel pairing and white plates are unpaired and remain a mystery as to how they fit in. It is believed this represents the first generation of tabs that were about 1½ inches wide (which has given rise to considerable inaccuracy in defining spacing measurements).

Table 10

Temp code	Prov code		Front	Back	Tab ref	Distance between tabs	Sunk / raised
23	1001		HAMMERSMITH	MANSION HOUSE	1	20¾	▼
DB4	1002		HAMMERSMITH	MANSION HOUSE	1	20¾	▼
DB1	1003		EALING	EAST HAM	2	19½	▼
	1004		BARKING	BOW ROAD		18¾	
33	1005		HIGH STREET	PUTNEY	3	17	▼
DB5	1006		HIGH STREET	PUTNEY	3	17	▼
DB8	1007		CHARING X	PARSONS GREEN	4	16	▼
	1008		ACTON	HOUNSLOW	5	14½	▼
38	1009		ACTON	HOUNSLOW	5	14½	▼
	1010		NORTHFIELDS	UXBRIDGE	6	13	▼
DB7	1011		STH ACTON	STH HARROW	7	11½	▼
24	1012		INNER CIRCLE	STH KEN	8	10	▼
32	1013		WHITECHAPEL	WIMBLEDON	9	9	▼
DB2	1014		EARLS COURT	RICHMOND	10	7¼	▼
29	1015		EDGWARE RD	PLAISTOW	11	5¾	▼
18	1016		NORTHFIELDS	(blank)	9	9	▼

It may be noted that this set does not include Dagenham or Upminster (the latter a destination from 1932 but Dagenham not coming into regular use until 1935). It is impossible to infer whether a plate has simply not yet been seen or whether the ‘sunken’ lettering plates predated these events. There is actually more than one style of lettering, one fairly thick and a second, more spidery, type where some individual letters depart significantly from the Johnston norm. It has not been determined why there is an extra NORTHFIELDS plate; this would have been required after 1932 (when Northfields depot opened) for District trains terminating there and it is possible that new single-sided plates were produced to meet the occasion, with later batches supplied with UXBRIDGE on the reverse.

The next table (Table 11) shows plates which have raised lettering and include some of slightly more modern appearance, probably post-dating LT but certainly not in all cases.

Table 11

Temp code	Prov code		Front	Back		Distance between tabs	Sunk / raised
34	1101		BARKING	BOW ROAD	2a	18¼	▲
DB6	1102		HIGH STREET	PUTNEY	3	17	▲
41	1103		CHARING CROSS	PARSONS GREEN	4	16	▲
39	1104		ACTON	HOUNSLOW	5	14¾	▲
35	1105		SOUTH ACTON	SOUTH HARROW	6	11	▲▲
30	1106		RAYNERS LANE	UXBRIDGE		10½	▲
DB3	1107		INNER CIRCLE	SOUTH KEN		10½	▲
28	1108		DAGENHAM	UPMINSTER		5¾	▲▲
21	1109		RAYNERS LANE	(blank)		19½	▲▲
19	1110		NORTHFIELDS	(blank)		?	▲▲
20	1111		WHITECHAPEL	(blank)		?	▲▲
	1112		BARKING	EAST HAM	4	16	▲

It is conceivable plate 1106 is a Piccadilly plate. More concise measuring between tabs is called for. Although an attempt has been made to represent condensed and uncondensed lettering in practice this is difficult and many names use both, to the style of the signwriter involved.

The history of the District short plates is very complicated and anyone able to contribute to the story is very welcome to contact the author.

London Transport District and Metropolitan Line short plates

In 1936 Metropolitan (Hammersmith & City) trains were extended from Aldgate to Barking and 14 motor cars of 'M' stock were ordered from BRCW; these cars were very similar to the 'L' type. This was the first time such stock had operated on the Metropolitan.

The stock would certainly have required the destinations: Barking, East Ham, Whitechapel, Edgware Road and Hammersmith. Possibly the destinations Plaistow and Aldgate would have been useful. It is unknown whether these trains would additionally have carried District destinations, but as the fleet was dedicated there would probably have been no need. The need for a Hammersmith destination was potentially a source of confusion as it had to be clear that the train was a Metropolitan (Hammersmith & City) service, not a District, which used identical stock. Thus was born the HAMMERSMITH VIA PADDINGTON plate, split over two lines.

Eastern destinations still in use included New Cross and New Cross Gate. However there is no evidence that M stock cars operated either the through or local trains during this period, through stock being provided by the Hammersmith & City pool (of Met & GW joint stock), and local trains by Metropolitan cars.

The Hammersmith & City fleet was to be replaced from 1935-6, by O stock trains, comprising 6-car trains, all motor cars, from two contractors, Birmingham and Gloucester. New destination signs would be needed and each car builder presumably sourced their own contribution. 116 cars were ordered in total. At this stage, the trains were intended to operate services between Hammersmith and Barking, Aldgate or either of the New Cross destinations, and between Edgware Road and Addison Road.

There was a second batch of stock (denoted P stock) ordered in 1937-8 comprising 146 motor cars from the same two manufacturers (with the majority of cars from Gloucester). Because the O stock units were soon lengthened by the addition of trailer cars there was a surplus of trains and some were infiltrated into the Metropolitan main line and District fleets. The consequences to the distribution of destination plates is not known.

The extension of Hammersmith & City Line trains to Barking has already been referred to. In 1939 it was decided to switch the Metropolitan main services (from Uxbridge) to Barking, confine the Hammersmith & City to Hammersmith-Aldgate and make the East London Line entirely self contained (using mainly ex District stock). Presumably this simply meant switching the Barking/East Ham plates from the O/M trains to the P stock for the duration (Barking/East Ham services switched back to the Hammersmith & City Line from 1941).

The next table represents an undated plan showing destination pairings and tab spacings. This plan probably dates from the mid 1930s and shows quite different destination plate spacings (these seem to represent a later type of tab a just fifteen sixteenths of an inch wide). The tab

spacings form an orderly cascade from plate edge towards the centre and these have been given position numbers. It may be noted there is no plate at position 3 and the closest positions are not allocated (the latest new pairing – DAGENHAM/UPMINSTER – is at the bottom and it might be inferred that as new pairings were required they took up positions at the bottom of the list). Neither WIMBLEDON nor MANSION HOUSE is shown and there is some evidence they fill the missing position number 3. SOUTH HARROW has been deleted and replaced by NORTHFIELDS.

Table 12

Front	Reverse	Position and displacement (ins)	Tab Position
BARKING	EALING	21.8	1
BOW ROAD	HOUNSLOW	20.4	2
<i>MANSION HOUSE</i>	<i>WIMBLEDON</i>	<i>19.1</i>	3
RICHMOND	WHITECHAPEL	17.7	4
PUTNEY	EDGWARE ROAD	16.3	5
PARSONS GREEN	HIGH STREET	14.9	6
ACTON	NORTHFIELDS (WAS SOUTH HARROW)	13.6	7
EARLS COURT	GLOUCESTER ROAD	12.2	8
SOUTH KENSINGTON	CIRCLE	10.8	9
EAST HAM	PLAISTOW	9.4	10
AL (ALDGATE?)	H (HAMMERSMITH VP)?	8.1	11
CHARING CROSS	HAMMERSMITH	6.7	12
DAGENHAM	UPMINSTER	5.3	13
(BLANK)	(BLANK)	3.9	14
(BLANK)	(BLANK)	2.6	15

It is entirely possible that position 11 (used by Hammersmith & City trains) was previously used for District destinations no longer necessary following extension of Piccadilly Line and withdrawal of normal stock on the South Acton service. These are in matt enamel unless otherwise stated.

Table 13

Temp code	Prov code		Front	Back	Distance between tabs	Sunk /raised
40	1301		BOW ROAD	HOUNSLOW	21	▼
27	1302		MANSION HOUSE	WIMBLEDON	19½	▼▼
31	1303		RICHMOND	WHITECHAPEL	17½	▼
DB10	1304		HIGH STREET	PARSONS GREEN	15½	▼
26	1305	NJ	EDGWARE RD.	PUTNEY	?	▼▼
DB11	1306		ALDGATE	HAMMERSMITH VIA PADDINGTON	8	▼

Note: NJ = not Johnston

Olympia Service

When Olympia trains began operating in 1946 there was no destination plate for the job. Paper slips were evidently produced for attaching over some infrequently needed destinations; no enamel plates were made. Stock used on the Olympia service was initially of the District's local stock but F stock helped out until transfer to the Metropolitan in the early 1950s. It is reported that Olympia trains had large paper slips pasted into some of the passenger windows to aid identification, and photos exist of the same slips posted across the offside cab window (in lieu of a proper plate) at a crazy angle since it was the only way they could be made to fit. These slips were printed in yellow on a black ground. R stock when delivered was not used on the Olympia service and did not have provision on the blind; it was added in the late 1950s when it was decided that reasonably modern trains should be used on the service.

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DESTINATION PLATES ON THE PICCADILLY LINE

Great Northern, Piccadilly & Brompton Railway

Between 1906 and 1932 trains on the Piccadilly Line simply shuttled between Hammersmith in the west and Finsbury Park in the east. There were no branches to complicate matters, the depot was at one end (trains running empty to and from Hammersmith) so with efficient signing at stations it was hard for passengers to go wrong. Destination plates were therefore not necessary.

The gate stock carried on (with the addition of 40 extra cars in 1917) until the late 1920s when the fleet was replaced by what was later described as Standard Stock. 136 cars were delivered, including 47 motor cars and 36 control trailers. The new car design allowed for destination plates on motor cars and control trailers, and photos show that they were fitted. As far as the author has been able to ascertain, the control trailer plates were identical to those used on motor cars. The destinations HAMMERSMITH and FINSBURY PK have been seen; presumably they were on either side of the same plate. The Piccadilly extensions had not yet been authorized so it is conjectured that at this stage no plates for the expected extensions would have been ordered speculatively.

In 1930, owing to stock transfers between lines. 20 additional control trailers were transferred from Bakerloo. These would have required new plates. Perhaps enamelled ones were made or the existing ones stickered over. We don't know.

For the 1932-3 extensions, a huge fleet new of cars was ordered, including 145 motor cars, but no control trailers. The motor cars all came from one manufacturer. One would expect this to be an indication that 145 sets of destination plates (plus spares) would also have been ordered as a single batch, possibly with a second batch to retro-fit the existing motor cars.

At the time the plates were ordered the destinations required would have been (in geographical order):

Cockfosters, East Barnet, Bowes Road, Wood Green, (Finsbury Park), (Green Park), (Barons Court), Hammersmith, Acton Town, Northfields, Hounslow West, Ealing Common, South Harrow. At this stage the Underground had no agreement to run Piccadilly Line trains onto the Metropolitan. The stations in brackets one cannot be certain about, but the suspicion is that the Finsbury Park/Hammersmith plates were retained but nothing was initially provided for Green Park or Barons Court. Ealing Common would have been doubtful except that a 1931 car has been photographed sporting an Ealing plate (a small number of Piccadilly trains were stabled at Ealing Common depot).

It may be postulated that at least THREE separate batches of plates would have been required, suggesting that plates may differ in style and manufacturing detail between batches, but with consistency within any batch.

- Plates ordered via the car manufacturers for the 1931 stock cars.
- Plates ordered by the LER for equipping older stock cars to run with 1931 stock cars.
- Plates ordered for the 1934 stock cars (these would incorporate the new station names of Arnos Grove and Enfield West).

Since plates have been seen displaying Barons Court we know that these must have been ordered later and are of the same matt style use for the 1938-40 plates (the matt finish was found better to eliminate glare from the marker lights used to illuminate the plates from below). Barons Court is backed up with Rayners Lane and may have displaced Ealing Common which was probably rarely used.

Important in the story is the widespread use of non-enamelled plates on this line. It appears that the LER was approached by a company able to print on a kind of shiny linen-backed paper material which enabled old destination plates to be reused by a durable material (neither paint nor paper by itself was durable enough for the rough handling plates received). It is evident from the huge number of survivors that large numbers of plates received this treatment, probably in the 1930s. It leaves a suspicion that there were not enough enamel plates for all trains as a matter of policy and this fabric material was used extensively. The destinations were backed up in the same way as on normal plates.

In the following tables the plates actually seen are listed, grouped together by style as far as it has been possible to do so from notes made when the plates were examined. The tables are not necessarily in time order.

Where a plate has NOT been seen, it is marked 'CON' for 'conjectured'. More information would be very helpful. As usual the arrow symbol signifies whether the lettering is raised out of the black background or sunk into it.

Gloss black finish

1603	BOWES ROAD	STH HARROW	▲
1604	HAMMERSMITH	FINSBURY PK	▲
1670	NORTHFIELDS	UXBRIDGE	▲
Con	EALING	WOOD GREEN	▲
Con	EAST BARNET	HOUNSLOW	▲
Con	COCKFOSTERS	ACTON TOWN	▲

1633	BOWES ROAD	STH HARROW	▼
1634	EALING	WOOD GREEN	▼
1635	EAST BARNET	HOUNSLOW	▼
Con	HAMMERSMITH	FINSBURY PK	▼
Con	NORTHFIELDS	UXBRIDGE	▼
Con	COCKFOSTERS	ACTON TOWN	▼

The following are all matt or semi matt finish, and presumably later than above.

1643	ARNOS GROVE	STH HARROW	▼
1644A	ACTON TOWN	NORTHFIELDS	▼
1644B	ACTON TOWN	NORTHFIELDS	▼
1645	COCKFOSTERS	WOOD GREEN	▼
1646	ENFIELD WEST	HOUNSLOW	▼
Con	UXBRIDGE	HAMMERSMITH	▼
1657	EALING COMMON	RAYNERS LANE	▲
1660	BARONS COURT	RAYNERS LANE	▼

1610=matt-ish. 1660=matt

The lettering used in the earlier plates is only very loosely based on the Johnston typeface and several letters are quite characteristic. In particular the letters O, C, G use narrow variants based on an elliptical O, and the letter W has a very short central apex, which makes it narrower than normal.

The post-1928 Piccadilly Line stock had two plate positions, the upper one being for the destination plate. The lower position carried a plate permanently fixed in this position by spigots at each end and attached centrally to the brass end plates so that the entire plate could be rotated around its central axis. One side of the plate displayed NON STOP and the other ALL STATIONS; the driver rotated the plate to display the appropriate face as required.

Two different types of non-stop plate has been noted. One type, seen on a 1929 stock control trailer, has white lettering on a black ground. The other has dark lettering on a lighter coloured ground; it is not possible to guess at the colours but neither the dark colour in photos looks intense enough to be black, nor the light colour white.

In February 1937, instructions were issued for the replacement of the swivelling plates by new ones carrying the name Piccadilly Line on one side, and blank on the other. Photographs and surviving evidence indicate these plates were black on yellow (as with District and Metropolitan Line plates introduced at the same time). Some non stop plates were adapted for use as normal plates (by painting on new destinations) by removing the spigot at both ends and replacing the brass end piece at one end with a wider one to make plates up to the correct length.

THIS IS PROVISIONAL AND FURTHER INFORMATION WOULD BE USEFUL.

DESTINATION PLATES ON THE NORTHERN LINE

City & South London Railway

Today's Northern Line developed from the interconnection of the City & South London (CSLR) and Charing Cross, Euston & Hampstead (CCEHR) Railways. The CSLR seemed at first to feel that changeable destination indications were unnecessary (based on a very small number of photographs and drawings) but quite soon after opening the rather loose destination 'CITY' is known to have been painted in enormous letters on the front of the original locomotives, just beneath the cab door. One might imagine that 'STOCKWELL' was painted on the other end but not one photograph confirming this has ever been seen and contemporary photos of the south-facing end of the locos show no destination painted. The painted destinations may not have been applied until some point after the line opened, and we do not know how long the arrangement persisted.

After the northern and southern extensions were opened photos show that small destination 'plates' were fitted to the locomotives. From photographs the plates are found to be approximately only 1ft 4in inches long and destinations are all in white lettering on a dark (perhaps black) ground. Destinations seen to have been carried include MOORGATE, EUSTON and CLAPHAM, and others assumed to have been catered for (about which more information would be welcome) include ANGEL and STOCKWELL. Other possible destinations at that time were Elephant & Castle, London Bridge and Old Street but these were used infrequently and quite possibly no plates were carried for these places. No CSLR plates from this period are known still to exist and so their method of construction is in doubt. Without overmuch evidence, it is thought that the plates were fitted into brackets on the left hand side of the original (flush-sided) locomotives and the right hand side of later ones as one looks at the loco from in front.

Photographs exist of a locomotive carrying a plate reading CITY. This ambiguous destination seems only to be found on what seems to be locomotive 36, which was restored for display at Moorgate in the 1930s. Quite possibly this misleading plate was produced as part of the 'restoration' process and was never used on any service trains.

Charing Cross Euston & Hampstead Railway and LER

The CCEHR was the only one of the 'Yerkes' tubes to require changeable destination indicators on the stock from the outset (in consequence of the bifurcation of the line at Camden Town to serve two northern branches). Plates known to have existed include GOLDERS GREEN and CHARING X (the X representing a rather more ornate cross [⊠] rather than an 'X'). Other destinations that would have been needed include 'HIGHGATE' and 'HAMPSTEAD' though no photographs of these have been seen. From photographs, the plates appear to be similar in size to the much later plates used on 1938 stock. One can only guess at what happened in 1914 when the Charing Cross (Embankment) loop was opened. The little evidence that exists suggests that the destination CHARING X continued in use until 1926. While the Kennington extension was under construction in 1925-6 half the service terminated at the old Charing Cross station, by then called 'Strand'; historian H.V. Borley recalls that Strand 'plates' were provided, but where these came from and from they took is not known. No permanent plates for Strand are known.

An internal circular of 8 May 1908 refers to 'train indicators' being fitted on all cars, one on either side. Guidance is given how to change them and it is obvious they were fitted externally. The same four destinations were provided just described. H.V. Borley recalled that these comprised 4-sided wooden devices that were supported at the ends so that they could be rotated so as to display the appropriate destination. They were rotated by the guard. We don't know exact details as no photo has yet been seen.

The opening of the Hendon extension in 1923, with the consequent need for new rolling stock, heralded the arrival of a new form of destination display on the CCEHR line—destination blinds. Blind displays known to have been provided include the destinations: EDGWARE, CHARING CROSS,

COLINDALE (this was condensed), GOLDERS GRN¹, HENDON, HIGHGATE, KENNINGTON (condensed), and MORDEN. In addition to destinations observed from photographs it might be inferred that destinations for HAMPSTEAD, EUSTON, MOORGATE, and TOOTING were also provided. The lettering was a form of ‘grot’ that appeared in several sizes. Short names such as HENDON completely filled the box, which was just under 4 inches high; longer names were reduced in height proportionately to fit within the length (the box window was 1ft 11¼in wide).

Although not one photograph has been seen of destinations on blinds set in Johnston, a 1926 drawing exists for such a thing and some blinds to this design may have been produced during the further brief period when blinds were still in use. The drawing is dated 24.8.1926 and shows the following destinations set mainly in 2-inch high Johnston:

Table 20 – Edgware, Highgate and Morden Line blind of 1926

HENDON
HIGHGATE
EDGWARE
COLINDALE
GOLDERS GREEN
TOOTING
EUSTON
KENNINGTON
CLAPHAM COMN
MORDEN

On the face of it the order defies rational explanation and it is perhaps surprising that Hampstead does not appear. However if the order remained unchanged from the 1923 stock one might surmise that Morden was not originally provided for and was added on at the bottom, and the intermediate reversing point (and perhaps regarded as temporary) ‘Hendon’ was added at the top; ‘Tooting’ perhaps replaced ‘Charing Cross’, and ‘Kennington’ perhaps replaced ‘Moorgate’. It’s a bit more sensible then.

Blinds were fitted to all of the 1923-5 stock but the 1926 and subsequent batches had an improved front-end appearance that included the headcode lights all being grouped together and a return to destination plates. At some time not long after the introduction of the 1926 stock, earlier batches of ‘standard’ stock were modified to suit. Presumably this meant ordering a large batch of new plates; with several stock manufacturers thought to have produced plates, and additional plates purchased separately by the UERL, one might expect considerable variety. Before this front-end modification was made, the necessity of showing the route arose (arising from the Kennington extension which gave two cross-London routes). The problem was overcome by installing a special rotatable plate beneath the blind. The plate, if that is the best word, had three faces. One was blank (plain black), the other two showed either, BANK or CHARING CROSS (both black on white). There was a fixed plate between the blind and the rotatable plate reading ‘VIA’ in black lettering on white.

The 1926 and 1927 stocks were delivered with a destination indicator box able to display two plates of which the lower one was the route plate and usually displayed VIA CHARING CROSS in rather condensed lettering or VIA BANK, both apparently in white lettering on a black ground; the marker lights immediately beneath the plates produced a floodlit effect. It is assumed that one route was on the back of the same plate used to show the other, but it is not known whether the plate was removable or a fixed swivelling one such as those known to have been used on standard stock and much surface stock later.

¹ The format of GRN is unclear. Photos suggest the final two letters may have been very small and raised.

If not much is known about route plates even less is known about the standard stock destination plates in early days. It is known that the destinations EDGWARE, COLINDALE, HENDON, HIGHGATE, GOLDERS GREEN and CLAPHAM COMMON exist and can infer that HAMPSTEAD, EUSTON, KENNINGTON, TOOTING and MORDEN would have been essential. Possibly MOORGATE STOCKWELL and STRAND would have been desirable. A plate has been seen with HENDON and CLAPHAM COMMON backed up together, the lettering on the latter being full height and thus very condensed. Similarly a COLINDALE plate has been recorded backed up with GOLDERS GREEN. From this extremely scant evidence it might be inferred that the gate stock plates were not re-used (Golders Green, a destination known to have existed in gate stock days, could not have been backed up with Colindale). Perhaps they were a different size after all, though gate stock was still operating on what became the Northern Line after the amalgamation of the two railways and would then have needed a full selection of plates.

Control Trailers

In addition to motor cars carrying destination indicators a number of control trailers also operated on what became the Northern Line. The first batches of these post-1923 control trailers also carried blind boxes above the cab doors and so far as can be seen these displays followed exactly the same destinations as the motor cars in what appear to be identical boxes.

However from 1926 the blinds were removed and replaced by small destination plate boxes fitted behind the offside cab windows. These were necessarily somewhat smaller than the boxes provided in the motor cars as the cab windows were narrower than the special display windows that had been fitted to the motors. The plates themselves were only 1 ft 8³/₄ ins along their top edge but were otherwise of similar construction to normal plates (which were 2 ft long), and carried the usual identification tabs on the top edge. The lower (route) plate swivelled and carried the destinations VIA CHARING X (note, not 'Cross') and VIA BANK in white on black lettering. Short plates were only fitted to 1923-25 batches of control trailers (later ones had standard plate boxes).

A 1931 drawing suggests plates were paired up as follows: EDGWARE / HIGHGATE, COLINDALE / GOLDERS GRN, TOOTING / WATERLOO, HENDON / (blank), KENNINGTON / MORDEN and EUSTON / (blank). The existence of Waterloo (where it was impossible to reverse trains) is intriguing, and as Hendon disappeared as a possible destination in 1930 it is perhaps interesting that it is still on the drawings in 1931, especially as its counterpart (Clapham Common) has disappeared. It is tempting to assume that the plates were backed up together to conform with the motor car plates but this is a theory far from proved.

New Works Programme Plates

The advent of the 1938 stock brought about a complete changeover of the plates in use on the Northern Line even though the new plates were the same size as the old ones. This time three positions for the display were provided and the name of the line was new shown. Curiously, two types of 'line' plate appear to exist; one has NORTHERN LINE in full-height lettering, though slightly condensed, and the other has slightly smaller, uncondensed lettering with the last three characters slightly smaller still. From the early 1950s only the latter variety has been in use but in older photographs the former 'same height' type predominates. Both varieties are in black lettering on a white ground; conceivably the earlier type were paper stickers or some other temporary arrangement, but the 'proper' ones are enamelled.

According to the construction contract the 1938 stock plates were the responsibility of the car builders. As the stock was going to be used on the Northern and Bakerloo Lines, but was initially only deployed on the Northern, it is possible that for a while there was a shortage of new plates suitable for use on the Northern. Alternatively it is possible that sets of plates were not ready for the first batches of trains. This might possibly explain a small number of early photographs that show the new cars with what looks like standard stock plates (such as HIGHGATE, where painted plates have been

identified). However correct plates would have been essential by late 1939 when the Barnet line extensions began to open in sections. In fact it was not until after the war that stock allocation settled, but as the Northern had fewer trains than originally intended it probably had a surfeit of new plates while the Bakerloo (which had additional new trains) had too few new plates and old plates were reused in quantity. It was unusual for a line to be completely ‘replated’ with so many old plates still suitable, but that is what seems to have happened. Drawings suggest that the Northern was to have plates sufficient for 534 new motor cars (sufficient for 133½ trains).

The new Northern Line destination plates were for the first time bound together into books kept together by chain-link loops. The set of ‘books’ comprises:

Table 25 Northern Line plates intended for 1938 stock

Ref No	Book 1		Hole centres (ins)
2501	ALEXANDRA PALACE	MOORGATE	8½
2502	EAST FINCHLEY	TOOTING	8½
2503	EDGWARE	KENNINGTON	8½
	Book 2		
2504	ARCHWAY	COLINDALE	15
2505	BUSHEY HEATH	FINCHLEY CEN	15
2506	HIGH BARNET	MORDEN	15
	Book 3		
2507	EUSTON	FINSBURY PARK	8½
2508	ELSTREE	SPECIAL	8½
2509	GOLDERS GREEN	HAMPSTEAD	8½
	Book 4		
2510	DRAYTON PK	(blank)	15

As will be seen from the list above some letters are smaller than the remainder on the plate. Apart from ‘AST’ in East Finchley (where the bottom of the letters are level) the remainder of the smaller letters arc level at the top. Most lettering is 3 inches high, though the longer names are reduced in height by half an inch and by further quarter inch increments in the case of the longer names. Oddly, the Kennington plate alone uses condensed letters (except for the initial ‘KE’).

The plates themselves are vitreous enamelled with the lettering most usually raised in white enamel above the level of the black background. The holes, for the chains to go through, appear to have been drilled before the enamelling process; they appear with holes at either 8½ or 15 inches apart. Several extremely minor variations between plates are known (this is not really surprising as over two thousand ‘books’ of plates were prepared for the Northern Line—5300 or so plates—in only about four years).

A plate not actually produced but for which drawings dated 1937 made provision was to have appeared as below.

Table 25A

2507A	EUSTON VIA CITY	FINSBURY PARK
2508A	ELSTREE	MOORGATE VIA CITY

By September 1937 the above plates had been simplified to the designs shown in table 25. Given that the 1938 stock had always been planned to have separate ‘Via’ plates any need for these split plates on 1938 stock is puzzling.

MILL HILL EAST was destination not originally provided for and from 1941 appears at first to have been hand painted and later as paper (finally vinyl) stickers, generally but not invariably applied over the ELSTREE destination (always where found painted but less consistently in the final days of vinyl). The post-war drawing schedule suggests that slips bearing MILL HILL EAST were supposed to have been applied over the blank reverse sides of the DRAYTON PARK plate, no doubt in contemplation of releasing ELSTREE for use, but this does not seem to have been done on any appreciable scale.

There is an inevitable question mark caused by ARCHWAY – a plate introduced in 1938 for a station at the time called Highgate until mid-1939. Was it painted or stickered over in the meantime?

Because it was necessary to seal the under-river tunnels just before and again at the beginning of the War, some changes were needed to the sets of plates already in use (probably less than about a third of them). Consistently STRAND and LONDON BRIDGE are respectively painted over ALEXANDRA PALACE and BUSHEY HEATH, which were not in use. On trains delivered later than late 1939 the plates were not painted over. These variations stayed until the end of 1938 stock.

Table 26. Northern Line painted destinations for 1938 stock required by alterations to the planned scheme (the names in the first column are painted over enamelled names).

2601	STRAND	MOORGATE
2602	LONDON BRIDGE	FINCHLEY CEN
2603	MILL HILL EAST	SPECIAL

With the introduction of 1938 stock the opportunity was taken to alter the types of route plate in use. Plates were certainly ordered according to the following pattern, and small numbers of each plate are known to exist. This time the routes were applied in black type on a yellow ground; this was adopted as standard on all lines.

Table 27. Northern Line ‘via’ plates for 1938 stock

2701	VIA CITY	VIA FINSBURY PARK
2702	VIA HIGHGATE AND CITY	VIA HIGHGATE AND WEST END
2703	VIA GOLDERS GREEN AND CITY	VIA GOLDERS GREEN AND WEST END
2704	VIA WEST END	[blank]
2705	[blank]	[blank]

There seems to have been some wavering over these route plates. Although 2704 has been seen, the drawings were amended in 1939 at which time this plate was altered to delete the lettering altogether producing a blank/blank plate instead, here numbered 2705; it is to be inferred that perhaps no more than 200 cars had been delivered by then. Perhaps it was considered on reflection that there was no need for that plate as plates 2702/3 would have sufficed. Via West End, on its own, would really only have been appropriate for trains starting or terminating at Archway or Hampstead.

VIA CITY (on its own) was mainly needed for northbound trains reversing at Euston (City), but see comments made previously with regard to table 25A – perhaps VIA CITY was not originally contemplated. However the drawing does state that a ‘temporary paper slip’ reading VIA CHARING X was to have been placed over one side of the blank plate. Motives are unknown but this certainly maintained the existing status quo until the new branches opened and something more complicated was demanded. On this flimsy evidence it is suggested that the early Northern Line trains displayed either VIA CITY or VIA CHARING X. It is possible that VIA WEST END was displayed on trains delivered with those plates but one cannot be certain these too were not slipped out with VIA

CHARING X. Photographs are unfortunately few from this time, but are not inconsistent with the foregoing.

The lack of enthusiasm for persisting with the introduction of the concept of ‘via West End’ rather than ‘via Charing Cross was in due course followed by dropping ‘via City’ for ‘via Bank’. At some point prior to the end of the war the latter was produced on slips applied to the remaining blank side of the blank/blank yellow plate (the reverse of the slipped VIA CHARING X plate) reading VIA BANK. In the event this sufficed in the absence of the complicated northern extensions opening and the other via plates 2701-2703 were evidently dispersed to other lines and covered with something more useful.

Note to self: need to remark on scarcity of 2703 compared with 2702. Also has anybody actually seen a 2704?

Several different styles of layout of via Bank/via Charing Cross plates is evident but there is no evidence that any of these were ever enamelled, only painted and paper slip varieties having been seen. One common type shows CHARING X - VIA BANK in large condensed equal-height lettering and seems to be the first type used. The second type incorporates the same wording, but in smaller, uncondensed lettering in the centre of the plate. The last type (introduced probably during the early 1960s) had a small VIA on the upper left hand part of the display, with CHARING X or BANK centred in the rest of the plate in fairly large uncondensed lettering. These displays consist mainly of vinyl stickers, or hand painted or transfers, but strangely, have been applied to blank yellow-enamelled plates and not as one might expect, to the defunct CITY - WEST END type which were found in small numbers on other lines painted over.

The 3-line destination boxes on the Northern Line could only accommodate a single plate in the upper position, and this was intended to be for the NORTHERN LINE plate. The second position could carry at least four plates and was intended for the several ‘via’ plates, though (with only one via plate ever used in practice) it usually stored a book of destination plates behind as well. The bottom row was designed to carry the ten destination plates. Train staff looking for an easy life, when trains were run on fixed workings between the same pair of termini it was not unusual for both active destinations to be presented in rows two and three with the via plate used to obscure the one not needed at that moment. Nice and quick!

Northern City Line Destination Plates

When the Northern Heights extensions were planned, the Northern City Line was still operationally to be operated as a Line in its own right (even though shown on maps as part of the Northern Line). On the line there was to be operated some 1938 stock trains together with a number of standard stock trains. The latter were to operate the Moorgate-Finsbury Park local service, with a mixture of standard stock and 1938 stock trains on the electrified LNER branches.

The outcome was a need for a comparatively small number of new plates for use on standard stock trains, enough for 46 motor cars and 11 control trailers. The plates required only needed to deal with destinations between Moorgate (Northern City Line) and Alexandra Palace, High Barnet and Bushey Heath. Had the Northern Line plates intended for 1938 stock been paired up together in a more logical way then producing an additional number of the relevant ones would have fitted the bill in the simplest way. In the event it was necessary to produce a new schedule of destination pairings for the additional plates. However the same drawings were used so the plates were superficially similar to those on the 1938 stock though they were undrilled (and not made into books) and the lettering was sunk into the matt black ground rather than raised. The plates did not carry tabs. The drawings indicate the plates had been intended to be drilled and made into two books (2801-2803, and 2804-2805) but physical evidence indicates this did not happen.

Plans indicate that the lower plate of the standard stock pair (the swivelling one) was to bear the legend NORTHERN LINE in a similar style to the 1938 stock; the reverse was to be blank.

Table 28. Northern Line ‘New Works’ destination plates intended for standard stock motor cars

2801	ALEXANDRA PALACE	MOORGATE VIA FINSBURY PARK
2802	BUSHEY HEATH	HIGH BARNET
2803	FINSBURY PARK	EAST FINCHLEY
2804	ELSTREE	SPECIAL
2805	DRAYTON PK	(blank)

On the MOORGATE VIA FINSBURY PARK plate the ‘via’ section is in black on yellow, about one third of the height of the plate, like the more well known plates used on the Central Line. This plate was originally just to have read MOORGATE but the design was amended early in 1938. ELSTREE/DRAYTON PARK also seems to have been an afterthought, and was added in early 1938; these destinations were needed for depot workings.

Absent from the scheme for Standard Stock are destinations Edgware and Finchley Central (for short workings), Highgate (for trains running into the depot from the south) and Moorgate (for local trains on the Finsbury Park to Moorgate shuttle).

As is well known, the scheme came to nought and the plates (if ever fitted to trains) were dispersed (they do not seem to have been used on the Northern Line) and were painted or papered over with more useful destinations. In later years a motley selection of plates was used on the Northern City, including ones with stickers, but MOORGATE was sometimes painted on the blank side of a DRAYTON PK plate, and this was really all that was necessary for the curtailed service.

The destination plate drawings suggest that short (1 ft 8¾ ins) plates were ordered for 11 control trailers in accordance with table 28, but no short enamelled plates have actually been seen. Those found on the Northern City until 1962 (when control trailers were withdrawn) were plates with paper slips. The only difference between the lettering of the short plates and normal plates was that the ‘PK’ in DRAYTON PK was in 2-inch lettering rather than 3-inch and ‘PARK’ in FINSBURY PARK has become PK, but in 3-inch lettering. A short version of the swivel plate with NORTHERN LINE on it was also provided for use in control trailer positions, the letter ‘O’ was condensed so the lettering would fit.

DESTINATION PLATES ON THE BAKERLOO LINE

Pre London Transport plates

The Bakerloo as originally envisaged ran between Elephant & Castle and Edgware Road and no destination plates were considered necessary. The extension to Queens Park (opened in 1915) was linked to a scheme to run electric trains beyond Queens Park to Watford over the London & North Western Railway but this service was to be operated by a dedicated fleet of trains owned jointly by the Underground and the LNWR. Initially a proportion of the existing train service was projected to Willesden using the original gate stock and it is simply not known whether this precipitated a need for some form of destination display on the trains.

The joint stock cars were delivered late. When the service was projected north of Willesden new motor cars for this dedicated service were borrowed from the Central London Railway. Photographs suggest that these did not at first carry any destination displays but may have relied on paper slips in the car windows along the side of the trains. An isolated photograph of a train taken in 1917 shows the leading motor car bearing a large board (about 4ft long) mounted over the front cab doors. This shows the destination WATFORD, in black on a white ground. A little later the odd gate stock motor car was borrowed for the Watford service and a single photograph of one of these taken in 1919 shows the same type of board in use, also showing WATFORD. The implication is that such boards were used until the joint stock came into service. One imagines the other side probably said ELEPHANT but the full title is possible. Special brackets for these boards must have been fitted.

From around 1921 the borrowed cars were replaced by a dedicated fleet owned jointly by the Underground and the LNWR. The joint stock seemed to use destination blinds situated over the cab doors of which the destinations ELEPHANT and WATFORD has been seen in photographs (it is just conceivable they were plates but blinds were in vogue at the time). Other destinations would have been needed, amongst which one can conjecture QUEENS PK, and probably WILLESDEN and BUSHEY.

At the same time destination plates were provided on other trains (then still gate stock) of which only the destination QUEENS PARK has been seen. By inference some form of 'Elephant & Castle' would also have been needed, and These appear to have been of the conventional 2 ft type. These trains did not venture on to LNWR tracks and would not have needed any other destinations. A small number of motor cars were built in 1914-5 but there are so few photographs the destination arrangements are unknown. Some control trailers from Cammell Laird entered service around 1920 and these did not carry any destination plates.

Standard stock began entering service in the late 1920s. Broadly this was split into so-called Watford Replacement Stock (which was modified for the longer Watford run), and 'tunnel' stock. They both used 2-line destination displays below the offside cab windows. The lower position was occupied by a swivelling plate showing NON STOP or ALL STATIONS. On the gate stock replacement cars the former was in white on black letteringⁱⁱ and on the Watford replacement stock it seems to have been dark on lightⁱⁱⁱ; the colours of ALL STATIONS are unknown. Trains certainly uncoupled during the day meaning that control trailers would have been at the leading ends of many trains. It is to be inferred that destination plates of the shorter type were employed here but photographs are almost unknown.

Destination plates for standard stock have been seen from photographs reading QUEENS PARK and ELEPHANT & CASTLE^{iv}, the latter in extremely condensed lettering. There must also have been plates for Watford and (from 1932) Harrow. Willesden was another possible destination.

Table 32 – Standard stock destination plate

3201	ELEPHANT&CASTLE	QUEENS PARK	9" tabs
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(lettering in white raised heavily out of gloss black ground)

Pre London Transport plates

During London Transport days, some time prior to the War, the NON STOP / ALL STATIONS plates were superseded by plates carrying the name BAKERLOO in dark letters on a light coloured ground. This may well have been achieved by using paper slips over one of the existing legends. All destinations from this time were in Johnston type.

The New Works programme envisaged a second branch of the Bakerloo opening between Baker Street and Stanmore. The existing standard stock was to be retained but new cars of the 1938 stock were to be supplied to augment services. Drawings indicate that 107 new motor cars would be needed and 158 existing motor cars. New destination plates were required for both stocks.

Plates with destinations are known both sunk into and raised from the background enamel. It is tentatively suggested that following purchasing practice on the Northern Line the plates ordered by the 1938 stock car builders employed raised lettering and those ordered by LT for the standard stock had sunken letters (an eventuality resulting from the use of different enamelling firms). This hypothesis is supported by the 'Line' plate where the version with the raised lettering could only have been used on 1938 stock while that with sunken letters was a swivel plate that could only be used on standard stock.

On that basis the following destinations and layouts were envisaged.

Table 33 – Bakerloo plates intended for 1938 stock

Ref	Set 1		Hole centres (ins)	Lettering
3301	ELEPHANT AND CASTLE	QUEENS PARK	15	▲
3302	HARROW (WEALDSTONE)	WATFORD (LMS)	15	▲
3303	STANMORE	WEMBLEY PARK	15	▲
	Set 2			
3304	WILLESDEN GRN	NEASDEN	8½	▲
3305	SPECIAL	(blank)	8½	▲
	Line plate			
3350	BAKERLOO LINE	(blank)	Nil	▲
	Route Plate			
3360	(blank)	(blank)	Nil	n/a

An oddity indicated by drawings is that blank yellow plates were evidently thought necessary to fill the third position in 1938 stock displays (where no 'via' points were necessary on the Bakerloo). These may well have been ordered and ended up in use elsewhere, perhaps the Northern Line for post War 'via' displays. Photos of Bakerloo trains almost always show this third position empty on 1938 stock, leaving an ugly gap.

Table 34 – Bakerloo plates intended for standard stock

Ref	Set 1		Hole centres (ins)	Lettering
3401	ELEPHANT AND CASTLE	QUEENS PARK	15	▼
3402	HARROW (WEALDSTONE)	WATFORD (LMS)	15	▼
3403	STANMORE	WEMBLEY PARK	15	▼
	Set 2			
3404	WILLESDEN GRN	NEASDEN	8½	▼
3405	SPECIAL	(blank)	8½	▼
	Line plate			
3450	BAKERLOO LINE	(blank swivel)	Nil	▼

Several observations need to be made in respect of both tables. First is that no books of Bakerloo Line plates have ever been seen and although the plates were drilled it is to be doubted they were ever made up into books. Secondly the existing QUEENS PARK / ELEPHANT & CASTLE plates (the latter very condensed) seem to have been largely superseded though a few plates escaped the cull and remained in service for many years (others were withdrawn and later re-issued around the network covered with other destinations). Older destination plates showing ‘Watford’ or ‘Harrow’ have not been seen. As plates 3401-3405 were interchangeable with 3301-3305 then they very quickly became thoroughly mixed up and were in practice not stock specific.

A few trains of standard stock operated on the Stanmore Line prior to the Bakerloo officially reaching that point in 1939. There is some suggestion that these displayed the word ‘Metropolitan’ in the destination display. This was probably done by means of a paper slip on the reverse of the ‘Bakerloo Line’ plate.

There was no requirement for any plates for standard stock control trailers on the Bakerloo, and as far as is known no very short plates for Stanmore line destinations exist. In fact no Bakerloo control trailer plates have been seen at all.

After the war the standard stock trains left the Bakerloo and additional trains were required compared with pre-war estimates. Additional destination plates were required and these were recycled plates with paper slips or transfers. As far as can be seen the usage on such slips was for ‘ELEPHANT AND CASTLE’ (in two lines) to be simplified to ‘ELEPHANT’ on one line, presumably because the two line displays were less easy to read; ‘HARROW (WEALDSTONE)’ (in two lines) seems to have been retained, though not used after 1966. After 1948 the ‘WATFORD (LMS)’ plates were modified to read ‘WATFORD (LMR)’, generally by means of paint but later by application of slips with the whole name on. Stickers have also been seen simply with ‘WATFORD’ on them.

Wartime activity resulted in a facing crossover being installed at Lambeth North and it was thereafter possible to run trains directly into London Road depot from Waterloo (this was already being scheduled in 1940). In due course the destination ‘WATERLOO’ was provided on slips on the hitherto blank reverse of the ‘SPECIAL’ plate.

Although many sets of destination plates were released in the early 1950s when twenty or so middle motor cars were replaced the Bakerloo did seem to lose a large number of its ‘new works’ programme plates and by the 1970 most plates were recycled ones carrying vinyl destinations. After 1979, when the Bakerloo was confined to the Watford – Elephant & Castle routeing, STONEBRIDGE PARK was required as a destination and vinyls were used. By this time most Bakerloo plates had been recycled from other lines and stickers were used extensively. In practice the only destinations required were: ELEPHANT, WATERLOO, QUEENS PARK, STONEBRIDGE PARK and WATFORD, though PICCADILLY CIRCUS was provided for some extensive engineering works around 1980. The blank third plate

position had received occasional attention over the years. Sometimes a blank plate had been used – probably the reverse of the ‘Special’ board until that was used for something else when odd blank boards from elsewhere were used. A concerted effort to provide blank boards was begun in the 1970s but by the 1980s these had had a neat white roundel added. Many if not all of these, together with some line plates, were actually made of wood and had the car numbers written on the back to help ensure they were replaced correctly if they needed to be removed for any reason. Although some Bakerloo line plates were painted over something else (including blank plates) in correct colours, by the end these too were black vinyls with white lettering.

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DESTINATION PLATES ON THE CENTRAL LINE

Pre London Transport

The Central London Railway opened in 1900 between Bank and Shepherds Bush, extending to Wood Lane in 1908 and Liverpool Street in 1912. With the entire service operating between the extreme termini destination signs on the trains were not considered necessary.

An extension to Ealing was opened in 1920 but was operated by a dedicated fleet of trains, only a small proportion of the overall service running through. At this point it became necessary for westbound Ealing trains to be distinguished from the others. Photographic evidence suggests that from the outset the new motor cars were provided with destination boards about 4ft long and mounted over the front cab doors. The only destinations seen at this time are for **EALING B \overline{D} \overline{Y}** in white letters on a black ground. One can speculate that something would have been required for Liverpool Street and possibly for short workings to Wood Lane, but no photographs have been seen. The boards appear to be the about the same size as those used on the same motor cars when borrowed by the Bakerloo. The boards seem to have been repainted after a short while to read **EALING B \overline{D} \overline{Y}** on one line and **LIVERPOOL S \overline{T}** on the next; the lettering was obviously smaller but still white on black. This exercise would have avoided the need to change the board over at the end of each trip.

The trains were designed to be split into short portions outside the peaks, in which case the leading cars could have been control trailers of 1900-03 origin; the massive boards could not be used in these positions because of the shape of the carriage roofs. A single photograph has so far been seen of a very much smaller board in use in this position that looks very similar to a 'normal' destination plate mounted in a bracket. Just visible is the legend **EALING B \overline{D} \overline{Y}** .

In later days (certainly after the trains were rebuilt with centre doors in 1926) the boards were entirely dispensed with and the requirement was addressed by means of permanent labels in the offside cab windows as shown to the right. It appears the notices were at both ends of the train. Type appears to be Johnston.



No evidence has been seen of any trains on the Wood Lane – Liverpool Street operation carrying any form of destination display at all.

London Transport

The 1935-40 New Works Programme envisaged significant extensions to the Central Line at each end. With this in mind it was decided to concentrate standard stock on the Central and the first cars started to arrive in 1938.

The drawings indicate that 288 motor cars and 115 control trailers were to be transferred, and new destinations plates were required for each (normal length for the former and short ones for the latter). These were almost certainly ordered directly from enamel manufacturers by London Transport; ones seen so far also have sunken lettering that is consistent with this. The complete story cannot be known with precision as the destination plate schedule was altered more than once. The total casting seems to have been as follows:

Table 43.

Ref	Set 1		Hole centres (ins)	Lettering
4301	LIVERPOOL ST	DENHAM	15	▼
4301A	LIVERPOOL ST	(blank)	15	▼
4302	NEWBURY PARK	WEST RUISLIP	15	▼
4303	HAINAULT VIA NEWBURY PARK	GRANGE HILL VIA WOODFORD	15	▼
4303A	HAINAULT VIA NEWBURY PARK	HAINAULT VIA WOODFORD	15	▼
4304	EALING BDY	WOODFORD	15	▼
	Set 2			
4305	WOOD LANE	LOUGHTON	15	▼
4305A	WHITE CITY	LOUGHTON		
4306	EPPING	ONGAR	15	▼
	Set 3			
4307	MARBLE ARCH	NORTHOLT	8½	▼
4307A	MARBLE ARCH	DEBDEN	8½	▼
4308	GREENFORD	GRANGE HILL	8½	▼
4308A	GREENFORD	HAINAULT	8½	▼
4309	SPECIAL	(blank)	8½	▼
4309A	SPECIAL	RUISLIP GARDENS	8½	▼
	Line plate			
4350	CENTRAL LINE	(blank swivel)	Nil	▼

Although plate 4303 has the white lettering sunk into the matt black enamel, the black lettering is raised out of the yellow. The plates with reference numbers in bold black have actually been seen, while those in white exist on drawings and enamelled versions have yet to be identified in reality

As with the Bakerloo Line, provision was made for making plates into books (at centres shown in table above). Books were certainly put together using metal rings (not chains as on Northern Line 1938 stock). No short (control trailer) plates have been seen and it cannot be confirmed whether the destinations were abbreviated or condensed, or not, or whether they necessarily adopted all the changes made to the motor car plates. It is to be noted that after the War the operation of short trains off peak was not resumed until 1952 and then only in 4-car formations with motor cars at each end. With the exception of the odd 3-car train on the Hainault-Woodford shuttle there was no requirement for control trailers to carry destination plates after 1939. The plates may all have been scrapped, but there is no reason to suppose there were none made and the drawings specified 115 sets.

It is now necessary to go through the table to explain the duplication of plates; those without the 'A' suffix are plates set out in the original set of drawings, while those with the suffix are subsequent adjustments.

4301 was adjusted on the drawing to 4301A in November 1949 by which time DENHAM had been abandoned as a destination. The DENHAM destination had already been appropriated for the STRATFORD destination used temporarily in 1946 during the first phase of the eastward expansion, paper slips having been used; this would only have been necessary on about half the total rolling stock, much of which was still in store. The fact that at least some enamelled plates exist of type 4301A suggests that a reasonably substantial order for plates post war existed; very few post plates

were made after the War. It is curious that the reverse is (uniquely) white on the enamelled plate seen and that the opportunity was not taken to use the position for Debden for which there was now a need (it had not been intended as a reversing point before the War).

4303 was never adjusted on the drawings to 4303A, however enamelled examples exist of 4303A (with no example of 4303 yet seen). 4305 was amended to White City (4305A) at some time not long after the War when the decision had been taken to give the new station a different name. Examples of both plates in enamel exist (plates that were already made had paper slips attached bearing the new name). Northolt had been intended as a reversing point before the War, as it then had a racecourse which was expected to attract significant traffic. After the War (for some years) only Greenford was retained as the intermediate reversing point on the Ruislip branch, and the unneeded destination position was appropriated for Debden.

The design for plate 4309 was modified in April 1938 to allow for RUISLIP GARDENS to be added, shown here as 4309A. The existence of the latter is confirmed from collections; it is entirely possible batches of the former had been made (and subsequently modified with paper slips), and indeed SPECIAL/(BLANK) plates have been found with holes drilled at the expected centres, but it is difficult to prove beyond doubt they are Central Line plates. Ruislip Gardens is an interesting omission given it had access to the depot, and that the equivalent position on the Northern Line (Elstree) had always been intended to have plates.

The circumstances surrounding plates 4303 and 4308 (and their respective alternatives) now call for explanation. Before the War the LPTB planned to reverse much of the service at Woodford and Newbury Park; traffic further east was expected to be very light initially and it was not clear how it would develop. It would be possible to extend more trains east of either point as circumstances warranted. To cover the north side of the Hainault loop (it was then called the Fairlop loop) a shuttle service was proposed between Woodford and Hainault. Had things been this simple then the three-colour plates (incorporating 'via' points) would have been unnecessary, but things were not that simple. The existence of a huge double-ended depot at Hainault meant that irrespective of passenger requirements trains would have been sent to the depot either way round the loop, with the possibility of confusion arising. The table suggests the eminently logical solution of GRANGE HILL VIA WOODFORD for trains going to depot via Woodford. The obverse use of HAINAULT VIA NEWBURY PARK one might have thought unnecessary (why not use simply a Hainault plate), but it does no harm to add additional information. The existence of alternative plans or plates showing either Hainault (or Hainault via Woodford), and Grange Hill (or Grange Hill via Woodford) is intriguing, and the fact that the logical 4303 has not yet been noted in any collection but the alternative (which exists) is not evidenced on the plans makes it more so.

EPPING and ONGAR as destinations raise questions. Electrification to these places was only settled just before the War and light electrification east of Loughton was finally agreed. This was to rely entirely of shuttle trains of 1935 tube stock which were equipped with blinds and not plates. After the war development required electrification to Epping (but not beyond) and drawings indicate that ONGAR was deleted in 1949 as a destination requiring a plate. From 1949 LT took over responsibility for the Ongar line but steam locomotives were retained. EPPING was needed as a plate and the unnecessary ONGAR may have been slipped or painted out, or, more likely, just left. No plates have been seen with EPPING/(BLANK) on them, but small numbers may exist for the same reason LIVERPOOL ST/(BLANK) exists.

From 1950 the flat-fronted 1935 stock were available to operate the Hainault-Woodford shuttle. New central line blinds were apparently provided. From 1954 these moved back to the Piccadilly but two of them returned in 1957 to operate the newly electrified Epping-Ongar shuttle. As three trains were required for this service a 1938 stock unit was also provided until 1960 when the third 1935 stock train moved to the Central.

Special plates marked CENTRAL LINE would have been required for the 1938 stock, and presumably an EPPING/ONGAR board was found for both cabs, and perhaps a CENTRAL LINE swivel plate was adapted to fit the display. A 1935 stock unit rebuilt after a collision that destroyed the cab may have been fitted with plate brackets rather than a blind box but confirmation would be helpful; if it had a plate bracket only a single plate was fitted (it didn't have the 1938 stock 3-line display). Anecdotally it seems an EPPING/ONGAR board of slightly larger dimensions than normal has been seen, but its purpose is not clear. Certainly photos exist of shuttle trains carrying a board propped up in the offside widow, perhaps because the blind was defective, but whether this was a standard or special board is unknown.

ⁱ SLU119

ⁱⁱ UM31

ⁱⁱⁱ U14-50

^{iv} U14-66