

Family history research at London Transport Museum

Introduction

This factsheet is for family historians researching ancestors who have connections with public transport in London. Many thousands of people have been employed across the different modes of transport over the years, but unfortunately relatively few records survive because there is no business or statutory requirement to keep them beyond a few years.

The guide to sources below is designed to help you identify surviving records that may be related to your research. It tells you where they are located and how you can access them. Questions at the end of this factsheet may also help you get started on your family history journey.



Where to start

To find relevant staff records, you first need to identify which company your ancestor might have worked for and the years when they may have been employed there.

The London Passenger Transport Board (also known as London Transport) was formed in 1933. Before then, public transport in London was run by many different companies operating the buses, trams and underground railway lines.

You might know your ancestor's job from a certificate or photograph. If you know where they lived in London, you could use that as a starting point to identify their employer. Be aware though that in the past people often walked long distances to go to work.

To learn more you can use our [Collections online](#). Here you can read [Stories](#) about the history of transport in London or search for [Photographs](#) of people doing different kinds of work.

You can also arrange a visit to our [Library](#) or [contact us](#) for advice. As well as books about the history of transport and transport workers, we can provide access to sources for family history research.

Please note that none of the primary sources listed in this guide cover staff working for mainline railway companies. The railway companies referred to in this guide operated underground railway lines in London.

Staff magazines

In our Library collection we have staff magazines for transport companies in London. These are the main source of information for individual staff members. The magazines date from 1914 to the present day and include London Transport staff and the staff of some older bus, tram and underground railway companies. For a full list of magazines see **Appendix A**.

The magazines contain company news, photographs and brief references to individual staff. These references are typically found in notices of retirement, obituaries, or reports on social activities and sporting events. During the years of the two world wars, rolls of honour were published along with references to individuals serving in the forces.

Some references to individuals in the staff magazines have been indexed and can be searched by surname in our [People collection](#) online. If you find a name and biography that matches with your ancestor, [email](#) the reference number to us as there may be more information in the magazine itself.

Because there are many references to individuals that have not been indexed in our People collection, we are happy to check a name if you know the specific date when a retirement or other significant event occurred.

Alternatively, you are welcome to make an appointment to visit the [Library](#) and search for yourself. Most of the magazines from 1914 to 1995 have been digitised and are searchable by name or keyword in the library. If the magazines have not been digitised, you can look through printed copies.

You can also search the digitised staff magazines remotely by visiting the TfL Corporate Archives pages on the TfL website. Scroll through the listing [here](#).

You may be lucky and find a reference to a family member, but even if you don't, browsing through the magazines is still a very rewarding activity. They offer a powerful, contemporary record of the history of transport in London and the day to day lives of people working in the organisation.

Staff registers

The Museum does not have responsibility for formal staff records (they are managed by TfL Corporate Archives – see **Other sources** below), but we do have a small collection of historical records. One of these, the register for the City & South London Railway, is on display in the Museum's Deep Tube gallery. The following manuscript staff registers have been digitised and the digital copies are available to view by booking a [Library](#) visit.

City & South London Railway

Staff register c1890-1913

Ref [1992/395](#)

London Road Car Company

Discipline register 1904-1908

Ref [1990/156](#)

London Tramways Company

Staff register c1890

Ref [2007/11016](#)

Metropolitan Railway

List of officers and staff in receipt of £200 per annum and upwards, c1899

Ref [1998/109307](#)

Metropolitan Railway

Register of female staff c1915-1920

Ref [2007/11017](#)

War service

Many transport workers served their country during the First and Second World Wars and recognition of their service has survived in various forms in the Museum's collections.

The items below all list individual members of staff. Memorials with a Depot location are cared for at our Museum Depot at Acton. Please contact our Duty Curator service to enquire about access to memorials at the Depot. Email collections@ltmuseum.co.uk

First World War

London County Council (LCC)

[Record of service in the Great War 1914-1918 by members of the Council's staff \(1922\)](#)

Library B061 LCC

This book was given to surviving LCC staff who served in the war or their next of kin. It gives brief details of individual war service and includes a section on the staff of LCC Tramways.

London General Omnibus Company

[Memorial plaque for members of the Surveyors Department who fell in the First World War, 1918](#)

Ref 1996/2976, Depot

Underground Electric Railways of London (UERL)

[Memorial plaque for Audit Office staff who served in the Great War, 1914 - 1919](#)

Ref 1997/13161, Depot

Underground Electric Railways of London (UERL)

[T.O.T. roll of honour](#): soldiers and sailors from the T.O.T. services who have laid down their lives or have suffered honourable wounds in the nation's defence, 1914-16.

Lists from issues of the staff magazine *News of T.O.T.* As well as Underground staff, includes bus and tramway staff of companies under the control of UERL. After 1916, lists were no longer published in the magazine.

Underground Electric Railways of London (UERL)

[Programme for Memorial Service at St Margaret's Church, Westminster, for staff killed in the 1914 - 1918 War](#)

Ref 2005/16851, Depot

Contains a roll of honour. As well as Underground staff, it lists staff from other companies (e.g. bus and tram) under the control of UERL.

Second World War

Throughout the war, London Transport published a regular roll of honour in the staff magazine *Pennyfare*, accompanied by powerful accounts of individual bravery. The digitised magazines can be viewed and searched in the Museum Library.

London Transport also commemorated staff with war memorials. The following items in the Museum collections list individual names:

[Order of Service in memory of Staff of the London Passenger Transport Board who fell in the Second World War](#)

Ref 1997/12703

London Transport held a memorial service after the war on 24 October 1946. The order of service contains a full roll of honour.

[Memorial from Elmers End LT bus garage following the flying bomb attack of July 1944](#)

Ref 2000/8161, Museum

This memorial commemorates and lists the names of ten London Transport staff who were killed on 18 July 1944 when the garage received a direct hit from a German V1 flying bomb.

[Memorial plaque issued to commemorate the deaths of Home Guard members from London Passenger Transport Board, circa 1939-1945](#)

Ref 1996/113, Depot

[Close-up photograph of First World War memorial plaque, Middle Row LT bus garage](#)

Ref 1998/64100, photograph only

Taxis and Private Hire

Taxis and private hire vehicles were historically controlled by the Metropolitan Police. The Museum does not hold any records for taxi drivers, nor does the Transport for London Corporate Archives.

The TfL Taxi and Private Hire Office is responsible for all matters to do with current licensing of taxi and private hire services.

<https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/about-tfl/what-we-do/taxi-and-private-hire>

For more information see London Metropolitan Archives research guide no. 46 on vehicle registration and licensing. [A full listing of research guides](#) on all topics is available on their website.

Other sources

Transport for London Corporate Archives

[Transport for London \(TfL\) Corporate Archives](#) are responsible for the official records of Transport for London (TfL), London Transport and other predecessor companies.

The Archivists have produced a series of research guides to the records they hold, which can be downloaded from the TfL website:

tfl.gov.uk/corporate/about-tfl/culture-and-heritage/corporate-archives/help-with-your-research

Their guide to sources for genealogical research lists surviving personnel records such as staff registers in the Archives. Some of these have been digitised and made available via [Ancestry](#) and others can be accessed by arranging a research visit.

You can also search digitised staff magazines remotely via the TfL Corporate Archives website. Scroll through the listing [here](#).

London Metropolitan Archives

Some bus and tram records and some Metropolitan Railway records.

<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/history-and-heritage/london-metropolitan-archives>

National Railway Museum

The National Railway Museum does not hold staff records but if your ancestor worked for a mainline railway company, the National Railway Museum has produced a useful guide for family historians: <https://www.railwaymuseum.org.uk/research-and-archives/further-resources/family-history>

Newham Local History & Archives

Newham holds some early London General Omnibus Company staff records in their special collections.

<https://www.newham.gov.uk/libraries-arts-culture/local-history-archives>

Appendix A

London Transport Museum Library – list of staff magazines

In the table below, the three columns contain the magazine title, a description of the content and the start and finish dates of the issues we hold. Titles are listed in chronological order. Titles in bold have been digitised and are searchable.

Magazine title	Content (all magazines are illustrated with photographs)	Issues start - finish
T.O.T fortnightly news News of T.O.T <i>[Train Omnibus Tram]</i>	Newsletter of the First World War relief fund for staff of the Underground Electric Railways Company of London (UERL) and associated companies e.g. the London General Omnibus Company. Includes letters from members of staff serving at the Front (such as drivers of B-type buses) and their families and colleagues at home; staff casualty lists (1914-1916); and reports of staff social and sporting events.	No. 1 (19 Sept. 1914) - no. 96 (Mar. 1922), May 1922, July 1922
The 'Met' accountants' gazette	Metropolitan Railway departmental newsletter.	No. 1 (Dec. 1915) - no. 25 (Dec. 1917)
Athletic and social news	London General Omnibus Company	Jan. 1918 - no. 56 (Aug. 1922)
T.O.T. staff magazine	First official staff magazine of the Underground Electric Railways Company of London (UERL) to represent all staff across Underground, bus and tram operations. Includes company news and information during a period of expansion and technological development. Reports of staff social events and activities; staff retirements and obituaries; senior appointments; staff awards; general interest articles.	Vol. 1 no. 1 (Oct. 1922) - vol. 11 no. 146 (Dec. 1933)
Thomas Tilling Social and Athletic Club bulletin	The bus operator Thomas Tilling, which operated in areas including London.	Vol. 2 no. 2 (Feb. 1925)
Tilling's staff magazine	'The official organ of the Tilling's Staff Welfare Society and the Tilling's Social and Athletic Club'	Vol. 4 no. 29 (Jan. 1929) - vol. 8 no. 85 (Sept. 1933)
Pennyfare	Official staff magazine following the formation of London Transport. Continues with similar content to T.O.T. staff magazine until the Second World War. During wartime sport and social activities are again included in the main magazine, which is reduced in size. Staff contribution to the war effort is reported as are casualties at home and on war service.	Jan. 1934 – Mar. 1947
Pennyfare sports supplement and social news	Reports of staff social events and sports activities.	No.1 (Jan. 1937) - no.12 (Dec. 1937), no. 15 (Mar. 1938), no. 20

(1937 issues digitised)		(Aug. 1938), no. 22 (Oct. 1938) - no. 30 (Jun. 1939), no. 32 (Aug. 1939)
The Home Guard: supplement to Pennyfare	Newsletter for London Transport Home Guard	Apr. 1941 - Dec. 1944
The kitbag	London Transport (Chiswick) Branch of the Railway Clerks' Association	v. 6, no. 5 (1943), v. 7, no. 1, 4, 6-12 (1944-1945), v. 8, no. 1-4, 6, 8-10 (1945)
London Transport magazine	Post-war return to a larger format with more detail about company activities. Reports of staff social and sporting activities continue. Addition of 'women's interest' items such as knitting patterns and recipes. Staff retirements and obituaries; senior appointments; staff awards; general interest articles.	Vol. 1 no. 1 (Apr. 1947) –vol. 26 no. 12 (Mar. 1973)
LT news LRT news	Fortnightly newspaper containing London Transport (LT) company and staff news.	No. 1 (6 Apr. 1973) – no. 449 (18 Dec. 1995)
London lines	Last LT house magazine up to the formation of TfL.	1990-2001

Appendix B

Questions to think about

Which company might your ancestor have worked for?

You can search for companies by looking at [Collections online](#) or we can help you identify companies using resources in our [Library](#). Contact us if you have any questions.

Have you tried searching our People collection?

Look for your ancestor's surname in our [People collection](#). Most (but not all) of the references are from our staff magazines dating between 1914-1995. Do remember that the magazines include people who began their career before 1914.

The People collection doesn't include everyone mentioned in the staff magazines, you will need to search the digital copies remotely or in the [Library](#) to do a comprehensive search.

In which years might they have been a transport worker?

In some roles and time periods, apprentices might start working at 14 years old. Older staff sometimes continued working well past normal retirement years. Do the dates of our resources match a time in your ancestor's working life?

Did your ancestor serve or die in the First or Second World War?

Check the resources listed in the 'War service' section. The staff magazines are also a particularly helpful resource and cover all modes of London transport.

Do any of our staff registers fit with information you already know?

See the 'Staff registers' section for full details.

Could they have worked on the Underground c1890-1913?

Today's Northern line began life as the City & South London Railway. See staff register (Ref 1992/395).

Are you researching a woman who worked on the Underground in the First World War?

Could they have worked on what is now the Metropolitan line? See the two registers of female staff employed by the Metropolitan Railway in the First World War (Ref 2007/11017).

Could they have been a senior member of staff who worked for the Metropolitan Railway c1870-1920?

See the Metropolitan Railway List of Officers & Salaries and staff in receipt of £200 p.a. and upwards (Ref 1998/109307).

Were they a bus driver or conductor c1904-1908?

See the London Road Car Company discipline register (Ref 1990/156).

Did they work on the trams c1890-1900?

See the London Tramways Company Limited drivers and conductors register (Ref 2007/11016).