

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **‘Where are all the women? London Transport Museum seeks to address historical gender imbalance with new Museum project**



Hannah Dadds



Ellen Bulfield



Joy Jarvis

London Transport Museum is asking the general public and organisations to contact them with stories about female family members, ancestors or employees who may have worked in the transport industry in London or on the railway across the United Kingdom from 1800 to the present day. People should contact the Museum by 28 February 2019 if they are aware of female family members with a story to tell who worked on the buses, trams, London Underground, trains or passenger boats.

Women Tube drivers, bus conductors and railway workers have helped to keep London and the country moving over the decades. However only very few of these notable women are represented in London’s transport history.

A new collecting project at London Transport Museum wants to highlight the lives of women who carried out important and skilled activities in a male dominated workforce, but who were often hidden from history.

The Museum is aiming to include the following ground-breaking women in an updated display at London Transport Museum. However the Museum also wants to

hear about other lesser-known women who shaped the history of the capital and the country.

Ellie Miles, Documentary Curator at London Transport Museum, said: “We are asking people to delve into their family history and tell us about any notable female relatives, ancestors, friends or colleagues who may have worked in the transport industry in the past. We especially want to hear about women transport workers from 1800 to the present day.

“Perhaps you know of an aunt that recruited bus drivers or led a team of engineers, or maybe you know of a relative who was a station supervisor or even a Tube seating fabric designer like Joy Jarvis. Please get in touch with us by filling in a very simple form. Your contribution can make a difference by putting women in the spotlight and helping to redress this historical imbalance.”

**‘Widow’ Birch, real name Elizabeth Birch – First Woman Omnibus Operator (1811-1874)**

Birch, also known as ‘Widow’ Birch, helped create the Westminster Omnibus Association after taking over her late husband’s cab business in 1846. In 1851 she bought four omnibuses and acquired a larger share of the association. She refused to sell her company to the larger London General Omnibus Company (L.G.O.C). The business was passed on to her sons and Birch Brothers continued as a successful bus and coach operator until 1971.

**Ellen Bulfield – Last LGOC First World War woman bus conductor (dates unknown)**

Bulfield was one of the first women to work for the London General Omnibus Company during the First World War. Astonishingly around 45 per cent of London’s transport workers were women in 1918, but they were encouraged or forced to step aside when male workers returned from the armed forces. Bulfield was one of the last female bus conductors, or ‘clippies’ as they were known, to hand over to a male colleague on his return.

### **Women go on strike ‘Pound for Pound’ at Willesden Bus Garage in 1918**

In August 1918, Ellen Bulfield was likely to have been one of the 17,000 female bus and tram workers who took industrial action when men were given a 5 shilling a week war bonus that the women workers were excluded from. Eventually, male and female workers up and down the country joined in and women won the 5 shilling bonus after a week of strikes. The industrial action was started by a group of women at Willesden Bus Garage.

### **Elizabeth Ann Holman – Railway labourer in Cornwall, Great Western Railway (dates unknown)**

Holman lived in the mid-nineteenth century when women were unequal to men politically, legally, professionally, financially, socially and educationally. She was probably one of numerous non-male railway workers. However, it is not known exactly how many women railway workers there were – four women were listed in the 1851 census as ‘railway labourers’. Holman wore ‘men’s’ clothes from the age of 13, as well as having short hair and was committed to doing so despite the prospect of ‘transportation’ to Australia. Holman cohabited with a young man and had two children.

### **Hannah Dadds– First woman Tube driver, Forest Gate, Newham (1941 to 2011)**

The first female train driver on London Underground joined as a ‘station-woman’ in 1969 and qualified as a driver in 1978. This was important in the move towards equal opportunities for women in the workplace. Dadds found most colleagues supportive, although she experienced some sexist remarks. Dadds became famous overnight when London Underground held a press conference and she posed for many photos climbing into the train cab. Her sister, Edna Dadds, worked at London Transport too and she and Hannah formed the first all-female train crew. Hannah Dadds was invited to the Queen's Women of Achievement lunch at Buckingham Palace in 2004.

### **Joy Jarvis – Tube seating fabric or ‘moquette’ designer (dates unknown)**

Jarvis, a textile designer working in London during the 1940s, designed the ‘Roundel’ or ‘Bullseye’ moquette for London Transport, which was until recently wrongly attributed to another male designer. Her design was used on the Museum’s refurbished 1938-Stock train and R-Stock in the late 1940s.

Members of the public are being asked to complete this short online form if they have a story about a female relative, ancestor, friend or colleague who worked in the transport industry. Organisations are also welcome to submit information on notable women employees. See form here: <https://www.ltmuseum.co.uk/womenintransport>  
Entries must be submitted by 28 February 2019.

### Daytime admission at London Transport Museum

Adult prices from £16.00 (concessions £13.50).

Cheapest tickets available online.

Adult tickets allow unlimited daytime access for the Museum for a whole year.

### Ends

**For media requests and images please contact:**

London Transport Museum	
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#### Editors notes:

##### About London Transport Museum

**The Museum** is situated in the heart of Covent Garden and filled with stunning exhibits; the Museum explores the powerful link between transport and the growth of modern London, culture and society since 1800. Historic vehicles, world-famous posters and the very best objects from the Museum's extraordinary collection are brought together to tell the story of London's development and the part transport played in defining the unique identity of the city.

**The Museum** is a charity and the world's leading museum of urban transport and a place for everyone to come to understand and enjoy the story of London's journey. No other capital city is defined and shaped so much by its transport as London. Yet the scale of influence of transport can be invisible to those who use it every day. The Museum and its collections are a window into the past, present and future of how transport keeps London moving, working and growing, and makes life in our city better. The Museum's charity number is 1123122.

##### Travel to London Transport Museum:

- Address: Covent Garden Piazza, WC2E 7BB.
- The nearest stations to London Transport Museum are:
  - o **Underground:** Covent Garden, Leicester Square, Charing Cross, Embankment, Holborn
  - o **National Rail:** Charing Cross and Waterloo
  - o **Boat:** Embankment or Westminster pier
  - o **Bus:** Strand or Aldwych

##### Public information:

- Talks & events bookings: +44 (0)20 7565 7298
- [www.ltmuseum.co.uk](http://www.ltmuseum.co.uk)