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**Advertising Aspects for Posters in London  
Underground**

**Bakalářská práce**

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Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a uvedla v ní předepsaným způsobem všechnu použitou literaturu.

V Olomouci dne .....

Na tomto místě bych ráda poděkovala vedoucí mé bakalářské práce, paní Mgr. Pavlíně Flajšarové, Ph.D., za cenné rady a připomínky.

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## **Introduction**

The Underground has been a crucial part of London for over a hundred years. Every day, it transports thousands of people not only in the centre but also far out into the suburbs. In fact, it has become such a common concept for the people of London and the majority of tourists as well that almost nobody thinks about its history and the difficulties connected to its construction anymore. Nowadays, while riding the tube, the passengers probably do not realize they are travelling by the oldest underground in the world, or do not take the time to wonder what public transport had been like in London before the Underground was built.

Moreover, almost ever since it was first introduced, the London Underground has been a great place to advertise one's products. In the beginning, the main purpose of the posters placed in the Underground was to advertise the tube itself and attract more passengers. Nevertheless, soon it became obvious that the Underground has a lot of potential to be used as an advertising space for other commercial products as well. Nevertheless, the posters for London Underground are famous for not being mere commercials but also great works of art. This tradition began in 1908 when Frank Pick was appointed the officer in charge of publicity for the Underground and has not stopped since. Over time it has been proven that the marriage of the London Underground and advertising posters is a very successful one and will most likely continue in the years to come.

This thesis deals with both the history of transportation in London and the Underground, as well as the advertising aspects of the posters and an analysis of select groups of individual posters.

Chapter one will introduce a brief history of public transport in London before the Underground was constructed. It will mostly deal with the problems faced by the citizens of London every day and the reasons for ultimately building the Underground. Moreover, various types of transport methods, ranging from horse-drawn carriages to railways, will be discussed.

Chapter two will deal with the first concepts of the Underground itself, its construction and gradual expansion and the difficulties and failures endured both by

the constructors and the citizens during this process. Brief history of advertising on the Underground will also be discussed.

In chapter three the idea of using advertising posters in the Underground will be introduced. Advertising aspects of the posters will be mentioned, such as the different sizes used or the placement of individual posters. Furthermore, rules established by Transport for London

In chapter four individual posters will be analysed. They will be divided into three different groups: First World War posters, shopping themed posters and posters designed for the 2012 Olympic Games held in London. Those three themes represent the diversity of the advertising on the Underground and also cover both old and new examples of the advertisements.

The last chapter will serve as a conclusion and a summary of everything that has been written.

The goal of this thesis is to introduce the history of London transportation, the Underground and the posters designed specifically to appear there. This would not be possible without including pictures; therefore there will be photos of the Underground, Underground maps in various stages of its construction and the individual posters interspersed within the text.

# 1. History of London Transportation

For the major part of its two thousand year existence the main way of transportation in London was walking. For a long time the reason for this phenomenon was that there simply was no other way to get from one place to another. Most of the inhabitants had to rely on themselves and their own physical abilities. Even though people discovered centuries ago that using animals, especially horses, as a means of transport is not only possible but also effective, travelling on horseback and later in horse-drawn carriages was saved for the royalty and wealthy upper-class citizens. Nevertheless, for the longest time there was not a pressing and immediate need for a change in the transportation system, as London was growing at a steady pace and virtually everything a person needed on a daily basis was within a walking distance. Nevertheless, everything was to change with the arrival of the Industrial revolution.

The Industrial revolution started slowly in the 1750s in the United Kingdom and in time gradually spread not only to Western Europe or North America, but also to Japan. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, due to great scientific progress, manual labour was starting to be replaced with machine based production, especially in the textile industry at first. With the invention of steam power, the manufacturing capabilities increased significantly. The economy started to shift from agriculture to machine based manufacturing, which resulted in a great influx of workers from rural areas to bigger cities. However, the cities were not ready for such an inundation.

Because of the Industrial revolution, Britain became a very powerful country, which had a clear effect on its capital. As Christian Wolmar writes, in the early decades of the nineteenth century, London metamorphosed from a busy commercial centre into the world's first megalopolis.<sup>1</sup> People were trying to find work and subsequently permanent residence in the capital, which resulted in a great increase of the number of inhabitants. Between 1801 and 1911, the overall population of London increased by a factor of five, from approximately 950,000 to over four and half million people, of which 300,000 arrived between 1891 and 1911.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Christian Wolmar, *The Subterranean Railway* (London: Atlantic Books, 2004), 9.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Butterfield, "Under Construction: Advertising Leisure Travel to the Countryside in London Underground Posters, 1908-1912" (MA thesis, The American International University in London, 2009), 9.

The majority of the newly arrived workers were from rural areas. Those were the most affected by the agricultural crises caused by the Industrial Revolution and the people living there were in dire need of new employment. Moreover, it was not only British citizens, whose lives were overturned by a sudden outside cause. Ireland was struck by a potato famine in the mid-1840s, which posed a great problem for many families, as the rural areas in Ireland were densely populated. Sustaining a living by working solely in agriculture was no longer possible for a great number of those labourers. It came as no surprise that many of them saw potential in moving to London and trying to find work there. The censuses of 1841 and 1851 show that during this decade alone an extra 330 000 migrants had flooded into the capital, making up more than one sixth of the population.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, not every aspect of the city was prepared for such a sudden increase in population.

With more factories and workshops being built in London, because of the shift to machine-based manufacturing, new jobs were created every day. However, it was not only manual workers, who were needed in the City. The increase of production and therefore of export caused the demand for clerks to rise as well. It did not take long before quarter a million people were going into the City to work every day. Nevertheless, the centre of London was not big enough to provide housing for all those newly found workers, therefore they had to find a way to transport themselves to work every morning.

The phenomenon of travelling long distances to work, mostly on foot, had begun as early as in 1836. 17,500 people crossed London bridges daily, most paying tolls.<sup>4</sup> First commuters were mostly walking from low rent areas to the more commercial parts of the city. However, as London was getting progressively bigger, walking on foot was no longer possible for most people, as the distances between their permanent residences and work places were gradually increasing. Christian Wolmar writes:

Whereas previously London's rural surroundings had never seemed very far away, now the sprawling slums were interspersed with elegant

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<sup>3</sup> Wolmar, 11.

<sup>4</sup> Wolmar, 15.



Georgian squares and swathes of little factories and warehouses which had sprung up in the capital as the Industrial Revolution gathered pace.

However, distance was not the sole problem that prevented workers from commuting on foot. As the number of people needing to make a long journey to their job was rising, traffic congestion started to be a usual occurrence. The need to cross bridges over the Thames in several areas posed a big problem, as speeds rarely rose above leisurely walking pace on those. Moreover, London is known for its less than ideal weather. Whenever it rained, roads would positively turn into mud, thus making it even harder to get from place to place on foot.

Furthermore, it was not only the lower class citizens suffering from the failing transportation. Well-off areas like Camberwell, Kennington, Islington, Mile End were within a mere hour's walk of the City in the days before traffic lights, congestion and pedestrian barriers.<sup>5</sup> However, by mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the situation in London became so desperate that the aforementioned statement simply was not true anymore.

Nevertheless, it is important to mention that walking, while the most common, was not the sole means of transportation in London before the Underground was built. The inhabitants could also use the omnibus, coaches, wagons, trams or the hackney cab to travel from one place to another. While all the aforementioned methods of transportation will be further analysed later in this chapter, it is essential to acknowledge that they also contributed to the overall desperate traffic situation in the capital of Britain. There were wagons whose drivers walked beside the horses, blocking a large part of the roadway; and large advertising vans pulled by horses whose very purpose – to be seen by as many passers-by as possible – meant their progress was bound to be slow.<sup>6</sup> All this combined with the overcrowding of the whole city leads Hugh Douglas to describe the situation as such:

London was dying – slowly, painfully and with a great deal of protest. No physician had to be called in to diagnose the trouble; it was all too apparent to those who lived there, for, wherever they went they

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<sup>5</sup> Wolmar, 9.

<sup>6</sup> Wolmar, 10.

encountered the great thrombosis of traffic which clogged the highways that were the veins and arteries carrying the city's blood.<sup>7</sup>

By mid-19<sup>th</sup> century it was clear that the whole transport system in London had to be changed and, more importantly, it had to grow. A man called Charles Pearson was the first one to campaign for the construction of a subterranean railway; however, his proposition was not met with any success. To support his idea, he decided to conduct the first ever traffic count of people coming into London in 1854. Traffic takers were appointed to count people entering and leaving London via all the main roads leading into the City between 8am and 8pm. The results showed that omnibuses were the main method of coming into town with 44,000 passengers, on 3,700 vehicles. 27,000 people came on the railway to the Fenchurch Street and London Bridge stations, however, a mere 4,200 combined to King's Cross, Euston and Paddington stations. The number of passengers entering on private carriages or hackney cabs was slightly lower – 26,000. Nevertheless, all those numbers were dwarfed by the 200,000 who walked to the City on foot every day.<sup>8</sup>

Anyhow, even though walking was by far the most preferred method of transportation in London, it was not the only option. The next section offers a more detailed look on the other transportation methods used in the capital in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the beginning of the 20th century, excluding the Underground, which will be discussed in Chapter 2.

## **1.1 Transportation Methods in London**

### **1.1.1 Horses and Horse-drawn Carriages**

Horses have been domesticated and used for transport for centuries; therefore their presence in London is hardly surprising. Nevertheless, their services were reserved solely for the rich, who could afford to own both horses and private carriages. The main reason is that while very helpful and indispensable, horses are very demanding in terms of feeding and grooming. They have to be maintained regularly and properly

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<sup>7</sup> Hugh Douglas, *The Underground Story* (London: Robert Hale, 1963), 13.

<sup>8</sup> Wolmar, 22.

and the expenses that have to be spent on those services prevent the members of lower classes from ever being able to own a horse.

In terms of the overall impact on the transportation in London, horse-drawn carriages were a great contributor to the traffic congestions. It is not easy to manoeuvre a horse in the crowded streets, let alone a carriage. Moreover, seeing as those carriages were largely owned by the upper class, another purpose they undoubtedly served was exhibiting their wealth for the world to see. John Stokes describes the three most common types of carriages in London as such:

The broughams were light, fast, elegant; the four wheelers were much more bulky and were sometimes known as ‘growlers’; the hansoms were the aristocrats, the most mythologized of carriages. Hansoms could move very quickly indeed, dodging in and out of the surrounding traffic, though inevitably even they sometimes became paralysed in the snarl. They were the most intimate, as well as the most exposed, of vehicles.<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless, what proved to be perhaps an even bigger problem than the low speed, were the horses’ droppings. They were virtually worthless to farmers, seeing as the selling price was not particularly high at all. For that reason, nobody made an effort to remove the horses’ droppings from the streets of London on regular basis. Moreover, when the droppings were eventually removed, they were usually dumped in the poorer areas of the city and thus contributed to the stench and general unhealthiness of London.<sup>10</sup>

### **1.1.2 Omnibus**

The privately owned carriages were far from being the only vehicle drawn by horses in London in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Another example is the omnibus. In 1829 George Shillibeer conceived an idea of creating a large carriage drawn by horses and utilizing it as a method for public transport. He opened the first service using twenty-seater carriages from Paddington to the Bank of England, anticipating the same route

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<sup>9</sup> John Stokes, “‘Encapsulation’: Horse-Drawn Journeys in Late-Victorian Literature,” *Journal of Victorian Culture* 15 (2010): 239, accessed April 4, 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Wolmar, 11.

that the first Underground railway would take thirty-four years later. It was a momentous event in the history of London's transport.<sup>11</sup>

Nonetheless, same as with the carriages, the omnibus was not without its problems. It was drawn by horses as well; therefore it contributed to the speed and droppings problem. Moreover, even though the idea was initially for the omnibus to be used by the wide public, the fares collected for its services turned out to be too high for the lower class citizens. In addition, the prices were not without controversy, as John Stokes suggests:

The immediate cause of dispute was invariably the vexed question of fares. These were always liable to be contested since the distance and nature of the journey would vary according to the needs of the individual passenger, his or her points of departure and of destination. There was also the question of whether the trip was to be costed according to distance or duration. Prolonged attempts were made throughout the nineteenth century to regularize fares but they had only limited success.<sup>12</sup>

As the quote suggests, the problems with regulating the fares meant that, much like the private carriages, the omnibuses were not meant for everybody in the city of London, as the poor could not afford them.

### **1.1.3 Hackney Cab**

Hackney cabs were another possible method of transportation in London. Essentially, they were what would nowadays be called a "black cab" in London; taxicabs licensed by the Public Carriage Office in Greater London. In the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they were horse-drawn vehicles for hire, usually driven by a coachman with seats for four people.

However, they were very uncomfortable and expensive. The usual price was eight pence per mile. Notwithstanding, the expenses of feeding and grooming the horses were high, therefore drivers would often go by circuitous routes to boost prices.

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<sup>11</sup> Wolmar, 11.

<sup>12</sup> Stokes, 242.

Nevertheless, even with such practices, the owners of hackney cabs could not afford to purchase new horses as often as would be ideal. According to John Stokes the availability of horses, and the ability to pay for them, was fundamental to an operation in which economics played a dominant, and cruel, part. Every day, the city offered the spectacle of physical suffering in the shape of horses that were too old, too weak for the job and driven past endurance – who might, and did, collapse in the street.<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, these practises did not apply solely to the operators of hackney cabs, but rather to most people in the public transport business.

#### **1.1.4 Trams**

In 1860 the first horse tramway began operating in London. Rails were built for the carriages to be pulled on by horses, thus creating the first fixed tram lines. The main difference of this method of transportation was that the carriages were run by tram companies, thus cheapening the fares for the passengers. Christian Wolmar writes:

From 1870, horse-drawn trams on rails challenged the supremacy of the horse bus. Trams ran earlier in the morning and were cheaper than buses, giving working-class Londoners their first access to affordable public transport.<sup>14</sup>

The first London trams were revolutionary, because they gave the lower classes an option to finally use the public transport, seeing as until they appeared, the poor could not afford neither the omnibus, nor hackney cabs or private coaches.

Considering that horses remained the main source of power in the transport system until the turn of the century, “oats and hay were as important a source of energy as coal”<sup>15</sup> in those times. With the unstoppable scientific progress though, the transport system started to change significantly in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>13</sup> Stokes, 243.

<sup>14</sup> Wolmar, 11.

<sup>15</sup> Wolmar, 11.

### **1.1.5 Motorized vehicles**

Right on the turn of the century, virtually every vehicle on the streets of London was drawn by one of the more than 300,000 horses. By 1915 everything had changed. Horse buses and horse trams had disappeared in London, and motor taxis heavily outnumbered horse-drawn cabs. Motor cars had replaced carriages, however, in the same spirit - only for the wealthy. On the other hand, motorbuses and electric trams were finally affordable enough to be used by almost everyone. This turn of events caused the number of Londoners making a journey by bus or a tram to double. Horses were still used, however, mostly for goods delivery and not in the public transport.<sup>16</sup>

However, same as every other method of transport, the usage of motorized vehicles had its drawbacks as well as advantages. Among the advantages was an increase in the overall speed on the roads and less congestion. Moreover, buses with pneumatic tyres made travelling much more comfortable. The rise in comfort was so high that by 1920s buses almost completely replaced trams. However, the move from horse-drawn vehicles to motorized ones brought a dramatic rise in fatal road accidents in the Capital. There were 186 road deaths in 1901, but this leapt to 1362 people killed in 1929. Not until 1934 were compulsory driving tests and an urban speed limit of 30mph (48kmh) imposed on drivers.<sup>17</sup>

### **1.1.6 Railways**

Out of all the transportation methods used in London in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, railways proved to be the most essential to the later construction of the Underground. In other words, railways were the way to the Underground.

Initially though, they were built primarily to establish commercial links between cities and to transport goods. Later on, railways started to transport people as well, however, mainly from city to city or from smaller villages. Therefore, for a

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<sup>16</sup> "19<sup>th</sup> Century London," accessed April 4, 2012,

[http://www.ltmcollection.org/museum/gallery/gallery\\_top-random.html?IXgallery=CGP.020](http://www.ltmcollection.org/museum/gallery/gallery_top-random.html?IXgallery=CGP.020).

<sup>17</sup> "On the Surface 1900 – 1945," accessed April 4, 2012,

[http://www.ltmcollection.org/museum/gallery/gallery\\_top-random.html?IXgallery=CGP.065](http://www.ltmcollection.org/museum/gallery/gallery_top-random.html?IXgallery=CGP.065).

significant part for their existence, railways had no impact on providing transport within London itself.

However, as has been said before, the Industrial Revolution caused a crisis in London's transportation. Politicians were trying to find a way to relieve the city of the intermittent congestions and, even more importantly, improve the quality of living within the city. Workers could not afford to travel long distances to work anymore, nor could they pay for any respectable accommodation, which resulted in slums being created in various parts of the city. Geoffrey Trease writes:

The rich no longer cared to live [in the centre] and the workers could not afford to occupy sites more profitably used for warehouses and offices. Yet until the coming of suburban railways there was a limit to the distance they could travel to work, especially when hours were so long.<sup>18</sup>

The idea of having railways help with the traffic within London was conceived in the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Railways for on the surface trains started to be built mainly in the South of London, where lands were owned largely by bishops, who welcomed the idea of trains passing through London.

Furthermore, railways were initially banned from reaching London's centre. They were driven through the poorest parts in the South with little regard to the inhabitants, to ensure the estates of the rich in the centre remained preserved. Despite this fact, ever since the construction started, railways were probably the most disruptive method of transport to the whole city, as Simon Jenkins describes:

The coming of the railways to London from the mid-1830s onwards dealt the metropolis a bigger, and certainly more lasting, blow than anything since the Great Fire. Like the Great Fire, the railways shattered both the living and working arrangements of hundreds of thousands of Londoners. Like the Fire, they ate up vast quantities of the labour, material and capital, and destroyed acres of the metropolis in the process. Most important of all, like the Fire, they spun the population of London ever further from the core, speeding the decay of the districts, yet at the same

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<sup>18</sup> Geoffrey Trease, *London: A concise History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), 187.

time enabling Londoners to enjoy higher standards of space and cleanliness that in any other city in the world.<sup>19</sup>

Even though Jenkins seems to have nothing but criticism for the railways, the government quickly realized that if they want the traffic crisis in London to be alleviated at least a little bit, the ban on entering the City must be lifted and more stations need to be built. Geoffrey Trease writes:

London Bridge station had been opened in 1836. Others had quickly followed, Paddington in 1838 and Fenchurch Street, the first in the City, in 1840. So it had gone on, with Euston in 1846 and Waterloo in 1848, and it had been largely the cheap railway that had turned the Great Exhibition into a national rather than a London affair. King's Cross had been opened the following year, 1852, by which time both Paddington and London Bridge were already undergoing reconstruction. But it was in the 1860s especially that the railway companies made their most spectacular invasion of the city, building their own bridges across the Thames and carving their way destructively into the very heart of the capital.<sup>20</sup>

The quote describes the progress of the first railway stations being built closer to the centre of London, after the ban was lifted. The first North London Railway, which was originally intended for goods, opened in 1850. It went from Fenchurch Street to Islington and a year later, it was extended to reach Hampstead Road as well. In the second part of 19th century more and more passengers were slowly starting to use the railway to travel into the centre from all parts of London and new stations were gradually added. A significant weight was lifted off the traffic in the streets of London; however, with the city progressively growing, it still was not enough. Luckily, the success of the railway led to a different idea – a subterranean railway.

In conclusion, the public transport in London went through many changes and additions of new revolutionary vehicles. However, nothing proved to be quite enough

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<sup>19</sup> Simon Jenkins, *Landlords to London: The Story of a Capital and Its Growth* (London: Constable, 1975) 100.

<sup>20</sup> Trease, 192.



to improve the overcrowding and traffic congestions in the streets. The next possible solution came, when the idea of building a railway under the ground was presented.

## **2. London Underground**

The following chapter is dedicated to the construction of the London Underground, and the beginnings of commercial advertising on the tube.

Even though it might be a bold statement to make, no subterranean railway might have existed in the world if it was not for a man called Charles Pearson. He was the first one ever to set out the idea of running railways under cities.<sup>21</sup> The City of London solicitor first presented this notion in a pamphlet he wrote in 1845. The initial suggestion was to run a subterranean railway down to Fleet valley that would be protected by glass and serviced by trains drawn by atmospheric power. Nothing came of this suggestion right away, but Pearson did not give up.

After extensive research and persuasion, the developers working with Pearson on his enormous project came to the conclusion that they needed three important things to build an underground railway: Parliamentary permission, capital and labour.<sup>22</sup> The first success came in 1853, when a Bill for an underground line between Edgware Road and Holborn Hill was successfully approved by the Parliament. Even though it was revoked a year later, because of a mistake in the plans, it gave the developers permission to obtain the land needed for the construction of the first line.

As further Parliamentary Bills were being passed, the developers worked on obtaining the necessary land. Generally, they reached accommodations with larger landlords and aristocratic estate owners. However, the process was not so accommodating for poorer people who had not enough money to hire a lawyer to fight for their property. Only tenants living in squalid houses that were to be demolished to make way for the Underground were paid a small compensation. The

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<sup>21</sup> Wolmar, 8.

<sup>22</sup> Wolmar, 27.

rest received nothing.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the developers also used illegal methods to avoid legal hassle, such as paying the landlords to evict their tenants a few weeks before their houses would be needed. Therefore, there are no precise numbers documenting how many people really lost their homes for the Underground to be built.<sup>24</sup>

## 2.1 The Construction Begins

Before the construction of the Underground could begin, two more elements were still needed. The most difficult one to obtain proved to be the sufficient capital. It was no surprise that investors were not willing to use their money on such a revolutionary project. In the end, the funding came in as a combination of private and public capital. Part was paid by the private companies owning The Great Western and Great Northern railways and the rest was supplied by The City, a public corporation, after much persuasion from Pearson. His final winning argument was the undeniably miserable situation in the streets of London.<sup>25</sup>

With the capital ready, the last missing piece was a construction crew that could build the first part of the subterranean railway with the given budget. The engineer assigned to prepare the plans for the Underground, John Fowler, had been with the projects since its beginning in 1853. He managed to hire a crew of experienced workers and the construction could finally begin in the spring of 1860. The initial plan was to have the service running in mere two years.

The method of construction chosen by Fowler was called “cut and cover”<sup>26</sup> and consisted of digging a hole in the ground, installing the railways, and covering it up again. The plan was to build the railway mainly under already existing roads, therefore the damage to the city of London was not as great as could have been. However, the construction site suffered a fair amount of damage along the way. Not long after the beginning, a drunken guard on an excursion train forgot to apply the brake in King’s Cross. This mistake caused the train to overshoot the platform and land in the Metropolitan workings, resulting in much damage. A few months later, a

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<sup>23</sup> Wolmar, 28.

<sup>24</sup> Wolmar, 29.

<sup>25</sup> Wolmar, 31.

<sup>26</sup> Wolmar, 28.

steam engine exploded and killed the driver of the train. Most seriously, in 1861 earthworks collapsed in Euston Roads and destroyed the pavement, gardens, telegraph wires and gas and water mains.<sup>27</sup>

Despite all the mishaps, the new line was ready for testing at the end of 1862. During the tests, a few problems were discovered that needed to be worked on, but it was clear that the subterranean railway would be ready for opening soon. Charles Pearson, the man who started the whole project, died in September 1862. He did not live till the opening; however, he passed with the knowledge that his dream would become reality.

## **2.2 The London Underground Opens**

The first subterranean railway in the world opened on Saturday January 10<sup>th</sup> 1863. Around 30,000 passengers were escorted in 120 trains in both directions, between Edgware Road and Holborn Hill. There were three classes available on the trains, ranging from a three pence for a single journey up to a nine pence for a return one. The first day was extremely successful, bringing in a total of 850 pounds for all tickets sold.<sup>28</sup> No serious breakdown happened, nevertheless, the fifteen minute intervals between trains proved to be insufficient, as the demand was greater than expected.

However, the beginnings of the Underground were not without their problems. The passengers complained that the trains did not stop long enough for them to board or that there was not enough space in the carriages to stand, particularly for men. The most serious problem, however, proved to be sulphurous fumes emitted from the steam engines of the trains. In 1867 three people died of problems related to the smoke inhalation on the tube, however, it was not until the early 1870s that ventilation shafts started to be installed.<sup>29</sup>

Nevertheless, despite all its problems, the Underground proved to be a profitable business, earning back the money that was used for its construction. Christian

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<sup>27</sup> Wolmar, 36.

<sup>28</sup> Wolmar, 43.

<sup>29</sup> Wolmar, 46.

Wolmar argues that the main reason for this turn of events is the fact that the tube was very safe.<sup>30</sup> There were no mass fatal accidents in the first years of the railway. The few deaths that occurred were either caused by smoke inhalation or they were rare isolated accidents. Those favourable statistics also contributed to the decision to construct more Underground lines.

### **2.3 The Underground Expands**

Ever since its first opening in 1863 the London Underground has grown to have eleven lines and 270 stations, both underground and over ground, as of 2012. The process of expanding the tube and building new stations began after the initial success of the first line that came to be called the Metropolitan line. In the following quote Russell Haywood describes the progress of building the Underground:

Although built initially as a means for main line passengers to gain access to the City, the Metropolitan was rapidly extended to tap its own suburban market: it reached Hammersmith in 1864, and Swiss Cottage and Kensington in 1868. By the late 1870s the Metropolitan and the Metropolitan District were providing services between central London and one of the first and most celebrated planned suburbs, Bedford Park, via Turnham Green station.<sup>31</sup>

The extensions to the line described in the quote above were all built by the cut and cover method, which was rather slow and disruptive to the whole city. However, with the invention of electricity, a revolutionary idea came. It was decided to use a new method to build tunnels deeper under the ground and for the trains to be powered by electricity.<sup>32</sup> New tunnels were built by tunnelling shields, which accelerated the construction process and proved to be cheaper than the cut and cover method. The first deep-level electrically operated railway line opened in 1890 between Stockwell and King William Street. Only a year later, three other lines were opened, among them the one that is now called the Central line.

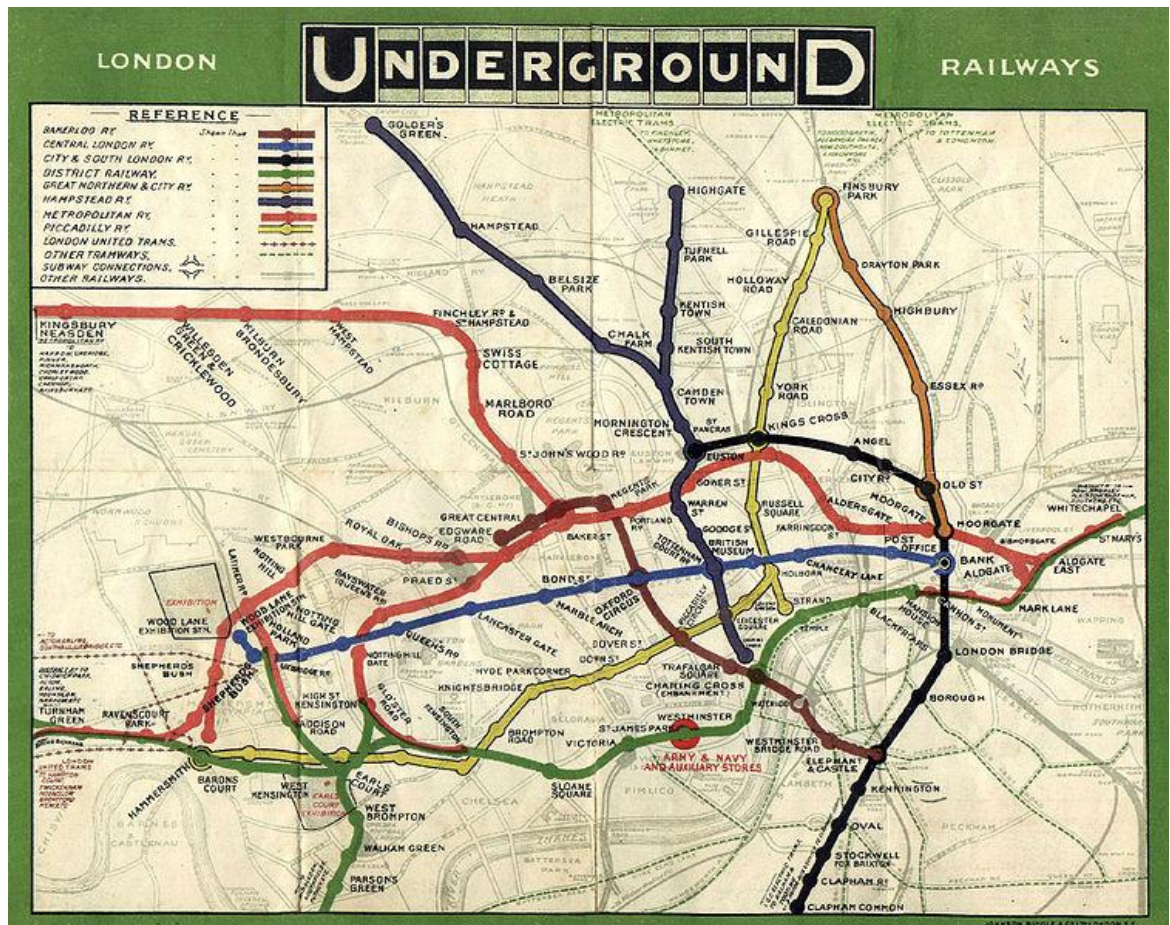
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<sup>30</sup> Wolmar, 51.

<sup>31</sup> Russell Haywood, "Railways, urban form and town planning in London: 1900–1947," *Planning Perspectives* 12 (1997): 42, accessed May 4, 2012.

<sup>32</sup> Wolmar, 130.

The first ever tube map was created in 1908 and shows all the lines and stations existing at that time. The majority of the current eleven lines were already in existence, as can be seen in the map below.

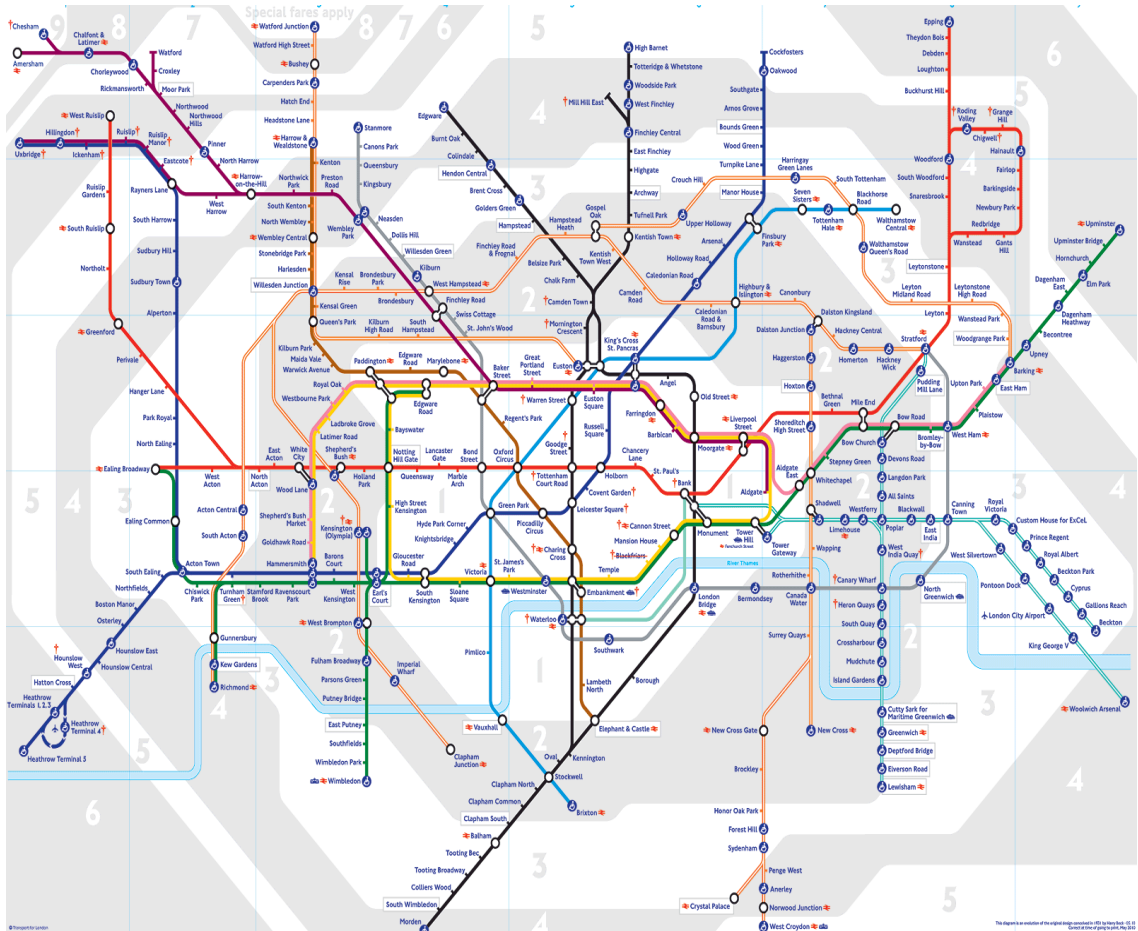


The map stays true to the geographical location of the stations, except for the red Metropolitan line in the left upper side. Presumably, it was shifted to accommodate the reference in the corner.

Since then, new and new stations continue to be built using the deep-level method and every line of the Underground came to be electrified. The process of electrification started in the early 1900s and too several years, especially in case of the first lines built by the cut and cover method. Eventually, steam engines were all replaced by trains powered by electricity. Nowadays, the London Underground serves 270 stations and transports approximately three million people every day.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Wolmar, 292.

For comparison, on the next page is a picture of the current London Underground showing all its stations. The portrayal of the stations is no longer perfectly geographically accurate, seeing as clarity was given higher importance.



The whole Underground is divided into six zones with diverse fares. The centre of London is covered by zone one, which is therefore the most popular with tourists and transports the most people. However, there are tube stations in the suburbs as well, thus helping with the problem of people commuting to work from long distances that was one of the main initial reasons to build the Underground.

With its 270 stations and 420 kilometres, the London Underground is the second largest metro system in the world in terms of route miles after the Shanghai metro.<sup>34</sup> It is also among the busiest in the world.

<sup>34</sup> David Barboza, “Expo Offers Shanghai a Turn in the Spotlight,” *The New York Times*, April 29, 2010, accessed May 7, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/30/world/asia/30shanghai.html>.

## 2.4 History of Advertising on the London Underground

Having discussed how the London Underground was built and developed, I will now briefly talk about the history of advertising posters on the Underground. Advertising posters graced the city of London in one way or another for centuries, however, it was not until the lithographic poster was invented that the real poster craze started. The method of printing lithographic posters was known in Britain since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, advertising itself was not given much attention until the 1890s, when the influx of foreign goods drove British manufacturers to attract their customers in a new, more inventive way. The early posters did not have much artistic value though. That was brought to the advertising posters by a French lithographer Jules Cherét in the late 1890s, when he started to view them as a creative medium.<sup>35</sup> Since then, mass production of advertising posters slowly started and they began to appear in more and more places.

When a man called Frank Pick became the head of the Underground Group publicity in 1908, the advertising posters started to appear even in the Underground. At that time, new stations were still being built and it was important to familiarize the passengers with the changes and make them comfortable with the tube again. Catherine Flood writes:

Letterpress bills were already being used to impart information, but Pick sensed the potential for modern pictorial posters to go beyond simply announcing the Underground. The poster campaign he initiated aimed at changing the way the public felt about the Underground and presenting a new idea of London that had the Underground at its core.<sup>36</sup>

As is clear from the quote, Pick revolutionized the way advertising posters were used at that time. He decided to promote the Underground itself and thus encourage the passengers to continue to use it on a daily basis. One of the first posters ever shown in the Underground was “No Need to ask a P’liceman” by John Hassall commissioned in 1908 that can be seen on the next page. It was a way of promoting the Underground, suggesting that it was so easy to use one could comfortably do so

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<sup>35</sup> Catherine Flood, “Pictorial Posters in Britain at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” in *London Transport Posters*, ed. David Bownes and Oliver Green (Hampshire: Lund Humphries, 2008), 17.

<sup>36</sup> Flood, 24.



without asking for help. The text in the picture also reads: “Underground to anywhere. Quickest way. Cheapest fare.” The slogan only enhances the message of the poster by adding more incentives to using the Underground.



The early posters were also used to promote new destinations that could be reached by the Underground. Pick’s idea was to aim to “inspire customers to make journey that had not yet crossed their minds.”<sup>37</sup> For that reason, a lot of the early posters featured the suburbs as well as museums and live events. Pick wanted to present London as a lively city full of adventures and encourage everyone to travel to them by the Underground at the same time.

Later on, as people grew more and more accustomed with the tube and started to use it regularly, there was not such a great need to advertise the tube anymore. Therefore, advertising posters for other commercial products began to appear on the walls of the stations and in the trains as well. In time, it became a trend and a privilege to have an item or an event promoted within the Underground as its prestige rose. Nowadays, the London Underground is one of the most sought-after advertising spots with the traffic it receives every day.

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<sup>37</sup> Flood, 29.



### **3. Advertising Strategies**

The organization responsible for all the advertising on the Underground at present is called Transport for London (TfL). It was established in 2000 as a successor to London Regional Transport. Transport for London is a government body that handles all aspects connected to public transport in London. Nevertheless, it did not take control over the Underground until 2003. Ever since, TfL has been responsible for running and maintaining the tube, as well as choosing and approving advertising posters.

#### **3.1 Advertising Policy**

Transport for London has strict rules that has to be followed by anybody who wants their advertisement to appear anywhere in the public transport system. Therefore this policy applies also to the posters for the London Underground. TfL drafted a six-page document<sup>38</sup> stating the purpose, definition and required standards for all advertisements, as well as possible reasons for approval or rejection of any posters.

The purpose of the policy is to “set out high level principles, together with the decision making framework and criteria, governing the approval of advertisements which appear on TfL’s services and information campaigns undertaken by TfL.” It is TfL’s responsibility to ensure that all advertisements used in the Underground and elsewhere abide by the law, especially the Greater London Authority Act of 1999. Section 404 of the GLA Act<sup>39</sup> states that when exercising their authority, both Transport for London and the Mayor have a duty:

- (a) to promote equality of opportunity for all persons irrespective of their race, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation or religion;
- (b) to eliminate unlawful discrimination; and

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<sup>38</sup> “Transport for London – Advertising Policy,” accessed May 4 2012, <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/businessandpartners/tfl-advertising-policy.pdf>.

<sup>39</sup> “Greater London Authority Act 1999,” accessed May 4 2012, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1999/29/section/404>.

(c) to promote good relations between persons of different racial groups, religious beliefs and sexual orientation.

TfL's definition for an advertisement reads: "**Advertisement** includes advertisements in any form proposed to appear on TfL's services and includes information campaigns undertaken by TfL." They further clarify that anyone who seeks an approval from the organization to use their advertisement in the public transport is called an applicant.

There are several reasons why an application could be rejected by TfL. The advertisement will not be accepted not only if it does not abide by the law, but also if it "incites someone to break the law." Furthermore, the advertisement must not cause any serious or widespread offense to any member of the public, be it by the image used, wording or the product being advertised. No overtly sexual images of nude or semi-nude women, men or children are permitted either. TfL clarifies that "while the use of underdressed people in most underwear advertising may be seen as an appropriate context, gratuitous use of an overtly sexual nature will be unacceptable." Usage of obscene content or language will not be accepted either, as well as advertisements promoting lap-dancing, 'gentlemen's clubs', escort agencies or massage parlours. TfL also forbids advertising any political parties or a political cause. Moreover, no advertising posters that contain negative references to TfL itself are permitted either.

In the instances of using a living person for promotion in the advertisement, their written consent must be sent to TfL before the campaign is approved. The policy also specifies that if a poster is likely to be defaced due to the subject matter or due to having a high proportion of blank space, it will not be allowed to be installed anywhere in the Underground or in any other public transport medium. Furthermore, posters that contain images that look like street art or graffiti are also forbidden for the same reason; TfL feels it is highly probably they would be defaced. The advertising policy document also states that "individual TfL services may specify further requirements in relation to advertising on those services which must be adhered to."

The decision to approve or reject the advertisements will be made by an appointed custodian in accordance with the advertising policy. They have the right to consult

the Committee of Advertising Practise as to whether or not the advertisement complies with the British Code of Advertising.

### 3.1.1 Banned Posters

In the past, there have been several instances where Transport for London banned advertising posters from appearing on the Underground. The most well-known case



is perhaps the album cover for a record by Metallica and Lou Reed, called “Lulu”.

The poster depicts a dismembered, cut and bruised female mannequin with the album’s name written in what appears to be blood. Even though it seems to violate TfL’s advertising policy by using a nude image and promoting violence, those were not the reason TfL decided to ban the

poster. It was forbidden to appear in the Underground, because “it looks too much like street graffiti”, which could lead to further defacing of the poster.<sup>40</sup>

In the case of the “Final Destination 5” film poster, it was dissatisfied parents, who convinced TfL to take the poster down, according to *The Guardian*.<sup>41</sup> The parents claimed that the human skull skewered by iron rods distressed their children. After receiving 13 complaints, the Advertising Standards Authority decided to ban the

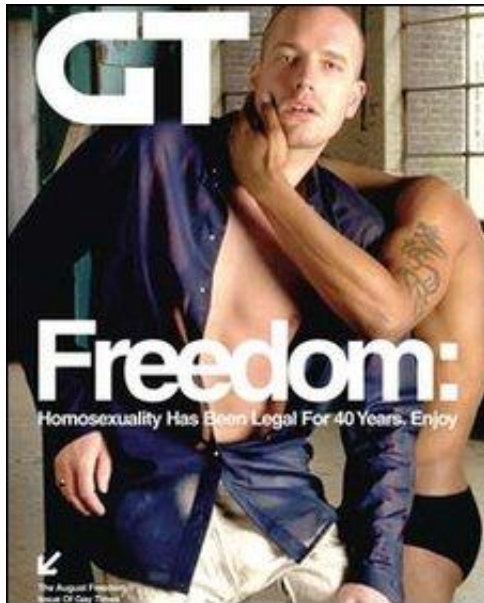


<sup>40</sup> Lucy Jones, “Lou Reed and Metallica’s sick poster has no place on the London Underground,” *The Telegraph*, September 21, 2011, accessed May 4, 2012, <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/culture/lucyjones/100056245>.

<sup>41</sup> Mark Sweney, “Final Destination 5 poster banned,” *The Guardian*, December 7, 2011, accessed May 4, 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2011/dec/07/final-destination-5-poster-banned>.

poster and issued a statement saying it was taken down “because very young children might view this ad depicting violence, it was likely to cause fear and undue distress to children”.

One of the most controversial bans issued by the TfL was the prohibition of a poster advertising an issue of a magazine called *Gay Times*, which celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup>



anniversary of decriminalization of homosexuality. BBC News reports<sup>42</sup> that in August of 2007 TfL refused to allow the image, because one of the models was in “an unnecessary state of undress” and it violated the advertising policy, which prohibits depicting nude and semi-nude figures in advertisements. Nevertheless, a spokesman for the magazine called the ban unjustified, considering some of the heterosexual advertisements on display in the Underground. The situation caused an

uproar in the gay community. However, TfL stood its ground and stated that they “have to take account of the full range of passengers and endeavour not to cause offence in the advertising [they] display.”

### 3.2 Advertising Strategies

Once the advertisement has been approved by Transport for London, it can finally be planted in the Underground. However, it is not as simple as it might sound. There are several options regarding both the size and the placement of the advertisement the client can choose from. The posters can be installed in the corridors, along the stairs, on the walls of the platform, inside the tube carriages or even on ticket gateways. The sizes of advertisements are typically referred to as “sheets”. “One sheet” used to be a

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<sup>42</sup> Andy Dangerfield, “Street art posters latest adverts to be censored by TfL,” *BBC News*, February 18, 2010, accessed May 4, 2012, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/england/london/8516345.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/london/8516345.stm).

standard movie poster, with the measurements of 27” x 40” (68.58cm x 101.6cm). Nowadays, the sizes of advertisements can be from the smallest one-sheets up to 96-sheet billboards. Those are also the largest posters used in the London Underground.

There are professional agencies offering their services to clients, who want to place their posters in the Underground. They usually offer their best opinion good strategic placement and size of the advertisement for any given product.

Over three million people travel via the Underground every day. They all have different purposes, such as travelling to work or going shopping, and they cover all the possible age groups and backgrounds. Advertising on the tube reaches a vast number of commuters and therefore has proven to be very effective.

### 3.2.1 Standard Poster Sizes and Placements

#### 4-sheets and 6-sheets



According to ADI Media UK,<sup>43</sup> an advertising agency specialising in public transport advertisements in London, the 4-sheet type posters are the most used in the London Underground. They are usually placed in the underground passages and platforms and thus ensure a great coverage, as a large number of passengers pass

them every day. The 6-sheets posters are very similar to the 4-sheets ones. Although slightly bigger in size, they are placed in much the same locations. Those posters are used for various types of products and usually rely on either big, bold text or an inviting and interesting image.

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<sup>43</sup> “London Underground Advertising,” ADI Media UK, accessed May 4, 2012, <http://www.adimediak.com/transport-underground-advertising.html>.

## 12-Sheets and 16-sheets

The 12 and 16 - sheet posters are significantly bigger and therefore stand out much more. They are usually found in central stations on passageways and platforms. Those posters easily attract the attention of passers-by because of their size and looming presence on the walls. As pictured in the image above, they are often used to advertise movies or West End shows, using their position in the busiest stations to reach a diverse audience.



## 48-Sheets and 96-sheets

Those sizes are closer to regular billboards, therefore they can be seen usually only on the walls facing the travellers in the tube tunnel. There is a standard waiting time of three minutes between the tube trains, which increases during weekends and before and after the rush hour. Therefore the placement and size of those particular advertisements is ideal for posters that involve a longer text with a more complicated message, as it provides the travellers with sufficient time to read it. Those types of posters usually do not advertise movies, theatre plays or anything pertaining to the entertainment industry, but are usually saved for more serious topics or items.

## Tube Car Panels

The walls in the passageways and platforms are not the only places where an advertising poster can be found. Many passengers spend a significant part of their working day in the tube; therefore the carriages themselves provide a great space for launching an advertising campaign. The advertisements are placed along the tube car walls, right above the windows. They are also mixed with tube maps and general Underground information, thus assuring the posters will not go unnoticed, as almost

every passenger glances up to the tube maps to plan their journey. This particular placement has also another great advantage; the advertisements are right at the eye-level of standing passengers, who undoubtedly distract themselves during the tube travel by reading the advertising posters.

### **Lift and Escalator Panels**

Everyone who wants to use the Underground usually has to go in or out of the stations via escalators or lifts. Those particular advertisement spots are sometimes referred to as “London’s notice board” because they require the posters to be inventive and eye-catching, as the passers-by do not have the sufficient time to focus on them properly. The spots by the escalators are best for book or movie posters, where the title of the advertised item dominates the space and is easy to read quickly. Moreover, this advertisement placement is also frequently used by businesses or shops close to the particular Underground station, because the passengers can visit them right after they exit the tube, if the poster interests them enough.

### **Tickets Gateways**

The ticket gateways are a much desired place for advertisements. Every single passenger entering the Underground in any station has to go through them, and usually more than once or twice, if the journey is long enough. Around 150.000 people enter the tube each hour and all of them undoubtedly notice the gateways advertisements, even if unconsciously. However, same as the escalator posters, those ads have to be attention grabbing, usually with big bold letters and simple yet catchy phrases, so they can be read and understood quickly while passing through the gateway.



### **3.2.2 Poster Placements according to the Area**

In the previous section, all the possible placements for the advertising posters within the Underground were discussed. However, it is important to mention, that the content of the posters also differs with respect to the area in which they appear.

Travelling by the London Underground from the residential and suburban areas to the centre, there is a very noticeable shift in the content of the advertising posters and the items featured in them. This phenomenon is the result of the advertisers trying to target the right audience and thus ensure the best possible results for their campaigns.

Personally, I observed that the further from the centre and the most popular tourist attractions, the advertisements tend to feature more family oriented items, such as last minute family holidays or grocery shopping items. The posters are trying to target the people returning home from work and most likely going to visit one of the local shopping areas. It would not be very useful to advertise West End plays or tourist spots so far from the centre, therefore the focus of escalator or lift posters may shift for example to newly released books.

On the other hand, underground stations closest to the popular tourist spots usually feature posters inviting the passengers to visit the nearest attraction. For example the Tower Hill station will feature posters with the history of The Tower of London to incite tourists, or the two closest stations to the London Eye, Waterloo and Westminster, will be full of pictures of the enormous Ferris wheel. Furthermore, unlike West End, the smaller theatres advertise their plays in the closest Underground stations.

Moreover, in business areas such as The City, the majority of passengers commute there for work. Therefore, the advertisements are more likely to be posters offering financial training, exotic holidays, real estate deals or the new issue of the Economist.

To sum up, it is clear that every advertising poster has its perfect place in the London Underground. There are many factors that influence the placement of each poster that need to be carefully considered, because the placement plays a large part in the success or a failure of an advertising campaign. The ideal size of a poster for each



product has to be taken into consideration, as well as the placement within the Underground. The most important thing is to target the right group of passengers with each poster, so it can be used to its fullest potential. There are many advertising agencies that specialize in public transport advertising; therefore every client has a large number of possibilities to choose from, while preparing a campaign for their product.

## **4. Posters in London Underground – analysis**

This chapter will discuss and analyse advertising posters that have been approved by TfL to appear in the London Underground. As has been already stated, the themes and products advertised in the Underground are limitless, ranging from everyday use items to tourist attractions or once in a lifetime events. Every poster has its purpose and is very well thought through by its designers to make the biggest impact possible. I have decided to divide the analysed posters into three groups according to their themes. The themes are the following: 2012 London Olympic Games, World Wars posters and shopping themed posters. Those three themes show the diversity of the advertising posters used in the Underground.

### **4.1 Olympic Posters**

The Olympic Games are the most important sporting event in the world and London has the privilege of hosting them in the summer of 2012. However, what might not be so obvious to most people is the long lasting tradition of creating new and unique advertising posters for each Olympic Games. This tradition dates back to the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm, for which the first official Olympic poster was designed.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> “Olympic Games Posters,” accessed May 4, 2012, [http://www.olympic.org/Documents/Reports/EN/en\\_report\\_776.pdf](http://www.olympic.org/Documents/Reports/EN/en_report_776.pdf).

The Olympic Museum defines an official Olympic poster as a poster that promotes a specific edition of the Olympic Games. It is a part of the look and feel of the whole Games and over time usually becomes a symbol of that particular edition of the Olympics.<sup>45</sup>

Moreover, according to the Olympic Museum, there is also a set of significant elements and symbols that are recurring in every new edition of the official Olympic posters. Those symbols can be divided into two groups:

The first includes figurative elements of significance for the host country such as public monuments, statues, flags, landscapes or cityscapes. The second puts more of an accent on graphic elements or on the emblem of the Games (a design featuring the Olympic rings together with other distinctive elements).<sup>46</sup>

As is clear from the quote, there are no overly specific requirements for an official Olympic poster. However, as is also mentioned above, the Olympic rings are usually the most distinguishing element in recognizing an official Olympic poster. The Olympic Museum writes that since 1928, the year they first appeared, the rings have been the overall unifying element on official posters.<sup>47</sup>

#### **4.1.1 2012 London Olympic Posters**

For the upcoming Games, the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG) commissioned a group of 12 contemporary British artists to help with the creation of the posters for this enormously important event. A spokesman for the LOCOG said:

The primary objective was artistic excellence and some of the UK's greatest artists have been commissioned. The brief for the artists encouraged them to celebrate the Games coming to London and to look at the values of the Olympic and Paralympic games. Each image is a

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<sup>45</sup> "Olympic Games Posters"

<sup>46</sup> "Olympic Games Posters"

<sup>47</sup> "Olympic Games Posters"

distinct interpretation of either the Olympic or Paralympic Games by the individual artists and the diversity of the series demonstrates the extraordinary creative talent that exists within the UK.<sup>48</sup>

Nevertheless, even though the commissioners are undoubtedly satisfied with the final product, as is clear from the quote above, the reaction of the media and public after unveiling the official posters was less than positive. The overall consensus seems to be that the posters “fail to inspire” and do not reflect the true spirit of the games. Art expert Maria Howard expressed that the longevity of the posters is questionable and that the posters range from witty to downright dull.<sup>49</sup> Her opinion best sums up the majority of the initial reactions, which were rather polarized. However, the majority of commenters seemed to agree that the official posters did not live up to the heightened expectations.

#### **4.1.2 Analysis**

The official Olympic posters will undoubtedly appear in the London Underground to advertise the sporting event of the year as much as possible. Therefore, I have chosen five out of the twelve official posters for deeper analysis of their advertising aspects. When choosing the posters, I tried to use those that are the most diverse and represent different advertising aspects and strategies. First of all, I have chosen posters from both the groups recognized by the Olympic Museum. That means posters that feature recognizable Olympic symbols, such as *Divers* by Anthea Hamilton, and posters which were created with the London landmarks in mind, such as *Big Ben 2012* by Sarah Morris.

Moreover, I wanted to analyse further the usage of the most recognizable Olympic symbol, the Olympic rings. Therefore, I have chosen two posters that represent it in a different way. *Divers* use the rings in a more traditional way, as opposed to *LONdON 2012* by Rachel Whiteread, which takes a more innovative and creative approach. Another criterion for my decision was to analyse both posters that feature text, such

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<sup>48</sup> Marc Sobbohi, “2012 Olympic posters fail to inspire,” *SW Londoner*, November 18, 2011, accessed May 6, 2012, <http://swlondoner.co.uk/content/1811601-2012-olympic-posters-fail-inspire>.

<sup>49</sup> Marc Sobbohi, “2012 Olympic posters fail to inspire”

as For the Unknown Runner by Chris Ofili, and text less posters that rely only on the image to get across their message.

Finally, I wanted to include posters that I think are working in terms of the advertising aspect, but also those that do not fulfil the purpose of advertising the Olympic Games that well. My goal was to compare and contrast their advertising value and try to predict which will be more and less successful at promoting the Games. The main reason for including GO by Michael Craig-Martin was to show that even though it is a well-made poster that does not necessarily mean it is suited for a successful advertising campaign.

### **Divers by Anthea Hamilton**



One of the officially selected posters by the LOCOG is *Divers* by Anthea Hamilton, pictured above. The official description of the image reads:

In *Divers* the poised legs seem to capture a gymnastic pose or show, perhaps a synchronised swimmer diver holding a balletic position. Interestingly, the only Olympic sport exclusively contested by women is synchronised swimming. *Divers* evokes the engaging theatricality of synchronised swimming, perhaps the most artistically challenging sport of the London 2012 Olympic Games.<sup>50</sup>

The quote above offers a basic description of the poster. If we were to analyse it further, a good place to start would be the title. The title is one of the first information we know about the poster and it undoubtedly affects our perception of it. Hamilton chose to name the image *Divers* for a reason; therefore it is safe to assume that the poised legs indeed do belong to a synchronised swimmer. However, the image is ambiguous enough that despite the specific title, there is still room for speculation.

In terms of the significant Olympic symbols and elements, the poster clearly falls into the second group, which puts an accent on graphic elements or on the emblem of the Games. The most recognizable feature of the Games, the Olympic rings, is also the most prominent feature of the poster. The rings are placed in the upper half of the image and thus immediately attract the attention of the viewer and simultaneously make it clear what is being advertised. The poised legs are another clear symbol of a sporting event, which only compliments the artist's choice of showcasing the Olympic elements without subtlety. The background of the poster seems to be a swimming pool full of water, which is another reason to assume the legs belong to a synchronised swimmer.

If we focus on the colours, the most prevalent and noticeable ones in the *Divers* poster are blue and white. In psychology of advertising, the colour white is viewed as neutral and blue is generally associated with calmness, passivity and certainty. If the colour is related to an object, which would be the swimming pool in this case, its

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<sup>50</sup> "Official Olympic and Paralympic Posters for London 2012 by UK's top artists unveiled today," *London 2012*, November 4, 2011, accessed May 6, 2012, <http://www.london2012.com/media-centre/media-releases/2011/11/official-olympic-and-paralympic-posters-for-london-2012-.html>.

associations are: cold, wet, deep, powerful, shiny, great, full or calm.<sup>51</sup> All those adjective are easily relatable to water and a swimming pool, therefore there is nothing ground-breaking about the choice of colour in relation to the subject matter.

To sum up, *Divers* by Anthea Hamilton is a poster that clearly advertises the Olympic Games by focusing on the significant and recognizable elements of the sporting event. The artist chose to use a simplistic approach by using only two main colours. The overall colour scheme looks very soothing and calm, mainly because of the abundance of light blue combined with the neutral white. Nevertheless, the message of the poster is clear at a first glance, therefore it serves its purpose in advertising the Olympic Games.

Finally, the reactions to this particular poster are mostly mixed. Art expert Maria Howard described the poster as a “as a classic take” on the tradition of Olympic posters, even though it lacks longevity.<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, *The Telegraph* was a little harsher with its comment, writing that “Anthea Hamilton’s [...] innocuous efforts leave you feeling that life may be just too comfortable for some of today’s successful artists.”<sup>53</sup> As is clear from the quote, the author of the article seems to think that the artist could put a little more effort into the poster and make it more outstanding.

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<sup>51</sup> Jitka Vysekalová, *Psychologie reklamy* (Praha: Grada Publishing, 2007), 154.

<sup>52</sup> Marc Sobbohi, “2012 Olympic posters fail to inspire”

<sup>53</sup> Mark Hudson, “London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics posters: the verdict,” *The Telegraph*, November 4, 2011, accessed May 6, 2012, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/art-features/8867430/London-2012-Olympics-and-Paralympics-posters-the-verdict.html>.

## Big Ben 2012 by Sarah Morris



The next poster I have chosen to analyse was created for the 2012 Paralympic Games by Sarah Morris. The official description says:

Since the mid-1990s Sarah Morris has been creating complex, geometric, abstract paintings derived from cityscapes and architectural detail, origami patterns and signs and symbols. To celebrate the Paralympic Games coming to London Morris has created an abstract representation of one of the city's most iconic landmarks - Big Ben. The grids and vivid colours create a sense of dynamism and also evoke images of athletic tracks, swimming lanes, and field markings.<sup>54</sup>

In case of this particular poster, the name proves to be even more important than in *Divers*. Because of its truly abstract nature, the image initially leaves the viewer

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<sup>54</sup> "Official Olympic and Paralympic Posters for London 2012 by UK's top artists unveiled today," *London 2012*

guessing as to what exactly he is looking at. Therefore, the title serves as the first introduction to the subject represented in the poster, which is one of London's most important landmarks, the Big Ben.

Moreover, though it might seem that in terms of specific Olympic symbols, this particular poster belongs only to the first group, which includes public monuments, statues, flags, landscapes or cityscapes of the host country, it is not entirely true. The overall image does represent Big Ben. Nevertheless, according to the official description, it is built from various pieces symbolizing athletic tracks or swimming lanes. For that reason, it is safe to say that Big Ben 2012 belongs to both the groups distinguished by The Olympic Museum. It has cultural elements of the host country, as well as symbols pertaining to a sporting event.

However, what the poster is obviously missing is the main symbol of the Olympic Games – the Olympic rings. As opposed to *Divers, 2012* Big Ben does not immediately and clearly evoke the idea of the Olympic Games. Therefore, it can be argued that its advertising potential might not be as affective. Research has shown that the average time a person spends looking at an advertising poster is two seconds.<sup>55</sup> Considering Sarah Morris's poster, it is not a given that everyone will immediately connect her abstract image with the most famous sporting event in the world. Consequently, even though the combination of colours she used is very bright and eye-catching, the overall image might not have a very high advertising impact.

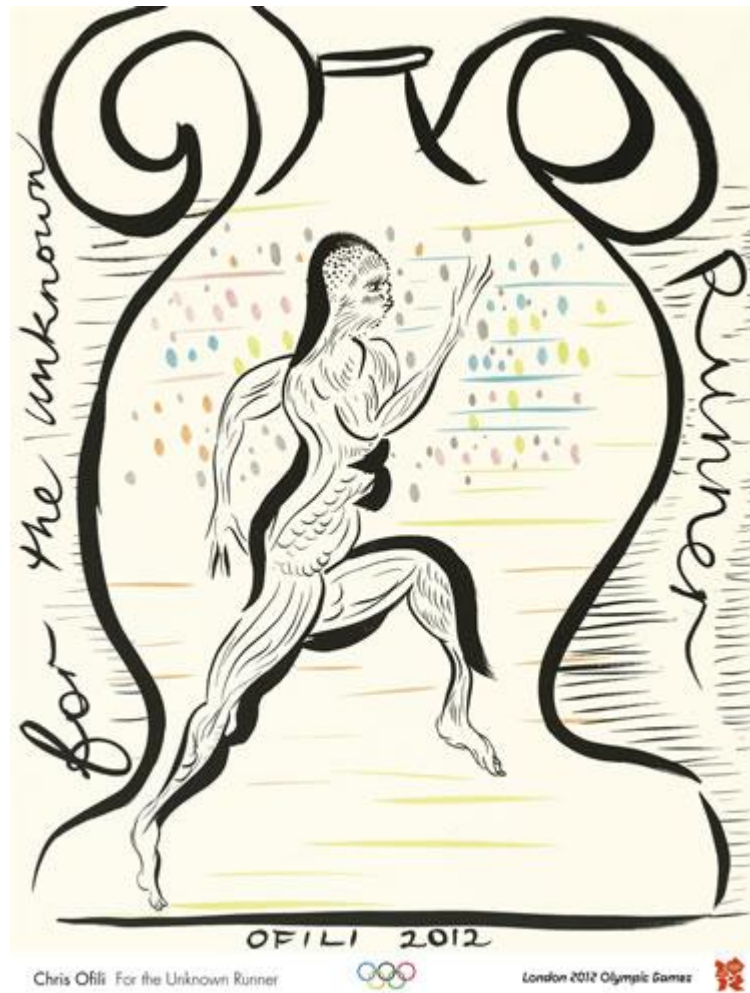
In conclusion, Sarah Morris decided to apply her usual abstract technique while creating her version of the official Olympic poster. The main image depicted is the well-known London landmark Big Ben. It is made of colourful geometric shapes that symbolize running tracks and swimming lanes, thus giving the poster a sporting element. However, the main symbol of the Olympic and Paralympic Games is missing, which makes this poster less clear about what it advertises. Over all, the choice of this particular design might not be the best for the advertising campaign launched by the LOCOG.

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<sup>55</sup> Vysekalová, 152.



## For the Unknown Runner by Chris Ofili



The third Olympic poster I am going to discuss is *For the Unknown Runner* by Chris Ofili. The official description provided by the LOGOC is:

Chris Ofili creates paintings inspired by personal experience, race, folklore, biblical narrative, and, for the last few years the island of Trinidad where he lives. In *For the Unknown Runner* a figure, somewhere between super-athlete and mythical being, sprints past a watching crowd. The figure is framed by a vase motif - a reference to the Ancient Olympic Games, which provided an arena for artistic and cultural expression as well as sporting excellence. *For the Unknown*

Runner is a powerful dedication to both Olympic history and the future stars of the London 2012 Games.<sup>56</sup>

Looking at all three of the analysed posters, the last one is the only one that actually features any text. The name of the poster appears on the sides of the image and graphically matches the rest of it. Again, the name of the poster refers to the subject depicted in the image, a runner in this case. The adjective “unknown” might mean that the winners of all the Olympic disciplines are still unknown, or perhaps that even relatively unknown athletes could surprise and seize the medal positions. The phrase is vague enough to keep the audience interested and thinking about the poster and its meaning.

As for the typical Olympic symbols, this poster would most likely belong to the second group that puts more of an accent on graphic elements or on the emblem of the Games. Even though the Olympic rings are once again missing from the main image, the overall design still evokes the idea of the Olympic Games at a first glance. The main theme of Ofili’s poster is mythology and Ancient Greece, which are popularly connected to the Games. The runner seems to be a cross between a human and a mythical hero, judging by the stylized form and the depiction of his superhuman muscles, and that is an image many people connect to professional athletes. Moreover, the figure of the runner is framed by a Grecian urn, which is a symbol typically representing Ancient Greece, the country of the origin of the Olympics. Therefore, even though the message about the Games is subtle, it is definitely present.

In comparison to the two previously analysed posters, For the Unknown Runner is better suited for advertising the Olympic Games than 2012 Big Ben, even though its message is not as clear as that of Divers. The artist decided to rely on the mythological themes related to the Games and thus created a subtle connection to the sporting event. It is not over the top; however, it still represents the Games and its participants.

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<sup>56</sup> “Official Olympic and Paralympic Posters for London 2012 by UK’s top artists unveiled today,” *London 2012*

## LONDOn 2012 by Rachel Whiteread



The next poster I have chosen to analyse is LONDOn 2012 by Rachel Whiteread. The description featured on the LOGOC site reads:

While Rachel Whiteread is best known for her sculptural work, drawing has always remained a critical part of her practice. She has described drawing as being like a diary of her work, whilst memory remains a key theme. For her print, she has composed a pattern of overlapping rings in the Olympic colours. The rings explore the emblem of the Olympic Games, and also represent marks left by drinking bottles or glasses. They

act as memories of a social gathering, such as the athletes in the stadium during the opening ceremony or the spectators of the Olympic Games.<sup>57</sup>

Firstly, according to the symbols used in the posters, LONdOn 2012 clearly fits into the second group, which represents features connected with the Games themselves. The artist decided to take the most recognizable symbol of the Olympics, the rings, and use them in an innovative and creative way. This approach works mainly because the symbol still retains its basic characteristics, which are etched to the minds of people all over the world. The five colours that represent the five continents are all present, as well as the familiar circular shape and the fact that the rings are connected together.

However, what makes the use of the most recognizable Olympic symbol unique in this poster is the way Whiteread decided to reinterpret it. She took the familiar image and injected it with a brand new meaning and message. As is said in the description quoted above, the rings are made to look like marks left by drinking bottles or glasses. This symbol is also widely recognized and transcends all continents and languages, same as the Olympic Games. Seeing a poster full of those marks suggests a successful and entertaining social event, where new connections undoubtedly were made. It creates a clear parallel with the Games and suggests that competing with each other is not the only purpose of this enormous sporting event. The image sends a message of acceptance and camaraderie, which is so very important in this time and age.

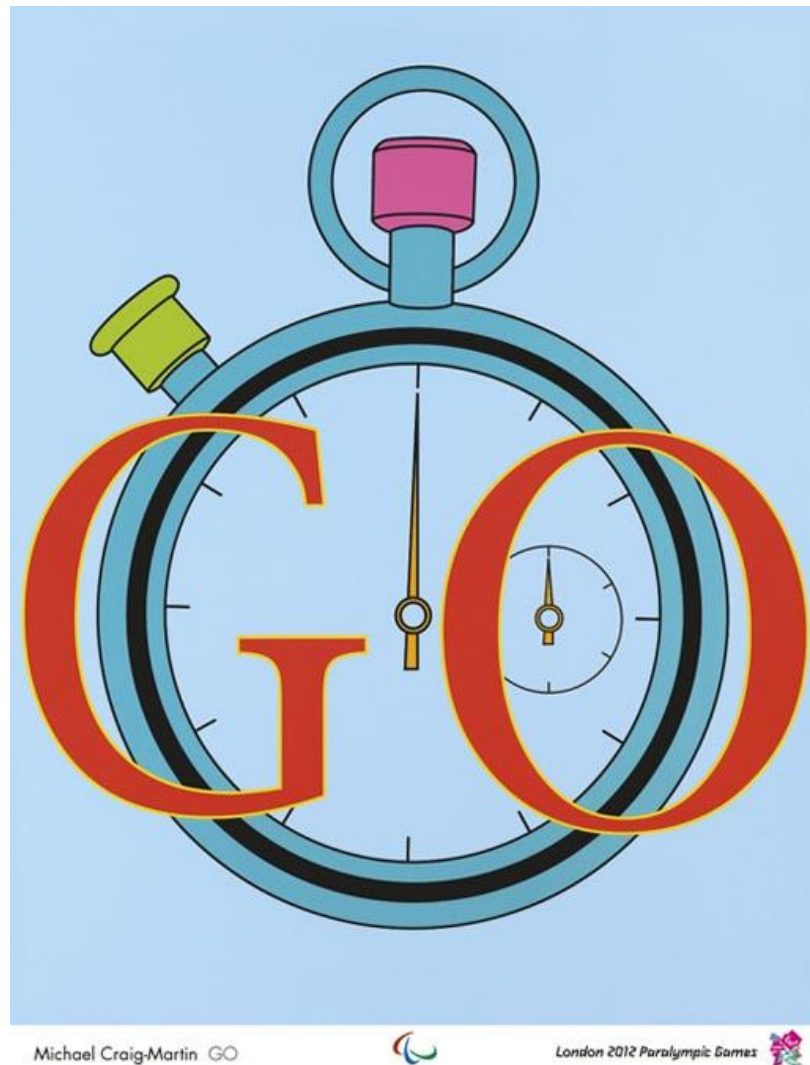
Moreover, even though there is no text featured in the poster, it is clear at a first glance what it is advertising. The Olympic rings are not altered enough to be unrecognizable during the average time a passer-by spends looking at an advertisement. Also, while the poster might not have a great longevity, it works in the current context and environment.

Over all, LONdOn 2012 by Rachel Whiteread is a successful advertising poster that works really well in the context of the pre- Olympic Games period in London. It takes a well-established and recognised Olympic symbol and transforms in a way that encapsulates a broader message than just that of the Olympics.

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<sup>57</sup> "Official Olympic and Paralympic Posters for London 2012 by UK's top artists unveiled today," *London 2012*

## GO by Michael Craig-Martin



The last Olympic poster I am going to analyse is GO by Michael Craig-Martin. The LOGOC official description reads:

Michael Craig-Martin combines quotidian objects such as light bulbs, chairs, and umbrellas with everyday words. His pairing of language and image is based on both familiar and unexpected associations. In combining the word GO with a stopwatch Craig-Martin conveys with a sense of immediacy the excitement and anticipation experienced in the moments before the starter pistol is fired, and the roar of the crowd as they encourage their favourite athlete towards the finish line.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> "Official Olympic and Paralympic Posters for London 2012 by UK's top artists unveiled today," *London 2012*

As can be seen in the picture, Michael Craig-Martin decided to take the sport symbols route with his Olympic poster. The stopwatch pictured in the poster has a clear association with sport and sporting events, therefore it would fit into the first category of Olympic posters recognized by the Olympic museum. However, the focus of the image is not the stopwatch, but rather the text written over it. The word “go” is written in capital letters and the colour used is red. Red is a more prominent colour than blue and is more likely to attract attention first. Nevertheless, the way the text is positioned over the image creates a blend of those two elements, therefore, once noticed, the viewer will focus on them both. There is a clear connection with a stopwatch and the word “go”, as the verb is usually used as an imperative to let athletes know they can commence with performing their chosen discipline.

On the whole, the image and the text go together very well and they evoke the feeling of movement and dynamics. However, what is missing from the poster is any symbol pointing directly to the Olympic Games. At the first glance, it might seem that GO is better suited for advertising the Games than the previously analysed poster, LOnOn 2012; however, it is not necessarily true. Seeing as the sole reason for creating it was to advertise the Olympics, it cannot be said that the outcome is particularly successful. The poster itself will undoubtedly attract attention in the London Underground thanks to the large red text that stands out, and the passers-by will not completely miss it. Nevertheless, as has been already mentioned, the average time a person spends looking at an advertising poster is three seconds. There are not enough elements and recognized symbols to even subconsciously send the message that the sporting event being advertised by this poster is the Olympic Games.

Over all, GO is a good poster in its own right. The large stop watch represents a sporting event and evokes the feeling of movement and urgency. The text is short and to the point, complementing the image and sending a similar message. At the same time, the colour of the text and the stop watch create a contrast that allows the text to be the focus of the poster and attract people’s attention. Nevertheless, there is a distinct lack of any distinguishing features that would clarify what sporting event is being advertised. There is no clear link to the Olympic Games anywhere in the poster and given the short amount of time necessary to make an impression on the viewer, that is a noticeable shortcoming.

## 4.2 First World War Underground Posters

Even though it is a widely known fact that the London Underground served as a shelter during the bombing in the Second World War, it is little known that the Underground played a crucial role in the First World War as well. The first aerial bombing of London happened on 31 May 1915, when a Zeppelin airship dropped bombs on north-east London, killing seven people and wounding thirty-five<sup>59</sup>. After the event, it was unsurprising that most people assumed the Underground was the safest place to be should such an attack happen again. At that time, unlike during the Second World War, even the government encouraged this train of thought

For that reason, they had special advertising posters created that told the inhabitants of London they were more than welcome to hide in the Underground during aerial attacks. One of the advertising posters read: "It is bomb proof down below. Underground for safety; plenty of bright trains, business as usual."<sup>60</sup> Even though the attacks were sporadic in the first years of the war, the advertising campaign was clearly working, as about 21,000 people found shelter in the Underground until 1917.<sup>61</sup> It was that year, when the concentrated attacks on London began and the Underground began to be used as a shelter by the masses. The Underground Company provided eighty-six stations with the capacity of 250,000 people.

However, it was not only the possibility of taking a shelter that was being advertised in the Underground during the war years. The themes of the posters can be divided into four main categories. The first one is shelter, which has been already discussed. The second theme featured heavily in the war time posters was recruitment. More soldiers are always needed, therefore the government decided to encourage men to join the war by creating advertising posters and displaying them in various places, the Underground included. Another theme the war time posters focused on was the home front. It was important to show that only the soldiers were helping the nation by fighting, but also those left behind. The posters featured mainly women doing men's work and thus also encouraged others to do the same. The last theme featured in the war posters did not appear until 1918. After the aerial attacks became more

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<sup>59</sup> Wolmar, 210.

<sup>60</sup> Wolmar, 211.

<sup>61</sup> Wolmar, 211.

frequent and more and more people became paranoid, using the Underground even without air raids being carried out, overcrowding became a serious problem<sup>62</sup>. During those times, posters advertising “ethical” behaviour on the Underground were displayed in the stations and carriages as well.

#### **4.2.1 Analysis**

I chose three First World War posters to analyse, each of them representing a different theme. Each of those posters was made used in a different part of the war and for different purposes. I decided to analyse those three particular posters to illustrate how the war was progressing and how the focus of advertising was gradually shifting. The first one, War by Frank William Brangwyn, is basically a call to arms and fits into the recruitment category of the war posters. In the beginning, the most important goal of advertising was to stress how important it was for men to join the armed forces.

The second poster is Harvest by John Walter, and it was created roughly in the middle of the war. With so many men gone, women had to replace them in various jobs and this particular poster is a part of a campaign that showed that everything was being taken care of at the home front.

Finally, the last poster illustrates how the last stages of the war reflected on London and the Underground in particular. It was created by George Morrow with the goal of reminding people how important proper behaviour was on the Underground. After the air raids became commonplace, too many started to use the metro as a shelter and soon it became unmanageable Therefore, the advertisements shifted to reflect this problem and try to elevate it by raising awareness among the citizens.

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<sup>62</sup> Wolmar, 213.



**War (1914) by Frank William Brangwyn**



This poster created by Frank William Brangwyn falls into the category of recruitment posters. It was made in 1914, not long after the start of the war; therefore, the main focus at that time was for more men to join the armed forces. Nevertheless, the London Underground was still run by Underground Electric Railways (UERL), a private company, in 1914. For that reason, the British government did not have much control over the advertisements displayed there. The Parliamentary Recruiting Committee expressed interest in having their posters placed

in the Underground; however, they were refused for their questionable artistic merit.<sup>63</sup>

Consequently, Frank Pick, the head of the artistic department at UERL, independently commissioned some of the best artist working at that time to create their own posters to support the war effort. The poster entitled simply “War” is one of the results of this campaign. Bex Lewis and David Bownes write that Brangwyn “favoured a graphic realism shockingly suited to the depiction of war, yet rarely employed in government propaganda.”<sup>64</sup> As the quote suggests, Pick’s goal in commissioning his own posters was to elevate the level of artistry in the recruitment posters, which was certainly successful in this case.

Looking at the poster itself, the first thing the observer notices is a soldier standing with an outstretched hand, pointing at something out of the frame. Originally, the poster was also printed in large landscape format and that version included a presumably Belgian family, leaving the wreckage of their home.<sup>65</sup> However, that part of the poster had to be removed from the version printed for the Underground. Nevertheless, the omission does not affect the dramatic impact of the overall image.

The poster paints a rather realistic picture of a soldier standing among civilian casualties and destroyed land. It is undoubtedly designed to affect passers-by’s emotions and make them sympathetic to the people suffering abroad. The dark colours used only underline the sombre mood of the poster and help evoke the sense of destruction and misery.

Moreover, the text under the image reads: “War: To Arms Citizens of the Empire!!” After influencing the viewer’s emotions and hopefully provoking sympathy, the poster then focuses on its prime goal, to recruit more soldiers. In contrast with the image itself, the phrase takes a different approach and glorifies the war a little bit more. The undoubtedly deliberate choice of words is very affective in this case. “Empire” immediately evokes the feeling of power and superiority and thus creates the impression that losing the war is not a possibility. Furthermore, the word “citizen” is casual enough that it covers people of both genders, all ages and social

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<sup>63</sup> Bex Lewis and David Bownes, “Underground Posters in Wartime,” in *London Transport Posters*, ed. David Bownes and Oliver Green (Hampshire: Lund Humphries, 2008), 168.

<sup>64</sup> Lewis and Bownes, 169.

<sup>65</sup> Lewis and Bownes, 169.

statutes. The result of using this particular phrase is that anyone can join the war, which will undoubtedly be glorious and victorious.

Over all, this poster by Frank William is successful in connecting the promotional purpose of the image with true artistry. The image itself focuses on affecting the emotions of the observer and making him feel sympathetic with the victims of the war. The slogan underneath then takes this feeling and raises it to a new level by suggesting that everyone can help and thus channel their feelings of sympathy. Moreover, the cleverly chosen words in the slogan suggest that anyone can be a part of the glorious event that is the war.

### **Harvest (1916) by John Walter West**



The second war poster I am going to analyse is Harvest by John Walter West. It was created in 1916 and it reflects how the focus of the war advertisements shifted in mere two years. Whereas in the beginning of the war the most important goal was to recruit new soldiers, two years in the situation changed significantly. With so many men gone abroad to fight in the war, the country started to lack work force in every

sector, which also showed in the economy. Therefore, there was no other choice but for women to replace men in all kinds of jobs.

The initial idea behind this poster was to make a design for soldiers overseas, to see how life continues at the “home front”.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, it ultimately appeared in the London Underground as well, undoubtedly to boost morale and show appreciation. The poster’s title suggests that this is a scene from a harvest. What is unusual about it is that there are only women involved. Not only the two prominent figures in the foreground, but also all the others in the background seem to be female as well.

Unlike “War”, there is no text on the poster; therefore, the whole message is carried solely by the image. The basic idea is to show women doing men’s work and make it look like it is how things always are. The women in the poster seem very relaxed and it is clear they know what they are doing. This image shows people that even though many left the country to fight, everything is still being taken care of. It also raises respect of women in general, as they were not necessarily thought of to be equal to men in sectors like agriculture.

Moreover, the choice of the colours also helps to evoke a calm and peaceful feeling. The shades are very subdued and not overly dramatic. Also, the choice of the subject matter is important as well. Harvest suggests that people are not starving, as is often the case in war time. Everything about this poster is showing its audience that there no woes at the “home front”.

To sum up, Harvest by John Walter West was created to show that even in the time of a world war; there is still everything in the working order in Britain. The poster shows that women replaced men without any fuss any are continuing with what they left behind after leaving to fight. The atmosphere is very calm and peaceful, mainly because of the choice of subdued colours. Also, portraying harvest is a great way to suggest that the living standard has not dropped because of the war.

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<sup>66</sup> Lewis and Bownes, 172.

**Pass Right Down the Car Please (1918) by George Morrow**



The last poster in this section is Pass Right Down the Car Please by George Morrow. Once again, the theme of the poster reflects the changes happening in the whole country and also in the London Underground. In the beginning of the war, the government encouraged using the Underground as a shelter during aerial raids and even had advertising posters created to spread the message. Nevertheless, by 1917 bombing of London became so frequent that people started to get paranoid and use the Underground excessively, in case another air raid would happen unexpectedly. In 1918 overcrowding in the tube became such a great problem that the Underground commissioned posters advertising “ethical” behaviour on the tube.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Lewis and Bownes, 175.

In this case, the main feature of the poster is the text. It is important to get the message across and George Morrow is not afraid to be blunt. The big lettered text at the top of the poster reads: “Pass Right Down the Car Please”. It is a straightforward phrase urging the passengers to conform to more ethical behaviour on the tube. The text is all in capital letters, which evokes a sense of urgency and importance. The colour used for this particular phrase is red. Among other things, the colour red is associated with stimulation, provocativeness and encouragement,<sup>68</sup> which makes it an appropriate choice for such an appellative poster. On the contrary, the usage of the word “please” at the end makes the message seem more like a request, rather than an order. Over all, the text at the top is sufficiently appellative, but in a polite manner.

The smaller text under the image reads: “Every one cannot get a seat at the busy hours but more could a get a strap and a standing room if the doors were left free from the crush. Think of the others. A door obstructor is a selfish person.” Obviously, it is a further explanation of the condensed phrase on the top of the poster. Not everyone will take the time to read it, which Morrow obviously knows, as he chose to go with a more subdued colour for this text. However, everyone who does read the text will be made to feel guilty by being called “selfish”. The message of the smaller blue text is even more urgent and appellative, despite its placement and a less bright colour.

Furthermore, the red text at the very bottom of the poster reads: “Train delays mean overcrowding.” This phrase sums up the message of the whole poster. It is more likely to be noticed than the blue text, seeing as it is slightly bigger and red, even if in lower case. Whereas the other two texts used focussed on the passenger in relation to others sharing the tube, this message is directed to the reader specifically. It mentions “delays” of the train, which implies it is in their best interest to move down the carriage, as the delay could affect them personally.

Finally, the image used illustrates what is spelled out by the text. It shows a less than ideal situation in the carriage and thus helps the passengers recognize it when it happens, in case they might not be sure.

Over all, this poster by George Morrow reaches the goal it set out to do. It is informative, yet appellative in a polite manner. It explains the reasons for this

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<sup>68</sup> Vysekalová, 154.

particular request and the possible consequences, if it is not carried out. The text used in the poster targets both the sense of sympathy with others, as well as possible personal inconvenience in case the train is delayed. It was undoubtedly a right choice to include it a part of the campaign against overcrowding in the Underground.

### **4.3 Shopping Themed Posters**

The last section of this chapter is dedicated to posters that advertise shopping. Nowadays it is a common thing that passengers use the Underground to travel to various locations to shop. The advertising companies are aware of that fact, therefore the majority of the posters in the Underground focus on various products and offers of bargains and sales. However, this phenomenon has not been present in the Underground since its very beginning. In fact, the trend of shopping themed advertising posters began in the early 1920s.

In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the typical gender stereotypes were still very much in place. Therefore, it was widely perceived that any posters advertising shopping trips to the centre of London must be focused on women. Also, until the 1920s it was only the upper classes that could really focus on current fashion, because no one else could afford the latest trends. However, this started to change with the arrival of cheaper clothing material and mass production.<sup>69</sup> Middle class women suddenly became major players in the world of fashion and it only made sense that the shopping themed advertisements would be targeted at them.

There were several approaches the clothing boutiques and poster creators employed while making the advertisements. One of them was focusing on the human senses and appealing to them. They used being able to touch and smell the high class products as an incentive to take an Underground trip to the centre and shop there. Another widely popular approach was to focus on presenting the latest trends in clothing. Often, the posters were no different to fashion plates used in the shops themselves. There was only added the Underground sign on the bottom of them. Advertising posters focusing on sales were very popular as well. They would change

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<sup>69</sup> Emmanuelle Dirix, "Fashioning the Tube," in *London Transport Posters*, ed. David Bownes and Oliver Green (Hampshire: Lund Humphries, 2008), 134.



according to the season, but the message would remain the same – the Underground is the best way to reach those sales.<sup>70</sup>

### 4.3.2 Analysis

I have chosen two shopping themed posters to analyse. The main difference is that one of them was created by a man and the other by a woman. I wanted to show the difference in approach and how the male and female perspectives affect the chosen subject and goal of the poster.

Frederick Charles Harrick created the poster called Touching the Riches of London. This advertisement is aimed at the middle-class women and seems to cater to their desire to enter the upper classes by at least experiencing the luxuries. There seems to be certain disconnect between the author and the subject matter, as the poster is not overly personal and relies on the stereotypical, superficial side of women.

On the other hand, Summer sales quickly reached by Mary Koop is a poster created for women by a woman. The main difference is that it is aimed not only at the middle-class, but women of any social status, who happen to enjoy sales. Moreover, it is clear right at the first glance that the poster has a less sterile and more appealing feel than the one created by Harrick. It shows that a female touch is definitely present and the author knows its audience very well.

Both those posters are great examples of advertisements promoting shopping around London. However, they work for completely different reasons, and that is why I chose to analyse them; to show two different approaches to advertising, which might be partially affected by the gender of the author.

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<sup>70</sup> Dirix, 137.



**Touching the Riches of London (1927) by Frederick Charles Herrick**



Touching the riches of London by Frederick Charles Herrick is one of a series of posters focussed on advertising shopping. It clearly falls into the category of posters appealing to one of the six senses, like touch or smell.

The target audience of this poster are mainly middle-class women. The woman depicted in the image is touching what seems to be a very expensive fabric with a clear wonder appearing in her face. It seems like it might be her first experience with such an expensive product and it is something very special. The image is very relatable for middle-class women, as it is easy to imagine themselves in this

woman's place. The act of touching something with one's bare hands is such an intimate experience that it adds a personal flavour to the whole image.

Furthermore, the text under the image reads: "Touching the riches of London." Using the word "riches" is undoubtedly deliberate. It evokes the sense of luxury, upper class and something uncommon. Seeing as being able to enter the world of fashion is still such a new trend for the middle-class women, touching the "riches" that were so out of reach not too long ago is a great incentive for them. The whole poster targets the consumer side of women that had not been a focus of advertising until then.

Also, an important part of the poster the Underground logo at the end that suggests the only way to those luxurious items is by the Underground. Emmanuelle Dirix writes about this poster: "[It is] a fusion of women, luxury commodities and London Underground's corporate identity."<sup>71</sup> The quote perfectly sums up the whole poster and its advertising value. The fusion of those three elements made perfect sense at that time and most likely had great success.

In conclusion, Herrick's poster succeeds in appealing to middle-class women and their consumerist streak. It offers them a unique experience of being able to touch something desirable that has been out of reach for a long time. It also subtly but cleverly includes the London Underground as a means to an end. Over all, this particular poster is a perfect example of shopping themed advertisement.

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<sup>71</sup> Dirix, 135.

**Summer sales quickly reached (1925) by Mary Koop**



As opposed to the previous one, the Summer Sales Quickly Reached poster is created by a woman. Not only were the 1920s revolutionary in creating advertisements targeting solely women for the first time, it was also at that time that women started to be regularly commissioned for making those posters.<sup>72</sup> The Summer Sales advertisement is one of the first ones created by Mary Koop.

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<sup>72</sup> Dirix, 140.

The most prominent element of this poster is the image. It is a sea of colourful umbrellas, most likely queuing to reach the summer sales. The diverse colours and designs are surely going to attract anyone's attention to the poster and make them focus on it long enough to read the text underneath. Also, the image of a corridor full of people creates the impression of urgency and hurry. It suggests that people, specifically women, will be rushing to reach those sales before everything is sold out. Therefore, it prompts the viewer to take action and be a part of the sales themselves.

Moreover, the text underneath the image reads: "Summer sales quickly reached by London Underground." It supports the impression established by the image previously – the sales need to be reached quickly and the Underground can help with that. Again, it uses women's preoccupation with fashion and their consumerist side. However, in this case the attraction is not luxurious items, like in the previous poster, but the incentive of reduced prices.

To sum up, the poster by Mary Koop reaches its goal of attracting attention and prompting customers to be a part of the summer sales. It is an advertisement for women created by a woman, which can be clearly seen. Koop knows how to reach a female audience by employing bright diverse colours to catch their attention and evoking a sense of urgency at the same time. It is a common fact that items on sale are sold out quickly and this poster cleverly emphasizes this by the right choice of words and an image. It is another example of a successful shopping themed poster.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, all the ten posters analysed in this chapter represent a different theme featured in the London Underground. They all use different techniques to attract the attention of passers-by and some succeed more than others. I tried to choose both contemporary and current posters, as well as posters created and used in the beginning of the century to show the progress and direction of the poster art. However, it is just a small fraction of the posters featured in the Underground, as virtually anything that aligns with the policies of the TfL can be displayed there. The advertising posters range from mundane grocery items to once in a lifetime events, like the Olympic Games.

## 5. Conclusion

This thesis deals mainly with the London Underground and advertising aspects of posters displayed in there. In the beginning, there is an introduction to the history of transportation in London and the main reasons for the ultimate construction of the Underground. After the Industrial Revolution, walking stopped being the only method of transport in the city of London and it had several unforeseen consequences. As more horse-drawn carriages started to be used in the streets, traffic congestions began clogging up the already overcrowded city and the situation quickly became unbearable. Another serious problem connected to the traffic crisis was the inability to commute to work for many people living far out of the centre.

As solutions for those problems started to be worked on, new types of vehicles and methods of transportation were being introduced. A select group of the most important ones is described in the second part of the first chapter. The first vehicles to be used in London were horse-drawn carriages, owned mostly by wealthy citizens, same as hackney cabs, which were introduced later. In 1829 came the omnibus as an alternative for the poorer citizens, but ultimately failed, as it was not possible to maintain low enough fares. The method of transport that finally succeeded in offering an alternative to the poor was the horse-drawn tram, the first vehicle to use railways. At the turn of the century, horses gradually started to be replaced by engines and first motorized vehicles appeared in London, However, the method of transport most important for the subsequent development of the Underground were the railways. First used for the transportation of goods and to connect only cities and villages, railways later arrived to the London suburbs and even centre and started to transport passengers.

However, none of those new transportation methods were sufficient to really solve the traffic crisis in London. What later proved to be the ultimate solution was an idea of building a subterranean railway under London. The most important man behind this project was Charles Pearson, who devised the whole project and was determined enough to secure financing and find the right crew. Unfortunately, he did not live until the grand opening of the Metropolitan railway in 1863, after more than two years of construction. Despite problems with sulphurous fumes and a lack of

comfort, the Underground became rather popular among the inhabitants of London, which led to its ultimate expansion. A new method of building tunnels was introduced, which accelerated the construction process, and ultimately resulted in the Underground servicing 270 stations in 2012.

Nevertheless, in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Underground went through an economic crisis and needed to gain some more support from the public. That is why the first advertising posters started to appear on the walls of the station. Frank Pick, the head of the Underground art department, was determined to show everyone how beneficial the tube could be and started to hire artists to create posters promoting just that – the advantages of travelling by the Underground. This idea was more than successful and nowadays the tube is one of the most prestigious advertising spaces in Britain.

After discussing the history of the Underground itself, the thesis focuses on advertising on the tube. All advertising must be approved by the Transport for London, the company that controls every aspect of public transportation, including the Underground. There are several rules that must be met before any poster is allowed to be displayed anywhere in the Underground. For example, the advertisements must comply with the law, must not cause serious offence to anybody or feature gratuitous nudity. Three examples of posters that were banned by the TfL are introduced for demonstration. A gay magazine cover that was not allowed for presenting a half-nude model, or a cover of a music album, banned for looking too much like graffiti.

After being approved, there are several places where an advertising poster can be placed on the Underground. This part of the process is very important, as it can determine the success or failure of the whole advertising campaign. The posters can be placed in the corridors in various sizes, where many people will at least glimpse them while walking by. For that reason, they need to be eye-catching and easy to remember. Posters with more text or complicated messages are best placed on the wall facing the passengers in a station. That way, the passengers have more time to read and focus on the advertisement, while waiting on a train. Advertisements can also be placed within the carriages, next to the escalators or in the lifts. It is also

important to choose a proper location around the city, as the target groups will differ for example in the centre of London and in the suburbs.

The last part of this thesis is dedicated to an analysis of ten advertising posters. I have chosen three groups, which I think represent the diversity of the advertising on the Underground. The first group are Olympic posters created for the 2012 Olympic Games in London. The overall reaction has not been very favourable, therefore I chose five of the more controversial posters and analysed them. Even though all of them rely on the typical symbols connected to the Games, most of the posters are not explicit enough to be particularly representative. The only exception is *Divers* by Anthea Hamilton, which is a classic Olympic poster that does not take any risks, but promotes the event sufficiently.

In case of the First World War posters, the initial idea behind them was to support the war effort. “War” is a great example of a recruitment poster that affects both people’s emotion and rational thinking. The same can be said about “Harvest”, even though its goal could not be more different. “Harvest” succeeds in reminding the general public that even though there is a war in progress, the British continue with their everyday life. Featuring women in an empowering role is another great aspect of this particular poster. However, as the war progressed and the situation in Britain changed, the focus of the posters shifted and got a more educational and appellative tone, reminding the passengers of the proper behaviour on the Underground. Overall, the advertising posters produced during the First World War were both artistic and advertising achievements.

Finally, not long after the beginning of the poster tradition, the Underground started to feature commercial posters as well. One of those were posters focussed on the shopping opportunities in the centre of London. What makes this particular type of advertising posters stand out is that their only target group is women. They play into the gender stereotypes and offer middle-class women a taste of the upper-class, which had been denied to them for so long. The shopping themed posters also mark the moment when women started to be hired to design advertising posters on a regular basis. The example I used is a summer sales poster by Mary Koop, which is very successful in attracting its target group.

To sum up, the ten posters offer a diverse representation of the variety of advertisements that appear on the Underground. They all use different methods to attract its audience, ranging from relying only on images and eye catching colours to attract attention, to using more written text to support their message. Their goal is the same, to advertise the given product or theme as well as possible. Where they differ is the extent to which they succeed with this goal. In my analysis, I tried to come to the conclusion if each of those posters is a good example of an advertisement and why I think so or not.



## Shrnutí

Tato práce se zabývá Londýnským metrem a reklamními aspekty plakátů, které jsou v něm umístěny. V první kapitole se nachází shrnutí historie dopravy v Londýně a hlavní důvody pro konstrukci podzemního metra. Jedním z nejpodstatnějších důvodů pro stavbu metra byla dopravní krize, která zasáhla Londýn po průmyslové revoluci. Chůze pěšky najednou přestala být hlavní metodou pohybu obyvatel po městě, což mělo za následek nepředvídatelný sled událostí. Lidé začali postupně více využívat kočárů tažených koňmi a to způsobilo, že dopravní zácpy většinou úplně zablokovaly Londýnské ulice a znemožnili pohyb jakýmkoliv směrem. Tato situace se velmi rychle stala neúnosnou. Nemožnost rychlého pohybu v ulicích měla za následek také to, že mnoho lidí docházejících do práce z větších vzdáleností, se nemohlo včas dostat do centra a dodržet tak svou pracovní dobu.

Na počátku 19. století se začala pomalu objevovat první řešení, jak ulevit Londýnským ulicím a zbavit je dopravních zácp. Nejlepším řešením se zdálo být představení zcela nových vozidel pro přepravu obyvatel. V první kapitole je popsána vybraná skupina těch nepoužívanějších dopravních prostředků, které bylo možno spatřit v ulicích Londýna během 19. století. Úplně první dopravní prostředek, který se v Londýně objevil, byl kočár tažený koňmi. Kočáry ale měly ve vlastnictví většinou pouze vyšší třídy obyvatel, kvůli vysokým nákladům spojeným se staráním se o koně. To samé platilo pro tzv. „hackney cab“, což je předchůdce dnešního taxíku, taktéž tažený koňmi. V roce 1829 se objevil omnibus, jako alternativa pro chudší obyvatele. Původní myšlenka byla, že omnibusy se stanou hlavním způsobem přepravy pro všechny, co si nemohou dovolit cestu taxíkem nebo kočárem. Nicméně, tento plán se nakonec neuskutečnil, protože se nepodařilo udržet ceny jízdného na dostatečně nízkých hodnotách. Opravdovou alternativou pro chudší obyvatele se staly až tramvaje tažené koňmi. Tyto tramvaje byly první vozidla v Londýně, která začala používat koleje.

Na přelomu 19. a 20. století koně začali být postupně vyměňováni za vozidla s prvními motory. Typy dopravních prostředků zůstaly stejné, stále jezdily autobusy, taxíky, i první osobní auta, jenom jejich pohon se díky vědeckému pokroku zmodernizoval. Nicméně, tím nejdůležitějším dopravním prostředkem pro pozdější

vznik podzemního metra byly železnice. Ze začátku se vlaky používaly pouze pro přepravu zboží, nebo pro propojení vzdálených měst a vesnic, postupem času se ale první železnice začaly stavět i v Londýně, za účelem přepravy osob.

Je ale nutné podotknout, že i přes tyto všechny inovace a užívání nových vozidel, dopravní krize v ulicích Londýna stále přetrvávala. Co se později ukázalo být tím jediným možným řešením, byl revoluční koncept železnice přímo pod městem. První muž, který přišel s tímto nápadem, byl Charles Pearson. Díky jeho vizi a neutuchajícímu entuziasmu pro tento projekt, se mu podařilo shromáždit dostatek financí a jiných prostředků na to, aby konstrukce prvního metra na světě mohla být zahájena. Bohužel, Charles Pearson se nedožil slavnostního otevření první části Londýnského metra v roce 1863, po více než dvou letech stavby.

Nic se samozřejmě neobejde bez problémů a tak to také bylo v případě první verze tohoto metra. Ale i přes problémy se sirnými výpary a nedostatkem pohodlí se podzemní železnice nakonec velmi rychle ujala a stala se populární mezi všemi vrstvami Londýnských obyvatel. Díky tomu bylo umožňováno stále další a další rozšiřování, které se velmi zrychlilo ke konci 19. století s vývojem nových technik ražení tunelů. V roce 2012 Londýnské metro obsluhuje už 270 stanic.

Nicméně, metro vždy nebylo tak populární, jak je tomu teď. Na počátku 20. století se podzemní železnice potýkala s ekonomickou krizí a pomalu začala ztrácet podporu obyvatel Londýna. Tehdejší ředitel výtvarného oddělení metra, Frank Pick, přišel s nápadem jak opět získat důvěru a zájem obyvatel, kterým nebylo nic jiného než využití reklamních plakátů. Pick začal najímat Britské výtvarníky, aby tvořili reklamní plakáty propagující metro a jeho nejrůznější výhody, jako byla třeba možnost rychle a levně se dostat do odlehlejších částí Londýna. Tento nápad se rychle ukázal být víc než úspěšným a postupem času se v metru začaly objevovat plakáty propagující nejen metro samotné, ale i jiné komerční produkty. V dnešní době je Londýnské metro jedno z nejprestižnějších míst pro reklamu v Británii.

Po krátkém shrnutí dopravy v Londýně a výstavby metra v prvních dvou kapitolách, se tato práce zaměřuje na samotnou reklamu v metru. Jedna z nejdůležitějších podmínek pro to, aby se reklamní plakáty mohly objevit v metru, je schválení společností Transport for London, která dohlíží na veškerou reklamu v Londýnském veřejném dopravě. Existuje podrobný seznam požadavků a zákazů, podle kterého je

každý reklamní plakát posuzován, před tím, než se může objevit v jakémkoli dopravním prostředku. Každá reklama musí být v souladu se zákonem, nesmí být pro nikoho urážlivá, nebo se například na plakátech nesmí objevit bezdůvodná a neopodstatněná nahota. Do této kapitoly jsem zařadila ukázky tří plakátů, které z různých důvodů nesplnily některý z těchto požadavků a byly v metru zakázány.

Pokud reklama projde a splní všechny požadavky, může být umístěna v metru. Zvolení správného místa pro každou reklamu je velmi důležité a musí být velmi dobře promyšleno, aby reklamní kampaň měla co nejlepší výsledky. Plakáty mohou být například umístěny na stěnách chodeb, které spojují jednotlivé vchody a nástupiště ve všech stanicích. Statisíce cestujících denně projdou těmito chodbami, ale většina z nich každému plakátu věnuje pouze pár sekund. Z tohoto důvodu by reklamy na chodbách měly být výrazné a lehce zapamatovatelné, bez delších textů. Plakáty, které se spoléhají na mnoho textu, bývají většinou umístěny na zdi přímo v místě, kde cestující čekají na příjezd vlaku. Interval mezi příjezdem vlaků je vždy nejméně tři minuty, což je dostatek času na to, aby si každý reklamu pořádně prohlédl a vstřebal. Plakáty se také mohou objevit přímo ve vlcích, podél eskalátorů, nebo třeba ve výtazích. Je také velmi důležité správně zvolit geografickou oblast města, do které bude reklama umístěna. Například cílové skupiny v centru Londýna a v obytných částech se velmi liší.

Další kapitola této práce se zabývá analýzou deseti reklamních plakátů. Zvolila jsem tři různé skupiny plakátů, které reprezentují rozmanitost reklamy objevující se v Londýnském metru. V první skupině jsou plakáty na propagaci letních Olympijských her 2012 v Londýně. Jelikož prvotní reakce medií po odhalení oficiálních plakátů nebyly pozitivní, zvolila jsem pět nejvíce diskutovaných plakátů pro podrobnější analýzu. I když všech pět plakátů používá typické symboly spojené s Olympijskými hrami, ne všechny z nich jsou natolik výrazné, aby ihned vyvolaly spojitost s tím, co mají propagovat. Výjimkou je například plakát Divers od autorky jménem Anthea Hamilton, který sice není nijak revoluční, ani nadměru kreativní, ale na druhou stranu je hned na první pohled jasné, že se vztahuje k Olympijským hrám

Další analyzovanou skupinou jsou plakáty vytvořené během první světové války. Vybrala jsem tři plakáty, které reprezentují tři odlišná období války a tři různé cíle reklamních kampaní. Prvním z nich je plakát s názvem War, který patří do skupiny

plakátů s tematikou odvodu do armády. V začátcích války byla většina reklamních kampaní v metru věnovaná náboru nových vojáků. S postupem času se ale cíle těchto reklam změnily a dostaly nový nádech. Plakát s názvem Harvest je příklad kampaně, která měla za účel dodat odvahu všem na domácí frontě a ukázat, že i ženy bez mužů si dokáží poradit. Ke konci války se reklamní plakáty v metru zaměřily hlavně na metro samotné, protože už nebylo dále možné, aby ho tisíce obyvatel používaly jako úkryt před leteckými nálety. Tyto plakáty upozorňovaly cestující na to, jak se mají chovat, aby byl zajištěn co nejlepší provoz metra.

Třetí skupina plakátů je příkladem prvních komerčních reklam v metru, které se nevztahovaly přímo k metru samotnému. Tyto plakáty se zaměřily na propagaci možnosti nákupů v centru Londýna a jejich cílovou skupinou byly převážně ženy. Pro analýzu jsem si zvolila dva odlišné plakáty, jeden byl vytvořen mužem a druhý ženou. Frederick Charles Herrick se ve své reklamě zaměřil na ženy ze středních tříd a jejich touhu po přiblížení se vyšším společenským třídám alespoň prostřednictvím nákupů v luxusních prodejnách. Na druhou stranu, na plakátu od Mary Koop je vidět, že zná svou cílovou skupinu a umí se lépe vžít do pozice ženy. Její reklama je zaměřena na výprodeje, tím pádem i na ženy ze všech sociálních tříd. Koop se nesnaží nabízet jedinečnou možnost proniknutí do světa luxusu, nýbrž se zaměřuje spíše na upoutání pozornosti velkým množstvím různých barev a vytvoření pocitu naléhavosti. Zdá se, jako by její plakát přímo říkal, že výprodeje nebudou trvat věčně a je nutné si pospíšet.

Těchto deset plakátů jsem zvolila proto, že reprezentují různorodost reklamy, která se objevuje v Londýnském metru. Plakáty v metru neinzerují pouze komerční produkty, ale také sportovní akce, jako jsou Olympijské hry, témata vztahující se k metru samotnému, nebo také reflektují aktuální dění nejen v Británii. Zároveň jsem chtěla použít plakáty z různých období, aby bylo vidět, jak se jejich design postupně měnil až do současnosti. Analyzované plakáty se také liší ve způsobu, jakým se snaží získat si pozornost kolemjdoucích. Některé se spoléhají na výrazné barvy a obrazy, jiné dávají přednost krátkým a snadno zapamatovatelným frázím. Co mají všechny společné, je jejich snaha zaujmout co nejvíce lidí a tak zajistit úspěch mnoha reklamních kampaní. V analýze u každého plakátu jsem se pokusila zhodnotit, jestli byl tento cíl více či méně splněn.

## **Annotation**

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Title of the Bachelor Thesis: Advertising Strategies of Posters for the London Underground

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Number of Characters: 102 887<sup>73</sup>

This bachelor thesis deals with the advertising aspects of posters for London Underground. However, it does not only focus on the posters themselves, but one of its aims is also to introduce the history of London's transportation. Nevertheless, the main focus remains on the London Underground, the reasons for its construction, the construction itself and the various problems connected with it. The thesis also presents various advertising strategies used in creating posters and possible placements in the Underground. Ten posters featured in the London Underground are discussed. They are divided into three groups: Olympic posters, First World War posters and shopping themed posters. The analysis focuses on the advertising strategies used and their potential success in an advertising campaign.

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<sup>73</sup> Without spaces.

## **Anotace**

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Název bakalářské práce: Reklamní aspekty plakátů v Londýnském metru

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Pavlína Flajšarová, Ph.D

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Tématem mé bakalářské práce jsou reklamní aspekty plakátů v Londýnském metru. Nebude ovšem zaměřena pouze na samotné plakáty, ale jejím cílem je také představit historii veřejné dopravy všech typů v Londýně, např. autobusové. Největší důraz bude kladen na historii metra, důvody pro jeho výstavbu, výstavu samotnou a problémy s ní spojené. Práce se také zaměří na různé obecné reklamní strategie využívané při tvorbě plakátů a možnosti umístění plakátů v Londýnském metru. Následuje analýza deseti reklamních plakátů, které se objevily nebo objevují v Londýnském metru. Tyto plakáty jsou rozděleny do tří skupin: Olympijské plakáty, plakáty z první světové války a plakáty s tématem nákupu. Analýza je zaměřena na to, jaké reklamní strategie využívají a jestli fungují jako dobrá reklama na daný produkt, nebo událost.

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<sup>74</sup> Bez mezer.

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