

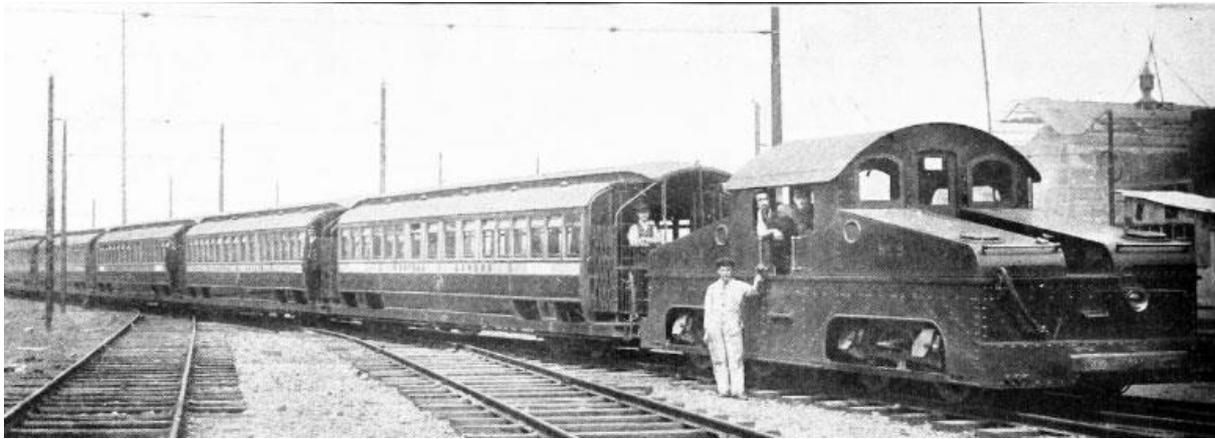
The Tube Station Platform that Moved!

Generally speaking, when standing on a tube station platform, the only thing that should move is the tube train as it arrives, but there was once a tube station in London with a platform that also moved, according to a story in *Transport News*.

When the Central line opened in June 1900, it ran from Bank to Shepherd's Bush and had a large depot in Wood Lane, just to the north-west of Shepherd's Bush. In 1905, the government announced plans for a large Franco-British Exhibition. As it was close to Shepherd's Bush station, the Central line, spying a chance for more passengers, built a loop railway around its depot, with a new tube station at Wood Lane built on the loop, which opened just a few days ahead of the exhibition opening, in May 1908.

Incidentally, the reason this part of London is now called White City is that so many of the buildings built for the exhibition were covered in white stucco, and the nickname stuck.

Now, the tube station being built on a curve wasn't a problem – initially - due to the way tube trains were designed at the time. Early tube train carriages only had doors at the ends of the carriages, not along the length of them as they are today.



This design changed in 1927 when new carriages were delivered with doors along the length of the carriage and this no longer worked with the existing carriages.

The implications for Wood Lane were serious – the platforms were long enough for the old design of trains, as the back of the last carriage didn't need to be in the station for passengers to use it - a bit like selective door opening at some stations today. However, with doors running along the full length of the carriage, they needed to lengthen the platforms. Which seems simple but - there's always a but - this station was right next to a curve for the railway depot. If the platform was lengthened, then the trains could not get out of the depot to the station.

An ingenious solution was needed, and they created a platform that could move out of the way when needed. In normal use, the platform looked as you would expect it to, but if they needed to get trains in or out of the depot, the platform could pivot to one side with a hinge at one end, and underneath the platform, wheels that rolled over a concrete support.



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Moving the platform to one side left enough space for the trains to curve as they once had, around the side and into the depot. A clever solution, and the only tube platform on the London Underground that could move. This carried on for twenty years, until in 1947, they closed the station entirely, to be replaced by a new station nearby, at White City.

The last remaining parts of the old station were demolished in 2003-05 as the depot was rebuilt and the Westfield Shopping Centre built above it.