

Baker Street to Waterloo, 1906



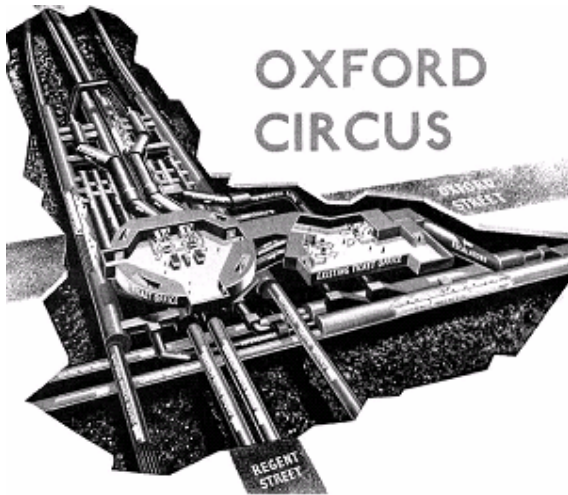
I was born in the provinces, in the city of Manchester, and when visiting London as a youngster, I was always fascinated by the Underground. Still am, to some degree. Whenever I travel on it, especially the Bakerloo line where I had my first underground journeys, I feel the same tingling pleasure, that of a little provincial boy up in the big city for a visit! There is something special, exciting, unique about this wonderful, pioneering and venerable railway system. I never fail to feel some excitement when I use it. The

mysterious long platforms and cavernous passages, amazingly deep escalators, bustling ticket halls, strange links to other railway stations and the magic of being underground at Piccadilly Circus or Oxford Circus. right in the heart of London! It all adds up to a deeply satisfying feeling for me.

I remember once, as a young lad of about 14, entering Trafalgar Square station on a Bakerloo train just as midnight was striking on Big Ben above. It was new Year's Eve. In 1979, Trafalgar Square Station was renamed Charing Cross. Pity that!



Originally called the Baker Street & Waterloo Railway, the line was constructed by the Underground Electric Railways Company of London Limited and opened in 1906. The contraction of the name to "Bakerloo" came from the nick-name given by the newspapers. It rapidly caught on, and the official name was changed to match in 1906.



Prior to the opening of the Jubilee Line in 1979, the Bakerloo covered a massive area of London.

So, 2006 is the centenary of the Bakerloo Line and 100 years of sturdy rapid transport is achieved. It is a milestone worth a mention, not just because 100 is a good long time, but because of the brilliant concept of travelling deep below the exotic sights of London. Praise is due to the brave few who conceived the idea and to the men and women who have staffed the service for 100 years as train drivers, platform staff, ticket sales and cleaners not forgetting those who maintain the system through the night, getting it ready for us day folk.

The Underground is one of the great unsung aspects of the capital city. I would hate to lose it.

Neil Richardson