



We did all this first. (Piccadilly Circus 1930)

castings faced with red scagliola and each carried a pair of lamps with cylindrical shades. The bronze appears as a series of ribs which it was considered that the inevitable contact with the public as they brushed by would keep polished. Across the top of the escalators as they dropped away into the depths was a colourful mural not advertising anything!

The escalators carried a series of bronze columns each with an indirect lighting fitting and the detailing of everything showed the same master hand. Until one got down to the platforms that is: there one came down to earth with a bump, so to speak. All was Bakerloo and Piccadilly & Brompton. The reader will think that I am making an unnecessary fuss but our subways and other below ground pedestrian spaces are rightly despised when compared with, say, the shop-lined affairs of Vienna. But we knew how to make them attractive but practical spaces, once upon a time. We did all this first. This station is a remarkable example of what can be done with a large area but low ceiling height. Piccadilly was the first application of the 'grand' manner to interchange stations on the tube. Since the various lines were originally all commercial enterprises separately launched, their stations were quite separate too. To change from one line to another often meant surfacing to cross a busy road and descend again. In the case of Holborn on the Piccadilly line there was quite a walk thrown in. So much so that the Central line called its station British Museum.**

It must be difficult for those, who were not around in the thirties, to realise the stimulus that the stations of Holden and his team did for the likes of me. The general architecture here at that time, with but few exceptions, seemed to take no account of the exciting activity on the Continent. Then suddenly Frank Pick's Underground blossomed in our midst and pushed out into the suburbs building new stations as it went. Compared with the Edgware and

**A station preserved for posterity in Hitchcock's Blackmail.

Morden extension of the twenties, things were suddenly all of a piece. The same master touch appeared in everything – platform furniture, poster layouts, booking halls, lighting fittings and the rest. This side is the least satisfactorily presented in the L.T. museum. Of necessity it is more concerned to show the contrast between the thirties and what went before than in architectural analysis. Both in the museum and in what appeared on cursory acquaintance to be a superb photographic archive at



... an interesting building in its own right.

280 Old Marylebone Road, that which went before is well evoked. The developments devised to process the increasing numbers of passengers from street to platform had resulted in something as cluttered as a Victorian mantelpiece. What we need now is to conserve some of those *pre-thirties* stations. Russell Square is a good candidate in the central area which only needs a little tidying up. The great depth (only Hampstead is deeper) of Covent Garden has preserved the three lifts but two have been trivially tarted up. The third needs but little

done to conserve it exactly. Incidentally the new control boxes come out poorly when compared ergonomically and decoratively with the original Waygood-Otis circulars! Some of the earlier surviving stations really do have something and it would be a pity if lack of money were the only reason that they have not been drastically altered. North Ealing (very well preserved and looked after) is a fine example of an early District line surface station complete with authentic overline footbridge. This is just as important to keep as the 'Holdens' on the same line out to Uxbridge. Then there are still some typical Metroland stations but it is time to get back to the L.T. Museum itself.

The most theatrical way to travel there is by the London General B type open top motor bus of 1910 which runs from near Oxford circus to the museum and back at regular intervals. This is a good reminder that the museum is not just a temple to trains. And what a temple this, the old flower market, is – an interesting building in its own right. Plenty of daylight through a good glass roof has removed the temptation to indulge in the spotlight-decor with which so many displays are swamped today. Here we see a tram as a tram and not as a nocturne or an aubade. Exhibits are clearly annotated rather than displayed. There is an occasional 'mobile'. For example, a good way of showing the contactors notching-up as the train starts has been devised.

The range of full-sized exhibits is good.

One can climb into some of them. The gaps in the story are well filled by models. It is really possible to see how things developed. This applies equally well to the accessories – bus and tram tickets for example. It was lovely to be reminded of the conductor's ticket rack. Such a simple idea – a piece of wood with some springs either side of it to hold bunches of tickets coloured for the different values. Many of the tickets, including those which took me to school, were originally printed with the names of all the fare stages along the particular route.