



## Get to know the guide behind Southern's Railway 200 station tours!

As part of our year-long celebrations for Railway 200, Waterloo, Victoria and London Bridge have opened their doors to the public for guided tours round the station.

Here, we get to know Rachel Kolsky, the expert guide at the helm of the tours as she shares a glimpse into the part she plays in celebrating Railway 200 and her favourite parts of the job.

After Rachel qualified as a London Guide, she devised a series of walks profiling London's terminus stations as it merged her love of stations with social history, architecture and stories linked to trains, travellers and railway hotels. The stations included King's Cross St Pancras, Paddington, Victoria, Marylebone and Rachel's favourite station of all, Waterloo.

For Waterloo's 175<sup>th</sup> birthday, Rachel was invited to lead a series of tours at the station to mark the occasion, and she's delighted to be back, leading tours for Railway 200.

### How would you describe the Railway 200 tours to someone who's never heard of them?

The R200 tours provide the perfect opportunity to visit three iconic London stations and instead of rushing for a train, you can stop and really look at the buildings while discovering their history, and transformation over the decades.

People can also discover the station details that are so often overlooked by passengers rushing in and out - war memorials, plaques, public artworks, film locations and memories of long gone cinemas to name a few.

**What's your favourite part of running these tours?**

Meeting the participants and hearing their memories linked to the stations. We have had so much fun sharing stories and even debating whether we all remember them the same way!

**Each of the three stations have their own unique character – what's your favourite part of Waterloo, Victoria and London Bridge?**

I love the whole of Waterloo, the number of artworks and stories connected with the station and the fact that it leads me to so many other places that bring me joy such as the South Bank and London theatres!

At Victoria, I'd have to say it's the memories of my three trips on the Night Ferry back in the 1970s and for London Bridge it's the remodelling of the station a few years ago and the new feel it brings.

**What kind of feedback have you received from people who've been on the tours?**

People who have been on the tours have been really appreciative of them. They have loved seeing things they somehow never saw despite regular commuting for decades.

**Do you have a personal favourite era of railway history?**

Probably the second half of the 19th century when things began to fall into place with fabulous station buildings being constructed, book stalls and refreshment facilities being introduced, time tables, waiting rooms, railway hotels ... it was a period of such rapid development! The glorious thing is that the same facilities are needed and being provided today ... albeit in different ways.

Look of the pics:





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