# London cabbie documentary premiered

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A new film documenting the lives and careers of London's black cab drivers was premiered last week at the London Transport Museum.

Arts and education charity digital:works worked with two primary schools, the London Transport Museum and Unite the Union to uncover the history of the London taxi cab and the stories of those who have spent their lives criss-crossing the capital.

On Friday, the schoolchildren who took part in the project hosted an audience of cabbies, historians, teachers and parents to show off the results of their hard work.

## Creating a documentary

Made possible by a National Lottery grant of £40,900, the project enabled Year 6 pupils from St George the Martyr and Westminster Cathedral primary schools to work with historians and interview 26 cab drivers, some of whom have been licensed since the 1950s.

Working with digital:works, they captured the taxi drivers' stories, including what inspired them to become taxi drivers, how they learnt The Knowledge and how the trade has changed. Some of the children even learnt 'runs' - the routes that cabbies have to memorise.

Their memories take us back to the 1950s, driving through 'pea souper' fogs and heading to Covent Garden in time for 'the burst' when the theatres emptied, through to the advent of the mini cab in the 1960s, and the challenges faced by the first female and black drivers.

Yukana from Westminster Cathedral RC Primary School said: "I learnt so much over the last few weeks. I learnt that [cabbies] have to do a knowledge test before they become black cab drivers and it takes over two years to learn. They have to learn the whole city of London within the six mile radius which I think is a very impressive thing. I really enjoyed the whole project."

## Not the end of the road

The drivers' personal accounts will be archived at London Transport Museum, adding to the museum's collection.

You can find out more about the project and watch the film on the Sherbet Dab website.



Sydney Arthur Roebuck, a taxi cab proprietor from 1920–1952, in front of two generations of Beardmore taxis. Credit: TFL



Cabmen’s shelter in St George’s Square, Pimlico

## Project to reveal cabbies' sheltered lives