

Britain's longest serving railway employee waves goodbye to Waterloo station

June 3, 2021



South Western Railway (SWR) has announced the retirement of Don Buckley, who is thought to be the longest-serving railway employee in the country.

At 82 years old, Don has been working at London Waterloo for almost seven decades. Most recently, he worked three shifts per week, helping visually impaired and disabled passengers around Waterloo station, as well as providing unrivalled London knowledge to customers needing directions around the city.

Don, who was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Rail Business Awards two years ago, was given an official send-off at an event at Waterloo station on Wednesday 2nd June.

Don started working at London Waterloo by coincidence. When he was 14 years old, he travelled from County Kerry, Ireland, jumped in a taxi and asked the driver to take him to “the big station in London”, expecting to be taken to Euston, but subsequently arrived at Waterloo. Too young to be working on the trains, Don started his career as a station message boy and remains working at “the big station” today, 68 years later.

Throughout his years of service, Don witnessed the last steam train leave Waterloo in 1967, a cinema in the station which was in operation up until 1970, the great train robber Buster Edwards setting up a flower stall outside following his release from jail in 1975 and scenes from Skyfall and the Bourne Ultimatum being filmed.

Don Buckley, South Western Railway, commenting on his years in service: "I have loved working at Waterloo for all these years. The station may have changed a lot since the 1950s, but it's still such a special place and I feel so lucky to have had so many wonderful experiences working here.

"The people are what make the station special and I will miss my colleagues and customers immensely. While all good things come to an end, Waterloo will always have a very special place in my heart."

Chico Coulibaly, London Waterloo Regional Manager at South Western Railway, said: "Don is a well-respected and much-loved member of our team. His wealth of knowledge about the railway, Waterloo and London is unrivalled, and he will be dearly missed by colleagues and customers alike. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Don for all his years of service and the significant contribution he has made at Waterloo. We wish Don all the very best for his retirement."

Photo credit: South Western Railway