

Southern stations get stunning Lionel Stanhope name signs

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Southern has welcomed three stunning murals that now grace its London metro rail route, each designed and painted by renowned local scenic artist Lionel Stanhope.

Tulse Hill, West Norwood and Birkbeck stations are now proudly represented by Lionel's trademark painted name signs, which have earned a reputation across South London as icons for local identity. Each mural is the result of local community and rail industry partnerships working together to enrich the areas served by the stations.

Lionel said: "It is a pleasure to paint my signs in these local communities; they are always received well and chatting to locals as I'm painting is always a positive experience. These signs can only be made possible by thorough organising on the part of a motivated group or individuals. It shows what can be achieved with driven local projects."

Southern's Station Manager Steve Fleming played a pivotal role in bringing all the parties together to make the murals a reality. Steve said: "Many thanks to everyone who's helped make these fantastic murals happen, and especially the local communities for their valuable input, from expression of interest, to

funding, and even polling to decide what colours they should be!

“I’m really happy to have helped bring these projects to fruition, as they enhance the urban realm, brighten our passengers’ journeys and remind people of the railway being a part of the local area.”

Network Rail not only gave permission for all three murals, as owners of the walls on which they are painted, but also funded the Birkbeck project.

Network Rail Southern region managing director John Halsall said: “Murals are a great way for the railway to bring positivity and a brighter face to the communities we serve. We own bridges and other structures across the south and not only do these murals make them much nicer to look at, but they also encourage people to respect and look after them. We’re always open to creative ways to make our railway look better and more welcoming for the neighbourhood.”

The Tulse Hill and West Norwood artworks were commissioned by the ‘Station-to-Station’ Business Improvement District (BID) covering the area served by both stations. For the Tulse Hill mural, the BID used funds provided by the Borough of Lambeth.

The West Norwood mural was originally planned before the pandemic, but work had to be delayed because the pavement alongside the bridge wall is too narrow to allow social distancing.

‘Station-to-Station’ BID Manager Charlotte Ashworth said: “As a business improvement district we have now worked with Lionel on four occasions – the station name signs on the two bridges plus another couple of murals on our industrial estate, Norwood Works.

“At Tulse Hill, Lionel matched the colours to the art installation already underneath the bridge, and it looks very cheerful, even matching the graffiti eggs above. Thanks to Steve and Lionel who helped us get to the right person at Network Rail to get the permission to use the wall.”

At Birkbeck, Lionel was commissioned by Birkbeck Community Initiative, a local environment-focused group. Station manager Steve Fleming had introduced himself to the group via their Facebook page and they asked him how they might go about getting a mural for their area. With his involvement in the Gipsy Hill station mural painted by Lionel Stanhope some years ago, he was able to put them in touch with the artist, and the right people at Network Rail.

William Foster, Treasurer of the Birkbeck Community Initiative, said: “We are massively proud of our mural here at Birkbeck and immensely grateful for the goodwill and generosity extended to our community by everyone involved in the project: Steve Fleming and his colleague Rob Whitehead at Southern, Jonathan Nesbitt at Network Rail, and of course, Lionel.

“We started the consultation about the mural colour scheme and design details over the festive period and ran three polls through the community group Facebook page over Christmas & New Year to finalise the colours and design. The project brought our community together – discussing and deciding the details created a sense of ownership – and the mural reinforces our community’s identity.

“We had to meet a time constraint on completion of the project to qualify for funding from Network Rail, and Lionel prioritised our mural to ensure it was delivered on time. We’re looking at having t-shirts printed with the design, which will be sold locally to support further community projects.”