

**SUBTEXT  
CALL FOR ENTRIES**

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**Measure invites writers of all ages and experience to contribute to the short story collection Subtext, accompanying the site-specific installation Chord at the Kingsway Tram Subway.**

**Deadline for submission: 31st July 2009**

*Chord* is a new collaboration between Measure and artist Conrad Shawcross, creating an epic site-specific installation as part of a unique temporary opening of the Kingsway Tram Subway in Holborn, London. Two machines, each five meters in diameter will slowly spin a rope made from over 80 individual spools over a length of 80 meters, following the original tracks of the trams.

The London Borough of Camden has granted special access to the Kingsway Tram Subway, a fascinating and unique survivor of London's transport heritage. *Chord* will be open from 18th September to 25th October 2009.

Measure is launching the opportunity for writers of all ages and experience to contribute to a collection of short stories inspired by the Kingsway Tram Subway and its history. Eight selected stories will be compiled and published for sale at the exhibition and through Measure's website. All submitted stories will be published on Measure's website.

Contributors to Subtext are asked to submit a complete short story of up to 1,000 words in length. The stories must revolve around Kingsway Tram Subway in some respect. They can be on any subject, set in any time, and written in any style, but must be new work, not published or submitted for consideration elsewhere. Stories to be accepted in the printed collection will be selected and edited by Karen Holst Bundgaard, creative writing student, Middlesex University. Subtext is edited by Bundgaard as part of her third year placement, and part of Measure's strong commitment to their education programme.

Measure will sell the collection at the exhibition for £1 per copy with the money raised going towards the printing costs. Unfortunately we cannot offer any fee to the writers for Subtext, however you will be invited to attend all the special events over the exhibition period and the opening night. Subtext will be publicised widely during the exhibition, and all writers will receive thanks and credits. Subtext will be ISBN registered.

Please contact us if you require any further information.

All stories must be submitted via email to [karen@measure.org.uk](mailto:karen@measure.org.uk) by July 31st 2009

For further information about Measure please visit: [www.measure.org.uk](http://www.measure.org.uk)

**SUBTEXT  
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In 1895, the newly elected London County Council (LCC) began carrying out the first major urban improvement scheme in central London. The intension was to clear the slum of Holborn to make way for a new, broad avenue, reflecting the council's vision of London as a modern day metropolis. By 1898, thousands of people had been re-housed and a tree-lined avenue named Kingsway in honor of Edward VII had replaced the slum. The tram system now blossomed on either side of the river, but the wealthy upper class upheld reservations against expansion through West End and City of London. The opposition was mainly due to the fact that the tram, because of its efficiency and low fares, had become a symbol of the working class. Central Londoners were afraid that letting in the plebian would affect the value of their property.

Thus, central London stayed tram-free whilst the rest of the city's lines were electrified. Because of further opposition against overhead wires amongst the upper class, the ambitious LCC took on using electric traction, the electrification method hailing from the USA that made the tube possible in 1890. Inspired by public transport in Boston and New York, LCC wished to unify all London tram lines and use shallow subways where necessary. A subway was recommended under Kingsway in 1901, partly to ease traffic and make the streets safer, but mainly to facilitate a connection between tramlines north and south of the river.

On February 24, 1906 King Edward VII opened the first section of the cut-and-cover tram subway, running under Kingsway from Southampton Row to Aldwych with an intermediate station at Holborn. Because of the need to pass under one of the city's main sewers (a branch of the river Fleet), descending a 10% slope from Theoband's Road, Kingsway subway was build only to accommodate single deck trams. Besides, coupled single deck trams were thought as a more efficient alternative to the double-deck tram at the time.

Over the next few decades, a weekly amount of 200,000 Londoners were commuting through the subway; it's maximum capacity. The demand for more apt transport rose rapidly, as did the competition from bus and tube services. Finally, in February 1930, the LCC decided to raise the roof and deepen the tunnel as appropriate to accommodate double-deck trams.

In January 1931 the subway opened to double-deck trams, only to be closed for good little over 20 years later, in 1952. The London Passenger Transport Board was formed in 1933, quickly taking over the trams. In contrast to the LCC, LPTB wished to introduce more modern vehicles to London's streets, and plans for several other tram subways across town were ditched. Trams were gradually replaced by trolley busses, running on the old tram overhead wires, and later by diesel busses.

Since the closure of Kingsway Tram Subway, the tunnel has mainly been used for storage. In the early 1964, the southern part of the tunnel was converted into the Strand Underpass for light road traffic. The northern part of the underpass has been abandoned since the completion of the Thames Barrier in 1984. Until then it was used as London's Flood Control Centre. Today, the subway is being restored in order to maintain its support under Kingsway, but inside both the original tiles and the electric traction tracks still remain as a little pocket of surviving London history.

A more descriptive account of the Subway, *100 years of the Kingsway Tram Subway*, published in the Camden History Review vol. 32. is available on request.

For further information about Kingsway Tram Subway please visit:

[www.subbrit.org.uk/sb-sites/sites/k/kingsway\\_tram\\_subway/index.shtml](http://www.subbrit.org.uk/sb-sites/sites/k/kingsway_tram_subway/index.shtml)

<http://underground-history.co.uk/kwupass.php>

[www.cwguser.org.uk/personal/hiddenc/kts.htm](http://www.cwguser.org.uk/personal/hiddenc/kts.htm)

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/july/6/newsid\\_2963000/2963092.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/july/6/newsid_2963000/2963092.stm)

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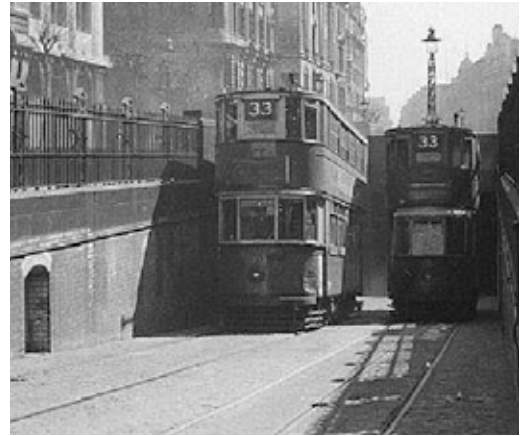


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How the Subway looks present day.

