

## Female Driver Case Study – Lisa Gibbs



**Click on the pictures to download**

“My career has come full circle,” says 56-year old Southern train driver, Lisa Gibbs. “I first applied to be a train driver when I was just 21, but back then it was all paper-based and quite technical, so I completely doubted my ability and walked straight back out of the assessment centre. I never pursued it after that and took a different path instead.

“Before I joined the railway I was working at a bank and I was just having a general chat with one of my customers who was working on the railway at the time and said I should give it a go. The conversation happened just at the right time when I was looking for change so I applied for a platform assistant role at Tulse Hill station.

“I was 49 when I changed careers. Some people might think that’s ridiculous, but I’m used to moving about and if I want something – I go and get it!”

After working on the platform for six months, Lisa was keen for the next step and moved up the ranks to becoming a train conductor, something she did for two and a half years.

“I was approached about going down the supervisor or management route, but that’s not what I wanted to do. I knew at that moment that my next move would be to train as a driver. There weren’t any vacancies at that particular point in time, but I was determined to be fully prepared when the next job came up. I know that amongst other skills, you have to have good memory to be a driver. I did lots of brain training and memory tests and even got into video games, spending time playing the games that simulated the driving experience!”

The practise paid off for Lisa and she started her journey to becoming a train driver.

“I’ve been qualified and driving on my own now for about a year and I absolutely love it. I cover London Victoria to Selhurst and I still have about five routes to learn. There’s not a particular route I’m desperate to try but one thing I’d definitely love to do is drive one of the Thameslink Class 700 trains one day!

“I’m glad things didn’t work out when I was 21 as I feel a lot more prepared to be a driver at this stage in my life. I joined the railway before turning 50 so I’d encourage others not to be bound by age. The railway is open to everyone young or old!”