### The Little Known Secrets of the London Underground



London's underground transport system, known as the London Underground or simply the Tube, is an iconic part of the city's infrastructure. Every day, millions of commuters and tourists rely on its extensive network to travel across the city.



#### Little Book of the London Underground

by Robin Bextor (Kindle Edition)

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Print length



While many people are familiar with its well-known stations and lines, there are some hidden gems and interesting facts about the London Underground that only a few know about. In this article, we will explore the little-known secrets and fascinating history of this remarkable underground network.

### The Oldest Underground Railway

Did you know that the London Underground is the oldest underground railway in the world? It was opened in 1863 and initially featured steam-powered trains. The first line, called the Metropolitan Railway, connected Paddington and Farringdon stations.

Today, the London Underground consists of 11 lines spanning 270 stations, with the newest line being the Elizabeth Line (formerly known as Crossrail), which is currently under construction and set to open in 2022.

#### **Curious Stations**

While traveling through the London Underground, you may come across some peculiar station names. One such station is "Embankment," which gets its name from the embankment of the River Thames nearby. Another interestingly named station is "Piccadilly Circus," which is not actually a circus but a major road junction.

There are also abandoned stations, such as Aldwych station, which closed to the public in 1994 but is occasionally used for filming movies and TV shows. These unique stations add to the charm and mystery of the London Underground.

### **Art and Design**

The London Underground is not only a means of transportation but also an art gallery. Many stations feature impressive artworks, installations, and unique design elements.

For example, the stunning mosaics at Tottenham Court Road station depict scenes from the Harry Potter series, as author J.K. Rowling lived nearby when she was writing the books. Another notable example is the artwork at Covent Garden station, which pays tribute to the nearby Royal Opera House.

#### The Mind the Gap Announcement

If you have ever traveled on the London Underground, you are likely familiar with the iconic "Mind the Gap" announcement. This phrase, which warns passengers to be cautious of the gap between the train and the platform, has become synonymous with the Tube.

The "Mind the Gap" announcement was first introduced in 1968 and has since become a globally recognized phrase associated with London's transportation

system. It is a classic example of how a simple phrase can become deeply ingrained in popular culture.

### **Transporting Celebrities**

The London Underground has not only served as a mode of transport for millions of Londoners but has also played host to numerous celebrities over the years.

Many famous individuals, from musicians to actors and even royalty, have been spotted traveling on the Tube.

Notable examples include Sir Paul McCartney, who famously performed an impromptu concert at St. John's Wood station, and the Queen herself, who made history in 1969 when she became the first reigning monarch to travel on the London Underground.

#### The Versatile London Underground

While most people think of the London Underground as a transport system for passengers, it has proven to be versatile in various other ways as well. In times of crisis and emergencies, the tunnels have been used as shelters, and during World War II, they served as air-raid shelters for thousands of Londoners seeking refuge.

Additionally, many scenes from popular movies and TV shows have been filmed within the London Underground tunnels, adding a touch of glamour to this already iconic transportation network.

The London Underground is not just a means of transportation; it is a historical and cultural landmark that holds many secrets and surprises. From its rich history as the world's oldest underground railway to its unique stations and famous passengers, the Tube is an integral part of London's identity.

So, the next time you find yourself traveling on the London Underground, take a moment to appreciate the little-known facts and hidden treasures that make this underground network so fascinating. Who knows, you may discover something new about the Tube every time you hop on a train!



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It's hard to think of any institution that more readily represents London than the Underground system. Practical, egalitarian, efficient, popular, logical, organised and yet infuriating, maddening and confusing it stands for everything modern life does in this great world capital. For most of our lives we simply take the Tube for granted, a huge resource that links us to our work, our friends, our entertainment and to every facet of life in the City. The Underground is dependable, ever present - it s that gentle giant that rumbles in the distance, those familiar red circles on the street, and yet it wasn't always like that. But then London wasn't always like it is today.



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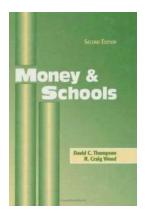
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