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A Boat Trip through the Paris Sewer

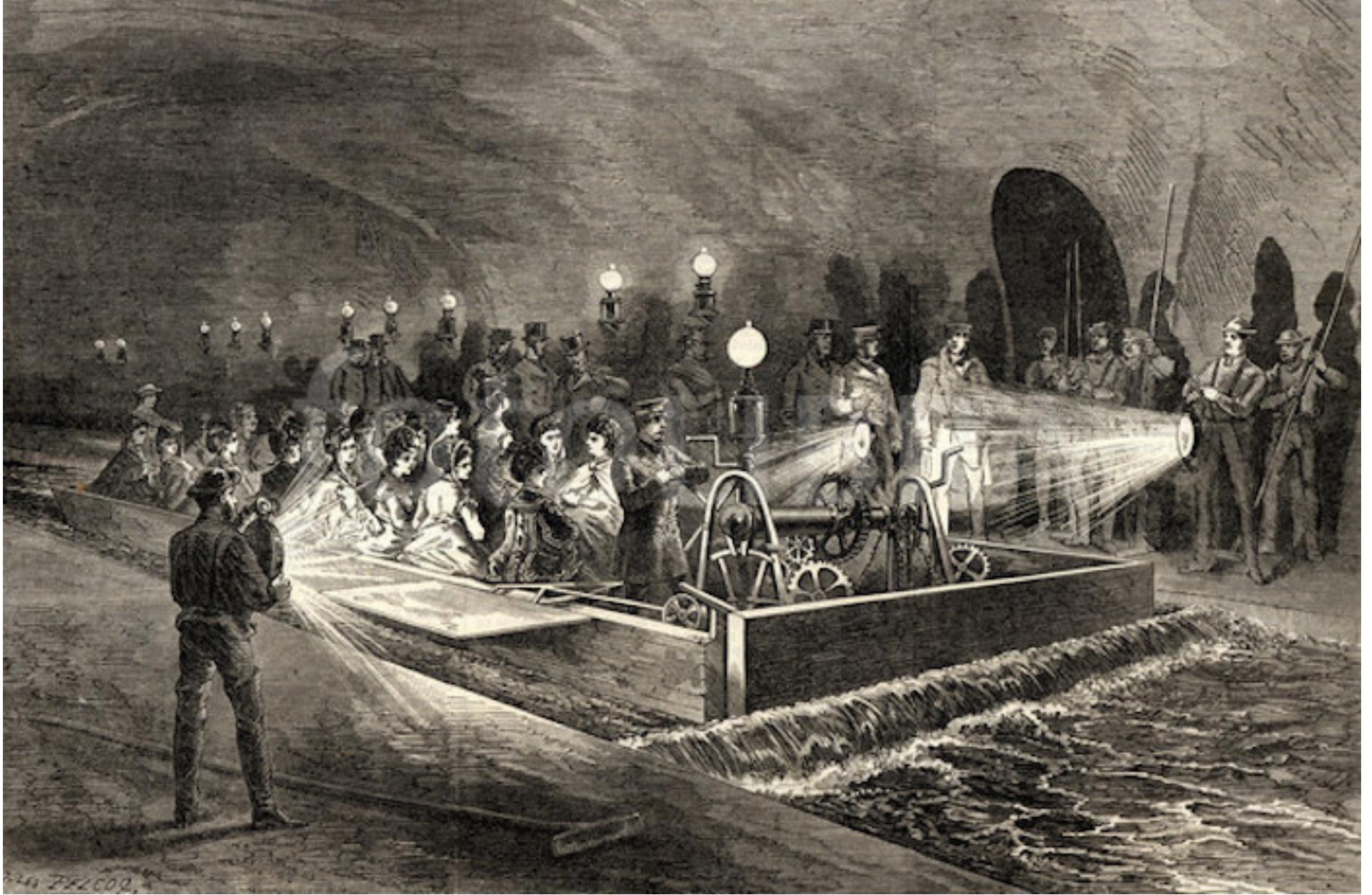
By MessyNessy

3RD NOV, 2015

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Forget boat rides down the Seine, if you were a tourist in Paris in the 19th and early 20th century, the subterranean sewers were the hot ticket. In an 1869 travel guide to the city of light “for the English and American Traveller”, Paris’ new system of sewers came highly recommended in the sightseeing section.

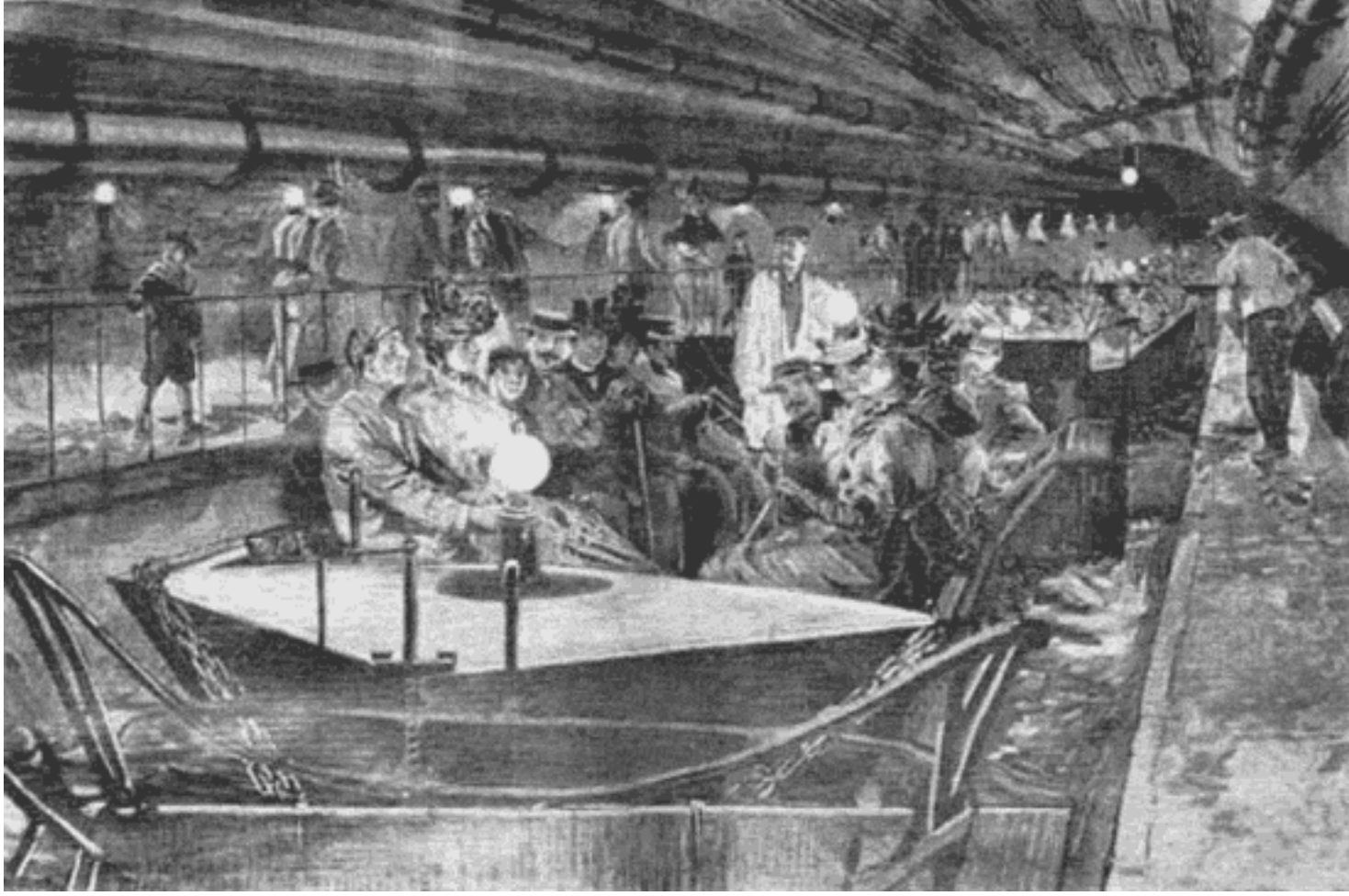


“Passing over the profusion of churches, monuments, galleries, and sights familiar to every tourist ... the wonders begin at the lowest level ... six main lines, fed by fifteen secondary lines, by means of which the city’s whole storm drainage is conducted to a grand receptacle beneath the Place de la Concorde, whence it is discharged by a shaft — the most extraordinary of its kind — sixteen feet high, eighteen feet wide, and three miles in length. The sewers may be visited, via an opening in the Boulevard de Sébastopol.”

— From *Paris Partout! A guide for the English and American Traveller in 1869* or *How to see PARIS for 5 guineas*



Needless to say, Paris was pretty pleased with its new sewers. The city founded on the site of an early Roman city called Lutèce, had once relied on natural streams to wash away the waste. As the population grew, chamber pots were emptied into the streets and later cesspits and cesspools were used that required routine cleaning that the city couldn't adequately provide. A series of cholera epidemics began and Paris was in short, a stinky mess. The 1840s-1890s saw the construction of "Les égouts", a complex system of over 500 km of sewers under Paris. The once putrid city had come to possess one of the most comprehensive and efficient systems in Europe and by 1930, each street had its own sewer.



It was the pride of Paris, so much so, that they turned it into a tourist attraction. “Sewerman” became a profession and tours were given by these sewermen on weekends. Surreal illustrations and photographs from the era show tourists, ladies included, wearing their Sunday best in a boat ride through the sewage systems of Paris like it was Disneyland.



I'm not exactly sure when or why the boat tours were scrapped, but the Museum of les Egouts de Paris is still a thing, and travellers looking to discover the underbelly, or should I say, the bowels of picturesque Paris, can visit from Saturday to Wednesday from €3,50. While some of you might be thinking the city would need to pay *you* to visit, the museum takes visitors through some rather impressive tunnels in the system and you'll find Napoléon's seal inscribed on many of the walls. It's entrance is just a few minute's walk from the Eiffel Tower. Which tourist would you be?

Discover **Les Egouts de Paris**, official museum website [here](#).

FROM THE VAULT





Paris, Under your Feet



That time when Parisians used to Hang Out at the Morgue for Fun

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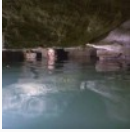
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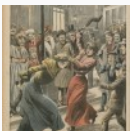
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HOT OFF THE PRESS



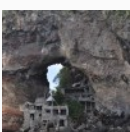
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HOT OFF THE PRESS

The Secret Swimming Pools of the Paris Catacombs

It felt like the pavements of Paris could have melted this month. The city's swimming pools were filled with splashing bodies and escape from the heat seemed futile. But there is one place, beneath...

WHAT'S HOT

You're Invited to a Secret Venetian Ball in the Underground Canals of Paris

It's only going to be the party
of the century, a once in a
lifetime thing, no biggie.
They're the most unique
underground party
organisers in the world, who
surfaced in the French

A Guide to Wes Anderson's Paris

Did you know Wes Anderson
lives in Paris? When he's not
off making one of his
beautifully
idiosyncratic films, the
director keeps a low profile
in his Parisian apartment

8 Off-beat Museums in Paris (for people who don't like

museums)

I'm not the kind of person
you're going to catch waiting
in a museum queue that goes
round the block to get my fix
of history and culture. So
here's Nussy's pick of
museums off the beaten path

13 Things I Found on the Internet Today (Vol. CXLXII)

1. A Female Street fight duel
with sand-filled socks
Published in “Le Petit
Journal” November 1st 1902:
There are Apaches of both
sexes as seen recently in the
rue du Général-Morin.

Won't Someone Save this Scandalously Forgotten Chateau?

With every passing day,
the Château de la Mothe-
Chandeniers falls further
into ruin; another stone

becomes dislodged by
strangling vines, what
remains of the roof sinks a

Paradise Lost at the Moonhole Mansion: An Abandoned Crusoe Dream

At night, the rising moon
peers through the natural
volcanic arch, revealing
the silhouettes of windows
and doorways alluding to a
crumbling fortress, guarding
a paradise lost. It shares its

The Chinese Village of Long- Haired Rapunzels

By 2019, the global shampoo
market is expected to reach
an estimated value of \$25.73
billion. But deep in the
mountains of southern
China's Guangxi province,
the women of Huangluo

Oh nothing, Just Sleeping Under

the Stars in a Hotel Room with a Removable Roof

Some people might have
mountains they want to
climb on their bucket list, or
elephants they want to ride.
Me? I'm adding this hotel
room onto my bucket list. At
a very fancy hotel in

Dining with Alligators

The strangest thing about
this terrible tourist
attraction, is that I couldn't
find a single newspaper
clipping or record of an
incident involving a visitor
being bitten by a crocodile.

Dreamy Paintings of a Bohemian Surfer

If I'm ever asked who my
favourite artist is, I think
I've always had the bad habit
of saying the name
of someone else's favourite
artist, or a buzzing artist I
was supposed to like or know
about...

