

160th Anniversary of The Tube [B2]

La metropolitana più antica del mondo è anche la più famosa. Conosciuta globalmente con questo nome iconico, 'the Tube' compie 160 anni. I londinesi celebrano questa occasione ricordando ogni dettaglio dell'affascinante storia della grande arteria della loro città.



This year, London is celebrating the 160th anniversary of one of its most famous icons: the London Underground, [aka](#) 'the Tube'. The underground passenger railway was proposed by Charles Pearson, a city [solicitor](#), as part of a city [improvement](#) plan. In 1843, a pioneering tunnel connecting South East London and East London had opened. The Thames Tunnel had become a major tourist attraction as well as a speedy way to cross the city by [carriage](#) or on foot. Why not, thought Pearson, do the same and provide transportation, too?

STEAM TO ELECTRIC

On 10 January 1863, the world's first London Underground line opened between Paddington (then Bishop's Road) and Farringdon Street in London. Based on the overground train, wooden [carriages](#) were [pulled](#) along by [steam locomotives](#) that burned [coke](#) and later [coal](#). This made for an uncomfortable journey, but it was a phenomenal success, carrying 9.5 million passengers in the first year. In 1890, the problem of smoke filling the tunnels was [dealt](#) with, and the first electric powered passenger railway — the sustainable transport of the future — was born.

WARTIME SECURITY

The London Underground name first appeared in 1908, however, it had been [nicknamed](#) 'the Tube' since the late 19th century. During World Wars I and II, underground stations functioned as [air-raid shelters](#), with the tunnels of the unused Aldwych line storing artefacts from the British Museum! Over the century since, it [branched out](#) into eleven lines using some 250 miles [400 kilometres] of railway track. Around five million passenger journeys take place every day to or from 272 stations. Despite its name, more than half of the system is actually overground, particularly that serving the city's peripheries.

EXPANDING THE CITY

The arrival of the Tube meant that travelling through London became increasingly manageable. It took less time to reach the centre from areas that had previously been [avoided](#) by Londoners and that were not considered residential. With the Tube, people could now [commute](#) to work in London or travel into the city for pleasure, leading to the expansion of the suburbs and the growth of the city as a cultural and commercial centre. The Tube radically changed London's size, shape and potential.

THE TUBE

'The Tube' is a [nickname](#) for the London Underground that dates back to the late 19th century. While early lines were built by [digging](#) a large [trench](#), [laying](#) the track, then covering it over, subsequent deeper tunnels, such as the Northern, Bakerloo and Jubilee lines, were dug tens of metres beneath London. They were smaller and circular, like a long 'tube' running under the city. The [nickname](#) 'the Tube' [caught on](#), and when the Central line opened in 1900, it was known as the "Twopenny Tube" after the price of a ticket. The deepest station on the Tube network is on the Northern line: Hampstead station, inaugurated in 1907, runs down to 58.5 metres.

THE ELIZABETH LINE

The Tube is the sustainable way to travel and as such is the transport of London's future as well as its past. In addition, the network is in constant expansion to meet the needs of the city's ever-growing population. Line extensions have been built in recent years, while in May 2022, a whole new line was opened by the late Queen Elizabeth II. Travelling horizontally across the centre of the city, the Elizabeth Line was built to a modern, [swish](#) design. Unlike London's other Tube lines, it is full-scale railway size, with 250-yard-long platforms [catering](#) to twelve-car trains.

Glossary

- **coke** = residui ottenuti dalla distillazione del carbon fossile.
- **coal** = carbone
- **dealt** = far fronte, risolvere
- **branched out** = espandersi, ramificarsi
- **nickname** = soprannome
- **catering** = fornire servizi
- **steam locomotives** = locomotrici a vapore
- **solicitor** = avvocato
- **pulled** = tirare
- **air-raid shelters** = rifugi antiaerei
- **commute** = fare il pendolare
- **aka** = alias (acronimo di also known as)
- **carriage** = carrozza
- **avoided** = evitare
- **trench** = trincea
- **caught on** = prendere piede
- **swish** = alla moda
- **improvement** = miglioramento
- **laying** = collocare
- **digging** = scavare