

HISTORY OF THE TUBE

HOW LONDON UNDERGROUND WAS BUILT

London Underground is the oldest and one of the biggest (1) _____ systems in the world, carrying millions of people every day. It has 270 stations, and the total length of the network is 402 kilometres. The Underground is as much a part of London as Big Ben and Buckingham Palace, and is one of the most recognised (2) _____ around the world.

It started as a crazy idea in the 1800s; running steam trains under the ground sounded as insane back then, as if someone suggested (3) _____ an elevator from Earth to Moon today. But it was a necessity; London roads were terribly (4) _____, and the city needed a transport solution. That's when Charles Pearson came to arena, and built Metropolitan - an underground line between what's now Paddington and Farringdon. It opened in 1863, but Pearson didn't attend the opening, having passed a year earlier.

Prime Minister Lord Palmerston also didn't come to the opening; being almost 80 years old, he said he'd like to spend as much time above the ground as he could.

The Metropolitan was a (5) _____, although the tunnels were filled with train fumes. The train drivers were growing beards to filter the air they were breathing. The line was growing, and the city started to (6) _____ as well. In fact, the underground railway is one of the reasons London has such a relatively low (7) _____ density today.

The success of Metropolitan (8) _____ other entrepreneurs to invest in building more lines. That's when District and Circle lines were built. The two new lines, however, were run by rivals, James Forbes and Edward Watkin. Their rivalry was so extreme, that Watkins' trains were running (9) _____, while Forbes' trains in the other direction.

Thanks to new tunneling technologies and the use of electrified rails, the new lines were being built on a deeper level under the ground, and the shape of the tunnels gave birth to the phrase "Tube", as most of the Londoners call the underground today.

Soon Waterloo & City, Central, Bakerloo and Piccadilly lines were built, mainly under the lead of Charles Tyson Yerkes, who was the first person attempting to unify London's chaotic underground (10) _____.

Although thousands of commuters used the Tube every day, it wasn't popular among the public, mainly because the trains didn't have (11) _____; the manufacturers figured there was nothing to see deep below the ground.

In 1906 Frank Pick began working for Underground Electric Railway Limited, and for the next 30 years he was leading the progress of the Tube, helping it to become the most famous and respected (12) _____ system in the world.

Pick had a great eye for (13) _____. He introduced the roundel - the famous logo of the tube, which today is (14) _____ even by those who have never been to London. He asked calligrapher Edward Johnston to design the tube's unique font - Underground Sans, which is used up to day. He commissioned Harry Beck to design a map that would simplify navigating through the most (15) _____ transport system. Funnily enough, Harry Beck was paid just 10 pounds for designing what became one of the most iconic samples of navigation design in history - the Tube Map.

Numerous architects took part in shaping what the stations look like today. Charles Holden designed several iconic stations, including Arncliffe Grove and Gants Hill, which was (16) _____ by the Moscow Metro. Sir Norman Foster designed Canary Wharf - one of the biggest Tube stations ever built.

London Underground played a (17) _____ role during World War II, when the tunnels and stations were used as bomb shelters for thousands of civilians.

In 1968 the recording of "Mind the gap" was introduced, to warn the (18) _____ about the gap between the train and the platform. Most of the lines still use the original recording from 1968 featuring the voice of sound recordist Peter Lodge. Some other stations use the (19) _____ of a voice artist Emma Clarke. The Piccadilly line, however, uses the voice of Tim Bentinck, better known as David Archer from The Archers music band.

Despite the World Wars and years of underinvestment, London Tube continued to grow, although much slower than in the early years. Only two new lines were built since Charles Yerkes - Victoria and Jubilee. London was the first city that has built a metro link to the airport. The railway system was also extended with the introduction of Overground, which became a great instrument in the gentrification of East London.

The Tube, now 150 years old, is an (20) _____ part of London's life and culture. It won't be an exaggeration to say that the Underground shaped London into the city that it is today.