



London Under London: A Subterranean Guide

Richard Trench, Ellis Hillman

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One of the most popular books on London (it has reprinted six times since it was first published in 1984) London under London has now been updated to take into account the latest subterranean developments. A new section covers: the pioneering deep level water main 80 kilometres in length, much longer even than the Channel Tunnel; new power tunnels and the enormous substation beneath Leicester Square; new underground railways; glass fibre communication; and much more. Clearly, metropolitan man is burrowing as actively as ever. The London we know and see is only the tip of the iceberg. Beneath the familiar surface lies an unknown city, a Hades of buried and forgotten rivers, sunken sewers, underground railways, pipes and passages, tubes and tunnels, crypts and cellars. These lifelines of the metropolis twist and turn hidden beneath the pavements of the city - fifteen hundred miles of Neo-Gothic sewers, a hundred miles of Neolithic rivers, eighty-two miles of tube tunnels, twelve miles of government tunnels and hundreds of thousands of miles of cables and pipes. Layer upon layer, they run their urgent errands, carrying people, delivering water, removing sewage, passing currents, sending messages, conveying parcels. Drawing extensively from the literature and visual archives of the underworld, London under London traces the history of the tunnellers and borers who have pierced the ground beneath the city for close on two thousand years. The authors trace the routes taken by man and nature, and enable us to follow them from the comfort of our armchairs. They can also tell us, gazetteer-style, exactly where we can get below and see the strange world which they depict, whom to ask for permission, and which of the public service authorities organizes trips underground.

London Under London: A Subterranean Guide Details

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Ipswichblade says

Very interesting book about all the different types of underground tunnels etc in London

Kay says

Sometimes I think that urban planners must surely have one of the most fascinating careers; or if not urban planners, then surely chroniclers of urban development. London's physical history -- the actual construction of sewers, tunnels, bridges, embankments, subways, and utility tunnels -- makes fascinating reading. The story of the construction of the Embankment alone is a riveting account, especially for those who, like myself, have spent quite a bit of time strolling along it. And, of course, the story of London's sewers is in large part the history of a social crusade. Not to mention all the buried rivers -- such as the Fleet and Tyburn, the legacy of which is seen mostly now in the names of streets and districts. There's a great deal here about such pivotal figures as the Brunels and Sir Edward Watkin, too. In short, this account makes one thing clear -- there's almost as much behind the history *under* the city's street's as there is to the history above them.

Diana says

A really interesting book about London. It explains about the lost rivers of the city, how they dug the underground, the air raid shelters of the blitz and many more things

Chas Bayfield says

What a shame I didn't know this book has been updated - my copy is from 1984 when everyone is getting excited about the idea of cable TV! What a fascinating read. I loved the story of Brunel Sr's inspiration for a tunneling machine coming from watching a beetle in prison and I am now in awe of Bazalgette and his sewers. There is a whole other London underground and this book rips the lid of it. Fantastic!

Chelsea Monroe-Cassel says

A very interesting look at the subterranean world underneath modern London. I especially liked the bits about the underground rivers!

Leslie Wilson says

This book, although dated, is a tour de force of research and excellent writing. The London Under London is a maze of competing fiefdoms - Post Office, Tube, sewers, cables, canals, abandoned diggings, etc. Written with enough joie de vivre to let you know the author has really enjoyed the effort of putting it together, wonderfully illustrated with drawing and photographs, and still retaining a sense of wonder at what lies Under London, it is a delightful and fascinating take on a long buried subject.
