

GUIDED TRAIN JOURNEY THROUGH THE EIGHTH WONDER OF THE WORLD

Avoid a Penalty Fare

Oyster cards work on London Overground, but if you use pay as you go, and intend to return directly to Rotherhithe, you must ascend to the ticket hall at Wapping, swipe out, then swipe in again and descend. No need if you have a one day travel card, season ticket or Freedom pass of course.

Rotherhithe Train Station & International Landmark Site

This is the Eighth Wonder of the World, an International Landmark site, the first project IKB worked on, and the only project he & his father worked on together. This is the first tunnel under a river anywhere in the world and the oldest tunnel in the Oldest Underground System in the World.

At the bottom of the escalator, half way down the stairs, a plaque marks an International Landmark Site. There are only 4 plaques like this in England. There are only 250 of these plaques in the world. This is in the top 10 in the world because all our underground journeys begin here.

Down the stairs to North bound platform

- i) Keep well clear of the yellow line. When you get to Wapping the platform is less than half this wide.
- ii) Flash photography is not allowed. Take photographs without flash.
- iii) You are visiting the Eighth Wonder of the World, but there are other passengers on the London Overground. Let passengers through.

From Rotherhithe you see a single arch, built in 1869 for the railway. Only at Wapping will you see the distinctive twin horseshoes of Brunel's original portico. At Wapping, Brunel's Tunnel begins at the end of the platform

Train Journey & Triumphal Opening March 1843

This is the oldest tunnel in the London Underground, but you are also travelling through the world's first underwater shopping arcade. Through the window, faintly, you can see horizontal lines of the moulding. The dark gaps were once shops and still have columns and Doric capitals. There were sixty arches selling Thames Tunnel souvenirs: gin flasks, snuff boxes, coffee cups, and nursery ware. If they'd had baseball caps they'd have sold them. This is technically known as aggressive marketing of site specific merchandise.

There were **FIFTY THOUSAND VISITORS ON THE FIRST DAY.**

Poster Art on Wapping platform

i) Pedestrian Tunnel

The Tunnel in its first incarnation. Fine ladies and gentlemen *walk under a river* for the first time anywhere in the world. If the men who built this tunnel were heroes, remember the men and women who walked through the tunnel felt heroic too. It was exciting and dangerous.

ii) Under Construction

Longitudinal section of tunnel under construction. See the archways for the shops, and the miners' cage. On top of the shaft there are pumping engines,

later moved into the engine house when the shaft became the pedestrian entrance. See the tall masted ships – there were 3,000 in the river every day. The tunnel was designed to move cargo under the busiest river in the world, but they had no money to build ramps to get cargo the down there.

iii) Steam Trains

For the first time anywhere in the world, steam locomotives travelled under a river. A noisy, dirty, smelly business. Notice the gentlemen leaning over the balustrade, behind the steam. Ascend the stairs to see that balustrade.

iv) Electric Trains

The tunnel is used as Brunel intended, moving cargo, but not in his lifetime.

Before leaving the platform, look down the Tunnel and see how it dips under the river. If you have time, wait for the next train to arrive and light up the shop arches Don't lean over the yellow line! Ascend the stairs - hold on to the rail and look up. Hold on to the rail because you should be watching your feet...

Outside lift

This huge cylindrical brick shaft weighs 1000 tons and was built above the ground & sunk under its own weight. Even with two lifts in the middle it is still impressive. This is the sister shaft to the one outside the Museum, open to the public (on special days) for the first time in 145 years.

Southbound Platform: The Underwater Banquet 1827

Look down the tunnel once the train has arrived and whilst you are boarding. This is the best view of the Tunnel, as you step off the platform to board.

Isambard Kingdom Brunel organised a banquet. The tunnel was draped in crimson, and long tables were laid out and covered in white damask. The place settings were solid silver, the glass was crystal and the band of the Coldstream guards played patriotic music. The noise was deafening.

Train Journey to Rotherhithe: The Underwater Fairground 1852

You are travelling through the world's first underwater fairground. Here, before the trains came, were tightrope walkers, sword swallows, fire eaters, Ethiopian serenaders, Indian dancers, Chinese singers, electricity, and Mr Green the celebrated bottle pantomimic equilibrist.

Rotherhithe Station platform

You have travelled through the oldest tunnel in the Oldest Underground system in the world, but this is a confusing tunnel. Designed to move cargo, it opened as a pedestrian tunnel, a banquet hall, a shopping arcade and fairground. More confusing still, there are two tunnels in Rotherhithe. You have travelled through the Thames Tunnel, or Brunel Tunnel, but the Rotherhithe Road Tunnel is above your head and people mix them up. The approach roads cross. If you listen carefully you can hear the noise of traffic making its descent.