

PRESS RELEASE – Monday 24 June 2019

Images: <https://we.tl/t-9P3aMWim2>

Last hurrah for steam travel in central London



A Victorian steam train carried passengers on the Underground for the final time in central London on Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 June as part of London Transport Museum and Transport for London's (TfL) plans to celebrate 150 years of the District line.

Three return journeys took place each day between Ealing Broadway and High Street Kensington, giving people the opportunity to experience what it would have been like to travel on District line when it first opened on Christmas Eve, 1868.

Passengers boarding the steam train at Ealing Broadway were entertained by Victorian costumed actors and a vintage brass band, as onlookers waved goodbye from the platform.

This was the final time a heritage steam train will travel in central London on the Underground due to the installation of a new signalling system on the Circle, District, Hammersmith & City and Metropolitan lines.

When the upgrade is complete in 2023, it will provide increased capacity and make journeys faster and more comfortable across 40 per cent of the Tube network.

Chris Nix, Assistant Director for Collections and Engagement at London Transport Museum said: "No other capital city has been shaped by transport the way London has, and these commemorative steam-powered trips have marked a special moment in the history of the Underground. For one last time, people experienced the sights and sounds of travelling by steam on the District line as they would have done when it first opened 150 years ago."

Nigel Holness the Managing Director of London Underground said: “The ongoing transformation of the oldest parts of the Tube network into one of the most modern railways in the world will mean that it will be the last time steam trains will run through central London. The District line has been a vital part of London’s transport network for 150 years and it is wonderful to be part of this historic weekend and experience what Tube travel would have been like when the line first opened.”

People interested in London’s transport history can go behind-the-scenes at London Transport Museum’s Depot in Acton Town at the next family-friendly Open Weekend on 13 and 14 July. Tickets can be booked online and cost £12 for adults and kids go free:

www.ltmuseum.co.uk

The weekend’s steam train trips in central London were organised by London Transport Museum in partnership with TfL. London Transport Museum will continue to offer its heritage steam train outings on the outer reaches of the Metropolitan line towards Chesham.

ENDS

Notes to editors

- The train was comprised of the following locomotives and carriages:
 - Met No.1 steam locomotive from Quainton Railway Society
 - Bluebell Chesham Coaches
 - District Railway Coach No.100 from the Kent and East Sussex Railway
 - London Transport Museum’s Met Jubilee Coach 353
 - Sarah Siddons electric locomotive
- The train was hauled by the electric locomotive Sarah Siddons to High Street Kensington and by steam locomotive Metropolitan No.1 on the return journey to Ealing Broadway.
- District line history:
 - The District line – originally known as the Metropolitan District Railway - is London’s second oldest Underground line
 - It first opened on Christmas Eve in 1868 between Westminster and South Kensington
 - By 1902, the line stretched from Ealing Broadway, Richmond and Wimbledon in the west to Upminster in the east
 - Today the District line has 60 stations, the most of any Underground line in the Capital
- History of steam on the District line and the Underground:
 - Steam trains first served passengers on the District line but were replaced by electric trains from 1903 onwards – although some steam trains did remain in passenger service on the line until after the Second World War
 - The last steam train operating on the Underground in passenger service ran on the Metropolitan line on 9 September 1961
 - London Transport Museum last operated a heritage steam train in central London on the Underground in 2013 as part of the 150th anniversary of London Underground

For media enquiries, images and interviews contact:

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In social media posts please tag:

- Twitter: [@ltmuseum](https://twitter.com/ltmuseum)
- Instagram: [@ltmuseum](https://www.instagram.com/ltmuseum)
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ltmuseum>

About London Transport Museum

- The Museum is situated in the heart of Covent Garden and filled with stunning exhibits; the Museum explores the powerful link between transport and the growth of modern London, culture and society since 1800. Historic vehicles, world-famous posters and the very best objects from the Museum's extraordinary collection are brought together to tell the story of London's development and the part transport played in defining the unique identity of the city. London Transport Museum is supported by public funding from Arts Council England. London Transport Museum's charity number is 1123122

Tickets for London Transport Museum

- Museum open daily from 10:00-18:00
- Cheapest tickets available online – kids go free!
- Tickets include unlimited daytime access to the Museum for a whole year – visit as many times as you like to enjoy new exhibitions and family fun activities

Travel to London Transport Museum

- Address: Covent Garden Piazza, WC2E 7BB
- The nearest stations to London Transport Museum are:
 - **Underground:** Covent Garden, Leicester Square, Charing Cross, Embankment, Holborn
 - **National Rail:** Charing Cross and Waterloo
 - **Boat:** Embankment or Westminster pier
 - **Bus:** Strand or Aldwych

Public information:

- Switchboard: +44 (0) 343 222 5000
- www.ltmuseum.co.uk