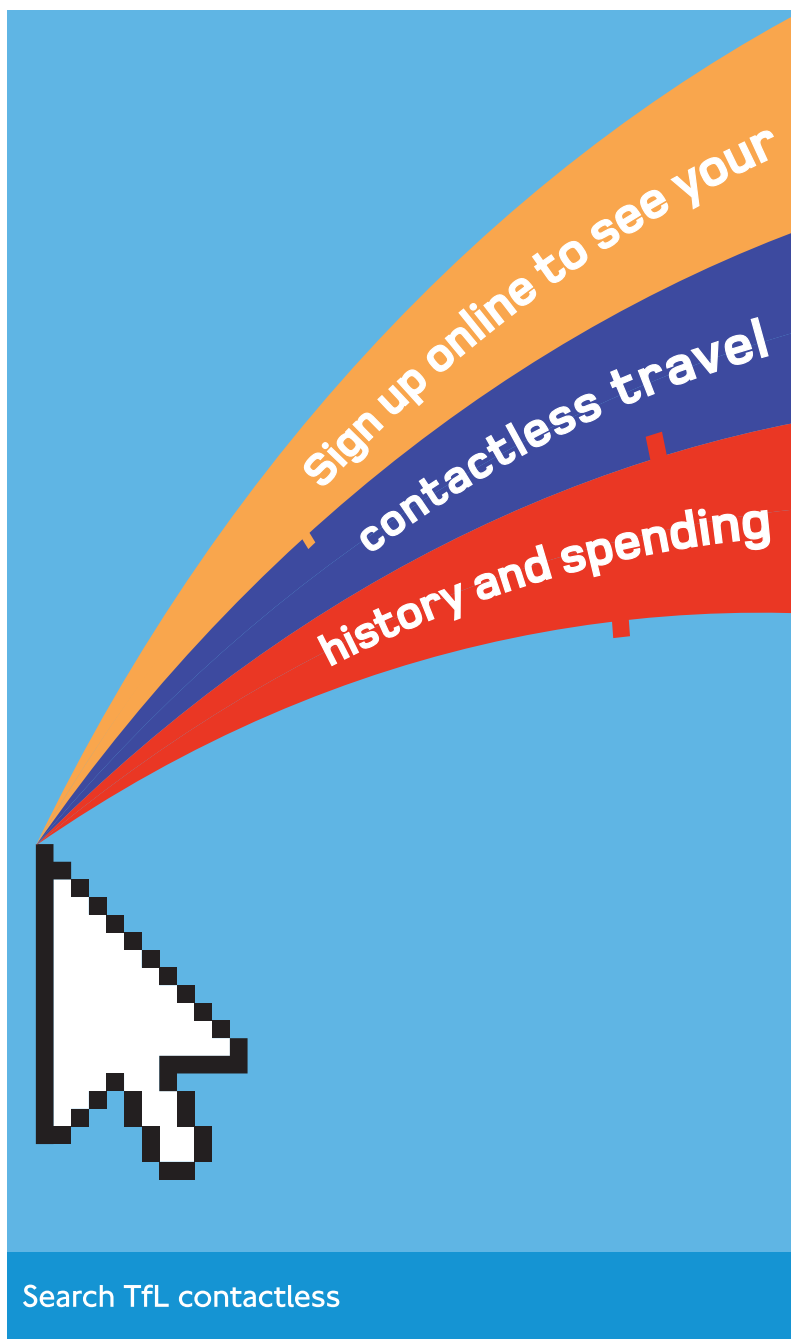




London's oldest: the world's first underground railway, the Metropolitan Railway, opened in 1863 between Paddington and Farringdon serving six intermediate stations.



Travel back in time

London is a city steeped in history, and a journey through the streets can offer a glimpse into the past. MetroTravel looks at some of the capital's oldest places of interest.

London's oldest museum

MANY people think this to be the British Museum, which was founded in 1753 and opened to the public in 1759. However, pre-dating this is the Royal Armouries in the Tower of London – otherwise known as the National Museum of Arms and Armour. It has been open to the public since 1660, but accepting paying, privileged visitors since as far back as 1592.

How to get there: Tower Hill is the nearest Tube station (District and Circle lines). Alternatively, enjoy a trip on the Thames and take the river bus service to Tower pier.

London's oldest park

Sit on a bench in Finsbury Circus and try to shut out the sounds of the city from your mind, reflecting on how Londoners have been enjoying the peace and calm offered by this small park since 1606. St. James's Park in Westminster dates back to the late 1500s, but was only opened to the public after Charles II took the throne in 1660.

How to get there: Finsbury Circus is a couple of minutes walk from Moorgate or Liverpool Street stations. It also has its own Santander Cycle docking station.

London's oldest house

Situated down a quiet, small street in Farringdon is 41/42 Cloth Fair, EC1. It was built some time between 1597 and 1614. It's the only building in the area to have survived the Great Fire of London in 1666 as it was surrounded at the time by high priory walls. It remains a residential property, but visitors can admire the exterior.

How to get there: The nearest Tube station is Barbican (Metropolitan, Hammersmith & City and Circle lines). Alternatively, the house is just a couple of minutes' walk from the West Smithfield Rotunda Santander Cycle docking station.

London's oldest pub

With several establishments claiming the title, this is an issue that has been debated over many a pint. A 2010 book, London: A Story of a Great City, points to The Olde Wine Shades, 6



The Tower of London: it houses the capital's oldest museum.

Martin Lane, EC4 – a tavern that dates back to 1663 and another survivor of the Great Fire. Whereas other hostels have been knocked down and rebuilt, it has remained pretty much intact since that time and still operates as a bar and restaurant to this day.

How to get there: It's a short walk from Monument or Cannon Street Tube stations (both on the District and Circle lines).

London's oldest restaurant

Rules in Covent Garden is widely accepted to be the oldest restaurant in the capital. Its founder, Thomas Rule, began selling oysters at the site in 1798 – well before the fashion for dining out truly began in the late 1800s. It remains one of London's most popular and well-respected establishments, steeped in history and specialising in game, shellfish and traditional British dishes.

How to get there: Rules is at 35 Maiden Lane, WC2. Covent Garden is the nearest Tube station (Piccadilly line). Alternatively, buses 6, 9, 11, 13, 15, 23, 87, 91, 139 and 176 stop nearby on The Strand.

London's oldest cinema

This honour goes to the Phoenix in East Finchley. Opened in 1912 as The Picturedrome – and later The Coliseum and The Rex – it's been operating as The Phoenix since 1975. It's independently run by a community trust, with actor Benedict Cumberbatch one of its patrons.

How to get there: Bus routes 102, 143, 234 and 263 stop outside, while the Northern line stops at nearby East Finchley Tube station.

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