



Mail Rail Time Line

- 1855** Rowland Hill, Secretary to the Post Office submits a report to Parliament on a system to move mail in underground tunnels with air as the propelling force.
- Experts report the scheme could work but it is deemed too expensive.
- 1863** General Post Office (GPO) inspects a pneumatic railway built by the Pneumatic Despatch Company running between Euston station and Eversholt Street.
- 1866** Post Office ends contract with Pneumatic Despatch Company. Trials continued until the company closed in 1876.
- 1909** GPO sets up Departmental Committee to study pneumatic and electric underground railways.
- 1911** In February the committee recommends construction of an electric railway with driverless trains. The recommendations are accepted.
- 1913** Post Office (London) Railway Bill is passed by a Select Committee of the House of Lords.
- 1914** Construction of the tunnels begins. An experimental track with one car is erected on Plumstead marshes.
- 1917** Tunnelling work is completed but the Post Office is not allowed to install operating equipment because materials are needed for the war.
- Tunnels are used to store precious artworks from the National Gallery and the Tate Gallery during wartime.
- 1923** Building work on the railway starts again after the First World War.
- 1927** Railway opens on 5 December just in time for the Christmas rush.
- On 19 December traffic between Mount Pleasant and Liverpool Street moves Christmas parcels.
- 1928** On 13 February movement of letters begins.
- 1965** Two of the main stations at Western Parcels Office and Western District Office are closed.
- 1987** To mark the 60th anniversary the Post Office Underground Railway changed its name to 'Mail Rail'.
- 1993** A central computer-controlled system is introduced. This means the railway can be controlled at a single point rather than at every station.
- 2003** The system has become more expensive than using other transport methods and is closed.