

Date: 24 June 2016

Thameslink's new train enters passenger service

Maiden voyage hailed a success

Thameslink's new Siemens-built Class 700 train has performed well as it enjoyed its maiden voyage in passenger service from Brighton to London Bridge.

Unit 700108, one of the 55, 12-carriage trains to be built, made a total of four trips on this route in the off-peak on Monday (20 June) as it was given a "gentle introduction" to passenger service. On Tuesday the train, which is capable of carrying up to 1,750 in air conditioned comfort, ran nine times between the two stations helping move passengers caught up in the Southern conductors' strike.

The train continues to be used this week on the four off-peak journeys after which it will begin service on the wider Thameslink route through central London to and from Bedford.

The train's features include:

- Wider doors and aisles to make getting on and off easier
- Spacious walkways between carriages to make it easier to move through the train to give a greater sense of security Two-by-two seating to create more room
- Lots of luggage space – essential for airport travellers
- Adaptive climate-controlled air conditioning which adjusts to the number of passengers to keep things comfortable
- Electronic signs showing which carriages have more space to sit or stand Screens with real time service information
- Fully accessible toilets for disabled passengers and those with pushchairs or needing baby changing facilities
- Spaces for full-sized bikes in the off-peak; storage for fold-up bikes in the peak

Engineering Director Gerry McFadden said: “We are thrilled that our new Thameslink train is performing well. In future, as the train continues to prove itself, we will begin running it across London to Bedford.

“Ultimately the train will give passengers much-needed additional capacity with longer trains throughout the rush-hour, creating at least 1,000 extra standard class seats.”

On board the very first service on Monday was Brighton’s Middle Street School which was taking a group of 35 six-year-olds dressed as pirates to see the Golden Hinde in London. Teachers said the new train really added to the excitement.

Anita, a Brighton businesswoman on board, was pleased to hear that peak hour services from Brighton would be run in fixed formation with 12-carriages – half as long again as most Thameslink trains today.

Another passenger, Roger Felkis of Haywards Heath, said: “The wide gangways mean I can get past suitcases without problems. The train’s smooth and comfortable.”

There were also cyclists returning from Sunday’s London to Brighton bike ride who made use of the dedicated bike storage area.

This was the first of the trains to enter service. GTR’s intention is to run the 12-carriage trains in the peak from Brighton. It means Thameslink will have at least 1,000 extra standard class seats from the town in the morning peak once the new fleet and timetable is introduced.

Ultimately there will be 115 new trains running on an expanded Thameslink network to additional destinations such as Peterborough and Cambridge. In total, 55 of these will be in 12-carriage formation and 60 will have eight carriages.

Siemens Thameslink Programme Director Dave Hooper said: “This success represents a step change in cross-London commuter train experience with the latest state-of-the-art train design and on board systems equipment. This has been achieved by many people across our European in-house team and supply chain in design, testing, train manufacturing and depot construction. The service team at Three Bridges depot is very proud to take over the leadership of these new trains from the development phase into passenger service

operation and we look forward to entering more new trains into service over the coming months.”

Andy Pitt, Executive Chairman of Cross-London Trains, said: “I am delighted that the new Class 700 trains are entering into passenger service. It’s great to see that passengers are starting to benefit from the massive investment in this brand new train fleet which will deliver much needed additional capacity to the rail network.”

For more information, please see our press release issued on 24 May <http://bit.ly/28NMbOL>

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For pictures, click on this link (two are of the train at Brighton on its maiden passenger service run; the remainder are from a showcase event at London Blackfriars station on 24 May) <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B37S24j3JgC7SDhWldBaXFtbVk>

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Notes to editors

Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) operates Thameslink, Great Northern, Southern and Gatwick Express services as follows:

- Thameslink – services between Bedford and Brighton, Luton/St Albans and Sutton, Wimbledon and Sevenoaks
- Great Northern – services between London and Welwyn, Hertford, Peterborough, Cambridge and King’s Lynn
- Southern – services between London and the Sussex coast (Brighton, Worthing, Eastbourne, Bognor Regis, Hastings) and parts of Surrey, Kent and Hampshire (Ashford International, Southampton, Portsmouth)
- Gatwick Express – Fast, non-stop direct services between Gatwick Airport and London Victoria

GTR is now the largest rail franchise in the UK in terms of passenger numbers, trains, revenue and staff: GTR carries about 273 million passenger journeys per year, employs around 6,500 people and generates annual passenger revenues of approximately £1.3bn.

The GTR investment programme for stations includes funding for more CCTV, toilet refurbishments, new retail facilities, help points and car park improvements – as well as plans for increased motorcycle storage and improved transport integration.

southernrailway.com, gatwickexpress.com, thameslinkrailway.com greatnorthernrail.com

Siemens AG (Berlin and Munich) is a global technology powerhouse that has stood for engineering excellence, innovation, quality, reliability and internationality for more than 165 years. The company is active in more than 200 countries, focusing on the areas of electrification, automation and digitalization. One of the world's largest producers of energy-efficient, resource-saving technologies, Siemens is No. 1 in offshore wind turbine construction, a leading supplier of gas and steam turbines for power generation, a major provider of power transmission solutions and a pioneer in infrastructure solutions as well as automation, drive and software solutions for industry. The company is also a leading provider of medical imaging equipment – such as computed tomography and magnetic resonance imaging systems – and a leader in laboratory diagnostics as well as clinical IT. In fiscal 2015, which ended on September 30, 2015, Siemens generated revenue of €75.6 billion and net income of €7.4 billion. At the end of September 2015, the company had around 348,000 employees worldwide. Further information is available on the Internet at www.siemens.com

Cross London Trains (XLT) is a consortium comprising Siemens Project Ventures GmbH, Innisfree Limited and 3i Infrastructure plc. XLT is procuring and financing the new Class 700 train fleet and leasing it to the operator of the Thameslink franchise.