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Rail professionals swap pantographs for pedals in charity cycle ride - £24,000 raised for worthy causes -

An 80-strong group of rail industry professionals, more used to bogies than bicycles, turned to a different mode of transport for a four-day (from 14 – 17 August) gruelling cycle ride to raise funds for charity. Covering nearly 300 miles, from Germany to the UK, the ride celebrated the successful project partnership that has led to the delivery of the first new Class 700 train set to run on the Thameslink routes.

The brainchild of Siemens' Materials Manager, Sheldon Dyer, the cycle team was drawn from the group of different organisations who have worked closely together to design, test and deliver new trains for the Government-sponsored Thameslink programme: Siemens, Cross London Trains (XLT), Department for Transport (DfT), Eversholt Rail Group and Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR).

The challenge saw 40 of the team take to pedal power to cycle all the way from the Siemens' train test track in Wildenrath, Germany, through the Netherlands and across the channel. Once on British soil, the cyclists rode from the port of Harwich in Essex to Hornsey, North London, where a brand new traincare facility is under construction as part of the Thameslink Programme.

An additional 42 riders then joined the group to cycle from Hornsey to Three Bridges in Crawley, West Sussex – the location of the second new Thameslink Programme traincare facility and the home of the first Siemens Class 700 Desiro City train for Thameslink. At Three Bridges depot they were met by Steve Scrimshaw and Sambit Banerjee (Managing Director and Finance Director of Siemens Rail Systems business in the UK) who presented all participants with commemorative medals as part of a celebratory event.

In total, the challenge saw the 'long ride' group cover an amazing 280 miles, and the 'short ride' group travel 60 miles. The cyclists all wore Siemens-branded cycle jerseys which also featured the names of the three charities benefitting from the £24,000 raised during the event, will more donations expected following the completion of the ride. The charities benefitting from the event are Macmillan Cancer Support, St Catherine's Hospice (a local charity close to Three Bridges) and Mind in Haringey (a local charity close to Hornsey).

Steve Scrimshaw, Managing Director Rail Systems UK, Siemens, said: "All of these riders and the support staff deserve a huge amount of respect. Not only have they shown just how well they work as a team, but they've raised a fantastic amount of money for charity."

He continued: "However there's one person who should be singled out for particular praise, Sheldon Dyer. He's put his heart and soul into organising this event – on top of his day job – no mean feat for someone who works in materials management not event management!"

In addition to the riders, a further team of support staff, including help from well known UK cycling experts Halfords, travelled alongside the cycle pack as it progressed on its way. They carried important supplies of food and water, assisted with any medical support and ensured a stress-free journey.

The charity cycle ride marks a significant landmark in the overall Thameslink Programme; the arrival of the first brand new Class 700 train which was delivered to the Three Bridges depot at the end of July 2015 where it will undergo exhaustive testing by Siemens and train operator GTR.

The delivery of this first train is part of the Government-sponsored Thameslink Programme of infrastructure improvements and new rolling stock that will transform north-south travel through London, reduce crowding, increase capacity and improve reliability on one of the busiest routes in the UK. The first new trains will be in passenger service from spring 2016 on the Thameslink network between Bedford and Brighton and later on routes to and from Cambridge and Peterborough, as well as to other destinations in Kent and Sussex.

The ride included a number of senior rail industry professionals including: Keith Wallace, Programme Director, GTR (long ride), Iain Smith, Thameslink Programme Director, Siemens (long ride), Charles Doyle, Managing Director, XLT (long ride), Zena Dent, Operations Manager Future Programmes, Eversholt Rail Group (long ride), Charles Horton, Chief Executive Officer, GTR (short ride – on his Brompton bicycle), Matthew Lodge, Project Director – Thameslink Programme, DfT (short ride).

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Editor's notes

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About Siemens

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 combined cycle 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 year 2014, which ended on September 30, 2014, Siemens generated revenue from continuing operations of €71.9 billion and net income of €5.5 billion. At the end of September 2014, the company had around 357,000 employees worldwide. Further information is available at www.siemens.com.

About the Thameslink Programme

The Thameslink Programme will transform north-south travel through London. When complete in 2018 it will give passengers:

- New spacious trains running every 2 to 3 minutes through central London in the peak
- Improved connections and better options to more destinations on an expanded Thameslink network including Cambridge and Peterborough
- Robust new track and signalling systems offer more reliable journeys
- A completely rebuilt London Bridge station with more space and great facilities

New routes the trains will run along include the Great Northern routes to Cambridge and Peterborough, the route to Sevenoaks via Elephant and Castle and new destinations including Littlehampton, Horsham, East Grinstead and Maidstone East.

From 2018, once all the trains are delivered and the new station built at London Bridge, the trains will run every 2-3 minutes in each direction across central London in the peak, providing a north-south metro-like service that intersects with east-west Crossrail at Farringdon and Eurostar at St Pancras International. Cambridge passengers will have direct services to Gatwick taking just 1 hour 40 minutes – up to half an hour quicker than today.

Find out more at www.ThameslinkProgramme.co.uk Follow [@TLProgramme](https://twitter.com/TLProgramme)

About Govia Thameslink Railway

Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) began running Thameslink (Bedford to Brighton, Sutton and Wimbledon) and Great Northern (London to Peterborough, Cambridge and King's Lynn) rail services

on 14 September 2014. A small number of services and stations previously operated by Southeastern transferred to GTR in December 2014 and in July 2015 the Southern and Gatwick Express routes will be incorporated into the franchise. GTR will then be the largest rail franchise in the UK in terms of passenger numbers, trains, revenue and staff: GTR will carry about 273 million passenger journeys per year and will employ around 6,500 people. www.gtrainway.com www.thameslinkrailway.com

About Cross London Trains (XLT)

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