

Frimley, UK
15 October 2015

Three Bridges depot opens its doors, marking completion of a major milestone for Thameslink Programme

Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin today formally opened Siemens and Govia Thameslink Railway's new, purpose-built Three Bridges train depot in Crawley, West Sussex, marking a major milestone for the Thameslink Programme, which will transform journeys for passengers. The depot, which is already home to two new Class 700 Desiro City trains, will play a significant part in housing and maintaining the new fleet for the Thameslink network.

The Three Bridges depot, along with a similar hi-tech train care centre being built in Hornsey, was constructed by VolkerFitzpatrick with an investment of over £300 million by Siemens and is part of Siemens' wider investment in the UK through the Thameslink Programme. The official opening of Three Bridges welcomed stakeholders to view the trains, tour the depot floor and hear more about the project. Following the opening of Three Bridges, Hornsey is on track to be completed in July 2016.

The depot is the result of extensive collaboration between Siemens, GTR and Network Rail. It is fully signalled and incorporates key personnel safety features including a depot protection and emergency electrical isolation system. It has an automatic inspection facility, which through laser measurement can accurately predict when key train components need to be maintained or replaced. Other features include the installation of an in-cab simulator at the depot which will provide the specialist training each driver must undergo in order to drive a new Class 700 train, from theoretical practice to practical reality.

With GTR running the depot and Siemens maintaining the trains in it, there will be a combined total of approximately 150 jobs based at Three Bridges, with 1.4 million man hours already accumulated during the construction phase.

Three Bridges will support the wider Thameslink Programme to deliver a wide range of infrastructure improvements – including Network Rail's reconstruction of London Bridge station – as well as new trains, new depots and new stabling facilities across southern England that will transform north-south travel through London. The programme – when complete – will provide a service tailored to future passenger needs.

The introduction of the new 12 and eight carriage Class 700 trains will significantly increase capacity across all routes, providing 80% more peak seats across the central London route, between Blackfriars and St Pancras. Passengers will benefit from 1,000 additional seats on trains travelling north from Brighton and 15% more seats from stations along the route from Peterborough to Cambridge. There will be more services on the Bedford Thameslink route with a 60% increase in carriages and over 50% more seats from St Albans to London.

Highlights include:

- More 12-carriage trains between Brighton, Gatwick Airport, the Horsham and Redhill line and the Blackfriars-St Pancras Thameslink cross-London route via London Bridge – 1,000 extra seats from Brighton
- New cross-London services for Peterborough and Cambridge with direct journeys of just 1 hr 40 minutes between Cambridge and Gatwick
- Turn up and go service of a train around every 4 minutes from East Croydon to London Bridge and the Blackfriars-St Pancras Thameslink cross-London route throughout the peak
- New trains and additional services from Littlehampton, Worthing and Hove to London Bridge and the Blackfriars-St Pancras Thameslink cross-London route
- New trains and new services from East Grinstead to London Bridge and the Blackfriars-St Pancras Thameslink cross-London route, with additional longer trains
- New trains for suburban services from Wimbledon, Sutton and Sevenoaks on Thameslink

Another major improvement will be improved reliability. By the end of 2018, there will be 115 new Class 700 trains in operation, providing a metro-style service of up to 24 trains per hour running across central London, between Blackfriars and St Pancras. These trains will also be the first European trains using the European Train Control System (ETCS) and Automatic Train Operation (ATO) devices. This will give passengers a safer, more reliable service across all routes.

Patrick McLoughlin, Secretary of State for Transport, said:

“Our plan for passengers is delivering real improvements for those who use Thameslink services. The opening of this state-of-the-art facility is a major milestone and paves the way for an impressive new fleet of hi-tech trains to come into service from Spring next year. The improvements will transform rail travel for millions of passengers, with better journeys on fantastic new Class 700 trains, improved connections and upgraded stations. The programme is also creating thousands of jobs across the country.”

Steve Scrimshaw, Managing Director, Rail Systems at Siemens, said:

“The opening of Three Bridges is a major milestone for the broader Thameslink Programme and a great example of a significant infrastructure project and investment in our railways. We are absolutely delighted that all our hard work and investment will now begin to pay off and passengers will soon start to feel the very real impact from such a major project.”

Charles Horton, GTR’s Chief Executive Officer, said:

“We are thrilled that Siemens have handed us the keys to run this fabulous new depot. The new trains they will maintain for us here will transform our passengers’ journeys providing much more space for today’s busy South East commuter services and the latest in accessibility and onboard information.”

Andy Pitt, Executive Chairman of train owners Cross London Trains (XLT), added:

“It is fantastic to see such a significant milestone reached as part of the Thameslink Programme. I would like to congratulate all of our Partners who have created a world class train maintenance facility which will be essential for delivering a super reliable new train fleet for passengers for many years to come.”

Thousands of jobs are being created as a result of the Thameslink Programme, including up to 2,000 in support of the new trains, across the UK supply chain in component manufacturing assembly, construction of new depots and subsequent maintenance. A considerable number of components for the new train are being manufactured by UK suppliers throughout the UK, further emphasising the UK rail industry’s ability to compete on a global scale.

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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 on the Internet at www.siemens.com.

About the Thameslink Programme

The Government-sponsored 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
- Robust new track and signaling systems offer more reliable journeys
- A completely rebuilt London Bridge station with more space and great facilities

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 were incorporated into the franchise. GTR is now the largest rail franchise in the UK in terms of passenger numbers, trains, revenue and staff: GTR carry about 273 million passenger journeys per year and employ around 6,500 people. www.thameslinkrailway.com www.southernrailway.com

About VolkerFitzpatrick

VolkerFitzpatrick is a multi-disciplinary contractor with an annual turnover of c£400 million working in the civil engineering, building, rail, waste and energy infrastructure sectors. Founded in 1921 as Fitzpatrick Contractors the company has grown organically and now employs more than 600 people. VolkerFitzpatrick's success is based on ensuring it has a sound understanding of the client's vision, which is then delivered on time and to budget.

VolkerFitzpatrick is part of VolkerWessels UK, a multi-disciplinary construction and civil engineering group with a turnover of circa £700 million. VolkerWessels UK employs more than 2,000 staff in six operating companies. The group is the UK arm of Dutch based VolkerWessels; one of the largest construction groups in Europe.

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.