

A testing time for Crossrail

Crossrail test trains were running as far as Abbey Wood station in south-east London in April, but with engineers rather than passengers on board.

As Europe's largest infrastructure project nears completion, a test train was seen beside the existing Docklands Light Railway at Prince Regent station and then further down the line at Abbey Wood.

At Abbey Wood later this year, Crossrail passengers will be able to connect with Southeastern services to Kent.

Three pedestrian bridges have been built at the new station at Abbey Wood, in expectation of large numbers of passengers switching trains.

Crossrail services (which will operate as the Elizabeth line) start in December, the culmination of the £15 billion project.

At Abbey Wood, the Elizabeth line logos are in place at the station but wrapped in protective plastic while workers put the finishing touches to the station.

Crossrail's large number of connections with existing London rail services are expected to transform travel opportunities, not only in London but throughout the south east of England.

In February, Crossrail announced that test trains had started running through the new tunnels under London.

The new Bombardier trains, built in Derby, are already being used by passengers between Liverpool Street and Shenfield.

Many Shenfield services will be integrated into Crossrail, providing spare capacity at London's Liverpool Street terminus.

Earlier in February, Crossrail activated the 25kV overhead lines in a section of the tunnels beneath the streets of London, a landmark moment. There were reports that the start of test train running was delayed by an explosion in electrical transformers.



Picture: RAY KING

Crossrail train at Abbey Wood station in April

railaction

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Picture: RAY KING

National Rail logo and the Elizabeth line logo (wrapped in plastic)



Picture: CROSSRAIL

New Bombardier test train in the Crossrail tunnels in central London in February

Crossrail said in February: "During the initial energisation of electrical equipment at Pudding Mill Lane sub-station on 11 November 2017, two voltage transformers failed. Following correction of the faults in the electrical system by the contractors, the sub-station has been successfully switched on.

"Energisation of the overhead line equipment will now follow, this will allow the infrastructure testing phase to begin. The Elizabeth line remains on course to open as planned in December 2018."

Test running will allow a significant amount of work to be completed, bringing together the complicated interfaces between track, power, signalling and trains.

The Elizabeth line is jointly sponsored by the Department for Transport and Transport for London. The new railway is expected to carry over 200 million passengers per year and add 10 per cent to central London's rail capacity.

In December, Crossrail services will commence between Paddington and Abbey Wood, and also between Paddington (main line station) and Heathrow Airport.

Railfuture press releases

Railfuture press releases can be read in full at

[*Railfuture press releases*](#)

A review of other Railfuture appearances in print and broadcast media can be seen at:

[*Railfuture in the news*](#)



Picture: RAY KING

A test train passing Prince Regent DLR station and track (left) with Crossrail construction equipment and Cundy Park (right), heading towards the Connaught tunnel under the Royal Docks



In May next year, direct services are expected to begin from Paddington to Shenfield as well as Paddington to Abbey Wood. Services from Paddington to Heathrow will continue to start and terminate in the main line station. From this month, TfL Rail takes over Heathrow Connect services but Heathrow Express trains, which carry more than five million passengers a year, will continue to operate.

Heathrow Express chief executive Fraser Brown said: "The growth of rail is critical to

the airport. Heathrow has to grow in a sustainable way, getting more people to travel by rail to the airport, balancing the needs of London with the airport."

In December 2019, the Elizabeth line will fully open, with services running from Reading and Heathrow in the west through the central tunnels to Shenfield and Abbey Wood in the east.

According to estate agents, there has already been a boom in demand for property within easy reach of Crossrail stations.

In Slough, Harry Bansil of Connells said: "Slough used to be regarded as the poor man's Windsor or Beaconsfield but now everyone wants to be part of it.

"It has lots of new developments, plus Victorian, Edwardian, post-war and modern housing. We are seeing investors, first-time buyers using Help to Buy to get on to the ladder, and families who want to be near the good schools."

<http://www.crossrail.co.uk/>

<https://www.heathrowexpress.com/>

Railfuture AGM 2018

The Railfuture AGM is in Edinburgh on 12 May 2018 and will take place at the Holyrood Hotel. For more information:

www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/

Railfuture conferences

The next Railfuture conference is in Carlisle on 23 June 2018.

Speakers include:

Mark Rand, past chairman, Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line

Simon Walton from the Campaign for Borders Rail

For further information see:

www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences

New trains for Greater Anglia

Work is already under way at the Bombardier factory in Derby on the first of over 100 new trains for Greater Anglia, which is replacing all its trains.

The Bombardier trains will be used for commuter services into London Liverpool Street from Essex, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire.

A further 58 trains are being built by Stadler, in Switzerland, to replace the current inter-city, Stansted Express and rural line trains.

Malcolm Brown, chief executive of Angel Trains, which is financing the trains said: "The £900 million deal we signed in September 2016 to procure these new vehicles, one of the largest private investments into rolling stock in the last 20 years, will greatly increase capacity across East Anglia and significantly improve passenger experience." Angel Trains leases trains to 18 franchised operators and two open access operators in Britain.

<https://www.angeltrains.co.uk/>

<https://www.greateranglia.co.uk/about-us/news-desk/news-articles>



Scenic routes for bus and train passengers

A 27-page document giving advice on scenic journeys by rail and bus includes Exeter-Bodmin, Carlisle-Settle, Glasgow-Mallaig, Keighley-Hebden Bridge, King's Lynn-Cromer, Machynlleth-Pwllheli, Oxford-Worcester, Pimlico-Hampstead, Scarborough-Whitby, Swindon-Lambourn, Weymouth-Lyme Regis and Windermere-Keswick.

More information: <https://www.goodjourney.org.uk/>

Free wi-fi on Southeastern

The train operator Southeastern has nearly completed a £78 million project to equip all its trains with free wi-fi, including Metro and high speed services in Kent, Sussex and south-east London. Completion date is June 2018. A daily free usage allowance of 50MB will be available to each user, although Southeastern warns that the strength and speed of the wi-fi will be affected by the number of users at any

What's on

Here are some forthcoming events that may be of interest to rail campaigners. Details of venues and times can be found on the Railfuture website:

3 May 2018. Thursday.
Railfuture London & South East regional branch, Sussex & Coastway division meeting. 18.00.

3 May 2018. Thursday.
Capital Rail Action Group meeting. Guest speaker: Alex Hynes, Managing Director, ScotRail Alliance. AGM follows. Venue: Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL. 19.30.

4 May 2018. Friday.
Colin Speakman talk on geologist Adam Sedgwick at Friends Meeting House, Kirkgate, Settle BD24 9DX. 14.15. £3. Part of Ride2Stride Walking Festival. Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line

4 May 2018. Friday.
Pontefract Civic Society, Rail sub-group. Venue: Pontefract Squash & Leisure Club, Stuart Road, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF8 4PQ. 19.00-21.00.

For further information on these and other events see:

<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Events>

one time and by how it is being used. It is not designed for streaming films or TV programmes, which Southeastern advises should be downloaded at home. A signal strength map is available on the Southeastern website at:

<https://www.southeasternrailway.co.uk/travel-information/on-board/wifi>

How Glasgow Crossrail can deliver cross-Scotland benefits

RAIL magazine included a powerful and well researched review in April on the history of the Glasgow Crossrail project, which Railfuture's Ken Sutherland fears will become another example of short-sighted transport planning. However, Ken will be liaising with MP Paul Sweeney and other RailQwest and Railfuture Scotland colleagues to alert the public to the opportunity that Crossrail offers in achieving wider economic, employment, social inclusion and environmental benefits for Glasgow and surrounding areas.

Crossrail would improve cross-Scotland connections by linking Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and Ayrshire with North Lanarkshire, West Lothian, Livingston New Town and Edinburgh. Railfuture Scotland's Roddy McDougall is also compiling detailed data on how Crossrail could attract large numbers of west-east commuters which could cut car commuting. Currently very few use the train because many west-east journeys require a break of journey in Glasgow. Reinstating the Strathbungo Link into Queen Street Low Level and diverting every alternate train from East Kilbride into the Queen Street Low Level Line would achieve a significantly improved service on this line from 30 minute frequency to 15 minutes. Improved accessibility into Glasgow's key business area would be enhanced by creating a new Glasgow Cross station. Passengers travelling west could enjoy "same platform change", and catch the next train running through to Partick or Hyndland.

https://www.facebook.com/pg/RailQwest/about/?ref=page_internal

Anglo-Scottish local services needed on East Coast main line

Rail Action Group, East of Scotland is awaiting the results of a capacity study on the East Coast main line which it hopes will clear the way for new Anglo-Scottish Edinburgh-Berwick services, which could serve reopened stations at East Linton and Reston. Passing loops may be needed and quadrupling of the line near Prestonpans.

<http://www.rages.org.uk/>

'Shameful tax deals' involving the Dutch and Ireland

The Dutch have been horrified to discover that when they buy train tickets from their state-owned rail company NS, a significant chunk of the money has been funnelled through Ireland, according to a report in *The Observer* on 22 April 2018 of one of the most shameful tax deals in Europe.

NS Financial Services, 100% owned by NS, bought trains, then leased them back to NS, while being incorporated in Ireland. Profits then came under Ireland's 12.5% company tax rate, rather than 25% in the Netherlands. So since 1998, a state-owned Dutch company has paid around £177 million in tax in Ireland, rather than to the Dutch ministry of finance, even though the ministry is the 100% shareholder of NS and the trains were operating entirely in the Netherlands.

NS has now caved in to political pressure and announced in February that train leases have been moved back to a subsidiary in the Netherlands. *The Observer* asks whether the British public has also been denied tax revenues. There are now many companies involved in running British trains. As large amounts of taxpayers' money are being invested in the railways, perhaps Railfuture members should be asking if revenue is being diverted abroad, where profits are being recorded and where tax is being paid.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/apr/22/abellio-ns-amsterdam-express-goes-via-dublin-ireland-low-tax>

Web links

Readers of *railaction* should be able to click on the web links in this document to be taken straight to the relevant website.

However this is not yet an exact science. One problem is that organisations update their websites and change the page references.

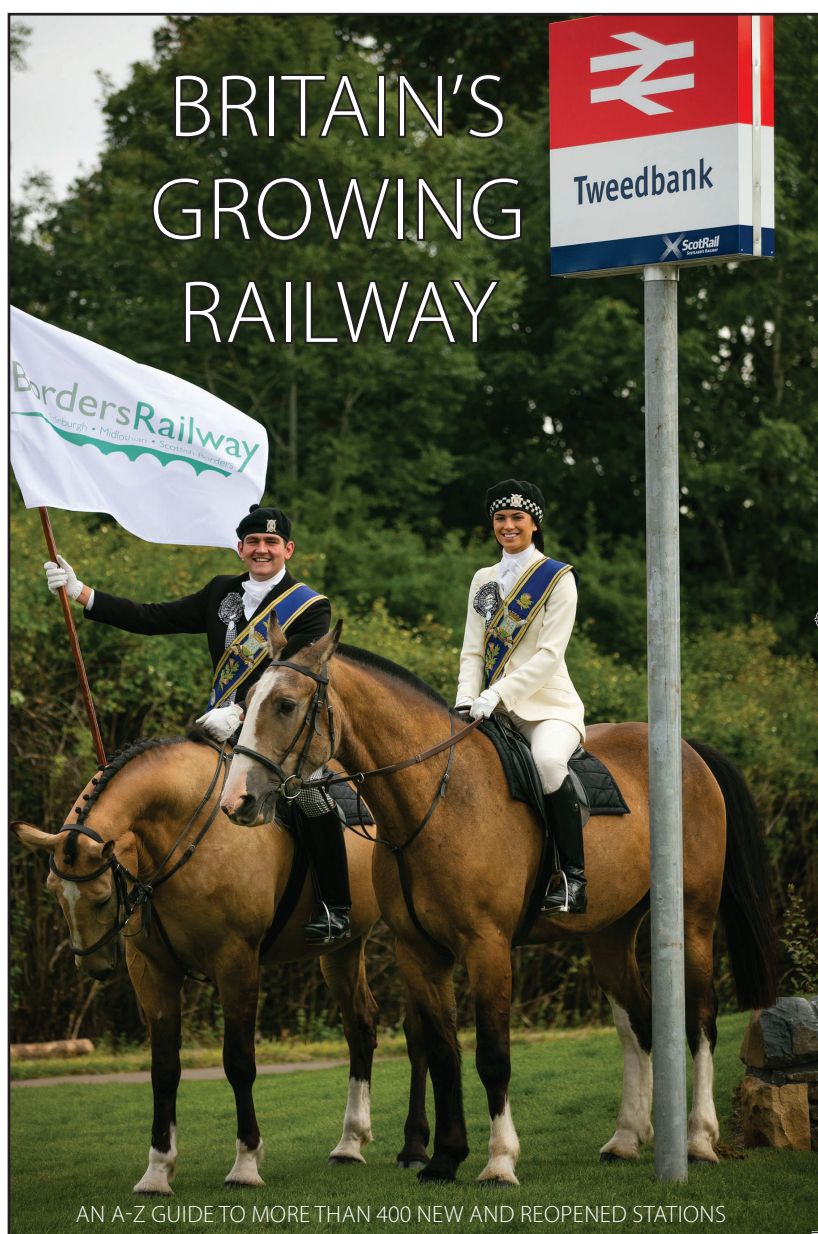
We do our best to keep abreast of these changes, but it is not always possible.

Railfuture submissions

Railfuture responds to many formal consultations about the railways.

Submissions can be downloaded from:

<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/consultation+responses>



Railfuture's latest book (above) gives details of the 400 stations and over 950km of new routes which have opened to passengers since 1960. Rail expert and author Paul Salveson said: "This book is indispensable not just to rail campaigners but transport professionals, local authority politicians – and those chap/esses in Government." The Rev Edmund Worthy of Wellingborough said: "Britain's Growing Railway is a wonderful work of reference and an inspiration to remind us of all the good news of railway expansion." The 192-page 2017 updated edition costs £9.95 and can be obtained online at

<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/shop/>

GET YOUR COPY TODAY!

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Timetable shake-up

Years of disruption should produce benefits in a few weeks when the Thameslink timetable is revamped.

Thameslink bosses say the timetable changes will be the biggest "for a generation" with almost a million daily journeys being affected by the changes.

The new timetable will operate from Sunday 20 May 2018.

Passengers in Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire are expected to be most affected.

The new timetable will have a knock-on effect on the south-east network, including Southern, Great Northern, Gatwick Express and Southeastern trains.

<https://www.railplan2020.com/timetables>

Treasury pipeline

The Government is introducing a new "pipeline" approach to rail enhancement projects, which will require Treasury approval on a case-by-case basis.

One rail campaigner said: "Network Rail is well and truly back under the Treasury's thumb."