



4th May 2014

Happy birthday Channel Tunnel

Rail campaigners are saying happy birthday to the Channel Tunnel, which was officially opened on the 6th of May 1994.

"It's a wonderful piece of technology, but even after 20 years it isn't fulfilling its full potential" said Bruce Williamson from the campaign group Railfuture. "We can now run freight trains all the way to China, but still it isn't being used to its full capacity. The recent cuts in charges for rail operators to use the tunnel are very welcome and should go some way to remedying this.

"Passenger numbers are heading in the right direction and recently we saw the very welcome achievement of reaching 10 million passengers a year on Eurostar, but there is still plenty of scope for further growth. We hope that DB will reconsider running trains to and from London which it seems to have given up on. There is much potential for a far wider range of Continental destinations to be served by through passenger trains from London, and hopefully in the future other regions of the UK. The barrier seems to be the issue of security and immigration checks; we need to find a way to avoid stations having to be made into a fortress at great expense."

"UK PLC is losing out as an international business centre, and maximising the potential for both passengers and freight through the tunnel could make a huge contribution to the British economy"

Notes to editors:

Railfuture is the UK's leading independent organisation campaigning for better rail services for both passengers and freight.

Railfuture's website can be found at: www.railfuture.org.uk

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