

Thameslink-East Coast tunnel link work starts

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Network Rail has announced what it describes as the first stage of work to connect two new Thameslink rail tunnels to the national network.

The Canal Tunnels in north London will connect the core Thameslink route to the East Coast Main Line ready for completion of the Thameslink Programme when direct train services between Sussex/Kent and Cambridge/Peterborough will be introduced.

Although the tunnels were built between 2004 and 2006 as part of the redevelopment of St Pancras station to accommodate High Speed 1, delays progressing what was called Thameslink 2000 mean they continue to lie idle.

However, as the introduction of trains moves closer, Network Rail says the first stage of connecting the tunnels to operational lines, including track work on the East Coast Main Line, near the tunnels' entrances, will take place over the weekend of 14 and 15 September 2013. The infraco is currently installing track, signalling, power and safety systems in the tunnels.

Between October 2011 and January 2012 Balfour Beatty Rail constructed a new Canal Tunnel Junction which involved the installation of two new turnouts from the existing Thameslink lines to the Canal Tunnels.

The Thameslink Programme is currently scheduled to complete towards the end of 2018 when up to eight of the promised 24 trains an hour in each direction will operate through the Canal Tunnels.

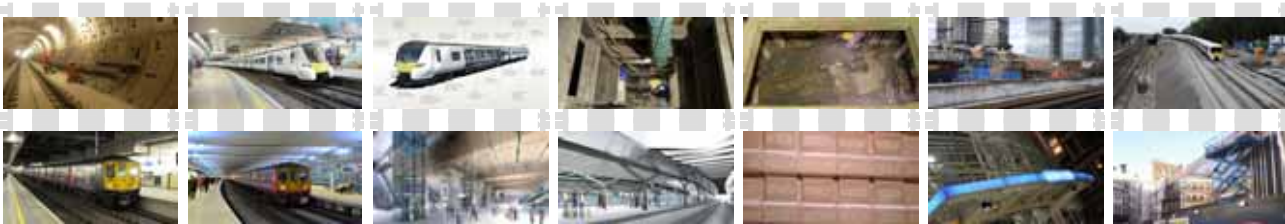
Canal Tunnels: Network Rail installing track, signalling, power and safety systems



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