

Press release

24 May 2019

New 'Untangling the Tracks' exhibition now open at London Transport Museum on 24 May 2019



- **Architectural models of London Bridge, Blackfriars and Borough Viaduct**
- **New interactive miniature train display**
- **Explore historic London Transport posters and modern Thameslink equivalents**
- **Marvel at Blackfriars – a station spanning the River Thames**
- **Bermondsey dive-under explained**
- **Borough Market go-pro footage shows how the Thameslink Programme has preserved this famous market's heritage features**

The UK has the oldest railway network in the world and a lively new exhibition *Untangling the Tracks*, which opens today (Friday 24 May), traces the history of the Thameslink route from 1836 through to the recent £7bn modernisation programme which has transformed the route and untangled the tracks.

The Thameslink route links destinations from the south coast through London to the east of England. Its origins are in the London, Chatham and Dover Railway and at the time was the only train company allowed into the heart of London. Thameslink trains still follow the same

route today, but they now carry tens of millions of passengers a year, presenting challenges which would be unimaginable to the Victorians who founded and ran the original railway on this route.

Visitors to London Transport Museum can now discover how the Thameslink Programme – a government funded collaboration between Network Rail, train operators Govia Thameslink Railway and Southeastern, and train builders Siemens – ensured millions of passengers could continue to travel on the Thameslink route, while undertaking a huge infrastructure project to transform and modernise an aging railway and its stations. New trains now run on ‘untangled’ tracks into a completely rebuilt London Bridge station.

This latest exhibition looks at the challenges of communicating major infrastructure projects to large audiences in creative ways. Historically, the art of the poster has always been an important medium to talk to passengers. In the exhibition, vintage London transport posters show how rail companies have a long history of using this kind of channel to tell passengers about disruption, big upgrades to stations or new services. The Thameslink Programme follows this tradition by creating eye-catching imagery such as its ‘spaghetti on a fork’ poster to express the idea that it can ‘reduce future delays by untangling the tracks’.

Visitors are invited to have a go at solving an ‘Untangling the Tracks’ puzzle by navigating trains into the right platforms. The game is inspired by the impressive engineering of the Bermondsey dive-under, a new structure built on the rail approach to London Bridge station. This section of track is more than 150 years old and was one of the most complex layouts in the world. Like a motorway flyover, the Bermondsey dive-under allows Thameslink and Southern trains serving Sussex to ‘pass over’ Southeastern trains to and from Kent. This innovative engineering solution removed a bottleneck which caused delays when trains had to pause to let others criss-cross in front of them.

Also, on display are miniature models of the central London stations which have been transformed, including Blackfriars station which is the only station to span the river Thames. Solar panels in its 250-metre-long roof means 50 per cent of the station’s energy can be produced in an environmentally-friendly way. London Bridge was also completely redeveloped. Architects had to work carefully around its listed features. The construction of the Borough Viaduct, through the historic Borough Market, doubled the number of tracks heading west out of London Bridge station. The Victorian market roof was taken off site and preserved, before being put back in place when the viaduct was complete.

The protected sight lines of St. Paul's Cathedral had to be taken into consideration during the Blackfriars station rebuild. The biggest challenge was keeping these stations open to the public while major building work was carried out. A total of 20 stations were improved as part of the Thameslink Programme.

Train fans will love the giant image of the new class 700 train with cut-away sections to show how these trains improve the experience for passengers. Visitors will also be able to experiment with a class 700 train model, testing the train's payload capacity to see if they can get their passengers to spread out evenly through the carriages.

Siemens Mobility, a leading global company, was commissioned to build 115 longer, more spacious trains which started running in 2016. On board computers now control the trains resulting in safe and high-frequency services.

Once visitors have explored the exhibition they will be asked the key question: is short-term disruption worth long-term improvement?

Sam Mullins, Director for London Transport Museum, said: "This new exhibition shows what a mammoth task it is to rebuild our ageing central London stations, 'untangle tracks' and safe-guard the heritage of our historic buildings while keeping services running for thousands of passengers a day. The Thameslink Programme and its partners have achieved a feat of engineering and we are sure our visitors will enjoy discovering the secrets behind this complex 'Untangling the Tracks' project."

Paul Harwood, Director of Route Investment at Network Rail, said: "This exciting exhibition shows how the Thameslink Programme follows in the great tradition of engineering innovation and excellence which created the rail network in the first place. Everyone involved in the programme has played a part in solving complex problems, while ensuring passengers could still travel. I am sure visitors will have great fun trying to untangle the tracks and the exhibition will hopefully help inspire the next generation of engineers."

Patrick Verwer, Chief Executive for Govia Thameslink Railway, said: "The Thameslink Programme has quite simply transformed the service we offer passengers, allowing us to run longer 12-coach trains at higher frequencies across a massively expanded Thameslink network that includes new services between Cambridge and Brighton. Already that means we have space for 50,000 more passengers into London each morning and evening rush hour."

May half-term family fun at London Transport Museum

Travelling with Thameslink

London Transport Museum is also organising May half-term activities inspired by the 'Untangling the Tracks' exhibition.

Saturday 25 May to Sunday 2 June

Drop in between 11.00 and 15.45

Families can take part in the Museum's STEM-inspired workshops and story time sessions. Little ones can get creative with their family and make a mini moving train from crafty materials that whizzes past their favourite city views and hear about the amazing landmarks they can see along the Thameslink route.



Young visitors are asked to look out of the train window and talk about what they can see. When you travel with Thameslink, you'll see some of London's loveliest landmarks, including St Paul's Cathedral and the River Thames and the city's most sensational stations, many of which were improved as part of the Thameslink programme.

May half-term family fun activities are part of our new Untangling the Tracks exhibition. More information can be found here: <https://www.ltmuseum.co.uk/whats-on/exhibitions/untangling-the-tracks> and here: <https://www.ltmuseum.co.uk/learning/families>.

Kids go free and tickets allow unlimited entry to London Transport Museum's galleries and temporary exhibitions for a whole year. Visitors can make the most of their ticket by returning for Summer Family Fun activities and to the new Hidden London exhibition opening in autumn.

Ends

For media requests, interviews and images please contact:

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Notes to Editors:

About London Transport Museum

- The Museum is situated in the heart of Covent Garden and filled with stunning exhibits; the Museum explores the powerful link between transport and the growth of modern London, culture and society since 1800. Historic vehicles, world-famous posters and the very best objects from the Museum's extraordinary collection are brought together to tell the story of London's development and the part transport played in defining the unique identity of the city.
- The Museum is a charity and the world's leading museum of urban transport and a place for everyone to come to understand and enjoy the story of London's journey. No other capital city is defined and shaped so much by its transport as London. Yet the scale of influence of transport can be invisible to those who use it every day. The Museum and its collections are a window into the past, present and future of how transport keeps London moving, working and growing, and makes life in our city better. The Museum's charity number is 1123122.
- London Transport Museum is supported by public funding from Arts Council England.

Travel to London Transport Museum:

- Address: Covent Garden Piazza, WC2E 7BB.
- The nearest stations to London Transport Museum are:
 - o **Underground:** Covent Garden, Leicester Square, Charing Cross, Embankment, Holborn
 - o **National Rail:** Charing Cross and Waterloo
 - o **Boat:** Embankment or Westminster pier
 - o **Bus:** Strand or Aldwych

Tickets for London Transport Museum:

- Museum open daily from 10:00-18:00.
- Cheapest tickets available online – kids go free!
- Tickets include unlimited daytime access to the Museum for a whole year – visit as many times as you like to enjoy new exhibitions and family fun activities.

Public information:

- Talks & events bookings: +44 (0)20 7565 7298
- Switchboard: +44 (0)20 7379 6344 - general information

- 24-hour information: +44 (0)20 7565 7299

www.ltmuseum.co.uk

About Thameslink Programme

- The Government-sponsored £7bn Thameslink Programme is an ambitious 10-year programme to transform north-south travel through London. It is delivering new longer and more spacious trains running more frequently than before, through central London in the peak, improved connections to more destinations on an expanded Thameslink network including Cambridge and Peterborough and more robust tracks and modern signalling using digital railway technology to make journeys more reliable. The Programme has also completely rebuilt stations at Blackfriars and London Bridge. “
- The Thameslink Programme is being delivered in partnership between the Department for Transport, Network Rail, Govia Thameslink Railway, Southeastern and Siemens.

www.thameslinkprogramme.co.uk