

# Introducing Kelly Rail's new rail operations director for the south

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*As Kelly Group's dedicated rail division Kelly Rail continues to grow and diversify, a newly-appointed senior leadership team is building the brand, forging new relationships, and ensuring that standards remain high. Neil Shearwood became rail operations director for the south in January. Nine months on, he discusses his appointment, looks back at his long career in rail, and outlines his hopes for the future.*

## **Starting out in rail**

I began my rail career in 1989, working on a major project at Marble Arch Station. A year earlier, the industry had been rocked by a devastating fire at Kings Cross. Thought to have been caused by a discarded match, this fire claimed 31 lives, and led to a four-year-long project to improve safety across the London Underground.

I worked as a commissioning engineer for fire alarm systems during this period, gradually progressing to site manager, project manager, construction manager, and senior project manager. In 2010, I became managing director of the rail division – a role I held for nine years.

When I joined my previous company in 1989, a project involving temporary power distribution works at Canary Wharf helped to establish the fledgling rail department. By around 2012, this department had taken on responsibility for technical services across London Underground.

### **A new journey with Kelly Rail**

I joined Kelly Rail as a regional operations director for the south in January 2022. My focus is developing new rail projects in the south of England, and forging strong relationships with existing and new clients – including the likes of Network Rail Telecoms (NRT), Siemens, Transport for London (TfL), BAM and Transport for Wales (TfW). Our hard work is already paying off – and, earlier this year, TfL awarded us a framework to carry out CRMS works on its behalf. I was also able to re-establish a business relationship with TfL associate Cubic.

### **Exciting projects**

We are currently working on a major project to replace security locking system at 2,332 REB (replaceable equipment building) locations throughout England, Scotland, and Wales. Each new lock is linked to a smart key – which, in turn, can be registered to an individual. This will enable NRT to establish exactly who has access to the buildings, improving security. We started the project in May, and are working towards a completion date at the end of December.

And this isn't the only major project in our pipeline. Kelly Rail recently won an SISS framework in Wales, and will be working directly for TfW. We expect to begin receiving enquiries on the four-year framework – which represents a major opportunity – in the first quarter of 2023.

I'm particularly excited about our involvement in a project at Leeds Station, which is set to undergo a 10-year programme of upgrades. Our team has been tasked with carrying out tag and trace works, and will help BAM Nuttall to establish the location of services and equipment (including lighting, air conditioning, and telecoms) throughout the station. BAM will refer to our maps when identifying potential construction areas. This project is due to commence at the beginning of December.

### **New relationships**

I am excited, not just about these ambitious new projects, but also the new business relationships we have forged since I joined Kelly Rail in January. We work extensively with Siemens in Scotland – and, in the last three or four months, have also established a relationship with their CIS team in the South. We are now actively carrying out work for this team; our first project, at Guildford station, involves installing new ducting, cabinets, cabinet bases, and CCTV camera poles and bases.

### **Looking ahead**

When I joined Kelly Rail at the beginning of 2022, I had a clear objective – to re-establish our workflow in the south of England. Nine months on, we have achieved and surpassed this goal, and are working for Siemens, Cubic, BAM, and TfL. We are also growing our team, both in the office and out in the field. It is important to have the right support structure in place for progressive growth, and we have excellent

support functions in our business in the PMO, HSQE, Pre-Construction & Commercial teams, all of whom have vast knowledge & experience of working within the rail industry. Indeed, with a very strong secured pipeline for the next two years, Kelly Rail's future in the south looks bright.

To learn more about Kelly Rail, visit [www.kelly.co.uk/what-we-do/rail-and-metro](http://www.kelly.co.uk/what-we-do/rail-and-metro)