

Marking a decade since dramatic rebuild of London Blackfriars station

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Thameslink's London Blackfriars station is this month celebrating 10 years since its dramatic reconstruction in time for the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Completed by Network Rail as part of the government-funded Thameslink Programme, the re-construction created space for the station to accommodate longer Thameslink trains.

Running at a high frequency on an expanded network, Thameslink services have now linked cities across central London with destinations as far apart as Cambridge and Brighton.

Rail Minister Wendy Morton said: "For the last decade Blackfriars has been a stunning addition to central London. Idyllically situated astride the Thames it is a prime example of the success of rail in London, giving passengers easy, green and comfortable journeys every day, something this government is delivering to passengers all across the UK."

The rebuild also created the world's largest solar-powered bridge. Boasting an impressive 4,400 solar panels, spanning the entire roof (about 23 tennis courts in size), it generates around half the station's

electricity. At almost 900,000 kWh a year, this is enough to make 30 million cups of tea¹ per annum and reduces CO₂ emissions by around 513 tonnes.

To mark the 10th anniversary, Thameslink has put together 10 top facts championing the station's rich history and exciting future (included below). A passenger photo competition to celebrate what many say is the best station view in London has also created stunning artwork now on permanent display in the south entrance.

Thameslink and Great Northern Managing Director Tom Moran said: "Blackfriars, sitting above the Thames, is quite literally the 'link' in Thameslink and the jewel in the crown of our expanded network. Its platforms give spectacular views up the river to Tower Bridge and its green credentials are second-to-none. I'm delighted to be celebrating its 10th anniversary."

Photo entries were judged by Tate Modern Director Frances Morris, Rail Minister Wendy Morton MP, Transport Focus CEO Antony Smith, Thameslink & Great Northern Managing Director Tom Moran, Network Rail Sussex Route Director Katie Frost and Blackfriars station assistant Donna Redding.

Frances Morris, Director of Tate Modern said: "Over the past 10 years, Blackfriars has brought hundreds of thousands of Thameslink passengers to our home on the south bank of the Thames, and the station's platform over the river has provided some incredible new views of Tate Modern. It was a real honour to be a judge for the 10th anniversary photo competition."

Network Rail route director for Sussex Katie Frost said: "The rebuilding of Blackfriars didn't just create a beautiful and more sustainable station but also built a crucial part of what was effectively a new railway. It was a massive undertaking and a shining example of how engineering ingenuity and creativity can create something both stunning and functional."

The top 10 photos are on display at Blackfriars (north bank ticket hall) until 31 May, while the winning image taken by Barbara Hough, a 38-year-old finance manager from Tulse Hill, is now in pride of place at the south entrance of the station.

10 facts to mark 10 years of Blackfriars:

1. Blackfriars is named after a Dominican priory established in 1276 at the foot of nearby Ludgate Hill
2. Opened on the north bank as St Paul's in 1886, the station served the London, Chatham and Dover Railway and was a starting point for rail trips to the continent – a historic wall featuring destinations across Europe still exists in the station
3. When the station was rebuilt from 2009-2012 it wasn't allowed to block the protected view of St Paul's Cathedral
4. 14,000 tonnes of building material were brought in by barge and 8,000 tonnes removed, keeping 2,000 lorries off London's streets

5. Blackfriars is now the only station in London to span the River Thames and is the only station with an entrance on either side of the river. This means it has two postcodes, EC4V (north side) and SE1 (south side)
6. Nine new lifts and eight new escalators has made every platform at Blackfriars step-free for the first time
7. Blackfriars boasts the largest solar roof of any bridge in the world (the size of 23 tennis courts), generating enough electricity for 80,000 cups of tea a day or almost 30 million a year
8. Blackfriars is the first bridge over the Thames since the 13th century to generate its own power. The old London Bridge used waterwheels to drive water pumps and grain mills
9. In 2018, Tom Cruise was filmed running across Blackfriars' roof for *Mission Impossible – Fallout* before being taken off the chimney of the Tate Modern by helicopter. He'd earlier broken his ankle!
10. Canny passengers exit to Queen Victoria Street through a little-known exit past station offices.

Photo credit: Thameslink