

Time-lapse shows impressive feat of engineering as 1,000-tonne crane replaces Bootle bridge

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Time-lapse footage has been released showing how Network Rail engineers have replaced an ageing railway bridge in Bootle by using a huge 1,000-tonne crane.

The bridge which crosses the Leeds & Liverpool Canal was renewed last week while the Southport line was closed for platform upgrades.

The important work as part of the Great North Rail Project will keep the bridge safe for the next 100 years.

Network Rail and Merseyrail planned the project to coincide with ongoing platform improvements in an effort to reduce overall disruption to passengers.

Chris Atkins, Network Rail scheme project manager, said: "It took two small cranes to build the whopping 1,000-tonne crane we used to lift the railway bridge!"

“This allowed us to completely renew the Leeds & Liverpool Canal bridge in just five days. Working with Merseyrail, we rescheduled this work to fit in with the closure of the Southport line while platforms were being upgraded.

“Both pieces of work are essential. One to prepare the Merseyrail network for the arrival of new, state-of-the-art trains. The other to ensure the railway bridge that supports the railway in Bootle is kept safe for the next 100 years.”

David Powell Merseytravel’s Programme Director Rolling Stock said: “All partners have worked together to minimise disruption to passengers as much as possible. We are progressing with the platform upgrades in preparation for the arrival of the new state-of-the-art trains from 2020.

“Although the end results might not be obvious, the upgrades are essential to ensure the new trains’ sliding step can meet the platform edge so that passengers can get on and off the new trains with ease.”

Andy Heath, managing director at Merseyrail, said: “The platform upgrade work is essential to prepare the network for the new state-of-the-art trains and we are pleased that together with Network Rail the bridge replacement could be scheduled to take place at the same time.”

“The next stage of platform upgrade work will start on the Chester and Ellesmere Port lines from Saturday 2 March – 22 March and 25 March – 2 April. Passengers are advised to check before they travel at merseyrail.org/itshappening.”

The Southport line was closed between 2 and 24 February while Network Rail engineers upgraded 17 platforms on the Merseyrail network. The work involves altering the height and width of station platforms and realigning track to ensure the new trains’ sliding step can meet the platform edge – a feature which will make them unique in the UK when the trains start running.

More information on travel advice for passengers can be found at: www.merseyrail.org/itshappening

More information on the work being delivered by Network Rail can be found at: www.networkrail.co.uk/lcr