

## Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Association

### Survival Guide to the London Bridge Rebuilding - Ver1 - 5<sup>th</sup> Dec 2014.

#### 1. Top Tips (sometimes called the Executive Summary!)

- a. If you can **avoid using London Bridge and Cannon Street** do so – these trains will be very heavily loaded. If you have to, check for alternative routes as explained in section 4.
- b. Have a smart phone and load **relevant apps and website links** , see section 6(a)
- c. Despite the £6Bn price tag for building work and new rolling stock, the relative **expenditure on improving customer information has been negligible**, especially in preparation for the inevitable disruptions, and we believe will largely leave SER staff and their customers to their own devices. Think “snow” and you are unlikely to be disappointed!
- d. If you have a **National Rail only season ticket** valid after January 12<sup>th</sup> 2015 you will have to have it reissued if you want to travel free of charge between London termini as explained in section 5 it must be reissued (free of charge). As of November 14<sup>th</sup>, the procedure for re-issuing has not yet been announced.
- e. **SRTA’s website and Twitter feed** will provide updates. Please share up to the minute information on services with fellow travellers through social media.
- f. At **Charing Cross**, remember the exit via the overbridge giving quick access to Embankment tube until 0930.

#### 2. Introduction

##### a. Survival Guide

The purpose of this guide is to provide rail customers from the Sevenoaks area with information to assist minimise the disruption to your journeys during 2015-18. This guide has necessarily been prepared in advance of the engineering works. The advice is based on the best information available at the time of writing and will be updated as the project progresses.

SRTA hopes that the project will proceed as planned and that the amended services will provide satisfactory alternatives. However, experience suggests that any large scale engineering project will encounter unplanned disruptions. There is also a significant probability that parts of the temporary timetables will periodically provide inadequate.

This guide reviews the project, temporary timetables and offers

##### b. Disclaimers

The authors have checked all the information carefully but changes may occur at short notice and outside the authors control so please check with SER before travelling.

##### c. Feedback

The authors would welcome feedback on the content of the guide as we expect to produce subsequent versions as the rebuilding project progresses. Please email [enquiries@srta.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@srta.org.uk) .

### 3. Summary

#### a. Overview

##### i. Background

The rebuilding of London Bridge will provide a 21<sup>st</sup> century station serving three key routes into central London. It should eliminate the congestion that has been a feature of the morning peak for many years. However, the price for rebuilding a station including one of the busiest platforms in the UK (platform 6) while maintaining the train service is some serious disruption for rail customers.

At the end of the project in 2018, London Bridge will offer commuters three operationally independent rail routes through the station – (1) to Waterloo East and CX, (2) to Cannon Street and (3) Thameslink services to Blackfriars, KX/St Pancras and the north of London. These will operate all day including throughout the peak period with easy interchange between the different routes. By providing each service with their own dedicated platforms it is intended that much of the congestion experienced today by trains in the LB area will be eliminated.

##### ii. Timescale of changes

From **January 2015 to August 2016** the platforms currently used by CX trains will be rebuilt. During this period therefore trains to CX will not be able to stop at LB. Consequently passengers to and from LB will need to use CS services.

From **August 2016 until January 2018** the CS platforms will be rebuilt. During this period trains to/from CS will not call at LB. Passengers using LB will then need to use CX services.

##### iii. Changing your London Terminus

A commitment has been made that passengers should be able to reach their current London terminus at no extra cost even if they are forced to travel to/from a different terminus. To allow this interchange at no cost to passengers all railway tickets will be accepted on **specified** bus and tube routes between Charing Cross, Waterloo East, London Bridge, Cannon Street and Blackfriars. For full details see section 5 below.

##### iv. Consequences

From January 2015 the total number of trains from Sevenoaks to London remains almost the same as now. However, many passengers currently use Charing Cross services to reach London Bridge. All these passengers will have to find an alternative route. The current Cannon Street services are already the most heavily loaded at Sevenoaks in the AM peak. Consequently during the AM peak passengers will almost certainly need to find alternative routes. Suggestions are set out in the section 4(b) below.

#### b. Morning Peak services

Our assessment of the morning peak is that trains to London Bridge and Cannon Street will be extremely crowded. Loadings on services to Waterloo East and Charing Cross will probably similar to today.

Dunton Green passengers are likely to face particular challenges as explained in Section 4(d).

#### c. Daytime and evening off-peak services

During the day there will be 4 trains per hour to Waterloo East and Charing Cross leaving Sevenoaks at 21, 29, 51, 59 minutes past each hour. The return service will leave Charing Cross at 10, 15, 40, 45 minutes past each hour. Given the pattern of services it is worth noting that the 21 and 51 minute up services run fast to Waterloo East while in the down direction the 21 and 51 minute departures run fast to Sevenoaks.

At 14 and 44 minutes past the hour there is a service to London Bridge and Cannon street (calling at New Cross see para 3b(ii) below) and at 03 and 33 minutes past the hour from Cannon Street again calling at London Bridge and New Cross.

#### d. Evening Peak services

The evening peak services are almost entirely unchanged as the peak is spread over a longer period reducing the acute pressure on the London termini.

#### e. Weekends

It has been announced that there will be very extensive diversions at the weekend and the only advice is to check each time on one of the websites listed in section 5.

#### 4. Re-planning your journey

##### a. Avoid rail heading to Sevenoaks!

Many commuters drive to Sevenoaks as a convenient railhead for services to London. As shown in section 3, services to London Bridge and Cannon Street will probably be under extreme pressure. Commuters using those services and with the option will do better to join their train much further from London to be sure of boarding their train and perhaps getting a seat.

##### b. City commuters

###### i. London Bridge & Cannon Street

Table 1 shows the trains leaving Sevenoaks during the morning peak. The schedule lacks any pattern and has some significant gaps. The first fast trains for London Bridge and Cannon Street are at 0549 and 0610. The 0653 and 0723 are likely to be very heavily loaded. Passengers may find it easier to wait for the 0728 although that train will be the first Ashford line service to Cannon Street since the 0549 service.

The slow services starting from Sevenoaks with guaranteed seats may look attractive.

###### ii. London Bridge via Waterloo East

Passengers who wish to reach London Bridge but cannot find a suitable Cannon Street service will be able to travel to Waterloo East and then change to the Jubilee line to travel back to London Bridge using their rail tickets.

While this will take extra time it will allow commuters to Docklands to avoid London Bridge. However SRTA has expressed to SER our concern about potential severe congestion interchanging between Waterloo East and Southwark tube station should there be serious delays on the Jubilee line.

###### iii. New Cross

An innovation in the timetable is the stopping of two services at New Cross which has a connection to London Overground services (4 trains per hour) to Canada Water (change for Jubilee line), Shadwell ( and onwards to Dalston Junction with a connection to Highbury & Islington. This avoids using London Bridge station.

###### iv. Blackfriars (and by changing at Bromley South to Victoria)

There are two alternative routes to reach Blackfriars.

- Thameslink service from Sevenoaks which run via Bat & Ball. Typical journey times to Blackfriars are just over an hour. This service will transfer from SER to GTR (formed by a merger of Thameslink and Southern) in December 2014. Public statements by the new company do not indicate any significant changes to services or ticketing arrangements.
- Maidstone East line services from Otford. From January 2015 SER will be running three fast trains from Maidstone East to London Blackfriars leaving Otford at 0626, 0722, 0907 with a journey time of just over 40 minutes. These will be in addition to the current service from Otford to Victoria.

SEV	NX	LB	CS
0501	0558	0555	0612 (slow) <i>Changing at Orpington</i>
<b>0549</b>		<b>0618</b>	<b>0625</b>
<b>0610</b>	<b>0630</b>	<b>0638</b>	<b>0645</b>
0616		0701	0708 (slow) <i>Changing at Orpington</i>
0636		0719	0726 (slow)
<b>0653</b>		<b>0723</b>	<b>0730</b>
0656		0738	0745 (slow)
0717	0754	0803	0810 (slow)
<b>0723</b>	<b>0744</b>	<b>0752</b>	<b>0759</b>
<b>0728</b>		<b>0755</b>	<b>0802</b>
0737	0811	0819	0828 (slow)
<b>0747</b>		<b>0815</b>	<b>0822</b>
<b>0808</b>		<b>0834</b>	<b>0842</b>
0817		0901	0908 (slow)
<b>0827</b>		<b>0856</b>	<b>0904</b>
<b>0856</b>		<b>0923</b>	<b>0931</b>
0914		1005	1012 (slow) <i>Changing at Orpington</i>
<b>0944</b>	<b>1006</b>	<b>1016</b>	<b>1020</b>

**Table 1 Trains to London Bridge and Cannon Street  
(Fast services in bold)**

c. West End commuters

It appears that services to Waterloo East and Charing Cross should be adequate although departure times have been substantially changed. The absence of passengers travelling to London Bridge may improve the balance of passengers to seat.

SEV	Wat East	Charing Cross	SEV	Wat East	Charing Cross
0501	0543	0549	<b>0803</b>	<b>0834</b>	<b>0840</b>
<b>0543</b>	<b>0614</b>	<b>0620</b>	<b>0812</b>	<b>0840</b>	<b>0846</b>
0600	0656	0702 (slow)	<b>0823</b>	<b>0854</b>	<b>0900</b>
<b>0616</b>	<b>0647</b>	<b>0654</b>	<b>0831</b>	<b>0900</b>	<b>0907</b>
<b>0630</b>	<b>0659</b>	<b>0705</b>	0837	0926	0932 (slow)
<b>0644</b>	<b>0715</b>	<b>0721</b>	<b>0847</b>	<b>0917</b>	<b>0923</b>
<b>0649</b>	<b>0718</b>	<b>0725</b>	<b>0851</b>	<b>0920</b>	<b>0928</b>
<b>0703</b>	<b>0734</b>	<b>0740</b>	0906	0951	0958 (slow)
<b>0711</b>	<b>0741</b>	<b>0747</b>	<b>0914</b>	<b>0945</b>	<b>0951</b>
<b>0732</b>	<b>0800</b>	<b>0806</b>	<b>0921</b>	<b>0948</b>	<b>0954</b>
<b>0743</b>	<b>0814</b>	<b>0820</b>	<b>0929</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>1006</b>
<b>0752</b>	<b>0821</b>	<b>0827</b>	0936	1021	1028 (slow)
0757	0842	0848 (slow)	<b>0951</b>	<b>1018</b>	<b>1024</b>

Table 2 Services between Sevenoaks and Waterloo East & Charing Cross

d. Dunton Green

Morning peak travellers from Dunton Green are faced with a difficult choice. Most services on the normal route to Charing Cross changing at Chelsfield will be operating. However some fast services will be diverted to Cannon Street (and these may well be extremely full) and some slow services will be diverted to Charing Cross. In general therefore we recommend using slow services to reach London Bridge and Cannon Street and fast services to Waterloo East and Charing Cross.

The service pattern from Dunton Green to Cannon Street (Calling London Bridge about 6 minutes earlier) is as follows

DG	CS	
0603	0645	Change at Orpington
0639	0726	Direct
0659	0745	Direct
0720	0759	Change at <u>Chelsfield</u> (connection may be very full - not recommended)
0720	0810	Direct
0740	0828	Direct
0800	0904	Change at <u>Chelsfield</u> for Charing Cross & tube from Embankment to Cannon St
0820	0908	Direct
0840	0931	Change at Orpington
0909	1012	Change at Orpington
0939	1020	Change at Orpington
<b>Table 3 Services from Dunton Green to Cannon St</b>		

DG	CS	
0603	0654	Change at Orpington
0603	0702	Direct
0639	0721	Change at Orpington
0659	0740	Change at Orpington
		There is NO service to Charing Cross at 0720 – only to Cannon Street
0740	0820	Change at Chelsfield
0800	0840	Change at Chelsfield
0800	0848	Direct
0820	0900	Change at Chelsfield
0840	0923	Change at Chelsfield
0840	0932	Direct
0909	0951	Change at Orpington
0909	0958	Direct
0939	1028	Direct
<b>Table 4 Services from Dunton Green to Charing Cross</b>		

## 5. Transferring between Stations

The authorities have given a commitment that customers should be able to reach their current London terminus at no extra cost even if they are obliged to travel to/from a different terminus. To allow this interchange at no cost to passengers all railway tickets will be accepted on **specified** bus and tube routes.

You can use the following Underground and bus routes without being charged:

You can travel between the following tube stations

Charing Cross, Embankment, Blackfriars, Cannon Street, London Bridge, Southwark, Waterloo and Elephant and Castle.

***(Note this does not include entering or leaving at intermediate stations such as Temple or Borough)***

Alternative routes

*Between London Bridge and Waterloo/Southwark on the Jubilee line or bus services (services 381 and RV1)*

*Between London Bridge and Charing Cross on Jubilee/Bakerloo/Northern Lines or bus services (services RV1 and 15)*

*Between Cannon Street and Charing Cross/Embankment on District/Circle lines or bus services (service 15)*

*Between Elephant and Castle and London Bridge on Northern Line or bus services (service 35, 40, 133 & 343)*

*Between Elephant and Castle and Waterloo on Bakerloo Line*

*Between Blackfriars and London Bridge on District/Circle/Northern lines and on bus services (service 17 (City Thameslink), 381 & RV1 (Blackfriars South bank))*

***Note rail tickets are valid for bus travel only between the London termini beyond those stops normal fares apply. Tickets should be shown to the driver.***

***National Rail only season tickets (ie not Travelcards) valid after January 12<sup>th</sup> 2015 will provide free travel as specified above. However in order to operate the ticket barriers they will need to be re-issued by SER otherwise ticketholders will need to use the manned gates at tube stations. Details of re-issuing awaited from SER.***

## 6. When Things Go Wrong - Information sources

An inevitable feature of any major engineering project is unplanned disruption. Listed below are a number of sources of information which may be able to provide useful information.

### i. Real Time Trains

A useful website is *Real Time Trains*. Details of all trains around Sevenoaks can be found at <http://www.realtimetrains.co.uk/search/advanced/SEV>

For details of other stations replace *SEV for Sevenoaks*, by *CHX for Charing Cross*, *CST for Cannon Street* and *LBG for London Bridge* etc. There is also a search box for other stations. The site also has an app for mobile phones. However if trains are diverted the site is slow to amend the

### ii. Network Rail Enquiries

This site is the official industry site but has not performed well when disruption occurs because of its dependence on pre-stored timetables.

<http://ojp.nationalrail.co.uk/service/ldbboard/dep/SEV>

It offers departures and arrivals from a specified station using the same code as in (i) above.

### iii. Phone numbers

Telephone numbers include

SER Customer Services Team **01732 378 751**

### iv. SER Twitter

This is available at Twitter [@SE\\_Railway](#) providing help and advice from the SER customer services team.

### v. SER Website

This includes a journey planner as well as a limited newsfeed

<http://www.southeasternrailway.co.uk/>

### vi. Limitations on smart phones in congested locations

SER is placing much emphasis on smart phones and tablets to circulate information during disruptions to both staff and customers. Many of us have experienced a significant degradation in service on our mobile devices at major sporting events as everyone uses mobile devices.

SRTA has expressed concern that large groups of customers and staff using mobiles to download information may suffer loss of data services or even voice services. In central London mobile phone cells cover small areas and a short walk can take you to a new cell which is fully functional. SRTA has pointed out to SER that their staff without this luxury of moving away from a crowded concourse may suffer significant issues in obtaining information during disruptions.

## 7. Claiming compensation for delays

SER operate a Delay-Repay scheme to compensate customers for delays over 30 minutes, including season ticket holders. Full details are available from <http://www.southeasternrailway.co.uk/contact/delay-repay/>

In view of Sevenoaks being the last station before London for many AM peak services, we are concerned about trains being too full to board. SER have responded to us that "If a customer chooses not to board a train because it is crowded I'm afraid that compensation would not apply. However, if a train skipped a stop or stops because it was crowded (or to recover the timetable in the event of disruption), then assuming that boarding the next service would delay the customer's journey by 30 minutes or more, then compensation would be paid."

## 8. Train loading information

The morning peak is going to be the period of maximum stress on the new timetable. SRTA will attempt through its website and Twitter feed to provide information to local commuters. If we can get sufficient information we may be able to provide a traffic light guide to loading on peak period trains to indicate the most heavily loaded.

## **9. Feedback**

The SRTA will be continuing its close contact with SER throughout the whole period. We welcome feedback on services throughout this period which can inform our representations to SER.

Finally this short guide has been provided to assist travellers. We are planning to revise this from time to time as circumstances change and so corrections and suggestions would be very welcome [enquiries@srta.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@srta.org.uk)