

International double act



RAIL SITE TRANSFORMED: Stratford station is in the foreground with the old works and depot cleared to make way for the international station. The CTRL runs diagonally from top left to bottom right in the picture.



Work starts on the extension to St Pancras station in London

Building work is under way in London for two new international stations. It is all part of the Channel Tunnel rail link scheme, Britain's first high-speed railway.

The aerial picture, left, shows Stratford, where the remnants of the old Great Eastern site have been cleared to make way for a one-kilometre long underground concrete box for Stratford International Station.

Two red Central Line trains can be seen in the left foreground and a suburban train on the former Great Eastern main line from London to Chelmsford and Colchester. The North London line can be seen curving away (towards Railfuture's office at Dalston) on the left of the picture.

The picture above shows piling work for the extension to St Pancras station which will be used for both Eurostars and inter-city services on the Midland main line.

A third new international station will also be constructed at Ebbsfleet in north Kent. Railfuture can claim much of the credit for the success of the existing CTRL station in Kent - at Ashford.

Railfuture campaigned for years for the Channel Tunnel and the associated rail link. It is good to see progress. The 46-mile section one of the CTRL - from the Channel Tunnel to Fawkham Junction - is now 90% complete. Work began last year on the 24-mile section two from Fawkham to St Pancras.

Other parts of Europe however are still forging ahead. The largest single project in the history of German railways becomes reality this year. A new high-speed rail route between Cologne and Frankfurt becomes fully operational in December. Unlike our isolated airport trains, the German high-speed services will be fully integrated into the national air and rail network.

■ St Pancras photo: Urban Exposure, courtesy of Rail Link Engineering, project managers and designers of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link.

■ Stratford photo: Countrywide Photographic, courtesy of Rail Link Engineering, project managers and designers of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link.