

Railwatch

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE FOR RAIL USERS

No 93

August 2002

£1.20



Cutting edge

This is the cutter head of the tunnel boring machine being lowered at Swanscombe, north Kent, on 11 July to start drilling the tunnels under the River Thames for the Channel Tunnel rail link. It signals the beginning

of the high-speed rail age for Britain. The tunnels are a combination of bored under the river and cut-and-cover at the portals near Thurrock, Essex, and Swanscombe. Children from a Northfleet primary school were

invited to the launch ceremony and nicknamed the boring machine Millie the Muncher Cruncher. When complete in 2007, the £5.2 billion link which was started in 1998, a year after the Labour government came to

power, will halve journey times from central London to the Channel Tunnel. Photo: QA Photos Ltd, courtesy of Rail Link Engineering, project managers and designers of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link.