

PRESS RELEASE



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For immediate release

Cars transported through Channel Tunnel by rail for first time in five years

Overnight from 4 to 5 July 2016, a train transporting new cars from Bristol in the UK to Ghent in Belgium travelled through the Channel Tunnel. This is the first time in five years that this type of traffic has been carried via the Tunnel, drawn by the need for reliable and secure transport for this high-value merchandise.

The traction for the car train was provided by GB Railfreight, the rail freight subsidiary of Groupe Eurotunnel, working on behalf of European automobile transport specialist, STVA UK Ltd.

The contract with STVA UK Ltd is for one train per week, carrying cars from the Bristol Port Company, Portbury, to Ghent, Belgium.

The first wagons are being hauled by a diesel Class 66 (locomotive 66713) from Portbury to the Channel Tunnel, where an electric Class 92 (locomotive 92044) will haul the wagons through the Tunnel. From Frethun, B Logistics and Europorte France will complete the journey to Ghent, Belgium.

Each train will be made up of nine double-deck STVA wagons, which were tailor-made to transport vehicles. Each wagon can carry 24 cars, with each train transporting 216 cars a week.

The components that went into the manufacture of the vehicles being transported came in part from continental European suppliers themselves and had already been transported through the Tunnel en-route to the assembly plant.

This train is therefore a symbol of the exchanges and the just-in-time logistics flows between the continent and the United Kingdom for which Groupe Eurotunnel offers a complementary service with its truck shuttles on the one hand and its rail freight services on the other.

This contract also signifies GB Railfreight's ambition to continue diversifying its portfolio and forge forward with its European growth plans. Following the decline of core commodities such as coal and steel, the company is intent on increasing UK rail freight's competitiveness in other markets, and opportunities for expansion exist in the automotive industry and across the Continent.

Paul Maynard MP, Rail Minister, said:

"This is a great example of how the rail freight industry in the UK is continuing to offer real benefits for the environment and for UK businesses. The extensive security measures put in place last year by both the French and UK Governments and Eurotunnel mean that customers now have confidence the Channel Tunnel site is secure and open for new business.

"This new cross-channel deal will build on the success of our safe and secure freight links through the Channel Tunnel, helping to reduce congestion on roads. The government is working with the industry to develop a Rail Freight Strategy that will identify and implement further measures to ensure continued growth and success for the sector."

John Smith, Managing Director of GB Railfreight, said:

"Over the course of the last three years we have built a strong relationship with STVA UK Ltd and we are really proud to have added this new flow to our portfolio."

“There is huge potential to increasingly transport bulk items, such as cars, on rail and through the Channel Tunnel, cutting carbon emissions and relieving congestion on our roads. We will continue to work closely with Government and the industry to ensure that we unlock capacity on the rail network in order to support the true potential of freight.”

Ian Brown, Managing Director of STVA UK, said:

“STVA is delighted to extend our transport services to an important customer to respond to a requirement linked to production growth. This solution is both operationally efficient and environmentally responsible. “STVA successfully works with GBRF to transport cars by rail within a Domestic Context and we are pleased to offer this opportunity to work together on this cross-channel project.”

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