

Siemens Rail Automation Commissions Final Stage of Walsall Re-signalling Programme

After a 96 hour blockade over the August bank holiday weekend, Siemens Rail Automation successfully commissioned the final stage of the three year Walsall and Cannock Lines Re-signalling Programme.

Delivering updated signalling and control equipment in the West Midlands area, the project represented Phase 3 of Network Rail's West Midlands signalling renewal scheme, its scope covering the Grand Junction line from the fringe with Birmingham New Street at Hamstead to the fringe with Wolverhampton PSB at Willenhall, the Sutton Park Line to the fringe with Water Orton Corridor at Streetly and the Cannock Line to the fringe with Stoke signalling control centre at Rugeley Trent Valley. In the build up to the commissioning, Siemens undertook 22 discrete signalling stages between August 2012 and August 2013, during which over 150 track circuits were replaced and 37 point ends upgraded from electro-pneumatic to electro-mechanical mechanisms. These advance stages significantly reduced the amount of works required within the commissioning.

Delivered under a Network Rail Type A Framework Contract, the 259 signalling equivalent unit (SEU) renewal programme was condition led, driven particularly by issues associated with the state of the existing equipment and the lack of spares for the existing geographical interlocking. During the course of the programme, the power signal boxes at Walsall and Bescot Down Tower and signal boxes at Bloxwich, Hednesford and Brereton Siding were all decommissioned, with control being transferred to the West Midlands Signalling Centre at Saltley. The new system was signed into service at 5.30am on 27 August.

Commenting on the programme, **Paul Danks, Network Rail Project Manager**, said: “The new signalling we have invested in, and successfully commissioned will deliver a more reliable services for our passenger and freight customers who use this route. To complete a total number of 22 complicated commissioning stage works is a testament to the skill and professionalism of all involved and highlights the strong and collaborative working relationship between the project teams”.

Stephen Bick, Siemens Rail Automation Senior Project Manager, added: “This has been a truly collaborative project epitomised by an extremely close working relationship with the Network Rail team and other spoke contractors. Solid planning helped the project to run smoothly, including installing and locally testing signalling equipment not associated with the main stage works before the final August 2013 commissioning, leaving minimum works for the blockade itself”.

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