Siemens Completes Major Christmas Commissionings

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Over a ten-day blockade between Christmas Eve and 5 January, the company completed the signalling work for Stage L of the Reading Station Area Redevelopment programme. Representing the third of four major commissionings for the seven-year project, Siemens commissioned an upgrade to three Trackguard Westlock interlocking systems and brought two new signal gantries into service. This was part of the programme which saw the introduction of a 1.7 kilometre viaduct to carry the Great Western Main Lines into Reading station through a fully re-modelled track layout.

The majority of the signalling and telecommunications work covered the installation of trackside equipment and cabling – all fully tested back to Siemens' Trackguard Westlock data interlocking at Network Rail's Thames Valley Signalling Centre. The relief lines were handed back into use on 27 December, enabling passenger lines to be brought back into service as soon as possible, with the main lines being handed back on 5 January.

Following a major blockade, Siemens' delivery team also handed back the low level station at London Bridge on 5 January. The commissioning took place from midnight on 20 December and marked an important chapter in the station's development, with the introduction of the last two of six new terminal platforms at the station.

The sheer volume of work that needed to be completed was a huge challenge for all involved, not only in terms of the resignalling work, with the transfer of control to Network Rail's new Rail Operating Centre at Three Bridges, but also due to the significant track and station works that needed to be conducted at the same time. Close collaboration was critical to the success of this project.

Completing the trio of major works, the commissioning of the Watford Area Resignalling project was safely and successfully completed on time on 29 December. Covering the resignalling of the Watford Junction and Kings Langley interlocking areas, as well as the relocation of control to Wembley Mainline Signalling Control Centre, this technically challenging project featured a number of complex interfaces and has now seen 17 major track remodelling stages completed in just 11 months.

In preparation for the commissioning, Siemens began powering up equipment in September and erecting straight post signals and gantries in October, with testing continuing throughout October and November. As the project moves to completion in June 2015, the company will be supporting more permanent way stages during February and Easter 2015 – at which time the new North Junction will be brought in to use at Watford.

Commenting on the Christmas works, Siemens' Managing Director Paul Copeland, said: "The volume of project activity over the Christmas and New Year period was one of our most demanding ever. The successful outcome was a result of the dedication of our project delivery teams, many months of robust planning and the collaborative culture that now exists within our industry."

Rob Morris, Siemens' new Director Delivery, added: "I'm delighted to have joined an organisation with such an outstanding track record. The level of project activity over Christmas really demonstrates the capability of the business and the expertise and commitment of our delivery teams."

Siemens Rail Automation is a global leader in the design, supply, installation and commissioning of track-side and train-borne signalling and train control solutions. Its portfolio includes train control, interlocking systems, operations control systems, components, track vacancy detection, level-crossing protection, rail communications, and cargo automation for both passenger and freight rail operators.

Siemens Rail Automation employs over 9,500 people across a network of offices worldwide. In the UK, 1,650 employees operate from offices in Chippenham, London, Croydon, Poole, Birmingham, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Manchester, York, Glasgow and Newport, delivering both mainline and mass transit programmes. For more information, visit www.siemens.com/rail-automation.

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