

[Press release: Report 08/2017: Near miss at Dock Lane level crossing](#)

Summary

At about 13:25 hrs on Tuesday 14 June 2016, the passenger of a car that was waiting to cross the line was opening the gates at Dock Lane user worked crossing, in Melton, Suffolk, when a train passed over the crossing. The signaller at Saxmundham signal box had given permission for the car to cross the line after the car driver had contacted him using the telephone provided at the crossing.

The signaller knew the train's approximate location before the call and was aware of its proximity to Dock Lane user worked crossing. However, during the call he did not use this information to decide to refuse permission to cross. Immediately after the call, the signaller realised the error.

It is possible that the signaller gave an automatic response to the car driver, partly because of the familiar nature of the telephone call and partly because of mental fatigue resulting from the complexity of maintaining awareness of train locations with the limited information that was available to him. Also, because he had been provided with all the information he needed to handle such a call without asking for it, he did not take the lead in the conversation. Had he done so, it might have reduced the chance of such an error.

The signaller at Saxmundham signal box is responsible for managing a high number of crossing telephone calls. The volume was such that it was highly likely that he would eventually make an error that could lead to a near miss or an accident.

Recommendations

The RAIB has made four recommendations to Network Rail, addressing management of human error when assessing level crossing risk, assessment of the signaller's workload at Saxmundham, identification and assessment of other signalling locations with a high workload from level crossings, and the criteria for triggering assessment of workload demands on signallers.

Notes to editors

1. The sole purpose of RAIB investigations is to prevent future accidents and incidents and improve railway safety. RAIB does not establish blame, liability or carry out prosecutions.
2. RAIB operates, as far as possible, in an open and transparent manner. While our investigations are completely independent of the railway industry, we do maintain close liaison with railway companies and if we discover matters that may affect the safety of the railway, we make sure that information about them is circulated to the right people as soon as

possible, and certainly long before publication of our final report.
3. For media enquiries, please call 01932 440015.

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PDF, 4.81MB, 39 pages

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[Press release: UK statement on political developments in Macedonia](#)

There has been a political crisis in Macedonia since 2015. Early elections took place in December last year. On 1 March 2017, a clear majority of those MPs elected in December asked to form a government. However, President Ivanov refused to offer the mandate so that the majority coalition could form a government. On 27 April a Speaker was elected by the Macedonian Parliament.

A Foreign Office Spokeswoman said:

The UK supports the democratic decision of the majority of Macedonian MPs to elect Talat Xhaferi as Speaker. We look forward to working with him.

We call on all individuals, institutions and parties to allow an unhindered and non-violent transfer of power from the previous ruling party to the majority coalition elected in December 2016. The sooner a government is formed, the sooner it can get on with implementing urgent reforms to benefit Macedonia's citizens.

At a time of heightened tension, all leaders should refrain from inflaming ethnic tensions. Any such behaviour is dangerous and contrary to the interests of Macedonia's national unity.

In the wake of the unacceptable violence of 27 April we also call for the State authorities, in particular the police, to be allowed to fulfil their roles without political interference.

Further information

[News story: Accelerator face-to-face meetings](#)

An opportunity to book a meeting with the Defence and Security Accelerator team to discuss your research idea.

The Accelerator is holding Enduring Challenge and Autonomous Last Mile Resupply themed challenge face-to-face meetings in London to give you the opportunity to discuss your innovative research idea in private.

The Accelerator focuses on innovations which can provide advantage to defence and national security to protect the UK from its adversaries. It funds the development of suppliers' innovative ideas and provides support through to potential application. This is through the [enduring competition](#) or [specific themed competitions](#).

Before you come to your meeting please prepare by thinking about:

- what is your research idea?
- what do you think the benefit is to defence and security?
- will it save time/costs, improve capability/performance/reliability?
- why should MOD or the Security Agencies invest in this work?
- what will your approach be?
- how will you structure your research?
- what will you deliver? what evidence will you produce?
- what will the impact of your research be?
- how will you demonstrate progress towards the claimed benefit?

The main purpose of this meeting is for you to ask questions, and most importantly, receive advice from the team, so please leave time for this during your session.

Spaces will be on a first-come, first-served basis and an organisation should only register once.

Defence and Security Accelerator Email accelerator@dstl.gov.uk Telephone+44 (0)30 67704236

Please email for the quickest response.

[News story: UNESCO: UK Explanation of Vote \(EoV\) concerning the Jerusalem and Culture resolutions](#)

In the long shadow cast by World War II, UNESCO was founded to build bridges and cross divides through solidarity in mankind's shared cultural heritage. Heritage that Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories are blessed with in abundance. It is therefore right that UNESCO supports their protection.

And we share fellow Members' concerns at the sharply negative trend in Israeli conduct of the Occupation, including the unacceptable threat posed to Cremisan's Christian Monastery. And it is of course important the long-standing status quo concerning the Holy Sites, continues.

But whilst we agreed with many points in the Culture resolution, we could not vote in favour of a text that ignored terrorism. According to the Quartet's report last year, 30 Israelis were killed in terrorist attacks. In past years we have seen repeated one-sided, inflammatory, and unacceptable UNESCO resolutions on Jerusalem, which sought to deny the Jewish people's ancient connection to Jerusalem. The Old City of Jerusalem is sacred to the world's three great Abrahamic faiths: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. We welcome some improvements in today's Jerusalem decision that better acknowledge this essential truth.

But the Jerusalem text still suffers from grave deficiencies. Absent agreement by both parties and safeguards to ensure objectivity, the monitoring mission as presently conceived risks hardening positions, as well as maintaining an excessive focus on Israel, at a time when regimes and terrorist groupings elsewhere in the world trample on cultural rights. For these reasons, today the UK has voted against the Jerusalem resolution.

UNESCO's founding constitution calls for the "principles of the dignity, equality and mutual respect of men". We are keen to work with like minded partners in support of this noble vision and ensure much greater balance in UNESCO on the Israeli-Palestinian file. Ultimately, only an even-handed approach can help realise our shared objective of two states for two peoples.

[News story: UK troops deploy to South Sudan to support peacekeeping mission](#)

Touching down in country today, an additional 35 UK military personnel will

join the current UK presence providing support to the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

This latest addition to the British contingent will provide engineering support to the UN mission, undertaking projects such as the construction of a jetty on the River Nile, helicopter landing sites and other infrastructure improvements, and will be based mainly in Malakal.

In particular, the Royal Engineers will support the construction of a temporary field hospital in Bentiu. On completion of this, a permanent hospital facility, which will support over 1,800 UN peacekeepers and UN staff, will be constructed. These hospitals will be staffed by medical personnel drawn from all three services.

This latest arrival means around 240 British personnel are now based in South Sudan, primarily split between Malakal and Bentiu in support of UNMISS.

The latest deployment of British troops has arrived in South Sudan. Picture: UNMISS.

Along with a small number of staff officers in the UNMISS headquarters in Juba, the total number of UK military deployed will rise to nearly 400 over the coming months, making it one of the UK's largest operational deployments across the world.