

# AUTUMN COMES BUT ONCE A YEAR

LU's leaf-fall season officially began on 3 October 2021 with temporary timetables applying on the Metropolitan, Piccadilly and District lines. For the District Line, there were no rail adhesion trains scheduled to operate but the timetable had minor retimings as a result of the Piccadilly Line leaf-fall timetable. However, there were no changes to the District Line services provided or the patterns of operation.

For the Central Line, a special Timetable Notice was separate to the normal working timetable, with no notable variations to the booked services. The timetables were:

- Central Line – STN 63/21 in addition to the booked working timetable 223/20. Five-car (west end) and eight-car (east end) trains of 1962 Tube Stock.
- District Line – TTN 136/21.
- Piccadilly Line – TTN 126/21. Two three-car units of 1973 Tube Stock specialty adapted as rail adhesion trains for the season, one at the east end and one at the west end.
- Metropolitan Line – TTN 128/21. One five-car train of D Stock (with one train spare) operating on all sections north of Wembley Park.

The timetables were scheduled to operate through to 23 December 2021, but that is not to say the Rail Adhesion Trains (RATs) would work throughout – a late start or early finish to the season would cause them to be cancelled, along with the occasional defect requiring depot attention of course. Moreover, it is also possible that the trains could run earlier or later than scheduled to fit in with the service requirements.

On the Metropolitan Line, service intervals and patterns continued to apply. However, southbound trains generally run 3½ minutes earlier from Amersham and Chesham, 2½ minutes earlier from Chalfont & Latimer and 1½ minutes earlier from Chorleywood, all due to speed restrictions caused by the leaf fall arrangements on the downhill run to Rickmansworth. In addition on the Metropolitan Line, a Rail Head Treatment Train (RHTT) was operated by Network Rail, formed of 2xClass 66 locomotives (tripcock fitted), top and tailing 3x60ft container wagons, and was scheduled to operate between Marylebone and Aylesbury and over the Metropolitan Line between Harrow and Amersham. The RHTT was due to end operations on Metropolitan Line metals on Monday morning 12 December 2021.

It is on the Piccadilly Line that substantial changes have been made for the leaf fall season, with increased running times (of up to 5 minutes in a complete journey) and 30 mph speed restrictions in both directions between Cockfosters and Arnos Grove, Boston Manor and Hounslow West and between North Ealing and South Harrow. On Mondays to Fridays there are two less trains in service at peak times (77 instead of 79). The service through the core section (Acton Town – Arnos Grove) is reduced from 24 to 23 trains per hour. Six of those trains per hour reverse at Arnos Grove, giving 17 tph onwards to Cockfosters. West of Acton Town, the 23 tph is shared out as follows:

- 6 tph Acton Town – Heathrow T5
- 6 tph Acton Town – Hatton Cross (and then empty via Heathrow T4 to Heathrow T2&3).
- 3 tph Acton Town – Northfields (depot reversers).
- 4 tph Acton Town – Rayners Lane.
- 4 tph Acton Town – Uxbridge.

It will be appreciated that the Rayners Lane and Uxbridge services come off worst as is usual, with a one-third reduction to Rayners Lane (8 tph instead of 12 tph) and a 50 per cent reduction to Uxbridge (4 tph instead of 8 tph).

During the midday off-peak, the same number of trains are in service (69) but with Arnos Grove reversers every 10 minutes instead of every 20 minutes and a reduced service of 15 trains per hour (instead of 18) in consequence to Cockfosters. On Saturdays before 12.00 and after 19.00, the 69-train service operates but the afternoon enhancement (12.00 to 19.00) has 72 trains in service instead of 76. The Northfields – Arnos Grove reversers comprise four trains per hour during this period instead of the usual six.



The 69-train service operates on Sundays between 13.30 and 18.30, but either side of these times, a 61-train service is provided, the service at the west end of the line being at normal intervals, the central area at 3-3½-minute intervals (18tph) and 3-7-minute intervals (15tph) to Cockfosters.

It is only the Piccadilly Line that has no permanent RAT, two three-car units of 1973 Tube Stock having to be adapted each season. As with last year the units are 868 and 890. These photos show unit 868 being prepared at Northfields for the season.

***All photos: Kevin Fisher***

