

<https://metro.co.uk/2023/02/03/kent-terrified-commuters-run-from-train-after-fire-broke-out-18218283/>

So for this article we're going to look at a number of things. The wording, as in was any of it true in what they said. The actual fire and where it occurred, as in the train and also the location. What, if anything, was found out about it after the fact?

I'll post the entire website here, as I'll be looking at a few areas in it, so once we can see the full page, we can start on each part.


Terrified commuters run from train after fire broke out and started exploding



Kirsten Robertson

Published Feb 3, 2023, 1:13pm | Updated Feb 3, 2023, 1:15pm

Southeastern train consumed by electrical fire at West Malling station in Kent



0:00 / 0:40

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Commuters were forced to leap from a burning train after it caught fire in Kent.

The blaze, on a Southeastern train bound for **London**, took hold yesterday afternoon.

People were forced to flee the carriage as it sent sparks across a nearby platform.

The terrifying ordeal was captured on video and showed passengers running away as the flames grew.

A series of loud bangs were heard before plumes of black smoke rose from the carriage.

The train doors were hastily opened as the fire took hold at West Malling station around 4pm.

A Southeastern spokesman said today: 'A fire occurred underneath the 3.25pm London Victoria to Ashford International train yesterday evening.'

'On becoming aware of the fire the driver took immediate action, safely stopping the train at West Malling station so passengers could be immediately evacuated.



The moment the train burst into flames was captured on shocking video (Picture: UkNewsinPictures)



Passengers leapt from the carriage and sprinted to safety(Picture: UkNewsinPictures)

'Emergency services attended the scene and put the fire out.

'No injuries were reported but our team offered support to people involved, both customers and staff.

'The safety of our passengers and staff remains our top priority and a full investigation will be carried out.'

Network Rail engineers attended the site to inspect the railway line and ensure it was safe to use.

Okay, so there it all is, now we can begin. Some things to note in order to find things later: the date.

03 February 2023, originally at 1:13pm, then 1:15pm – as in the article, and it says it happened yesterday; hence the date is 02 February 2023. Can I find any other instances of this out there, with photos or videos not seen in this page?

2/2/2023 to 2/4/2023 – This is for Google Search, dates are 02 to 04th February, for non-US dates:

I've popped them in groups, as many are the same. So, video:

Same as article:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Azpb8KRHJGE>

This one is a clearer video of the main one in this article. Also, it states that credit goes to @stewartkerr_ so we need to track down his twitter account, or TikTok, for an original.

New video, different platform – same, better quality on 2nd? 2nd is by Sonny Rae Smith?

<https://www.tiktok.com/@lifeontheedgeofficial/video/7195981042791025925>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WP2Elu-Vc6E>

New video, taking from elevated position:

<https://www.kentonline.co.uk/malling/news/passengers-evacuated-from-train-after-fire-281545/>

Does cut into the original video, but I think it was just added on due to quality. The credit goes to 'Alex Baker'

New Video and a picture:

<https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/southeastern-train-catches-fire-kent/>

Image and I guess video credit is Twitter/Lauren Ena Andrews



Plumes of smoke filled the area. Picture: [Twitter/Lauren Ena Andrews](#)

This also made me chuckle, in a sad way. Doesn't any of these 'news websites' now how to create their own unique story?



The Independent
<https://www.independent.co.uk> › UK

Passengers flee burning train

3 Feb 2023 — A Southeastern spokesman said on Friday: "A fire occurred underneath the **3.25pm London Victoria to Ashford International** train yesterday evening ...



Romford Recorder
<https://www.romfordrecorder.co.uk> › news › national

Passengers flee burning train

3 Feb 2023 — A Southeastern spokesman said on Friday: "A fire occurred underneath the **3.25pm London Victoria to Ashford International** train yesterday evening ...



The Mirror
<https://www.mirror.co.uk> › News › UK News › Trains

Train bursts into flames forcing passengers to run for their ...

3 Feb 2023 — A Southeastern spokesman said on Friday: "A fire occurred underneath the **3.25pm London Victoria to Ashford International** train yesterday evening ...



Guernsey Press
<https://guernseypress.com> › news › uk-news › 2023/02/03

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Ilford Recorder
<https://www.ilfordrecorder.co.uk> › news › national › 23...

Passengers flee burning train

3 Feb 2023 — A Southeastern spokesman said on Friday: "A fire occurred underneath the **3.25pm London Victoria to Ashford International** train yesterday evening ...



lbc.co.uk
<https://www.lbc.co.uk> › news › southeastern-train-catch...

Dozens of passengers forced to flee as Southeastern train ...

3 Feb 2023 — A Southeastern spokesman said on Friday: "A fire occurred underneath the

Okay, so now that we have extra vids and a picture, we can begin. We'll start with the actual wording of the article, and then we'll get to the juicy parts, the fire etc.

Its states in the headline that commuters were forced to leap from a burning train. Well, that's not exactly true. Leap means to jump or spring a long way. That isn't what you see in the video, most seem to just get off as normal, sure a little faster than usual, but not diving for cover. And some people just stroll off, like it's a normal thing. Forced? Well, I suppose yes, unless you want to stay behind and see if you can burn to death.

So straight away, the headline tells you something that isn't true, to drag you in. It's the same with the line "The terrifying ordeal was captured on video and showed passengers running away as the flames grew."

Again, some did, but majority didn't.

Now the next line: "The blaze, on a Southeastern train bound for London, took hold yesterday afternoon."

Well, again, that is false. Why? For a start, sure it was a blaze but that wasn't what drew my attention. It's the fact it states it's bound for London. This set of wording explains in more detail:

"A Southeastern spokesman said today: 'A fire occurred underneath the 3.25pm London Victoria to Ashford International train yesterday evening.

On becoming aware of the fire the driver took immediate action, safely stopping the train at West Malling station so passengers could be immediately evacuated."

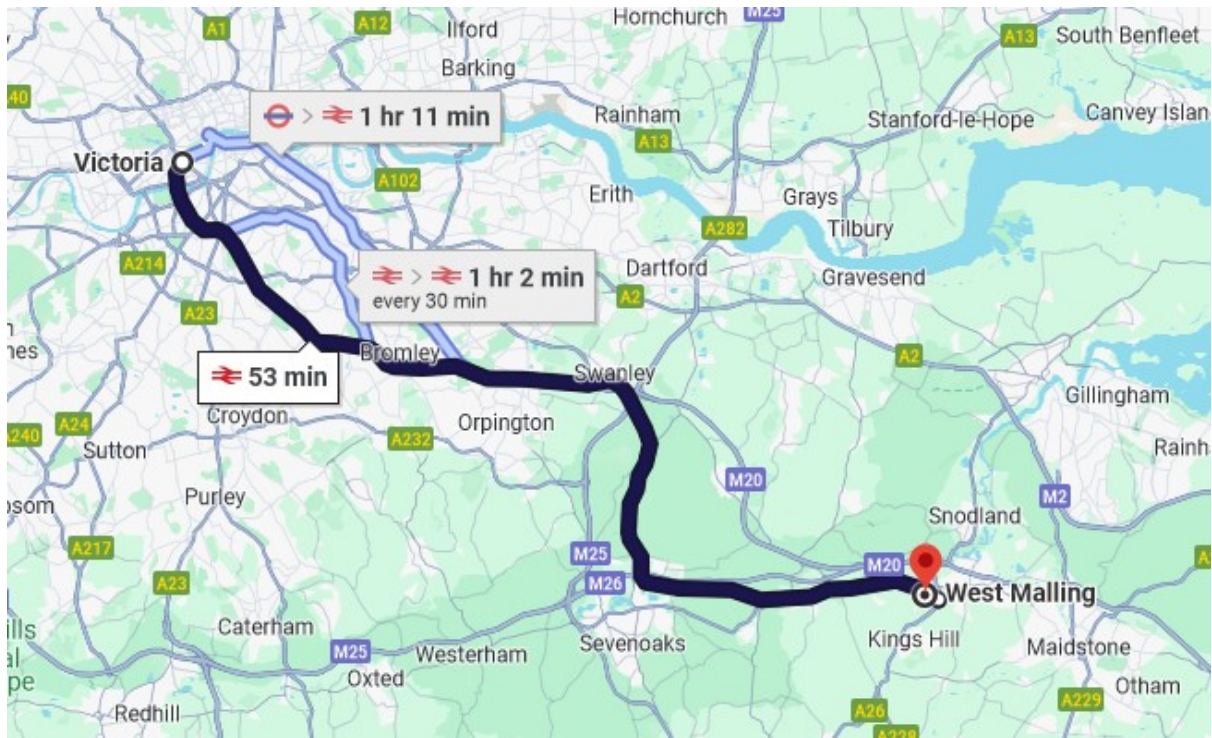
Let's look at this in detail. It was the 3.25pm London Victoria **TO** Ashford, and it was stopped at the West Malling station.

Here it is on the map, and it's going **away** from London, to Kent:

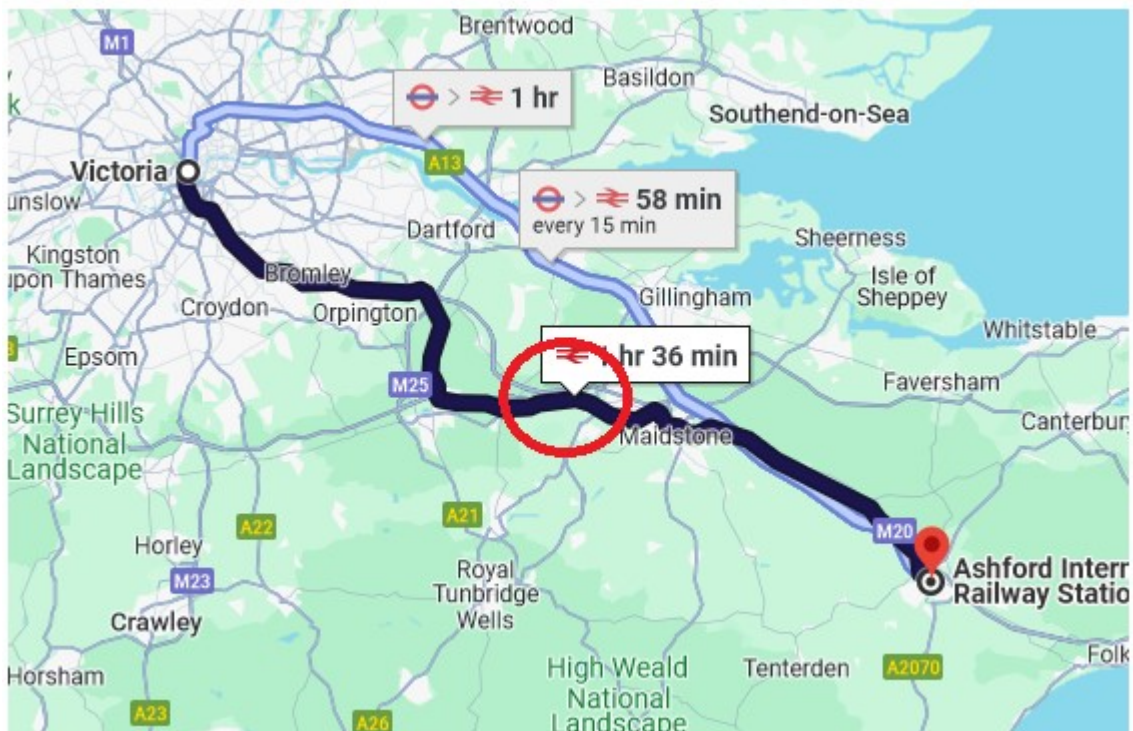


Sure, you could say 'wait, the train was on its way back from that station' but that can't be right, as you can't go to London if the train is going the other way, unless your name is Marty and Doc.

So, where is West Malling? It's here:



Which when you look at the main map, would be here:



So, definitely not **TO** London, but from what I can tell, it's a very short ride, about 40 mins, so it may not have been a scheduled stop.

So, that's it for the wording, which so far is not strictly true, except for the fire and it was on a train. Now, onto the fire itself.

Yes, it's on the carriage, but you can't see much and assume it's all on that side. Its only when you see the video from the other side, the second video is longer and shows where it is. You can tell it's from the other side, as there is a track between the platform and the train. This is at 32 seconds:



You can see the smoke, and then he zooms in for a better shot, 33 seconds:



Now, from my eye, that is just off the rail and underneath. The elevated position is very good, notice how no-one is running for their lives, and this is taken at 22 seconds in:



Definitely underneath, see how it's rising from the bottom. In fact, if you watch the video closely, at about 3 seconds, the flames go:



But then come back again, like it's an electrical thing. So, can we find out what train type was running, so we can maybe delve a little deeper?

So, looking here shows a list of the types of trains they have:

<https://www.southeasternrailway.co.uk/about-us/company/company-information>

Under Our Trains, it's actually the Metro train Class 466 Networkers. It can't be the 465, as the train number is on the opposite side. So, this is the train we're looking for:



And the 465:



<https://eversholtrail.co.uk/fleet/class-465/>

And the 466:



<https://angeltrains.co.uk/fleet/class-466/>

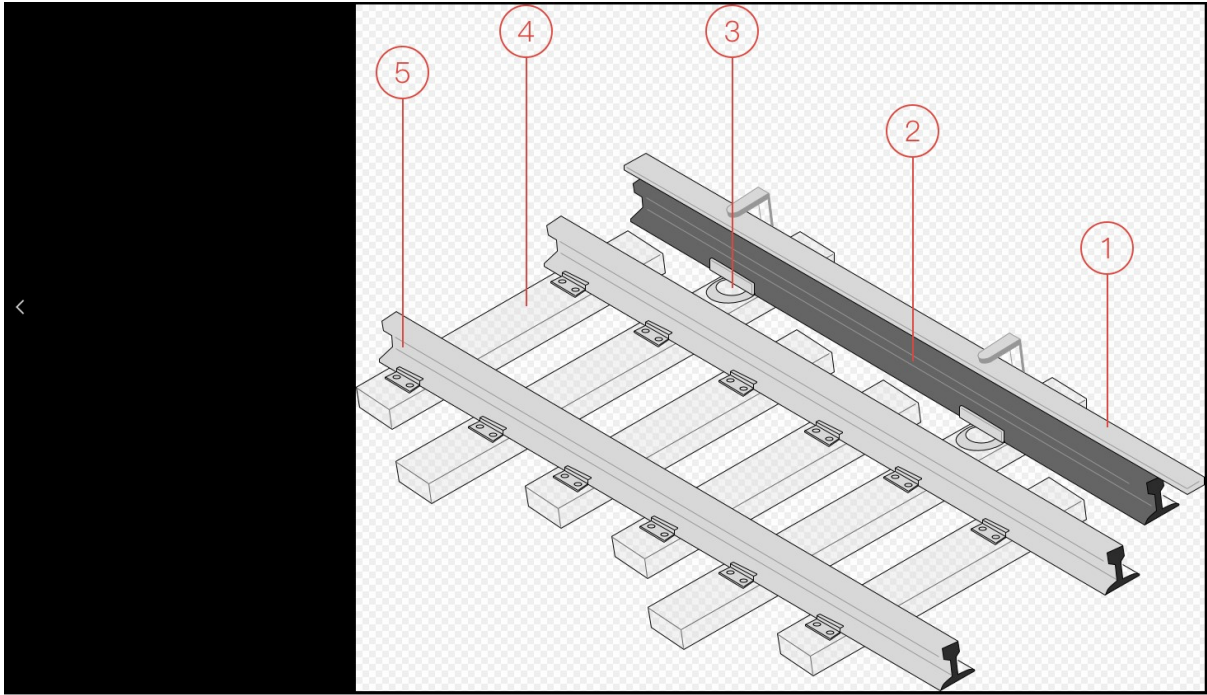
So, now that we have narrowed that down, can we find any details about the electrics or undercarriage?

Well, firstly we have the Wikipedia page for it:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Rail_Class_466

and on the right it says that the Electric System is 750 V DC third rail. So, I was looking into this, and the rail runs alongside the tracks, hence 'third':

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_rail



Third rail layout: 1: coverboard 2: power rail 3: insulator 4: sleeper 5: rail

But in our image, I would say it's not:



So, in the above picture, the yellow is the third rail, but the glow is not.

Weird or not, but I have looked here in the time frame, as in on the day and before all the way up to current, trying: fire, train, West Malling, etc. And it's not mentioned at all:

<https://www.gov.uk/search/news-and-communications>

Did find something here:

<https://www.kent.fire-uk.org/incident/maidstone/fire-west-malling-train-station>

But apart from that, I can't find anything. I have looked at these sites, and nothing is mentioned at all:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/raibs-response-to-accident-and-incident-notification#how-raib-selects-accidents-to-investigate>

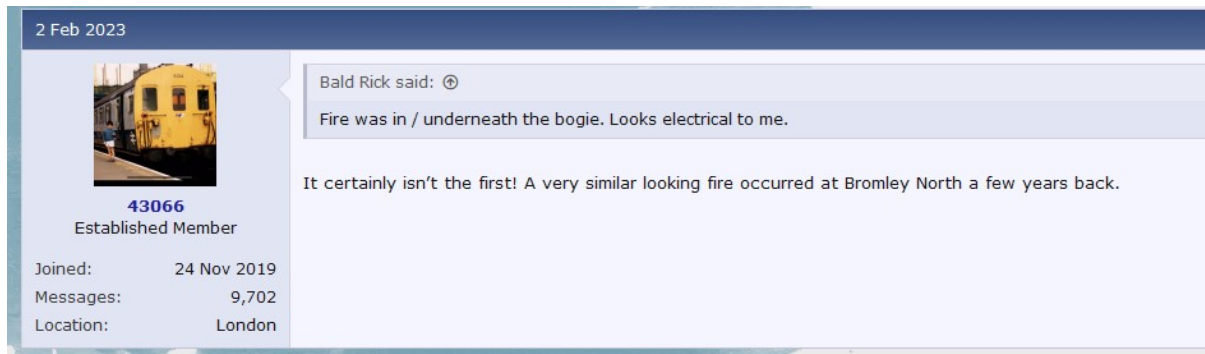
<https://www.gov.uk/raib-reports>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/catalogue-of-investigation-reports-and-bulletins>


<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/raib-annual-reports>

But I was reading in here that there was a similar thing a few years before:

<https://www.railforums.co.uk/threads/west-malling-train-fire-02-02-2023.242882/#post-6054123>




2 Feb 2023



43066
Established Member

Joined: 24 Nov 2019
Messages: 9,702
Location: London

Bald Rick said: 
Fire was in / underneath the bogie. Looks electrical to me.

It certainly isn't the first! A very similar looking fire occurred at Bromley North a few years back.

And then someone said this, pointing to electrical:



2 Feb 2023


milleille
Member

Shoe gear burn up. A relatively common occurrence in 3rd rail land, impact damage/shorting from track debris or could be a build up of dirt on the shoe gear and beam which shorts across the shoe beam to vehicle body and sets fire to the beam and cables.

In case you can't read it:

Shoe gear burn up. A relatively common occurrence in 3rd rail land, impact damage/shorting from track debris or could be a build up of dirt on the shoe gear and beam which shorts across the shoe beam to vehicle body and sets fire to the beam and cables.

So, could I find the similar thing in Bromley North? Yes:

<https://www.newsflare.com/video/67284/fire-on-tracks-in-bromley-north-rail-station>

It was in Google in 2021:

Videos :



Fire on tracks in Bromley North Rail Station

Newsflare
15 Oct 2021

But according to the actual website, it was from Thursday 31st March 2016, but I can't find anything relating to that date in Google.

Anyway, I think this is the end of this bit of research. What did we conclude? Well, the headlines and content of the article was misleading. The fire wasn't what everyone thought it was but electrical on the track. This is why, I think, it's not in the RAIB, as technically it's not a train fault.

Hopefully you've enjoyed this little bit of research, it was fun looking for things.