

Train delay to beat all others

Train leaving St Pancras has laid a claim to break the record for the longest ever delay



The Sign at St Pancras Photo: Dan Levene

By David Millward, Transport Editor

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There are delays and then there was the 23.02 from St Pancras to Bedford which, passengers were told, was running a trifling 1,387 minutes late.

Passengers looking to leave London shortly before midnight on Wednesday needed a calendar rather than a watch to calculate when their train was going to turn up.

According to industry punctuality rules, a train on a commuter service – such as this one – is deemed late if it runs more than five minutes behind timetable.

Exactly how this particular train will have been classified is a matter of debate.

Somebody waiting for the 23.02 could have boiled 462 eggs – one at a time – to while away the hours.

Or while stuck on the platform an adult with an average reading speed of 300 words a minute could

have worked his or her way through about three quarters of *War and Peace*.

A football fan could have watched more than 15 matches and a film buff could have sat through *Gone With the Wind* – complete with intermission and exit music – nearly six times.

“Passengers could have walked to Bedford and part-way back by the time this train turned up – or cycled there and back almost twice over,” said David Sidebottom, director of the independent watchdog Passenger Focus.

“This certainly highlights the need for accurate passenger information!”

A spokesman for First Capital Connect was mystified by the information provided to passengers, although the company believed this could have been due to a system fault.

“We are still trying to fathom out how this happened.”

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