

REGIONAL REVIEW

STOCK NOTES

South Western Railway has a serious problem with its suburban fleet, with an increasing number of services short-formed. Class 701 remains far from ready to enter service and class 707 units continue departing to Southeastern. At the same time, there is no desire to undertake significant work on class 455 and 456 units, so those becoming due for an overhaul are stored. Pairs of class 456 units often substitute for a 455. Class 458 units have started coming out of service, for conversion for use on express services. Apart from software problems, difficulties with class 701 include the design of the drivers cab. These are smaller than those on other Aventura type units, in order to fit in an additional row of seats in the passenger saloon.

Class 73: 73966 suffered significant damage when its axles seized while double-heading the southbound Inverness sleeper on the night of 27 October. It was moved by lorry to Eastleigh for repairs.

Class 171: Unit 171201 is out of service, following bodywork damage to vehicle 79423.

Class 319: Unit 319382 has been converted into hydrogen/electric train 799201. It has more fuel cells, so a greater operating range, than 799001. Driving trailer 77975 is entirely occupied by the hydrogen traction equipment. The unit is normally based at Long Marston unit, but visited Glasgow in connection with COP26. Invited guests were taken on trips round the Cathcart Circle, but with the train operating only on electric power. The official explanation was that this allowed guests to view the hydrogen equipment.

Class 465: The final class 465/2 moves to Worksop were 465239+243 on 25 October and 465235+237 on 28 October. 465004+017 were returned from Worksop on 29 October.

Class 701: 701036 was moved from Derby to Worksop and 701033 was returned to Derby from Worksop on 9 November.

TIMETABLES AND DIAGRAMS

Southeastern: Changes to the timetable in December include reinstatement of high speed trains via Deal and the introduction of off-peak semi-fast trains between Maidstone East and Blackfriars. The Maidstone service looks like a substitute for the promised Thameslink operation. Trains will call at Elephant & Castle, Bromley South, Swanley, Otford, Borough Green and West Malling. There will be later trains on suburban routes from Charing Cross.

INTERESTING WORKINGS

Class 73: Network Rail locomotives 73951 and 73952 ran from Welwyn Garden City to Ashford via Kew East and Orpington on 31 October. They were meant to work test trains round Kent on 3 and 4 November, but got no further than Paddock Wood on Wednesday and the Thursday trip was cancelled.

Class 153: 153385 worked infrastructure recording trips from Eastleigh on 9 November, visiting Southampton, Romsey and Brockenhurst.

Class 377: Class 377/3 units are not normally seen on Coastway services, but on 16 November 377325 was noted on the 13:29 Portsmouth Harbour to Brighton and 19:00 Brighton to Portsmouth Harbour.

Class 455: Units 455720+737 worked the 05:50 Waterloo to Reading and 07:39 return on 12 November. Fortunately, the next part of the diagram was empty to Wimbledon Park. A pair of units worked empty Stewarts Lane to Haywards Heath via the Quarry Line and return during the afternoon on 18 November.

Class 769: Units continue to make trips from Reading to Redhill or Gatwick Airport, for staff training, but this is not particularly intensive. 769938 was noted at Redhill on 5 November and ran from Reading to Eastleigh on 12 November.

Excursions: 57313 and 57601 topped and tailed an excursion from Chester to Winchester on 12 November, arriving over an hour late and giving passengers just two hours to view the city. The same locomotives were back on 20 November, with an excursion from Leeds to Winchester. By coincidence, there was a trip from Eastleigh to Leeds on the same day, hauled by 67013.

Imports: Class 231 and 756 trains, built by Stadler for Transport for Wales, have started arriving via the Channel Tunnel. The normal delivery route is via HS1, at 18:06 from Dollands Moor to Ripple Lane, with the first such working on 18 November when 756002 and 756004 were hauled by 92042.

RAILWAY BUSINESS

Channel Tunnel: RENFE, the Spanish national railway, is planning to run trains between London and Paris in competition with Eurostar.

PERFORMANCE and INCIDENTS

Figures show the percentage of trains arriving within 59 seconds of scheduled time, at all monitored stations. The ranking of the companies within the 23 passenger train operators is shown. Eurostar is not included, but open access operators are. MAA = moving annual average.

	19 Sept to 17 October	MAA to 17 October
All TOCs	71.5%	76.5%
SWR	73.2% (7 th)	78.2% (7 th)
GTR	72.4% (8 th)	76.7% (8 th)
SE	68.5% (14 th)	74.4% (14 th)

Wednesday 27 October: Early morning services from Hither Green and the Mid Kent line were unable to call at Lewisham, because of a points failure. Signalling problems at Charing Cross resulted in some morning peak trains being cancelled or diverted to Victoria or Cannon Street. A points failure at Ash Vale resulted in several evening trains from Alton to Waterloo being diverted via Guildford.

Thursday 28 October: The fire alarm was activated at London Overground's signalling centre at New Cross Gate, resulting in services via the East London Line being suspended for over two hours during the afternoon. The 17:09 Slade Green to Cannon Street failed at Woolwich Arsenal.

Saturday 30 October: A signalling problem between Dorchester and Moreton resulted in most trains being cancelled and those that did run being severely delayed until late afternoon.

Sunday 31 October: Torrential rain and strong winds brought many trees down onto South Western Railway routes during the morning. Lines were blocked at Syon Lane, Raynes Park, Bookham, Gomshall, Bagshot, Farnborough Main, Romsey, Fareham, Swanwick, Hinton Admiral, Wareham, Moreton, Grateley and Wilton. The line was flooded at Farnham. All lines reopened by the middle of the afternoon, but another tree came down at Hedge End during the evening. Adding to the severe disruption, over-running engineering work at Guildford resulted in a very limited service via Ash during the morning. A points failure prevented trains running between Horsham and Three Bridges during the evening.

SALISBURY COLLISION, 31 October: The 17:30 Waterloo to Honiton, unit 159102, collided with the 17:08 Portsmouth Harbour to Bristol Temple Meads, units 158762+763, at Salisbury Tunnel Junction. The Honiton train almost certainly suffered very poor adhesion and was unable to stop at the red signal protecting the junction. The front two coaches of

the Honiton train (57803 and 58703) and the rear two coaches of the Bristol train (unit 158763) derailed and both trains came to halt largely in the tunnel.

Some passengers and the driver of the Honiton train required hospital treatment, but fortunately there were no fatalities. Sadly, the driver was trapped in his cab and was reported to be seriously injured.

Lines from Salisbury to Andover and Romsey were closed until Monday 15 November. Shuttle services operated between Basingstoke and Andover and between Salisbury and Exeter, but with SWR operating only between Gillingham and Exeter on 1 November. Great Western operated a shuttle between Portsmouth and Romsey, with trains from Cardiff terminating at Salisbury. There was no SWR local service to Romsey, but GWR called at Millbrook and Redbridge from 2 November. The only trains scheduled to call at Swaythling were the few peak hour electric workings, but others are reported to have stopped there, presumably on the basis of the special stop order. There were no passenger trains at Chandlers Ford. A SWR diesel unit ran from Southampton to Salisbury Depot via Reading and Westbury on 5 November. Aggregate trains from Somerset to Fareham and Chichester were diverted via Melksham and Didcot.

Carriages started being cleared from the crash site on 4 November, after BT Police and RAIB had completed their investigations. The leading unit of the Bristol train, 158762, could be driven from the scene. 59003 hauled a Kirow crane from Eastleigh on 3 November; this and a very large road crane were used to lift the other vehicles out of the cutting. 59003 had to be used to drag the damaged carriages out of the tunnel, on the end of a chain. The carriages were loaded onto lorries in London Road, the last being removed on 7 November. Work was then able to start on repairing infrastructure, which included replacing 1,010 yards of track and three sets of points, 1,456 sleepers and 3 kilometres of signalling and power cable.

Freight traffic resumed on 15 November and railhead treatment trains also operated. SWR operated a test trip with an empty train from Salisbury, working twice to Romsey and Andover between 14:05 and 20:23. Full passenger services restarted on 16 November. Unfortunately that did not get off to a good start, because a track circuit failure caused significant disruption for about five hours from 11:20. Poor adhesion was reported in the Salisbury area on 17 November, resulting in the service being thinned.

Monday 1 November: Early morning services via Chertsey were delayed or cancelled, because of a tree on the line near Weybridge. The 10:23 from Ascot terminated at Frimley, because of a track circuit failure and there were no further trains until midday.

Tuesday 2 November: The 06:04 Tonbridge to Strood terminated at Paddock Wood, because of a problem with the doors. The 05:25 Guildford to Waterloo developed a fault at Epsom and was unable to proceed for 1 ½ hours. Following SWR trains were cancelled or diverted via Cobham.

Wednesday 3 November: Morning peak services through Charlton were delayed or diverted, because of a trespasser on the station roof. The line between East Croydon and South Croydon was closed for about an hour late in the afternoon while a person who had fallen from a bridge was moved from the track.

Friday 5 November: A points failure resulted in there being no trains between Crystal Palace and Beckenham Junction during the morning peak. The 17:28 Waterloo to Windsor was involved in a fatality at Mortlake, causing trains to be cancelled or diverted via Hounslow until after 21:00. A signalling failure resulted in most trains through Lewes after 21:00 being cancelled.

Saturday 6 November: The 08:04 from Strood terminated at Beltring because of a brake problem. A points failure at Moreton resulted in there being no trains between Wool and Dorchester for most of the morning. The 13:55 London Bridge to Epsom failed at Carshalton Beeches and terminated there. A track circuit failure between Bentley and Alton resulted in most trains being cancelled between 15:00 and 18:30.

Sunday 7 November: There were more problems at Beltring. The 15:33 from Tonbridge became stranded between Paddock Wood and Beltring, with loss of shoe gear, and a section of conductor rail was damaged. There were no more trains for the rest of the day while passengers were evacuated, the train moved and repairs to the conductor rails carried out.

Tuesday 9 November: There were no trains between Dorchester and Wool during the afternoon, because of a signalling failure.

Wednesday 10 November: An empty train from Wimbledon Park to Epsom, formed of units 455865+727 failed south of Ewell West. The train was moved into platform 2 at Epsom about 08:10, but remained there, blocking the line, for a further 2½ hours. Many SWR services were cancelled and some trains were diverted via Cobham. A track circuit failure at Charing Cross prevented use of platforms 1 to 3 during the evening. Ramsgate trains were diverted to Victoria and Hastings ones to Cannon Street. A points failure at St Denys caused delays during the evening and required trains towards Fareham to be diverted via Eastleigh.

Thursday 11 November: A signalling fault at Grove Park prevented use of the slow lines during the morning peak. There were delays and cancellations, with some main line services diverted to Victoria.

Friday 12 November: The 11:30 from Waterloo was involved in a fatality between Liss and Petersfield. Train were diverted via Winchester until the middle of the afternoon.

Saturday 13 November: The 09:30 Victoria to Epsom Downs suffered a technical fault at Carshalton Beeches and terminated at Sutton.

Tuesday 16 November: The 07:32 from Guildford failed near Cobham, resulting in up trains being diverted via Woking or Epsom until 10:00. A suspicious vehicle resulted in part of Croydon town centre, including West Croydon station, being cordoned off by police from 15:00. Initially trains ran through without stopping and terminating ones were diverted elsewhere. The line was closed from about 16:00, with trains diverted via Mitcham Junction. The line re-opened after about an hour later, following a controlled explosion, but the service remained disrupted for several more hours.

Wednesday 17 November: A cable fault at Keymer Junction resulted in many trains being cancelled and extensive delays from 11:20 until late afternoon. A track circuit failure at Littlehampton resulted in trains being delayed or cancelled throughout the afternoon. The 22:45 Epsom to London Bridge suffered a brake problem at Waddon, blocking the line. Following trains were cancelled or diverted via Mitcham Junction.

Thursday 18 November: A points failure at Preston Park caused cancellations and delays to trains from 21:00. Some trains between Victoria and Littlehampton were diverted via Horsham.

AROUND THE REGION

Paddock Wood: The up siding was abolished in October.

Swanley: The new street-level station building was formally opened on 22 November. The footbridge and stairs to the platforms have been repainted and re-glazed and have new external cladding. The waiting rooms and toilets on the platforms have been refurbished.

Abbey Wood: Hitherto, trial running by Crossrail has been for driver training, mileage accumulation on the class 345 trains and testing the signalling system. In recent months up to twelve trains per hour have been running. A further preparatory phase got under way in November, with various types of operational incidents being simulated in order to train staff how to deal with them. This includes evacuating trains in the tunnels.

Peckham Rye: The railway still owns some remarkable properties. One of these is the art deco building in Rye Lane that was previously a C&A department store. The building is located on the opposite side of the road from Peckham Rye station. It was built by the Southern Railway as a commercial venture. The Railway Heritage Trust is contributing to a project to renovate the building. It is to be hoped that this will include replacement of the current inappropriate shop fronts.

Accessibility: Work has started on building new footbridges with lifts at Crowborough and East Grinstead.

Weymouth: There was a blockade of the line to Weymouth from Monday 22 to Friday 26 November, for work in the Dorchester area. On Monday trains terminated and started at Wool and Tuesday to Friday at Dorchester South.

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