

## REGIONAL REVIEW: FEBRUARY 2022

### STOCK NOTES

**Class 171:** It is proposed to reform the most of the units as three coaches. The eight four-coach units would each donate a middle vehicle to a two-coach unit.

**Class 456:** Movements to Long Marston have been 456010/16/18 on 26 January, 456008/15/20 on 31 January, 456002/04/23 on 7 February and 456007/11 on 14 February. It is expected that 456001/05/17 will be moved by road.

**Class 484:** Unit 484005 was transported to the Isle of Wight on 16 February, completing delivery of the new fleet.

**Class 701:** The first five-coach unit to be delivered to Eastleigh was 701509, which arrived on 2 February. Units stored at Worksop are 701001/02/03/08/09/20/21/36/38/39/40 and 701507/510/511. Units 701501/02 are at the Asfordby test track. Alstom claims that recently built trains have far fewer defects than what it refers to as the “legacy units” built by Bombardier.

**Class 707:** Unit 707005 has had lettering *Remembering Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP Old Bexley and Sidcup* applied to the bodywork next to the offside driver’s door at each end. The Westminster portcullis symbol is also displayed.

### TIMETABLES AND DIAGRAMS

**Southern** is introducing a revised timetable on 28 February. A near normal service returns to Victoria, though Gatwick Express is still cancelled. A half-hourly service is provided between London Bridge and Epsom via West Croydon. The London Bridge to Beckenham Junction via Crystal Palace service runs every 90 minutes, but with additional trains for school pupils. Victoria to London Bridge via Crystal Palace trains are confined to two morning peak and a few late evening services. The hourly service between Redhill and Tonbridge is increased to half hourly at peak times. On Coastway routes the service between Brighton and Hastings remains hourly, but most trains are eight coaches. The Hove shuttle is still cancelled. Trains west from Brighton run no further than Chichester. London trains and the local service from Littlehampton provide onward services to Southampton and Portsmouth. Southern services to Milton Keynes were not planned to resume until 14 March and then only with one return trip in the morning peak and another in the evening.

**Thameslink** also makes some changes from 28 February. The service between Rainham and St Albans is hourly, but trains run to Orpington at peak times.

**South Western Railway** restored its timetable to the autumn 2021 service from 21 February, though initially thwarted by the impact of Storm Eunice.

**Eurostar** ran an additional train each way between London and Paris from 24 January, and two extra on Fridays and Sundays.

**Class 377:** It is envisaged that the class 377 fleet will be redeployed, as a result of cutting back suburban services from ten to eight coaches. It is expected that class 377/3 will replace class 313 on Coastway routes and classes 377/6 and 377/7 will be used to form ten-coach main line trains. There is likely to be greater use of class 377/1 and 377/4 on suburban workings.

**Freight:** GB Railfreight started operating trains from Newhaven Marine to Thorney Mill (West Drayton) for Brett Aggregates on 19 January. These convey sea-dredged material. It appears that GBRf’s class 69 locomotives will be based at Tonbridge for services in Southern England. 69003 hauled the gypsum empties from Mountfield to

Southampton on 8 February, as a trial. 69001-03 were at Tonbridge on 12 February. 69004, in BR Research livery, ran from Eastleigh to Brighton on 17 February.

## INTERESTING WORKINGS

**Class 455** workings to Reading continue. On 1, 2 and 3 February the 10:50 and 11:50 Waterloo to Reading and 12:42 and 13:42 return were class 455. On all three days the units used were 5851+5915 and 5862+5920.

**Class 769:** Unit 769925 ran from Oxford to Eastleigh Works on 28 January. On 16 February 769927 ran from Reading to Eastleigh and 769925 returned. Test runs between Reading and Gatwick continue. Meantime, the class 769 bimodes working for Northern are managing just 675 miles per technical incident.

**Engineering work** resulted in the line being closed between Purley and Redhill over the weekend 5 and 6 February. A half-hourly service operated between Victoria and Gatwick Airport via Dorking and Horsham, with Thameslink operating between Redhill and Brighton. Southern ran main line services from Three Bridges to Littlehampton and the East Coastway line. There were trains from Horsham to Portsmouth on Saturday and Sunday, but to Southampton only on Saturday.

## 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 24 passenger train operators is shown. Eurostar is not included, but open access operators are. MAA = moving annual average.

	14 Dec to 8 January	MAA to 8 January
All TOCs	72.8%	74.8%
SWR	75.2% (9 <sup>th</sup> )	76.4% (7 <sup>th</sup> )
GTR	75.6% (8 <sup>th</sup> )	76.0% (8 <sup>th</sup> )
SE	68.5% (13 <sup>th</sup> )	72.9% (10 <sup>th</sup> )

**SALISBURY COLLISION:** RAIB has issued an interim report on the collision between two trains at Salisbury Tunnel Junction on 31 October 2021. This mainly deals with factual findings. The driver of the 17:20 Waterloo to Honiton was unable to stop the train at the signal protecting the junction, resulting in it hitting the 17:08 Portsmouth Harbour to Bristol Temple Meads. There was medium or heavy contamination of the rails on the line from Waterloo, with crushed leaf material. The Waterloo train suffered wheel-slide and the wheel-slide prevention system was of little effect. Network Rail's Wessex Route's autumn working arrangements aspire for railhead treatment trains (RHTT) to run over all routes once every 24 hours. Normally a RHTT would have covered the down main line to Salisbury Tunnel Junction shortly before the collision took place, but it had been rescheduled six hours later, because of engineering work. There had not been a RHTT over the line for 32 hours before the collision. It is clear from the interim report that while RAIB will be investigating a wide range of matters, including the operation of trains under low adhesion conditions, there will be considerable focus on Network Rail's arrangements for managing rail adhesion.

**Thursday 27 January:** There were no trains via Hounslow for about three hours from shortly after 07:00, as a result of a points failure there. Trains were diverted via Richmond. Unit 450072 failed at Brockenhurst following arrival as the 11:57 from Lymington Pier. The branch service was suspended until the 14:42 from Brockenhurst, when the unit had been revived.

**Friday 28 January:** The 05:58 Dartford to Rainham was involved in a fatality near Gravesend, resulting in the line being closed for about 3½ hours. A track circuit failure at Lewisham Vale Junction caused trains between Victoria and Dartford to be delayed or cancelled during the afternoon and evening. Evening peak services through Epsom were severely disrupted by a points failure.

**Saturday 29 January:** The 20:40 Charing Cross to Ramsgate was involved in a fatality between Deal and Sandwich.

**Monday 31 January:** The 06:29 Waterloo to Windsor hit a tree, which became stuck under the train, at Ashford (Surrey).

**Tuesday 1 February:** The line was closed for the rest of the evening after a body was found on the track near West Worthing about 21:00. Trains between Victoria and Littlehampton were diverted via Horsham.

**Thursday 3 February:** A track circuit failure at Lower Sydenham resulted in cancellation of some Hayes trains during the morning and complete suspension of the service for 1½ hours from midday to allow repairs. A persistent points failure at Three Bridges caused disruption throughout the day. Trains could only depart from the down Thameslink sidings southbound and various lines were closed while repairs were carried out.

**Friday 4 February:** Unit 313205 suffered a severe traction motor flashover between Falmer and Lewes while working the 22:11 Brighton to Seaford, filling the front carriage with smoke. The train was brought to a halt and current isolated to allow the driver to investigate the fault. The line was blocked for the rest of the evening, resulting in trains being cancelled or diverted via Wivelsfield.

**Saturday 5 February:** A car was driven onto the railway at Pooley Green level crossing, Egham shortly after 22:00, resulting in the line being closed for about an hour.

**Sunday 6 February:** Two trees fell onto the line near North Camp, one of which was hit by the 08:18 Reading to Redhill, but without significant damage to the train. A signalling fault at Bedhampton during the early afternoon caused delays, with trains between Horsham and Portsmouth cut back to Chichester for about two hours. A tree fell onto the down line at Ewell East about midday, but both lines had to be blocked while it was removed. A points failure at Streatham caused numerous cancellations during the evening. Some trains were diverted via Crystal Palace, including the 17:46 and 18:16 Sutton to St Albans. The 18:39 Waterloo to Reading was involved in a fatality between Staines and Egham.

**Monday 7 February:** The line was closed for about three hours after a broken rail was found at Gloucester Road Junction mid-morning. Some London Overground services were diverted to Crystal Palace, but most services were cancelled. Trains via Folkestone were diverted via Canterbury West during the early afternoon while staff dealt with an electrical fault at Folkestone East that was causing severe arcing. Unfortunately, the problem recurred in the evening, causing cancellations and diversions from 20:00 onwards.

**Thursday 10 February:** Over-running engineering work between Waterloo and Wimbledon resulted in early morning trains being diverted via East Putney. A points failure put platform 1 at East Croydon out of use during the morning peak.

**Friday 11 February:** The 14:04 Charing Cross to Sevenoaks was stranded north of Orpington station, because a points failure prevented access to the slow lines platforms. It was able to enter the station, where it terminated at 16:06, after the points had been clipped to allow access to the up slow platform. The down slow platform remained out of use for the rest of the day, requiring some terminating trains to be diverted to the fast lines and platform 1. The 16:10 St Pancras to Margate was involved in a fatality at Minster. Trains terminated at Canterbury West or were diverted via Dover until the line re-opened about 20:00.

**Saturday 12 February:** The 21:35 Ore to Brighton was involved in a fatality near Collington, resulting in the line being blocked for the rest of the evening.

**Monday 14 February:** Bridge strikes by lorries are all too common, but there were two particularly serious ones today. A lorry carrying an excavator damaged the bridge carrying the Arun Valley line over the Horsham Bypass. The line was closed from 11:30 until after 16:00, with trains cancelled or diverted via Hove. A lorry badly damaged a bridge on the Bromley North branch, resulting in there being no trains after 14:00.

**Tuesday 15 February:** Trains from Waterloo to Weybridge were diverted via Richmond during the early afternoon, because of a points failure at New Kew Jn.

**Wednesday 16 February:** There were no trains between Ashford and Ore during the evening, because of a points failure at Rye and a tree on line at Doleham. There was also a tree on the line between Syon Land and Kew Bridge, resulting in up trains being diverted via Richmond for two hours from 20:00.

**Sunday 20 February:** On top of all the problems caused by Storm Eunice, a power failure at Ashurst brought trains to a halt. The late-running 16:34 from Uckfield terminated at Crowborough and there was no further service until late evening.

**STORM EUNICE** caused very severe disruption on Friday 18 February, with exceptionally high winds for most of the day. A gust of 122 mph was recorded on the Isle of Wight. More typically were wind speeds up to 76 mph at Bournemouth, 71 mph at Shoreham-by-Sea, 63 mph at Croydon (Kenley) and 69 mph at Ramsgate (Manston). There were over forty

trees blocking lines on routes from Waterloo alone. Among the places where trees or other objects blocked railway lines were: Branksome, Bournemouth, New Milton, Sway, Brockenhurst, Totton, Swanwick, Fareham, Dean, Winchester, Wallers Ash, Grateley, Ash, Brookwood, Worplesdon, London Road (Guildford), Bracknell, Virginia Water, Sunnymeads, Feltham, Whitton, Putney, Ewell West, Queenstown Road, Balham, Tulse Hill, Waddon, Kenley, Riddlesdown, Woldingham, Hurst Green, Redhill, Reigate, Ifield, Cowden, Plumpton, Hassocks, Patcham, Hove, Pulborough, Chichester, Bosham, Elephant & Castle, Lower Sydenham, New Beckenham, Mottingham, Crayford, Slade Green, Stone Crossing, St Mary Cray, Eynsford, Sevenoaks, Hildenborough, Tonbridge, High Brooms, Etchingham, Mountfield, Paddock Wood, East Malling, New Hythe, Maidstone West, Bearsted, Rainham, Newington, Faversham, Selling, Sturry and Margate. Part of Barnes station roof blew off. The 08:51 Tunbridge Wells to Charing Cross ran over a tree branch near Hildenborough, but fortunately was not derailed. Both lines were blocked until 11:00, while the branch was disentangled from the train. Most trains were cancelled or curtailed meantime, but the 08:39 and 09:10 from Charing Cross were diverted via Maidstone East. The 09:52 London Bridge to East Grinstead hit a tree near Riddlesdown, blocking the line until after 13:00. A UK Power Network failure in the Hastings area resulted in there being no trains south of Tunbridge Wells or east of Eastbourne from mid-morning. There were no trains to Canterbury during the afternoon and evening, because of loss of power there.

The only trains to run during the afternoon were a very few Thameslink services between Blackfriars and Three Bridges. Later in the day limited services operated from London to Dartford and Gravesend via Bexleyheath and Woolwich, to Orpington via Bromley South and between St Pancras and Ashford. A few trains ran to Chessington and Woking during the evening. Thameslink ran a very limited service from Blackfriars to Horsham and Brighton in the evening. Southern managed a few evening services to South Croydon and Purley.

Many lines remained blocked on Saturday, with more trees having fallen during the night. Southern was able to run some trains to Hastings during the afternoon and evening, but the line south of Tunbridge Wells remained closed because of the power supply problem. There were no trains at all between Redhill and Tonbridge, and no service to Epsom Downs until the middle of the afternoon. Battersea Park and Chichester stations were closed. The Maidstone East line did not open until mid-morning. Trees came down on the line at Winchester, Swanley, Longfield, Maidstone Barracks, Harrietsham, Selling, Kearsney and Broadstairs, among other places. South Western Railway reported widespread disruption. Where trains were running a 50 mph speed restriction was in place, because of the risk of objects on the tracks.

There was an improved situation on Sunday, but lines remained closed between Tunbridge Wells and St Leonards and between Redhill and Tonbridge. Trains resumed between Ashford and Hastings late in the afternoon. The line between Dover and Shepherds Well was closed all day, because large trees were blocking the tracks at Kearsney. The 18:09 Blackfriars to Horsham, unit 700126, hit a tree south of Tulse Hill, resulting in the leading bogie becoming derailed. Other trains to hit trees, though staying on the rails, were the 17:40 Waterloo to Guildford near Worplesdon, the 17:35 Waterloo to Reading between Longcross and Sunningdale, the 18:07 Waterloo to Basingstoke between Fleet and Winchfield, the 18:27 Ashford to Victoria near Charing and the 20:15 Tonbridge to Maidstone West near East Farleigh. Trees also fell on the line at Bagshot, Virginia Water and Chilham.

High winds overnight caused more problems on Monday and speed restrictions remained in place. There were no trains between Tulse Hill and Streatham Junction until 700126 was rerailed and had departed for Three Bridges Depot, with the leading bogie on wheel skates, shortly after 11:00. The line between Redhill and Tonbridge reopened late morning, but there were no trains between Dorking and Horsham until the middle of the afternoon, because of a tree on the line at Ockley. Hampton Court station was closed because of storm damage. Trains continued to run, but empty between Thames Ditton and Hampton Court. A reasonably normal service resumed on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February, but with restricted access to parts of some stations, because of damage. The concourse was closed at Eastbourne and Hampton Court station was not expected to reopen before the end of the week. Some trains were short-formed, because units that had hit trees and other obstructions were out of service.

## **AROUND THE REGION**

**Paddock Wood:** The down siding west has been abolished.

**Eynsford:** The Railway Heritage Trust has made a grant of £24,000 to Southeastern for restoring the waiting room and booking hall at Eynsford.

**Gatwick Airport:** The last three of the eight new escalators to the platforms at Gatwick Airport were lifted into place over the weekend of 5 & 6 February.

**Brighton Line:** Lines from Three Bridges to Brighton and Lewes were closed from 19 to 27 February, enabling track renewals and reinforcement of earthworks. Copyhold Junction was completely renewed.

**Shawford:** The Railway Heritage Trust has made a grant of £41,880 to Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership, to be used towards renovation of the station building.

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