

## REGIONAL REVIEW: APRIL 2022

### CROSSRAIL

Crossrail (Elizabeth Line) passenger services may start running between Abbey Wood and Paddington in mid-May, possibly from Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup>.

### STOCK NOTES

**Rolling stock moves:** The long delay in getting class 701 into service impacts on rolling stock deployment quite widely. Introduction of class 701 allows all class 707 units to transfer to Southeastern, but SWR is retaining twelve 707s at least until August and probably longer. As well as enabling class 465/2 to be withdrawn, the 707s also release Networkers to work on the Maidstone East line and other main line stopping services. That will enable Southeastern to return units 377163/64 to Southern, with most, if not all, class 377/5 units moving to Southern as well. They cover withdrawal of Southern's class 455 and 313 units, but running shorter trains will also make a contribution. Until class 701 units are in service in some quantity, other stock transfers may be delayed, short formations are likely and class 313 soldiers on.

**Class 455:** Units 455810/27/31 made a trip from Hove to Haywards Heath and back on 5 April. Units 455839/40/41 returned to Stewarts Lane from Hove on 7 April. All Southern class 455 units are withdrawn from 15 May.

**Class 458:** Unit 458504 was out of service following a collision in Clapham Yard in December 2020. It made a test run, 10:01 Wimbledon Park to Basingstoke Barton Mill Sidings and 14:20 return, with 458511 on 6 April.

**Class 701:** Unit 701043 was delivered to Eastleigh on 29 March and 701045 on 14 April. 701024 has joined those stored at Worksop. A few units have been accepted by SWR, but it will be several more months before any are in passenger service, because of the time required for staff training.

**Hitachi** trains are to undergo remedial work at Eastleigh Works to deal with and prevent cracks in the aluminium structure. Trains concerned are ScotRail's class 385, Southeastern's class 395 and the various class 80x express trains. It is expected to take until 2028 to complete the modifications, with priority being given to vehicles that have cracks.

### TIMETABLES AND DIAGRAMS

**South Western Suburban:** With no prospect of class 701 in passenger service soon, most inner suburban workings from Waterloo continue to be class 455. Shepperton services are class 707 and two of the six trains working the Kingston Loop are class 458. Windsor has a mixture of class 450, 458 and 707. Class 458 has been replaced on most Reading and Chertsey Loop turns by class 450. There is normally just one 458 pair working to Reading. There are few peak hour additional trains and Saturday is now the busiest day of the week.

**Southern:** Trains between East Croydon and Milton Keynes are cut back to Watford Junction from 16 May, but Mondays to Fridays there will be a morning peak round trip from Clapham Junction to Hemel Hempstead. The Beckenham Junction via Crystal Palace service becomes hourly off-peak and half-hourly at peak times. Through trains from Brighton to Portsmouth and Southampton are reinstated. The stopping service to West Worthing remains withdrawn, so local stations still have to be served by the Portsmouth and Southampton trains. There are additional trains between Brighton and Hastings at peak times, but the shuttle between Brighton and Lewes still does not run.

**Thameslink:** Monday to Friday peak services are improved from 16 May. Trains between Sevenoaks and Blackfriars are extended to Welwyn Garden City, with departures from Sevenoaks half-hourly 05:52 to 08:22 and 15:22 to 17:52. The very sparse peak service between Orpington and Luton becomes half hourly, again. Also reinstated are Littlehampton trains, but only one each way, 05:52 to Bedford and an arrival from Bedford at 18:37.

**Weymouth** regains two trains an hour Monday to Saturday from 16 May, with the Poole trains extended there, also calling at Wareham and Dorchester South.

**Covid service cuts:** Passenger services have not resumed over three sections of line. There was just one afternoon passenger train from Streatham Hill to London Bridge via Leigham Junction and Tulse Hill. That ran for the last time on Friday 20 March 2020, but there was a short-notice 23:56 Victoria to London Bridge via Tulse Hill Monday to Thursday the following week. Passenger use of the curve from Middle Junction to Western Junction at Sittingbourne was suspended from 23 March 2020, resumed on 7 September 2020, but suspended again from 16 November 2020. Trains were to and from Gillingham, for the depot, and peak services between Sheerness and Victoria. When Eurostar ceased calling at Ashford International on 19 March 2020 that brought to an end regular use of the connection to HS1 at Ashford East Junction. It remains to be seen whether any of these lines regains a passenger service. Hounslow to Whitton used to have a half hourly service daily, but now sees trains at peak hours only.

## INTERESTING WORKINGS

**Class 37:** 37510 hauled a rake of Grand Central Mk 4 carriages from Eastleigh to Doncaster on 28 March. On the same day DRS 37716 ran light from Crewe to Eastleigh. 37521 hauled two Locomotive Services carriages from Crewe to Eastleigh for attention on 29 March. It returned next day with three carriages that had been outshopped from the works.

**Class 165:** Unit 165101 formed the 10:41 Great Malvern to Brighton and 17:02 Brighton to Bristol Parkway on 1 April. This is claimed to be the only occasion on which a three-coach class 165 has worked to Brighton.

**Class 201:** On 2 April unit 1001 worked an excursion from Hastings to the Mid Hants Railway via Tunbridge Wells, Redhill and Guildford.

**Excursions:** 47593 and 47810 worked a Crewe to Portsmouth Harbour via Banbury excursion on 30 March. Empty stock was stabled at Eastleigh Depot. 68007 hauled an Easter tour to Scotland from Eastleigh and Salisbury as far as Skipton on 15 April and back from York on 18 April.

47593 and 47805 were on a trip from Shrewsbury to Windsor via Swindon and Kensington on 13 April. The train remained in platform 2 at Windsor during the afternoon, so all SWR trains had to use platform 1. That required arrivals to be scheduled five minutes later than usual, because trains normally have a 32 minutes turn round, with platforms used alternately. This was done by increasing the running time from Datchet. The same arrangements applied for a Carnforth to Windsor excursion on 20 April, with the same locomotives, and one from Hull on 27 April.

A Locomotive Services private charter train, including Pullman Car *Pegasus*, made an extended tour from Edinburgh and Alnmouth to East Anglia and Kent at Easter, double headed by 37667 and 37688. It ran from Stowmarket to Canterbury West via Kensington, Catford and Maidstone East on 16 April. Next day it made an evening trip from Canterbury West to Beechbrook Farm Loop, near Hothfield, out via Deal and return via Wye. On 18 April the train ran from Canterbury West to Staplehurst and then empty to stable at Tonbridge West Yard. There was then an afternoon trip from Staplehurst to Penshurst via Ashford, Hastings and Battle, following which the train returned empty to Tonbridge via Redhill. Meantime, 47805 ran from Norwich to Tonbridge, with sleeping cars that had been detached there earlier, via Kensington, Herne Hill and Redhill. There are a significant number of routes in Kent over which Mark 3 carriages are banned, so the sleeping cars could not be included in the consist. The reunited train returned north overnight from Penshurst via Crystal Palace, Herne Hill and Kensington with all three locomotives.

500078 and 50008 worked a one-way trip from Burton-on-Trent to Eastleigh on 22 April, prior to a complicated railtour next day from Eastleigh. That ran to Reading, Eastleigh (again), Portsmouth & Southsea, Bognor Regis, Littlehampton, Brighton, Hove, Preston Park, Brighton, Newhaven Marine, Haywards Heath, Eastbourne, Quarry Line, Cannon Street, Redhill, Horsham, Fareham, Southampton and Eastleigh. A locomotive-hauled passenger train at Cannon Street is particularly unusual. The train returned empty to Burton-on-Trent on 24 April.

**Easter Engineering:** Engineering work between Victoria and Clapham Junction over the Easter weekend, 15 to 18 April, resulted in most trains being diverted to London Bridge. Epsom Downs and Sutton via West Croydon services terminated and started at Balham. Gatwick Express was cancelled. The work required the Down Main Slow line from Waterloo to be closed, so all trains had to use the Down Main Fast. As a result most main line suburban services were reduced to hourly and only Windsor line trains called at Vauxhall. Kingston loop trains did not run between Waterloo and Kingston via Wimbledon. Resignalling work on the Reading line resulted in Windsor having a better service than usual at Easter, because Weybridge trains were diverted there in addition to the normal service. Victoria to Balham is again closed over the holiday weekend 30 April to 2 May.

## RAILWAY BUSINESS

**Southeastern:** Further investigations into Southeastern's financial arrangements have revealed that the company was systematically not paying sums due to the Department of Transport, while taking steps to conceal this in its accounts. It was six years before the DfT noticed this. Southeastern's parent company, Go Ahead Group, says that exhaustive internal and external reviews have found no similar problems in other parts of the business, which include Govia Thameslink Railway. The company's shares resumed trading towards the end of February. Go Ahead's auditors, Deloitte, are being investigated by the Financial Reporting Council.

**Assisted Travel:** Passengers travelling on Govia Thameslink Railway services now need to give only two hours' notice if they require assistance from staff during their journey.

**Train Cleaners strike:** Eurostar, Southeastern and Govia Thameslink Railway all employ a contractor, Churchill, to clean trains. Staff are to strike from 27 April to 7 May in a dispute over pay and conditions. There was a previous strike on 11 and 12 March. The company has offered £11.05 per hour, the London living wage, but the RMT union is seeking terms similar to those for staff who are employed by the train companies.

## 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.

|          | 6 February to 5 March     | MAA to 5 March            | 6 to 31 March              | MAA to 31 March           |
|----------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| All TOCs | 70.6%                     | 73.6%                     | 73.4%                      | 73.0%                     |
| SWR      | 70.7% (10 <sup>th</sup> ) | 74.8% (8 <sup>th</sup> )  | 77.3% (8 <sup>th</sup> )   | 74.4% (8 <sup>th</sup> )  |
| GTR      | 70.8% (9 <sup>th</sup> )  | 75.1% (7 <sup>th</sup> )  | 75.0% (10 <sup>th</sup> )  | 74.7% (7 <sup>th</sup> )  |
| SE       | 70.6% (11 <sup>th</sup> ) | 72.0% (10 <sup>th</sup> ) | 71.9% (=12 <sup>th</sup> ) | 71.4% (10 <sup>th</sup> ) |

**Friday 25 March:** The 04:25 Ramsgate to Victoria was involved in a fatality at Meopham, resulting in the line being blocked until shortly after 10:00. Most trains were cancelled, but some were diverted via Dartford.

**Saturday 26 March:** A points failure at Havant caused serious delays and cancellations for about two hours from 18:00.

**Monday 28 March:** There was no service all week on the Lymington branch because a large number of staff were off work with Covid-19. There were some West of England cancellations as well. A staff shortage also resulted in all Southern services to Beckenham Junction, except the 16:01 school service from London Bridge, being cancelled. A points failure at Blackfriars resulted in Sevenoaks trains terminating at Elephant & Castle from 13:00 for the rest of the day. Southeastern's evening peak trains from Blackfriars started from Victoria.

**Wednesday 30 March:** There were hardly any trains through Effingham Junction before 08:00, because of fault with the signalling.

**Thursday 31 March:** There were no trains between Dorking and Horsham for three hours after a tree fell onto the line near Holmwood late in the afternoon.

**Friday 1 April:** The 19:25 Victoria to Ramsgate became stranded between St Mary Cray and Swanley after hitting an object that caused a short circuit between the conductor rail and running rail. The train was delayed 2½ hours.

**Saturday 2 April:** The 12:25 Victoria to Ramsgate hit a bicycle on the line at Eynsford, causing damage to the brake system. It could not be moved for 3½ hours, so passengers were evacuated to another train.

**Sunday 3 April:** There was a problem recharging the conductor rails in the Streatham Common area following overnight engineering work. The Up Fast line was out of use until mid-morning. The 08:17 London Bridge to East Croydon failed at South Bermondsey and terminated there.

**Monday 4 April:** After smoke was seen coming from the 05:42 Charing Cross to Dartford it was diverted into platform 2 at Lewisham for examination. That was less disruptive than sending it to the Blackheath platform, as booked, because following trains could be diverted via Parks Bridge Junction. Up trains also had to be diverted, because power had to be discharged while fitters worked on the train. It was able to depart empty about 08:30 following attention to the brakes. An empty train, unit 700057, came out of Smithfield Sidings with the pantograph incorrectly raised shortly after 16:00. This caused damage to the pantograph and the AC power to trip out when the train ran off the end of the catenary south of City Thameslink. After some delay it was able to reach Blackfriars on DC, where it was found that the pantograph would have to be secured before the train could proceed any further. That was not achieved until after 21:00, and there were hardly any trains through Blackfriars meantime.

**Wednesday 6 April:** The 05:30 Waterloo to Weymouth lost part of its shoegear near Weybridge. It was able to continue, but terminated at Basingtoke. There was significant disruption, because the fast lines had to be closed while the lost shoegear was retrieved. The passenger alarm was activated on the 06:57 Kingston Loop train between Clapham Junction and Queenstown Road on its inward journey. Unfortunately, the train was gapped when it came to a stand, despite being eight coaches, 455741+455919. Another train had to assist it forward to Queenstown Road, where it terminated 106 minutes late. The 14:53 to Aldershot hit a tree on the line between Ascot and Bagshot.

**Thursday 7 April:** There were no trains between Faversham and Margate for over three hours after the 15:40 from Victoria was involved in a fatality near Herne Bay. Some services were diverted via Ashford.

**Friday 8 April:** The 22:22 Waterloo to Weybridge was involved in a fatality at Barnes. A car was driven off Crawley level crossing and onto the railway late in the evening.

**Sunday 10 April:** There were no trains to or from Littlehampton from 07:10 until 09:30, because the signaller was ill. London Overground services to New Cross were suspended for the rest of the day after the 14:13 from Dalston Junction hit the buffers on arrival. A points failure at Surbiton about 17:30 required trains to Hampton Court to use the down fast line from New Malden to Hampton Court Junction. As a result they were unable to call at Berrylands or Surbiton.

**Monday 11 April:** Some main line trains were diverted via Chertsey after the 09:45 Waterloo to Portsmouth & Southsea was involved in a fatality at Raynes Park.

**Tuesday 12 April:** The 18:39 Victoria to Reigate was involved in a fatality at Thornton Heath.

**Thursday 14 April:** A signalling failure on the Quarry line resulted in all trains having to run via Redhill during the morning, causing congestion and delays.

**Good Friday 15 April:** The 10:45 Portsmouth Harbour to Waterloo was diverted via Cobham, because of a points failure at Woking. Following trains were able to run via Woking, but with delays.

**Easter Sunday 17 April:** A points failure at Stoats Nest Junction about 10:00 put all lines except the down slow out of use for about 1½ hours. The Quarry Line was blocked for over two hours and the service was disrupted until late afternoon.

**Monday 18 April:** A damaged rail near St Pancras required imposition of a 5 mph speed restriction throughout the day. As a result trains between Bedford and Gatwick Airport (starting and terminating there) were cancelled and the Rainham to Luton service was replaced by a shuttle between Rainham and Dartford. There was also a problem with a track defect on the down fast line near Wimbledon, while the down slow was under a planned possession. Various trains were cancelled and a few were diverted via East Putney. The 16:25 Ramsgate to Charing Cross was involved in a fatality at Pluckley, resulting in trains being diverted via Maidstone East for most of the evening.

**Wednesday 20 April:** There was a complete loss of power to signals in the Wokingham area during the evening, so no trains could operate for three hours.

**Thursday 21 April:** Unfortunately, there were two further fatalities, involving an empty train near Ashted during the afternoon and the 13:54 from Cambridge at Preston Park. In both cases the lines were closed for about two hours. A

signalling fault resulted in there being no trains on the Bromley North branch between the 14:02 from Grove Park and the 18:14 from Bromley North.

**Saturday 23 April:** The 11:07 St Albans to Sutton hit a tree between Tooting and Haydons Road. The train was eventually able to continue to Wimbledon, where it terminated almost three hours late. Trains were cancelled or diverted via Mitcham Junction meantime.

**Monday 25 April:** A defect on the north bound line at Farringdon required a 5 mph speed restriction, but a repair was not expected until the following weekend. A track circuit failure at City Thameslink during the morning peak added to delays, which continued throughout the day. As usual at times of disruption, trains terminating and starting at Gatwick were cancelled in order to ease the congestion. Most Shepperton trains were diverted via Richmond until early evening, because of a signalling problem at Norbiton. Other trains were delayed.

## **AROUND THE REGION**

**Graffiti:** Network Rail has recently removed graffiti from 475 Southern Region locations at a cost of £2.0 million.

**East Malling:** The station is closed from 9 to 15 May to allow repairs to the stairs that lead to the platforms.

**Victoria Area Resignalling:** Network Rail has awarded a contract to Alstom for resignalling the Catford Loop and the Chatham main line to Sydenham Hill.

**Feltham Area Resignalling:** New signalling, controlled from Basingstoke ROC, came into use on 19 April from Rusham level crossing (west of Egham) to Bracknell, Chertsey and Camberley. These lines were previously controlled from Feltham Area Signalling Centre. Axle counter train detection replaces track circuits. Trains may turn back in platform 3 at Virginia Water (up Chertsey line) and platform 2 at Bracknell (down line). The Hounslow loop is closed from Sunday to Wednesday 1 to 4 May for resignalling work.

## **SOUTH WESTERN ELECTRIFICATION**

South Western Railway has announced that its entire network will be electrified by the end of 2024. Sadly for residents of Salisbury, Yeovil and Exeter, this is the South Western Railway in India, which is undertaking electrification at the rate of 750-800 km per year. Worting Junction, Eastleigh and Redbridge to Salisbury and Exeter is just under 220 km.

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