

## REGIONAL REVIEW: MAY 2022

### CROSSRAIL

Elizabeth Line services between Abbey Wood and Paddington commenced on 24 May. Trains run every five minutes, with departures from Abbey Wood 06:30 to 23:00. Journey time is 29 minutes, with intermediate stops at Woolwich, Custom House, Canary Wharf, Whitechapel, Liverpool Street, Farringdon and Tottenham Court Road. Bond Street station is not ready for use, so trains do not call there. There is no Sunday service, but trains are scheduled to run empty for software updates and other trials. Six trains stable overnight at Plumstead Crossrail Sidings, which are quite separate from Plumstead Yard. The only connection between Crossrail and the North Kent line is the non-electrified link at Alsike Road Junction, east of Abbey Wood.

### STOCK NOTES

**Class 171:** Units 171201/02 and 171401/02 have been leased by East Midlands Railway, but temporarily subleased to Govia Thameslink Railway. It is expected that they will move to East Midlands Railway later this year and be reformed as three-coach units.

**Class 377:** Units 377163/64 returned from Southeastern to Southern on 14 May, running from Ramsgate to Selhurst via Victoria.

**Class 455:** The first class 455 units to go for scrap were 455838/39, which were hauled from Stewarts Lane to Sims Metals at Newport, South Wales on 4 May. They were followed by 455810/25 on 10 May and 455827/31 on 12 May. Twenty six Southern units were diagrammed for service on 14 May, their last day in traffic. They appeared on most Southern suburban routes, but not Coulsdon Town to Tattenham Corner. The only working between Sutton and Horsham was by the farewell railtour, formed of units 455835/41, which also visited Billingshurst, Brighton, Blackfriars and Sevenoaks. Two 455 diagrams were covered by class 377 after 455811 failed at Wandsworth Common while working the 06:02 Victoria to Epsom Downs. Unit 455829, which should have worked the 06:50 Victoria to London Bridge, was used to provide assistance. The final passenger service, early on 15 May, was scheduled to be 455843 on the 00:25 Victoria to Norwood Junction via Crystal Palace. Units 455801/12/17/20/23/26/37/44 were reported as stored at Horsham and 455814/22/30/33/34/36/43 at Hove. Further moves from Stewarts Lane for scrapping at Newport were 455809/16 on 17 May, 455835/41 on 19 May and 455828/46 on 24 May. SWR units 455855/70 have been moved by road from Wimbledon to Newport for scrapping, after being stripped of parts to keep other units going.

**Class 483:** A planning application has been made for conversion of former Island Line unit 483004, at Holliers Farm, Arreton, into a diner/café with a small museum area. The vehicles have had the old paint stripped off and have been primed, with the intention of returning them to red livery. It is intended to retain as many original features as possible.

**Class 701:** Unit 701031, which had been returned to Derby, was hauled back to Eastleigh on 29 April. 701005 was hauled from Eastleigh to Derby on 16 May. Mileage accumulation trips ceased after 19 May and all units were isolated from power supplies, because of fears of explosions resulting from a build up of gases in the traction converter cases. An explosion on an AC-equipped class 455 unit at Guildford in 2017 was caused by emissions from a failed capacitor and the potential problem with class 701 may be similar.

### TIMETABLES AND DIAGRAMS

**South Western Railway:** Following the timetable change, Reading trains appear all to be class 450, with Windsor being exclusively class 458. Weybridge via Chertsey is a mixture of classes 450 and 458. The Shepperton branch remains the place to find SWR's class 707 units. Most other main line suburban services, including the Kingston loop, are class 455, but class 450 has been seen on some Chessington workings. Some Alton and Basingstoke stopping services are worked by class 444 instead of class 450. The 16:42 Waterloo to Basingstoke is booked to be a nine-coach 450+444.

**Class 707:** Units are permitted in passenger service over the following Southeastern routes.

- Victoria to Petts Wood Junction via Herne Hill (but only empty if via Stewarts Lane)
- Brixton to Lewisham
- Bickley Junction to Sevenoaks via Bat & Ball
- Charing Cross and Cannon Street to Gillingham (all routes via Dartford)
- Slade Green to Perry Street Fork Junction, Crayford Spur and Lee Spur
- Lewisham and Parks Bridge Junction to Beckenham Junction and Hayes
- Hither Green to Sevenoaks, Bromley North and St Mary Cray Junction (both loops)

Class 707 is not able to work between Nunhead and Shortlands. They may not pass below Dalrymple Road bridge, near Crofton Park, on the up line and are shown as not permitted via either route between Ravensbourne and Shortlands Junction. They may run empty to and from depots at Ramsgate (via Whitstable) and Ashford (via Tonbridge or Maidstone East). Units may also run empty from Blackfriars to Metropolitan Junction, Cambria Junction, Canterbury Road Junction and Herne Hill, but subject to the opposite line being blocked at a number of locations.

The Southeastern units work exclusively on services from Charing Cross and Cannon Street, but not normally beyond Orpington. They are not used on the Bromley North branch, which is diagrammed for a class 465 unit. Thameslink provides the stopping service between Gravesend and Gillingham and there are only a few class 707 workings to Gravesend. Mon-Fri these are 09:18, 14:18 and 17:02 from Charing Cross and 10:48, 15:48 and 18:18 return. Class 707 is found in greatest quantity on the Woolwich and Sidcup lines.

## INTERESTING WORKINGS

**Class 171:** Unit 171803 ran from Selhurst Depot to Redhill and back during the afternoon on 20 May, presumably as a test trip.

**Class 201:** Unit 1001 worked a Hastings to Worcester Shrub Hill excursion on 7 May, running via Tonbridge, Redhill, Reading and Oxford.

**Great Western to Brighton:** The final Great Western workings to Brighton ran on Friday 13 May. They were 158767+798 on the 10:41 from Great Malvern and the 17:02 to Bristol Parkway. This was the last vestige of services between Brighton and the West of England. The LSWR and LBSCR provided through carriages between Brighton and Ilfracombe and long after all of the lines from Brighton were electrified it was possible to catch a steam-hauled express to Plymouth. From 1972 to 1977 the Saturday service between Brighton and Exeter was worked by Hastings diesel units.

## RAILWAY BUSINESS

**Fare evasion:** Southeastern is employing additional staff to deal with revenue protection at stations. During financial year 2021/22 Southeastern issued 84,000 penalty fares and 6,700 people were reported for criminal fare evasion. Court referrals are usually of repeat offenders. About £2.5M was recovered through penalty fares and compensation awarded by courts.

**Community Rail:** The Wey Valley Community Rail Partnership has been established to promote the Alton line, including stations to Ash Vale and Wanborough. The station adoption group at Tolworth station has been expanded to become a community rail partnership for stations on the southern part of the London Borough of Kingston. Station adoption groups have recently been established for Ashurst New Forest, Bookham, Effingham Junction, Egham, Hamworthy, Havant, Milford, Putney, Richmond, St Margarets and Witley. Station adopters are local volunteers who enhance stations typically through gardening, but other projects may include provision of artworks and community use of surplus rooms. Community rail partnerships have a wider role in promoting the railway and may include paid employees.

## 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.

	1 to 30 April	MAA to 30 April
All TOCs	74.2%	72.6%
SWR	65.3% (19 <sup>th</sup> )	65.8% (15 <sup>th</sup> )
GTR	87.6% (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	84.6% (1 <sup>st</sup> )
SE	76.2% (8 <sup>th</sup> )	74.0% (8 <sup>th</sup> )

Details are as published by the Office of Rail and Road. There has been a significant recalculation, backdated over previous periods. In particular, there is an extraordinary improvement in the data for Govia Thameslink Railway.

**Thursday 28 April:** The 06:47 Brighton to Littlehampton failed at Goring-on-Sea, as a result of hitting a bird, which caused a short circuit and fire. The line was blocked until 09:45 and several trains between Victoria and Littlehampton were diverted via Crawley. The 16:55 Dartford to Charing Cross was cancelled on departure, when the front unit became detached from the rest of the train. A metal bar caused a short circuit between a conductor rail and the running rail between Folkestone and Dover about 17:45. The line was closed for over two hours while a temporary repair to the burned running rail was carried out. Trains were cancelled or diverted via Canterbury West.

**Saturday 30 April:** The 21:20 from Sheerness hit a bicycle on the line near Sittingbourne. That caused a short circuit which resulted in the signalling failing on the down main line. No down trains were able to run until 00:30. Worst affected were passengers on the 20:40 from Victoria, which was stranded between Rainham and Newington for three hours.

**Sunday 1 May:** A problem with Mortlake level crossing caused trains to be delayed or diverted via Hounslow during the afternoon.

**Monday 2 May:** Trains were diverted via Bexleyheath after a person was hit by the 08:48 Charing Cross to Gravesend at Bexley. The 10:08 Cannon Street loop service terminated at Plumstead, due to a fault on the train. The train ran empty to Slade Green Depot, but failed at Slade Green station, blocking the line for about an hour.

**Tuesday 3 May:** There were no trains via Netley for about four hours from 08:30, because of a signalling failure. Trains were cancelled or diverted via Eastleigh. Trains between London and Littlehampton were diverted via Horsham following a fatality at East Worthing involving the 16:32 Brighton to Chichester.

**Wednesday 4 May:** A lineside fire at Virginia Water caused the 08:59 Waterloo to Weybridge to terminate there. Services resumed with the 10:30 from Waterloo.

**Friday 6 May:** The line between Three Bridges and Horsham was closed for about two hours after the 11:56 from Bognor Regis was involved in a fatality near Ifield. Some trains were diverted via Hove. Platforms 1 to 3 at Charing Cross were out of use during the afternoon, because of a signalling failure. Hastings trains were diverted to Cannon Street and other main line services to Victoria. Various other trains were cancelled or terminated short.

**Saturday 7 May:** The 22:05 (previous day) Waterloo to Poole was involved in a fatality at Pokesdown.

**Sunday 8 May:** The 18:25 Southampton Central to Waterloo was cancelled after motor coach 63831 of unit 444031 filled with smoke shortly before departure time. The fire brigade attended and power was isolated on all lines for about 45 minutes. The train was later able to run to Northam Depot for examination.

**Friday 13 May:** There were problems restoring traction current in the Hilsea area following overnight engineering work. Electric trains were unable to run to and from Portsmouth until after 07:00, but consequent displacement of crews and rolling stock resulted in delays and cancellations until mid-morning.

**Saturday 14 May:** The 07:04 from Guildford failed at Clandon. Following trains were cancelled or diverted via Woking until 08:30.

**Tuesday 17 May:** The 05:10 Tunbridge West Yard to Mountfield gypsum train, hauled by 69004, suffered a brake failure between Tonbridge and High Brooms, blocking traffic in both directions on the single-line section. The train was able to continue after about an hour.

**Thursday 19 May:** A road/rail vehicle failed on the down slow line at Byfleet during the night, and could not be moved until the middle of the afternoon. All down trains had to use the fast line from Weybridge to Woking, so were unable to call at Byfleet & New Haw or West Byfleet. The 07:15 Charing Cross to Hastings hit a tree near Stonegate, resulting in the down line being blocked until late morning. The 09:24 Cambridge to Brighton was involved in a fatality at Norwood Junction, following which services were diverted or cancelled for three hours.

**Friday 20 May:** The first three trains from Ascot to Aldershot were cancelled, because of a points failure at Ash Vale, and the 06:19 Farnham to Waterloo via Camberley was diverted via Surbiton. There was a 2½ hours gap in the Sheerness service during the evening, because of a problem with Kings Ferry Bridge.

**Saturday 21 May:** Early morning trains from Hither Green to Dartford were subject to cancellation or diversion, because of a points failure at Lee.

**Monday 23 May:** A tree fell onto the line between Martin Mill and Dover late afternoon, blocking the line towards Ramsgate. The 15:40 from Charing Cross was diverted via Canterbury West as were later trains until 20:30.

## AROUND THE REGION

**Petts Wood:** Work has started on construction of a new footbridge with lifts at Petts Wood station.

**Hither Green:** A new footbridge with lifts is to be provided at Hither Green station. This will replace two separate bridges, one over the main line and the other over the Dartford loop. Associated with this, new entrances will be provided to Fernbrook Road and Springbank Road. The present access, via a subway at the London end, is to be retained, though the ramp up from it is too steep to meet current standards and gives direct access to platforms 4 and 5 only.

**Beckenham Junction:** The station footbridge is closed until August, while work is carried out. If crossing between platforms it is necessary to do so via the road bridge.

**Peckham Rye:** Network Rail has applied for planning permission and listed building consent for improvements to Peckham Rye station, including a new two-storey concourse, stairs and lifts. The existing booking hall is to be remodelled to improve station facilities and accessibility and it is proposed to reinstate the canopy on the front elevation. A new building including lifts and stairs, an electrical substation and station support accommodation will be provided on the site of the existing shop at 1-4 Holly Grove, north of the railway. A new station forecourt and second station entrance is planned at the rear of the station facing west.

**Solar Power:** Following a small trial installation at Aldershot, plans were developed for a larger, solar-powered traction supply at Selmeston, near Berwick. Unfortunately, what are described as “site-specific technical issues” have prevented this going ahead. However, Network Rail and its partner, Riding Sunbeams, intend to continue pursuing the concept of solar energy powering trains.

**Micheldever:** A special event was held on 8 May to celebrate 180 years of Micheldever station, though it had to take place two years late because of the Covid pandemic. As far as possible, it replicated the original opening on 11 May 1840, when entertainment was provided by Hurstbourne Tarrant Band. Test Valley Brass Band stood in for them. Hospitality was at the Dove Inn, near to the station and built at the same time. Originally known as the Western Road Hotel, it was where local celebrations to mark the opening of the railway were held. The station was known as Andover Road until 1856 and is some distance north of Micheldever village. An entirely separate community, Micheldever Station, has developed around it.

**Fareham:** The line between Eastleigh and Fareham will be closed between 25 June and 3 July, in order to stabilise cutting slopes adjacent to Fareham Tunnel. The opportunity will be taken to improve track drainage and undertake other maintenance work at the same time.

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