

## REGIONAL REVIEW: JULY 2022

### STOCK NOTES

**Stored stock:** Noted at Long Marston during a rail industry event on 22 June were units 319362/64/65/71, 319454, 455726/36, 456003/04/06/07-16/18-24, 768001 (319010), 769936/40/44/46, 799001 (319001), 799201 (319382) and former class 508 coaches 64664 and 64707, now used as match vehicles for classes 465 and 466. This is not necessarily a complete list of all Southern Electric stock present.

**Train occupancy:** South Western Railway is equipping class 158, 159, 444 and 450 trains to report how full they are, with the intention that this information will be available to prospective passengers. The system works by measuring the weight carried by each coach.

**Class 66:** 66720 was named *Wascosa* at Victoria on 28 June. Wascosa is a Swiss company that hires out freight wagons and 66720 was with a train of new wagons that will be used in support of railway engineering work.

**Class 73:** 73212 was named *Stephen Eaves* at Blackfriars on 8 July, marking Mr Eaves' retirement after a railway career of fifty years.

**Class 387:** Units 387201-208 remain in use on Great Northern services from King's Cross, but some are to return to the Brighton line in the autumn.

**Class 455:** Further units dispatched to the scrap yard at Newport were 455803/06 on 16 June, 455826/43 on 30 June, 455813/42 on 28 June, 455830/37 on 7 July, 455814/22 on 12 July. Omitted from previous reports was movement of 455811/24 to Newport on 26 May.

**Class 465:** Units 465240+248 were moved from store at Ely to Doncaster on 20 July. Next day 465912 was hauled from Doncaster to Ely. Class 465/9 units have not previously been stored.

**Class 701:** The public version of SWR's 2022/23 business plan is extremely vague as to when class 701 might enter service. SWR says this will happen as soon as possible, while minimising risk to the timetable, but train acceptance and driver training have been delayed by continuing problems. SWR expects close working with Alstom and Rock Rail (the leasing company) to resolve the situation shortly. If there was any confidence as to when the trains will enter service, a more specific timescale might have been given. Unit 701048 was delivered from Derby to Eastleigh on 27 June. 701030 was hauled from Eastleigh to Ilford on 11 July.

### TIMETABLES AND DIAGRAMS

**Class 707:** The 05:17 Waterloo to Reading and 07:11 return are regularly worked by a pair of class 707 units.

**Freight:** Fuel oil to Rolls Royce at Sinfin, Derby, is now coming from Isle of Grain, instead of Grangemouth. Trains are currently running to short-term planning schedules, passing through South London during the night. The principal traffic from Grain is aviation fuel to Colnbrook.

### INTERESTING WORKINGS

**Hitachi remediation:** The first Hitachi train to enter Eastleigh Works, for remedial action to deal with bodywork cracking, was five-coach Great Western unit 802003, which arrived from North Pole Depot on 27 June.

**Class 33 and heritage stock:** 33029 hauled London Underground's 4TC unit from West Ruislip to Alton, for the Mid Hants Railway, on 8 July. 33025 hauled 2EPB 5729 and motor luggage vans 9002 and 68001 from Southall to Alton on 14 July.

**Class 43:** Rail Adventure's power cars 43465 and 43484 made five return test trips between Eastleigh and Fareham on 14 July.

**Class 73:** 73107 has been based at Doncaster since late May, where it has been used for route learning trips. Class 73/9 locomotives can be found almost anywhere on test trains for Network Rail, but class 73/1 rarely stray far from the third rail. On 29 June the Mountfield to Southampton Western Docks gypsum empties was worked forward from Tonbridge by 73109+73136. The EDs returned with the loaded train to Tonbridge. Class 73 in England is normally confined to track recording and engineer's trains.

**Class 313:** Network Rail test unit 313121 ran from Hornsey to Eastleigh Works via Kensington, Selhurst, Redhill, Crawley and Southampton Central on 27 June.

**Classes 444 and 450:** A track circuit failure near Weymouth disrupted services during the afternoon on Saturday 9 July, resulting in the late-running 16:20 Weymouth to Waterloo being formed of units 444036+041. Normally, only single units are permitted west of Poole, because of power supply limitations. However, a ten coach train may be allowed by special arrangement if few other electric units are in the area. Selective door operation is required at all intermediate stations. 450002 was on a class 444 diagram on 20 July working the 06:50 from Portsmouth Harbour via Winchester and the 09:35 Waterloo to Weymouth with 444036. 450002 was the Weymouth portion. It continued as the 13:03 from Weymouth, with 444027 attached at Bournemouth, and then 16:35 to Weymouth. It concluded as 19:59 Weymouth to Waterloo, on its own throughout.

**Class 455:** Units 5709+5741 were working between Waterloo and Reading on 10 July.

#### **Excursions:**

2 July: 47593 and 47810 top and tailed a Poole to Kingswear trip. 47804 and 57314 topped and tailed the Northern Belle from Victoria to Bournemouth via Kensington and Reading, with the empty stock being serviced at Swanage. The train returned to Euston.

9 July: There were no fewer than five class 47s at Weymouth, with 47826 and 47804 on an excursion from Birmingham International and 47614 and 47805 on one from Norwich. 47813 was working top and tail with 35028 Clan Line on a Victoria – Yeovil – Weymouth – Waterloo trip commemorating the end of Southern steam. Several of these workings were delayed by a points failure at Dorchester Junction; there were no trains to or from Weymouth for over two hours from 14:00.

16 July: 66700 and 69004 topped and tailed a railtour from Waterloo to Marchwood and Ludgershall.

21 July: In view of the very hot weather and the risk of lineside fires, Network Rail placed a ban on steam locomotives, so 47772 and 47813 worked the Dorset Coast Express between Victoria to Weymouth.

23 July: 47812 and 47826 topped and tailed an excursion from Hull to Winchester via Oxford.

#### **STRIKES**

Services on Thursday 23 June, when there was a further strike by RMT union members employed by Network Rail, were the same as on 21 June (described in the June *Regional Review*). The service on 25 June was similar, but with no trains via West Croydon, because of engineering work. Epsom Downs trains were cut back to Selhurst and those to West Croydon via Crystal Palace were diverted to East Croydon. East London line services ran only to Crystal Palace and Clapham Junction. There was a late start to services in East Kent on 24 and 26 June, while conductor rails were recharged. Eurostar ran a normal service on all three strike days, save for early morning and evening trains being cancelled. The gypsum trains between Southampton and Mountfield were diverted via Reading and Kensington.

Cleaners employed by Churchill were on strike again on 14 to 16 July, seeking pay and conditions comparable with train company employees. Churchill provides cleaners for Govia Thameslink Railway, South East Trains and Network Rail.

RMT members employed by Network Rail and many train operators went on strike on 27 July and are to do so again on 18 and 20 August, in ongoing disputes about pay and conditions. Southeastern train drivers who are members of ASLEF are to strike on 30 July. Southeastern staff who are members of TSSA have also voted to strike. They include station staff, controllers and some administrators and managers.

The advertised service on 27 July was similar to that on 21 and 23 June. No Southeastern trains will run on 30 July.

## RAIL BUSINESS

**Elizabeth Line:** Between 200,000 and 250,000 passengers are using the Abbey Wood to Paddington service, which is more than forecast at this stage. Can anyone advise how traffic on Southeastern and Thameslink has been affected? It is 31 minutes from Abbey Wood to Farringdon by Thameslink, with a train every half hour, but 21 minutes on the Elizabeth Line, with a train every ten minutes.

## HOT WEATHER

Exceptionally hot weather on 18 and 19 July caused severe disruption. Temperatures up to 39°C were registered in the Southern Electric area, with the rails getting much hotter than that. The risk of rails buckling resulted in widespread speed restrictions being imposed, and there was a reduced service on many lines. Thameslink services were further disrupted by closure of the Midland Main Line and East Coast Main Line, because the overhead lines were sagging. HS1 was not affected, because it is built to SNCF specifications that allow for higher temperatures.

19 July was the hottest day. Tracks buckled at Vauxhall and Swanley and there were lineside fires at Hampden Park, Streatham North Junction and Staplehurst. The Hampden Park fire involved a UK Power Networks substation adjacent to the track. Three Bridges Area Signalling Centre was evacuated for a short while during the afternoon, because of a nearby fire. HS1 was closed because of a vehicle on fire on the M20, near to the railway.

## 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. Performance is measured against the timetable that each train operator advertised the previous day. Therefore, although very few trains run on strike days there is still a “good performance”, because only a limited timetable was intended.

	29 May to 25 June	MAA to 25 June
All TOCs	71.4%	71.9%
SWR	69.3% (12 <sup>th</sup> )	73.2% (9 <sup>th</sup> )
GTR	76.2% (6 <sup>th</sup> )	73.8% (8 <sup>th</sup> )
SE	70.2% (10 <sup>th</sup> )	70.8% (10 <sup>th</sup> )

An increasing problem is road transport being unavailable when railway lines are closed. This is because of a shortage of coach drivers. There are particular difficulties in providing road transport at short notice, but arranging coaches when lines are closed for pre-planned engineering work can be a problem.

**Tuesday 21 June:** The 08:04 London Bridge to Dartford was cancelled, because of an electrical fire on unit 465045.

**Wednesday 22 June:** The 08:58 from Sevenoaks, unit 700042, failed between Elephant & Castle and Blackfriars. After about two hours passengers were evacuated to a train on an adjacent track, but 700042 was not moved until after

13:00. The 11:48 Weymouth to Waterloo was involved in a fatality between Earlsfield and Clapham Junction. The line was closed for about an hour.

**Friday 24 June:** The 09:41 Dartford to Charing Cross terminated at Abbey Wood, because of a problem with the doors. The 13:50 from Hastings was disabled after hitting a deer near Stonegate.

**Saturday 25 June:** Hove station was closed from 09:00 until 15:00 after a car crashed into the front of the station building and the shuttle service from Brighton was suspended. There were no other trains at Hove because of the Network Rail strike.

**Monday 27 June:** A track defect on the down fast line near Forest Hill caused disruption during the afternoon, with some trains cancelled or diverted via Tulse Hill. There were no trains to Uckfield between the 13:07 and 19:07 from London Bridge, because of a signalling failure. The 15:07 was diverted to East Grinstead and the 18:07 started from East Croydon, but terminated at Crowborough. Other trains were cancelled entirely.

**Tuesday 28 June:** There was a spurious fire alarm activation on the 08:37 Brighton to Cambridge resulting in it terminating at Blackfriars. Trains were diverted via Woolwich during the afternoon, because there was a person under the 14:04 Victoria to Dartford at Welling. The 17:06 West Hampstead Thameslink to Orpington terminated at City Thameslink, because of a power failure on the train.

**Wednesday 29 June:** All of the points connecting the Caterham and Brighton slow lines at Purley failed about 10:00. There were no trains to or from Caterham and Tattenham Corner for two hours and a very limited service during the afternoon. Trains between Victoria and Reigate were cancelled and some others via Redhill were diverted via the Quarry Line.

**Thursday 30 June:** Loss of power to signalling and level crossings between Bexhill and Normans Bay resulted in there being no trains from 05:30 until 17:30. Most trains terminated at Eastbourne, but a few continued to Pevensey Bay.

**Saturday 2 July:** A tree fell onto the railway near Teddington about 10:00, blocking the line towards Kingston for almost two hours. Shepperton trains were diverted via Richmond. There were no Southeastern or Eurostar services from St Pancras for about three hours from 11:00 after a body was found on the line. The 17:03 Weymouth to Waterloo failed near Totton, with electrical problems on unit 444027.

**Sunday 3 July:** The 12:02 Waterloo to Dorking, units 5912+5917, failed near Boxhill. Following trains terminated at Epsom until the failure was able to move to Dorking.

**Monday 4 July:** The 20:25 Ashford to Eastbourne terminated at Cooden Beach, because of a brake problem.

**Tuesday 5 July:** A damaged conductor rail at Farningham Road resulted in there being no trains between Swanley and Rochester for about four hours from 15:45. A few trains were diverted via Dartford, but most were curtailed or cancelled.

**Wednesday 6 July:** An empty train suffered a wheel bearing failure at Canada Water overnight and had to be moved to New Cross Depot on a wheel skate. As a result there were no London Overground services to New Cross, Crystal Palace, West Croydon and Clapham Junction via Denmark Hill until after 10:00 when a few trains started running. The full timetable was not in operation until early afternoon. There was yet another signalling failure between Crowborough and Uckfield resulting in there being no trains during the afternoon and evening, except for the 23:07 from London Bridge. There were more cancellations next morning.

**Thursday 7 July:** Bridge strikes are all too common, but there was considerable disruption after an articulated lorry became wedged under a bridge on the Quarry line about 14:30 and could not easily be extracted. The line was closed for four hours, with trains diverted via Redhill or cancelled. When the line re-opened there was a severe speed restriction, followed by a further line closure when the lorry was removed about 20:45. A points failure at Peckham Rye shortly before 18:00 resulted in there being no trains via East Dulwich for the rest of the day. Beckenham Junction services were cancelled and Caterham trains were diverted via Forest Hill.

**Friday 8 July:** There was further disruption on the Uckfield line during the morning, because of a track circuit failure at Greenhurst Junction and a train hitting a deer. A points failure at South Croydon prevented any trains running to and from the Oxted line after the 12:50 from Victoria, except for a very few late in the evening. A points failure at Micheldever caused both lines to be closed for about an hour late afternoon. The 15:45 Bournemouth to Manchester was diverted via Laverstock and the 16:35 Waterloo to Weymouth ran via Havant, but other trains were delayed.

**Monday 11 July:** A fire on the line between Victoria and Factory Junction caused early morning trains to be cancelled or diverted via Stewarts Lane. The 06:40 Hilsea to Waterloo failed at Rowlands Castle and was not able to continue for 1½ hours. Following trains were cancelled or diverted via Winchester. Units 458504/28 failed at Shepperton, causing the 07:30 to Waterloo to be cancelled. With only one platform at the station, other trains were delayed until the miscreant

could depart empty shortly before 08:00. Trains from Victoria to Rochester were cancelled or diverted via Dartford during the afternoon while a defective set of points at Fawkham Junction was repaired. The 21:54 Portsmouth Harbour to Eastleigh, unit 450008, failed near Hilsea, blocking the line until about 23:00.

**Tuesday 12 July:** The track was distorted when a road vehicle hit a bridge at Ashurst, so there were no trains to or from Uckfield after the 12:33 to London Bridge. Services were disrupted when a hay bale fell onto the line between Falmer and Lewes. Both lines were closed for about two hours from 16:30 to allow the bale to be removed. Some trains were diverted via Haywards Heath, but signalling problems there added to the disruption.

**Thursday 14 July:** A track circuit failure at Gravesend caused delays and prevented use of platform 0 until after 13:00. Trains scheduled to terminate and start at Gravesend were cut back to Dartford or cancelled. Some main line trains were diverted via Chertsey and Shepperton trains via Richmond during the afternoon, after a person jumped from a bridge between Earlsfield and Clapham Junction. Other trains were delayed or cancelled.

**Saturday 16 July:** Trains from Horsham to Barnham were diverted via Hove during the afternoon, to allow urgent track repairs near Christ's Hospital.

**Sunday 17 July:** The 13:19 Sutton to Luton was involved in a fatality at Elephant & Castle. The fast lines were closed until shortly after 15:00 and the slow lines reopened by 17:30.

**Monday 18 July:** There were no trains between Surrey Quays and Clapham Junction until 08:00, because of a track circuit failure at Longhedge Junction. For the rest of the day trains were diverted to Battersea Park. A points failure at Grove Junction, Tunbridge Wells about 14:00 brought trains to a stand. It was 18:00 before services resumed and there were delays and cancellations for the rest of the day.

**Tuesday 19 July:** An empty train from Selhurst to Tattenham corner failed near Chipstead with an air leak in the brake system. It was some time before it could be moved, so there were no trains from Tattenham Corner between the 06:09 (running late) and the 10:39. A signalling problem at Rye resulted in trains between Eastbourne and Ashford being curtailed or cancelled from mid-morning. There was no service at all between Ore and Ashford after the 12:49 from Eastbourne terminated at Rye and returned 14:55. A points failure at St Mary Cray resulted in most Thameslink services to Sevenoaks being diverted via Orpington from late morning until 21:00. A track circuit failure near Norwood Junction during the afternoon resulted in London Overground services to and from West Croydon being cancelled or diverted to Crystal Palace. Southern trains via West Croydon were diverted via Selhurst or to East Croydon.

**Wednesday 20 July:** A signalling problem at Ascot and a points failure at Virginia Water caused severe disruption during the morning. Reading services resumed with the 08:50 from Waterloo, but the first Chertsey train was the 13:22 from Waterloo. Trains were delayed by cattle on the line at Salfords during the afternoon.

**Friday 22 July:** A power failure resulted in there being no trains from Tattenham Corner until the 11:39 to London Bridge.

**Saturday 23 July:** There were no trains between Redhill and Tonbridge during the afternoon and evening, because of lack of staff. The 16:16 Blackfriars to Sevenoaks hit a tree near Otford. Trains were cancelled or diverted via Orpington until 19:30. There were no trains between Maidstone West and Paddock Wood after 19:00, because a signaller was taken ill. Trains between Ascot and Aldershot were cancelled during the evening, because of a track defect.

**Sunday 24 July:** The 12:20 Ramsgate to St Pancras International failed between Dumpton Park and Broadstairs, blocking the line until about 14:00. It returned to Ramsgate where it terminated. Most evening trains to East Grinstead were cancelled, because of a track defect in the Lingfield area. The 21:37 Waterloo to Alton, unit 450067, failed between Brookwood and Ash Vale. It went forward an hour late and terminated at Farnham.

**Monday 25 July:** A train crew shortage resulted in many cancellations on Coastway routes, particularly east from Brighton.

## AROUND THE REGION

**Penge Tunnel:** The 1 mile 381 yards long tunnel is closed from 23 to 31 July, while the track is replaced, so there are no trains between Brixton and Shortlands. Stations are being deep cleaned and painted while the line is closed. Main line services are diverted via Catford and a shuttle operates between Beckenham Junction and Orpington. Rail replacement buses run between Denmark Hill and Beckenham Junction.

**Victoria:** The claustrophobic concourse by platforms 15 to 19 is to be remodelled to reduce congestion. Various retail units and the Gatwick Express ticket office are to be relocated. The number of ticket gates across the station, including

the Chatham side, is to be increased from 86 to 111. Work starts in September and, as far as possible, will be undertaken at times when the station is closed because of resignalling work.

**Oxted:** Renovation of Oxted Viaduct has been completed. This included a complete repaint, brickwork repairs and replacing the bearings on which the three truss spans rest. The work has taken two years and cost £10.5M.

**Ashurst:** Millstream Viaduct, immediately north of Ashurst station, is being refurbished. It has a wrought iron deck on cast iron columns and dates from construction of the railway, which opened in 1888. The old paint is being stripped off, the metalwork repaired and the bridge repainted. The timber deck and the track over the bridge are being replaced. Work started in June and continues until November.

**Eastbourne:** Renovation of the front of the station building and the forecourt canopy has been completed. Work to the concourse will take place later this year and include new lighting, subject to listed building consent being granted.

**Brighton:** The system to protect staff working on sidings at Lovers Walk Depot has been upgraded. Derailers, preventing use of sidings, can be activated using radio frequency identification tags, instead of having to be manually secured with padlocks.

**Waterloo:** A statue commemorating the Windrush generation of emigrants to the UK was unveiled on the concourse at Waterloo on 22 June. It depicts a man, woman and child on a pile of luggage. The *Empire Windrush* docked at Tilbury, but many emigrants from the Caribbean arrived via Southampton and Waterloo. Among the guests at the unveiling by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge was Siggie Williams, who at 82 is Thameslink's oldest employee. Siggie came from Barbados sixty years ago and is still at work at Elstree & Borehamwood station.

**Wokingham:** Waterloo automatic half barrier level crossing, between Wokingham and Bracknell, has been permanently closed, in association with road alterations in the area.

**Havant:** The former taxi office at the station has been taken over by Solent Remade, a community interest company that specialises in repair of household items, so they can be reused and do not have to be replaced.

**Hythe:** Network Rail is holding a public consultation on plans to introduce passenger services to Marchwood and Hythe. Drop in events are being held at locations in the area between 10 August and 9 September. It is proposed that Marchwood station will re-open, but there will be a completely new station in Hythe.

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