

REGIONAL REVIEW: NOVEMBER 2022

STOCK NOTES

New trains for Southeastern: Southeastern is seeking tenders for between 350 and 570 new carriages, with an option for a further 70. The exact size of the order will be determined when tenders have been received and a business case completed. The trains are to be suitable for main line or suburban operation and have toilets and air-conditioning. An option is required for battery power, for working in depots or when power is off on the main line. The trains do not need to be able to work on HS1. The remaining Networker fleet amounts to 452 carriages, with class 376 being an additional 180. That totals 632, which is almost exactly the potential maximum order of 640 carriages.

Class 92: The remaining DB Cargo locomotives registered for use in the UK are: 92011/15/19/36/41/42. All of these are maintained at Crewe and used on freight traffic between Ripple Lane, Dollands Moor and Fréthun. 92015/42 are in red livery and the others are grey.

GBRf locomotives are maintained at Willesden, but sometimes receive attention at Crewe. 92032/44 are dedicated to Channel Tunnel traffic and 92006/14/20/23 to Caledonian Sleeper. 92010/18/28/38/43 are common user. 92006/10/14/18/23/38 are in Caledonian Sleeper livery, 92032/20/28/43 are in GBRf dark blue and orange livery and 92044 remains in grey. Stored locomotives, also in grey, are 92021/40/44/45/46.

Class 171: Augmentation of two coach units to three has been thus:

Old unit number	New unit number	Additional carriage
171721	171807	56806
171722	171808	56804
171723	171809	56802
171724	171810	56805
171725	171811	56803
171726	171812	56801

Class 313: Some units are to be withdrawn following the December timetable change. It is planned that the rest will go in May.

Class 701: Unit 701045 was hauled from Derby to Eastleigh on 10 November.

TIMETABLES and DIAGRAMS

West of England: The normal timetable resumed on the West of England line on 14 November. Repairs to embankments that had shrunk during the summer drought enabled speed restrictions to be lifted.

INTERESTING WORKINGS

Class 20: Locomotive Services locomotives 20096+20107 ran from Crewe to Eastleigh on 9 November and returned next day, moving coaches to and from the works for attention. The came back light on 17 November to collect a carriage from Eastleigh and returned with it to Crewe on 18 November.

Class 360: The refresh of class 360 for East Midland Trains has been completed at Eastleigh. The last unit to be dealt with, 360112, was hauled to Cricklewood on 11 November.

STRIKES

Further strikes by Network Rail RMT staff, who include signallers, were to take place on 5, 7 and 9 November, but were cancelled on 4 November. That was too short notice for the full service to be provided on 5 November, so at most stations there were no trains or the limited timetable that had operated on previous strike days. Southeastern managed run trains on most routes, though not to Sheerness, Medway Valley line, Bromley North and Hayes, but finishing earlier than usual.

A strike by staff at Thames Valley Signalling Centre on 21 November resulted in early morning and evening services between Waterloo and Reading terminating and starting at Wokingham.

ASLEF called a strike on 26 November by drivers working for various operators, including Southeastern, CrossCountry and Great Western. Most of the affected companies are running no trains, but Great Western plans a limited service, including between Reading and Basingstoke.

The November RMT strikes were called off because the union expected a better offer from Network Rail. In absence of agreement further strikes have been called on 13, 14, 16 and 17 December and 3, 4, 6 and 7 January.

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.

	18 Sept to 15 Oct P7	MAA to 15 Oct
All TOCs	68.1%	69.9%
SWR	70.9% (7 th)	71.3% (9 th)
GTR	67.0% (12 th)	71.5% (8 th)
SE	68.1% (9 th)	68.5% (12 th)

Tuesday 25 October: A Southall at Allington aggregate train, hauled by 59205, slipped to a stand on the down fast line between Bromley South and Bickley Junction about 05:30. Another locomotive was not immediately available and efforts to get the train on the move by sanding the rails were unsuccessful. The train was eventually under way, with a second locomotive, about 11:20. Meantime, 66112 failed at St Mary Cray on a Dollands Moor to Daventry freight about 09:00 and was assisted forward by another locomotive about 11:00. The 11:24 Portsmouth & Southsea to Brighton was delayed by two hours after hitting a shopping trolley on the line at Angmering. A trolley on the line at Maidstone Barracks caused some track damage, because of arcing, so the line was closed for about four hours during the evening.

Wednesday 26 October: A points failure resulted in early morning trains between Guildford and Waterloo via Woking being diverted via Cobham. There were no trains to or from Littlehampton between 05:12 and 08:58 because of a points failure. The line was closed for about two hours after the 13:54 Charing Cross to Dartford hit a bicycle on the line between Lewisham and Blackheath. Services through Gravesend were disrupted during the afternoon after a metal bar was thrown onto the line. It came into contact with a conductor rail, resulting in it being welded to the track.

Thursday 27 October: Trains were diverted via Maidstone East after the 05:39 Ramsgate to Charing Cross was involved in a fatality between Headcorn and Staplehurst. A further fatality at Northam resulted in the line being blocked for most of the evening.

Friday 28 October: A signalling failure limited the number of trains that could operate through Dover Priory during the morning, so some, mainly Charing Cross terminators, were cut back to Folkestone Central.

Sunday 30 October: There were no trains north from Gatwick Airport between the 05:04 to London Bridge and a succession of late-running services from 08:25 because a rail head treatment train failed on the up slow line. The fast lines were closed for engineering work.

Monday 31 October: Southeastern had a difficult day, with three major incidents. Engineering work at Rainham overran, so the line between Faversham and Gillingham did not re-open until 07:35. The 05:10 Tonbridge to Mountfield gypsum train was delayed by poor adhesion and failed in Mountfield Tunnel, blocking the line in both directions until 09:20. The 14:25 Ramsgate to Charing Cross failed at Pluckley and could not be moved until shortly before 20:00, when it returned empty to Ashford. The 15:22 and 16:52 from Ramsgate were diverted via Maidstone East, but other up trains used the down line between Ashford and Headcorn, taking advantage of the bi-directional signalling. This caused delays in both directions, but there were commendably few cancellations.

Tuesday 1 November: High winds during the night brought obstructions onto the railway. A trampoline became welded to the line at Southwick and was hit by an empty train about 05:25. The train was able to move clear about 07:00, but it took another two hours to repair the track. Early morning trains were also delayed by a greenhouse on the line at Paddock Wood and a tree blocking the down lines between West Byfleet and Woking. There were other fallen trees at Tadworth and Dorking. The up line from Lewes to Keymer Junction was flooded during the afternoon, so trains were diverted via Brighton. The 16:00 from Portsmouth Harbour hit a tree on the line between Buriton Tunnel and Petersfield, resulting in the line being closed for 2½ hours. Trains were cancelled or diverted via Winchester meantime.

Wednesday 2 November: A cable fire at Loughborough Junction caused cancellations and delays from 10:00 until early afternoon.

Thursday 3 November: Heavy rain overnight caused lines to be flooded at Wadhurst, Plumpton, Crowborough, between Hampton and Fulwell and between Pirbright Junction and Farnborough Main. All lines re-opened by early afternoon, except at Wadhurst where there were no trains until the evening. A signalling failure resulted in there being no trains to or from Littlehampton until after 08:00. There were no trains between Surrey Quays and Clapham Junction until 09:30 because of a power failure on the Atlantic Line. A track circuit failure at Lee resulted in up trains being diverted via Bexleyheath for most of the morning. Several late afternoon trains between Victoria and London Bridge were diverted via the Leigham spur and Tulse Hill, because of a points failure at West Norwood. Trains between Victoria and West Croydon via Crystal Palace were diverted via Selhurst. The 18:35 Victoria to Bognor Regis terminated at Pulborough, because of a problem with the brakes.

Sunday 6 November: All trains through Purley Oaks were using the fast lines, because of engineering work. Unfortunately for passengers alighting from the first two down trains, or wishing to board them, the gate to the platform was locked. Power failed on the Epsom Downs branch, stranding the 10:08 to Victoria. Services resumed with the 13:08 to Victoria. A cable fire at Tunbridge Wells resulted in the line being closed for about three hours from 16:30.

Monday 7 November: There were no trains to or from Portsmouth Harbour from midday until 17:00, because of a points failure.

Tuesday 8 November: Flooding washed mud onto the line at Cuxton, though steel piles prevented a much worse landslide. Services between Strood and Maidstone West were suspended from 07:30 for the rest of the day, while the line was cleared and the slope made safe. The line between Brighton and Lewes was closed during the afternoon and evening, following a landslip at the east end of Falmer Tunnel. A few trains operated via Haywards Heath, but many were cancelled or terminated and started at Lewes. The last two trains to Sheerness were cancelled, because the unit failed at Sittingbourne.

Wednesday 9 November: There were no trains from Bromley North between 05:21 and 07:05, because the unit failed. Unit 387204, working the 08:04 from Dalston Junction, failed near Queens Road Peckham. An assisting unit was unable to move the train, so passengers were evacuated via the track about 11:00. The unit could not be worked to New Cross depot until 15:00. Meantime trains between London Bridge and Crystal Palace or East Croydon were diverted via Forest Hill and others were cancelled. A signalling problem prevented trains running between Blackheath and Charlton for about an hour from 10:00 and then again during the afternoon. A track circuit failure at Eastleigh about 11:30 prevented trains coming off the Fareham line for the rest of the day. Trains from Portsmouth to Waterloo via Winchester were diverted via St Denys. The 12:53 Ascot to Aldershot was delayed by about an hour after hitting a tree on the line at Bagshot. Locomotive 73963, running light from Eastleigh to Tonbridge, failed on Gomshall bank, blocking the line for about three hours from 13:00.

Thursday 10 November: About 05:45 unit 700011, running empty from Rochester to Dartford, hit a level crossing panel that had been stacked by the line at Stone Crossing. The displaced panel caused minor damage to the train but hit the

up platform, causing part of it to collapse. Another unit assisted the train to Dartford by 11:00, but up trains were unable to call at Stone Crossing until the platform had been repaired overnight. The 15:55 Maidstone East to Blackfriars was detained at Borough Green for over two hours, because of a fire on the train, but was eventually able to continue.

Friday 11 November: A power failure affecting signalling prevented Southeastern trains from running in and out of Victoria for about an hour from 08:50. Trains were diverted to Cannon Street or Blackfriars, if not cancelled or terminated short. The service remained disrupted for the rest of the morning.

Saturday 12 November: Sadly there were two fatalities on Southeastern lines, involving the 10:21 from Tunbridge Wells at High Brooms and the 14:42 Ramsgate to Victoria at Kemsing.

Monday 14 November: The 10:03 Weymouth to Waterloo terminated at Wareham with an electrical fault on unit 444007. The 21:21 Bristol Parkway to Portsmouth & Southsea was involved in a fatality at Portchester.

Tuesday 15 November: The 20:25 Sittingbourne to Sheerness was badly damaged when hit by an object thrown from a bridge and terminated at Queenborough. There were no trains on the branch for the rest of the evening. Services were cancelled or delayed during the middle of the day, because of flooding at Haslemere. The 10:30 and 10:45 from Waterloo were diverted via Winchester.

Wednesday 16 November: Flooding caused severe disruption during the evening. There were no trains between Lewes and Brighton after 20:15 and lines south of Haywards Heath were closed from 21:00. The 21:16 from Ryde Esplanade terminated at St John's Road because of flooding and there were no further trains for the rest of the evening. Flooding at Frant and a signal failure caused by rain at Wadhurst resulted in there being few trains after 21:00. Those that did run were very badly delayed.

Thursday 17 November: An engineer's train from Horsley to Woking Yard failed at Guildford about 04:40, blocking the line to Woking. Trains were diverted via Cobham for two hours. An aggregate train from Bardon Hill to Crawley New Yard failed at Tulse Hill at 05:45, blocking the route for Thameslink services until 06:30. Consequent cancellations continued through the morning peak. The 08:16 from Dover Priory hit a tree on the line at Shepherdswell, resulting in unit 375623 needing a new end gangway.

Saturday 19 November: The 10:49 Sutton to St Albans terminated at Wimbledon Chase, because of a points failure at Wimbledon. It returned wrong line forming a short-notice 11:35 to Sutton. Other trains were diverted via Mitcham Junction or cancelled until normal service resumed with the 12:19 from Sutton. Afternoon services were disrupted by a points failure at Moreton.

Sunday 20 November: Morning services were disrupted by over-running engineering work at Wimbledon.

Monday 21 November: There were no trains from Hayes between 06:15 and 11:15, because of a signalling failure. Services were cancelled or cut back to Elmers End meantime. A track circuit failure at Basingstoke meant that only platform 1 was in use during the afternoon, resulting in major delays and cancellations. A tree fell onto line between Frimley and Ash Vale about midday, blocking the line for three hours. A points failure put the former Eurostar platforms at Waterloo out of use from early afternoon until late evening.

AROUND THE REGION

Ashford: Special events at Ashford (Kent) on 19 November marked 180 years of railways in the town. They were organised by Ashford Museum, Ashford Model Railway Club and others. The railway from Headcorn to Ashford opened to the public on 1 December 1842, following a ceremony on 28 November.

Lydd: The former station building, dating from 1881, was severely damaged by fire in the early hours of 8 November, with just the walls left standing. After the station closed to passengers in 1967 the building was used for about twenty years by a motor mechanic, but had since been vacant. It was sold out of railway ownership in 2006.

Bishopstone: The former parcels office at Bishopstone station has come into use as a community centre. The project was led by Friends of Bishopstone Station, who hope to restore the rest of the building for community use. The facility was officially opened by the Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex on 4 November. Southern intends to reinstate the station's windows to their original design and to introduce new 1930s style external signs.

Wimbledon: New derailleurs have been installed at East Wimbledon Depot, to control access to by trains to sheds. Like the recently installed installation at Lover's Walk, these are secured by staff using radio frequency identification tags.

Barnes Bridge: Following the discovery of defects, Barnes Bridge was suddenly closed to rail traffic from 22 November. The line is expected to remain closed until 27 November, with Weybridge trains diverted via Twickenham. Trains are running half-hourly between Waterloo and Hounslow via Twickenham.

CREDITS: William Davies, Colin Duff, John Goodrich, Stuart Hicks, Steven Ricketts