

## REGIONAL REVIEW: DECEMBER 2022

### STOCK NOTES

**Classes 158 and 159:** Two units have been fitted with high-definition cameras that can monitor the condition of rails during the leaf fall season. Images from the trains can be viewed by staff at Basingstoke ROC.

**Classes 377 and 387:** Upgrades to the class 377/4 fleet have been completed at Selhurst Depot and attention is now being given to class 377/1. Improvements that passengers will notice include provision of new information screens, LED lighting and at-seat charging and power points. Forward-facing cameras, automatic passenger counting and data recorders for monitoring and reporting on the condition of equipment on the train are also being fitted. Less work will be required to classes 377/6, 377/7 and 387, because they already have forward-facing cameras and power sockets. Their equipment monitors will be upgraded.

**Class 701:** South Western Railway has accepted 24 trains from Alstom. Driver training commences early in 2023.

**Class 769:** Great Western is returning its class 319 hybrid conversions to the leasing company, without any of them having been used in revenue service. Class 165 and 166 units will continue to work GW services to Redhill, Gatwick and Basingstoke.

### TIMETABLES and DIAGRAMS

**Southern and Thameslink** timetables were adjusted from 11 December, to allow for the imminent return to use of platforms 5 and 6 at Gatwick Airport. Some journeys will be faster as a result. Other changes include Thameslink services between Bedford and Gatwick Airport calling additionally at South Croydon and being extended to Three Bridges. There are two additional Thameslink peak trains from East Grinstead.

**Freight:** A new working on Saturdays from 26 November is an intermodal service from Southampton Maritime to London Gateway and return operated by Freightliner. The train runs from Southampton overnight and arrives back during the afternoon (initially short-term schedules varied slightly from week to week). It runs via Reading in both directions. Spoil from HS2 tunnels in the London area is to be disposed of by rail from Willesden to a number of locations, including Cliffe, on the Grain branch.

### INTERESTING WORKINGS

**Victorian Steam:** There was an unusual service at Victoria on 26 November. The Brighton side was closed because of engineering work and Southeastern drivers were on strike. The only passenger train all day was a steam excursion to the Medway Valley line, out via Tulse Hill and Redhill and return via Strood, Rochester and Herne Hill. It is suggested that this was the first day that Victoria has been served only by steam since 1909.

**Class 20:** 20096+20107 made another visit to Eastleigh, transferring Locomotive Services carriages to and from the Works. They arrived from Crewe on 6 December and returned the following day.

**Excursions:** 47832 and 57313 topped and tailed a Nottingham to Winchester excursion on 23 November. The train stabled at Eastleigh. A trip from Peterborough via Reading to Winchester, Southampton and Salisbury on 18 December was hauled by 67016.

## STRIKES

ASLEF called a strike on 26 November by drivers working for various operators, including Southeastern, CrossCountry and Great Western. Most of the affected companies, including Southeastern, ran no trains, but Great Western operated 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 were called on 13, 14, 16 and 17 December, 18:00 on 24 December until 05:59 on 27 December and 3, 4, 6 and 7 January. The 24 to 27 December strike threatened planned engineering work, but when this was published it appeared that most, if not all, work was taking place as planned.

Services provided on most of the December strike days were similar to those previously. There was a fuller service on 24 December, but only in the morning, and on 27 December, but starting much later than usual. On many lines there were no trains during the morning. The regular service on days when RMT members at Network Rail are on strike remains as:

**South Eastern:** Half hourly from London Bridge, all stations (unless shown otherwise) to:

- Dartford via Greenwich, not calling at Woolwich Dockyard
- Dartford via Bexleyheath
- Dartford via Lewisham and Sidcup
- Orpington via Lewisham
- Sevenoaks via Lewisham

London St Pancras to Stratford International and Ebbsfleet quarter hourly, with alternate trains continuing to Ashford.

**Southern:** Half hourly:

- Victoria to Clapham Junction, Balham and all stations to Sutton via Mitcham Junction
- Victoria to West Croydon, all stations via Crystal Palace except Wandsworth Common
- Victoria to Epsom Downs, all stations via Selhurst
- Victoria to East Croydon, Gatwick Airport, Haywards Heath and Brighton
- Purley to Tattenham Corner, with alternate trains from London Bridge and East Croydon
- Brighton to Hove

**Thameslink:** Half hourly from London Bridge to:

- Norwood Junction, East Croydon, Purley and all stations Redhill to Gatwick Airport
- East Croydon, Coulsdon South, Merstham, Redhill, Horley, Gatwick Airport and Three Bridges
- East Croydon and all stations Gatwick Airport to Brighton

**London Overground, East London Line:** Half hourly:

- Highbury & Islington to Clapham Junction
- Dalston Junction to Crystal Palace
- Highbury & Islington to West Croydon

**South Western Railway:** Half hourly from Waterloo to:

- All stations except Queenstown Road to Windsor via Hounslow
- Clapham Junction, Wimbledon, Surbiton and all stations to Woking
- Clapham Junction, Surbiton, Woking and all stations to Basingstoke
- Clapham Junction, Woking, Basingstoke, Winchester, Eastleigh, Southampton Airport Parkway and Southampton Central

There is a limited **CrossCountry** service between Southampton Central and Manchester Piccadilly. **Great Western** operates hourly between Reading and Basingstoke.

RMT members working for Southeastern were on strike on 15 December. Despite warnings of disruption, most trains operated other than early in the morning (see below).

An ASLEF strike on 5 January affects many train operators, including Southeastern, Southern, Gatwick Express and Thameslink, who will not be operating any trains. Great Western expects to operate a very limited service, as on 26 November. CrossCountry has not announced what services, if any, it will be able to provide.

## **FROZEN UP**

Very cold weather, with rain and sleet, resulted in major disruption on Sunday 11 and Monday 12 December, because of ice on conductor rails.

### **Sunday**

The 22:00 (Saturday) Charing Cross to Ramsgate became stranded between Ashford and Westenhanger. After a deicing train had operated over the up line passengers were returned to Ashford on another train about 04:00. The stranded unit was hauled back to Ashford later. An early morning empty train from Dover Priory was unable to reach Kearsney and had to return to Dover. A limited service was possible via Canterbury West during the morning, but all lines to Dover were closed until the afternoon. Trains in East Kent were subject to delay or cancellation for the rest of the day. The 18:33 Strood to Paddock Wood was delayed for two hours at Beltring and there were no further trains on the Medway Valley line. The last trains on the Hastings line were 15:46 from Charing Cross and 17:50 from Hastings. There were also delays and cancellations on the Chatham line, which got worse as the evening progressed.

The 07:12 Eastbourne to Brighton, the first departure of the day, failed to get as far as Hampden Park. Following manual deicing of the conductor rails the train was hauled back into the station by another unit shortly after 10:00. It was followed in by the 07:05 from Brighton, which had been stood at Hampden Park since 07:54. There were very few trains to or from Eastbourne until the afternoon. There were also delays and cancellations on the Seaford branch.

The line was closed for engineering work between Southampton Central and Brockenhurst. The 08:08 Weymouth to Brockenhurst failed to reach Upwey, but was able to return to Weymouth and the 08:14 from Bournemouth got no further than Wareham. Services were suspended between Poole and Weymouth and then to Brockenhurst after the 09:20 Poole to Brockenhurst became stranded at Poole and the 09:30 from Brockenhurst terminated at Christchurch. The last train on the Lymington branch was the 10:29 from Brockenhurst. Services resumed from 16:30.

Afternoon services via Fareham were subject to delays and cancellation during the afternoon, because of ice on conductor rails.

### **Monday**

Snow made icy conditions even more difficult.

Southeastern services were severely disrupted, with very few trains running. There were none at all on the Bromley North and Sheerness branches or on the Medway Valley line. Main line services were less severely affected than main line ones, but the only train on the Hastings line, where fallen trees added to the difficulties, was a short notice service from Tonbridge at 14:50. There were fewer cancellations from St Pancras, but some trains terminated and started at Ashford. The first train via Canterbury East was the 10:10 from Victoria.

The 03:15 Bedford to Brighton became stranded on departure from Herne Hill, blocking the Chatham line until after 08:00. There were no Thameslink trains to Sutton throughout the day.

Southern was much less badly affected, but most Gatwick Express services were cancelled. An empty train from Bognor Regis became stranded between Arundel Junction and Angmering about 04:30. The 05:27 Brighton to Southampton

terminated at Worthing and there were no other trains west of Brighton until the middle of the afternoon. Most trains between Victoria and Littlehampton were cancelled or terminated short, but a few were diverted via Horsham. Many trains to and from Eastbourne were cancelled from 11:00 until late afternoon. There were no trains between Redhill and Tonbridge until late afternoon and very few thereafter. There were gaps of up to two hours in the East Grinstead service.

There were strikes on 13 and 14 December, so there was a late start to services on Thursday 15 December, to allow time for deicing and checking that lines were clear of ice.

## TIMETABLES AND DIAGRAMS

**South Western Railway** runs a reduced service between 28 January and 2 January, even though there are no strikes on those days, comprising:

From Waterloo:

- Reading via Twickenham, half hourly
- Windsor via Hounslow, quarter hourly
- Shepperton via Kingston, hourly
- Guildford via Epsom, half hourly
- Clapham Junction, Wimbledon, Surbiton and all stations to Woking, quarter hourly
- Clapham Junction, Surbiton, Woking and all stations to Woking, half hourly
- Clapham Junction, Woking, Basingstoke, Winchester, Eastleigh, Southampton Airport Parkway and Southampton Central

There are also hourly trains calling at all stations:

- Woking to Portsmouth Harbour
- Eastleigh to Portsmouth Harbour
- Southampton Central to Weymouth (so Beaulieu Road has a better service than usual)
- Basingstoke to Salisbury, with alternate trains continuing to Exeter St Davids

A few Weymouth trains run to and from Winchester. There is a limited service to Alton, with hourly trains until mid-morning and during the evening. There is a normal service on the Isle of Wight.

## 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.

	16 Oct to 12 Nov	MAA to 12 Nov	13 Nov to 10 Dec	MAA to 10 Dec
All TOCs	60.7%	69.5%	60.1%	69.2%
SWR	59.0% (9 <sup>th</sup> )	70.8% (8 <sup>th</sup> )	53.7% (13 <sup>th</sup> )	70.0% (=8 <sup>th</sup> )
GTR	60.2% (8 <sup>th</sup> )	70.6% (9 <sup>th</sup> )	62.5% (9 <sup>th</sup> )	70.0% (=8 <sup>th</sup> )
SE	57.6% (12 <sup>th</sup> )	68.0% (12 <sup>th</sup> )	53.9% (12 <sup>th</sup> )	67.5% (12 <sup>th</sup> )

**Wednesday 23 November:** Trains between Farnham and Guildford were cancelled for six hours from 06:30, because of a points failure at Aldershot. A multi-purpose vehicle hit a tree near East Grimstead (between Dean and Salisbury) about

06:40, resulting in the line being closed until 12:45. A points failure on the down fast line at Courthill Loop South Junction about 15:00 required trains to be diverted to the down slow line for five hours. Ramsgate trains were diverted to Victoria during the evening peak and Cannon Street roundabout services were cancelled.

**Thursday 24 November:** A UK Power Network cable fell onto the line at Sturry about 18:30 resulted in there being no trains between Canterbury and Ramsgate for the rest of the day.

**Friday 25 November:** A track defect in the up fast line between Byfleet and Weybridge caused trains to be diverted to the up slow line until 10:00, with up trains omitting calls at Byfleet and Weybridge to ease congestion. Following immediate attention, the up fast line reopened with a 5 mph speed restriction pending overnight repairs. The Networkers on the 08:51 Tunbridge Wells to Charing Cross failed at Hildenborough. The 08:17 Hastings to Charing Cross was delayed by 22 minutes at Tonbridge and then used the bidirectional signalling to run via the down line to Sevenoaks, overtaking the failure. The failed train was able to run empty to Grove Park after about an hour. A points failure at Selhurst about 18:20 put the up slow and down fast lines out of use for the rest of the day, resulting in significant delays and cancellations. The lines were open next morning, but without trains being able to run between Selhurst and West Croydon until 10:20.

**Saturday 26 November:** A points failure at Wennington about 12:45 required single line working on the up line between St Pancras and Singlewell. There were no Southeastern trains, because drivers were on strike, so only Eurostar was affected.

**Sunday 27 November:** The 10:20 Ramsgate to St Pancras terminated at Whitstable, because of a problem with the doors. The 11:16 Basingstoke to Waterloo suffered a traction failure at Hook and terminated there. There were no trains between Crowborough and Uckfield from 11:00 until 15:00 because of flooding. Then the 17:38 Oxted to Uckfield ran into a herd of deer near Cowden, blocking the line for three hours.

**Monday 28 November:** Unit 377103 derailed at Selhurst Depot during the evening.

**Tuesday 29 November:** Severe damage to the overhead line caused the 08:28 Faversham to St Pancras to become stranded between Dagenham and Stratford. Southeastern services were suspended, but Eurostar was able to operate with severe delays and some cancellations, using the down line in both directions. A Eurotunnel locomotive was used to retrieve the failed train during the afternoon, after passengers had been evacuated. Southeastern was able to provide a limited evening service from St Pancras, with trains to Ashford hourly 17:20 to 20:20, also at 19:50. All but the 19:50 connected with trains from Ebbsfleet to Ramsgate via Gravesend. The line closed at 21:00 to enable repairs to the overhead line.

**Wednesday 30 November:** Overhead lines between Stratford and Ebbsfleet were repaired overnight, but one of the works trains failed. Single line working was in operation on the down line between Wennington and Stratford until 09:30, resulting in many cancellations throughout the morning. Littlehampton signal box was closed for seven hours from 07:15, because the rostered signaller was ill. Some Victoria services were cut back to West Worthing, but many trains were cancelled entirely. There were no trains to or from Hayes for 1½ hours from 11:15 because of a signalling failure.

**Friday 2 December:** The 09:19 Brockenhurst to Bournemouth, unit 450035, became stranded following departure from Sway, because the conductor rail was too low. An assisting unit became gapped. Both lines were blocked until single line working over the up line between Bournemouth and Brockenhurst was implemented during the evening, but very few trains ran. Both of the failed trains were moved overnight, following adjustment to their shoe gear. The conductor rail alignment was corrected overnight. The 12:38 Victoria to Reigate failed at Merstham and was unable to proceed to Redhill until 16:36. Trains were diverted via the Quarry Line or cancelled meantime. A signal failure on the Quarry Line added to the disruption.

**Saturday 3 December:** A broken rail resulted in the up slow line between Basingstoke and Byfleet Junction being closed until the middle of the afternoon. Trains were diverted via the up fast line, so could not call at West Byfleet or Byfleet & New Haw.

**Sunday 4 December:** There were no trains between Strood and Maidstone West during the morning, because a signaller was ill. The 06:49 Andover to Waterloo was disabled after hitting a shopping trolley on the line between Hook and Winchfield. Passengers were evacuated to the 07:43 from Andover, which ran via the slow line to Winchfield and set back onto the front of the failure, allowing an end to end transfer. The failed train was able to proceed empty about 11:30, following fitters' attention. The 11:12 Charing Cross to Sidcup was involved in a fatality at Mottingham. There was a very limited service until 16:00.

**Tuesday 6 December:** The up line was closed for about three hours from 16:00 following a land slip east of Gravesend.

**Wednesday 7 December:** A broken rail in the up fast line at Woking resulted in many trains from Portsmouth being diverted via Cobham until 10:00 and West of England services terminating and starting at Basingstoke. All trains were able to run via Woking after the rail was clamped, but subject to a 20 mph speed restriction pending a repair overnight. The 18:34 Cannon Street to Cannon Street via Greenwich and Sidcup suffered a brake fault Charlton and terminated there. After about an hour the train was able to proceed empty, but failed again at Woolwich Arsenal. After a further hour it was able to continue to Plumstead Sidings. Meantime, following trains were diverted via Bexleyheath or Sidcup. A signalling failure between Moreton and Dorchester South caused significant delays during the evening. The 16:05 from Waterloo terminated at Wool and returned in the times of the 19:03 from Weymouth.

**Thursday 8 December:** The parapet of Station Road bridge, New Milton was struck by a car during the night, resulting in rubble falling onto the line and the adjacent footbridge being damaged. Down trains were cautioned during the morning while the bridge was made safe. A woman was arrested on suspicion of drink driving and assaulting an emergency worker. A signalling failure between Tulse Hill and Streatham caused significant delays during the morning. Some trains from London Bridge to East Croydon ran via Crystal Palace instead of Selhurst. South Western Railway was badly disrupted by several incidents during the morning, including continued signalling difficulties at Moreton, a signal failure between Wimbledon and Earlsfield, points failures at Tolworth, Virginia Water and Brockenhurst, a problem with the level crossing at Farncombe and a track fault at Bracknell. There were no trains between Virginia Water and Wokingham until after 09:00. Adding to SWR's woes, the 13:45 Southampton Maritime to Birmingham Lawley Street, hauled by 70015, failed at Redbridge, blocking both lines for over an hour.

**Friday 9 December:** A points failure at Tulse Hill resulted in delays and cancellations until after 09:00. A broken rail was found on the up main fast line at Queenstown Road about midday. Pending overnight repairs Shepperton trains were diverted via Twickenham and all those to Waterloo via Wimbledon had to use the up slow. Suburban trains ran non-stop from Wimbledon to Waterloo and West of England trains terminated and started at Basingstoke.

**Saturday 10 December:** A points failure at Feltham about 06:00 was rectified within an hour, but the service remained disrupted for three more hours. Several Reading trains were diverted via Chertsey. The line was blocked for about three hours after the 15:39 from Reading was involved in a fatality at Ashford. Reading trains were again diverted via Chertsey.

**Sunday 11 December:** Only nine hours after the previous incident, the 01:05 Waterloo to Woking via Chertsey was involved in a fatality near Feltham. Sadly, there was yet another fatality, involving the 08:32 Cannon Street roundabout service at Plumstead. Trains were diverted via Sidcup for about two hours.

**Thursday 15 December:** There were few trains to Uckfield until the afternoon, because of a points failure at Ashurst. A burst water main flooded platform 1 at Mottingham from midday. The resulting ice sheet made the platform unsafe, so up trains did not stop. A signalling failure at Lewisham caused all Hayes trains to run via Parks Bridge Junction from 17:40 until 23:00.

**Friday 16 December:** A broken rail was found in the up line within Balcombe Tunnel during the night. Bidirectional working over the down line between New Copyhold Junction and Balcombe Tunnel Junction applied until mid-morning. The rail break was clamped pending a repair on Sunday night, with a 5 mph speed restriction applied. This caused delays and some cancellations.

**Sunday 18 December:** A herd of deer got onto the railway near Frant and one was struck by the 07:15 from Hastings. The train was able to reach Frant station, where it terminated. It was able to depart empty three hours later after attention to its shoe gear. A cable fault caused signals to fail on the down slow line at Grove Park. Trains had to be cautioned or diverted to the fast line and points had to be set manually when trains were leaving Grove Park depot. The location of the fault was not established until Monday afternoon and vegetation had to be cleared before repairs could be carried out. Normal running resumed about 20:00 on Monday.

**Monday 19 December:** A points failure at Eastbourne caused early morning trains to be delayed or cancelled, with further disruption because staff and trains had become displaced. No sooner had the service returned to normal than the 10:23 Ore to Victoria failed between Willingdon Junction and Hampden Park when approaching Eastbourne. It had to be assisted to Eastbourne by another unit and all lines were blocked until midday. There was a repeated loss of signalling between Crayford and Albany Park from 10:40 that was not rectified until about 18:00. Trains were diverted via Bexleyheath or cancelled meantime.

**Tuesday 20 December:** A broken rail in a set of points at Preston Park resulted in trains between Victoria and Littlehampton being cancelled all day. A track circuit failure on the Courthill Loop prevented trains running between Lewisham and Ladywell or Hither Green until after 09:20. Trains were cancelled or diverted via Parks Bridge Junction.

Failed points at the north end of Wadhurst Tunnel had to be worked manually until the middle of the afternoon. This resulted in severe disruption throughout the day.

**Wednesday 21 December:** A points failure put platforms 1 to 3 at Charing Cross out of use until 10:00. Trains were diverted to other termini or cancelled. There was only an hourly service on the Sheerness branch during the morning peak, because one of the trains failed. The 08:45 Waterloo to Woking failed west of Weybridge, having suffered damage to its shoe gear. Passengers were evacuated by means of end-to-end transfer to the 09:28 empty stock from Waterloo to Woking. This was somewhat unusual, because the failed train was class 450 units, but the empties were class 159 units. The failed train could not be moved until after 14:00, with all down trains having to use the slow line until then.

**Thursday 22 December:** Morning peak services were disrupted by a track circuit failure at Cannon Street that put platform 2 out of use. The 09:33 Strood to Paddock Wood failed near Aylesford, blocking the line until about 11:45.

**Friday 23 December:** A signalling fault at Otford prevented trains running to and from the Maidstone East line from 09:30. A very limited service was possible from late afternoon. Trains were cancelled or diverted via Tonbridge and there was an infrequent shuttle between Ashford and Borough Green. Unit 171801 sustained minor damage after hitting a tree between Buxted and Uckfield, while working the 10:33 from Uckfield. Services resumed with the 14:07 from London Bridge. A broken rail at Twickenham resulted in some up trains being diverted via Hounslow during the afternoon. Platform 4 remained out of use for the rest of the day, with all up trains running via platform 3.

In the week leading up to Christmas there were many cancellations and delays, because of a shortage of staff, in some cases because of illness. This included signallers and train crew. It also affected busy stations, where there were not enough staff to attend all platforms.

## RAILWAY BUSINESS

**Boundary Fares:** A claim has been made against Govia Thameslink Railway, Southeastern and South Western Railways that they do not make boundary fares sufficiently available and are over-charging passengers. Holders of Travelcards should be able to pay boundary fares from stations further from London to the zone for which their card is valid. The Competition Appeal Tribunal has determined that a claim can be brought against Southeastern and SWR as a collective action by a suitable representative. It is expected to reach the same decision in respect of the claim against GTR at a hearing on 20 February.

## AROUND THE REGION

**Dover Western Docks:** Network Rail has renovated the magnificent war memorial at Dover Western Docks former station.

**Canterbury West line:** The level crossings at Wye and Chartham were closed to road traffic for two weeks from 5 December in order to be converted from hand-operated gates to full barrier crossings. The level crossings are controlled from Canterbury Wye Area Control Centre and supervised by CCTV.

**Petts Wood:** New lift shafts were installed over the Christmas holiday period.

**Lewisham:** All lines through Lewisham are blocked between 24 December and 2 January while the junction immediately west of the station is renewed. The Bexleyheath line is closed and all trains via Woolwich run via Greenwich. *[It is confirmed that this work is proceeding, despite the RMT strike].*

**Parcels Business:** Govia Thameslink has entered into the parcels business, after a fashion. InPost parcels lockers, where people can collect deliveries of goods ordered online, have been installed at an eclectic variety of stations, many of which are quite minor. Maybe space is not available at busier stations or it can be put to more valuable uses. Stations south of the Thames with InPost lockers are: Aldrington, Ashtead, Beckenham Hill, Bognor Regis, Carshalton, Cheam, Chichester, Chipstead, Cooden Beach, Coulsdon South, Coulsdon Town, Dorking, Epsom Downs, Hackbridge, Ham Street, Haywards Heath, Horley, Horsham, Hurst Green, Kenley, Kingswood, Littlehampton, Mitcham Junction, Morden South,

Oxted, Purley, Purley Oaks, Redhill, Reigate, Salfords, Sanderstead, South Croydon, South Merton, Sutton, Tattenham Corner, Upper Warlingham, Wandsworth Common, Whyteleafe, Wimbledon Chase, Wivelsfield and Woldingham.

**Victoria Area Resignalling:** Planned work over the Christmas and New Year holiday results in Three Bridges ROC taking control of signalling between Victoria and Streatham North Junction, the Chatham lines between Victoria and Battersea Pier Junction, the Streatham Hill area and the West London Line. This means that the only section of the Brighton lines still controlled from Victoria Area Signalling Centre will be East Dulwich and Herne Hill (both exclusive) to Beckenham Junction via Tulse Hill and Crystal Palace. *[At publication day work was still under way, despite the RMT strike, but the extent of what has actually been possible remains to be confirmed].*

**Horley:** The Victorian footbridge at the site of the original Horley station is being replaced. The new span was lifted into position over the Christmas holiday period.

**Gatwick Airport:** The down fast line through platform 5 was temporarily returned to use, subject to a 30 mph speed restriction, between 5 and 27 December, to facilitate engineering work.



Repairs under way at Barnes Bridge (Network Rail photo)

**Barnes Bridge:** A 20 mph emergency speed restriction, and a ban on locomotives, was imposed over Barnes river bridge on 18 November, after ultrasonic testing found defects in four of the 86 steel pins that hold in place the beams that support the railway tracks. Freight trains were diverted via Hounslow or Kensington Olympia. The line was closed entirely from 08:46 on 22 November, but the footbridge remained open. New pins had to be manufactured specially and it was a difficult job installing them above the river. Weybridge trains were diverted via Twickenham and there was a very limited service between Waterloo and Hounslow or Kew Bridge via Twickenham. From 23 November alternate trains to Weybridge were diverted to Kew Bridge via Hounslow, with some additional peak trains between Waterloo and Hounslow. On Sunday 27 November there was an hourly service between Kew Bridge and Woking via Chertsey. The line re-opened on 3 December.

**CREDITS:** William Davies, Colin Duff, John Goodrich, Stuart Hicks, David Lloyd-Roberts