

REGIONAL REVIEW: MARCH 2023

STOCK NOTES

Class 313: Units 313202/14/17 were hauled from Lovers Walk to Eastleigh Works via Selhurst, Willesden and Chertsey on 10 March. All remaining units are to be withdrawn on 22 May, with their workings taken over by class 377.

Class 444: Unit 444023 was named *The Alex Wardle Foundation* at Waterloo on 14 March. Alex Wardle, the son of a long-serving SWR employee, died age 23 from a cardiac arrest. As well as naming a train, SWR is providing defibrillators at all of its staffed stations.

Class 701: Units 701509+512 made what is thought to be the first test trip by five-coach units on 1 March. Departing Eastleigh at 06:23 the itinerary was Winchester, Bournemouth, Waterloo, Poole, Eastleigh. The units made further trips later in the week.

Class 707: Unit 707001 was named *Spirit of Ukraine* in a ceremony at Cannon Street on 24 February, the anniversary of the Russian invasion.

TIMETABLES and DIAGRAMS

Southeastern: From 22 May there will be an hourly service between Charing Cross and the Bexleyheath line, which since December has been served only by trains to Victoria and Cannon Street.

Southern: The Leigham Spur, between Streatham Hill and Tulse Hill regains a limited service from 22 May. The trains concerned are 07:50 and 08:20 Mon-Fri Streatham Hill to London Bridge.

Island Line: Two trains per hour are to operate from 2 April, passing at Brading.

INTERESTING WORKINGS

Class 20: 20096+20107 ran light from Crewe to Eastleigh via Didcot on 17 March. On 20 March they worked a mixed rake of Mark 1 and Mark 3 carriages from Eastleigh Works to Southall via Reading.

RAILWAY BUSINESS

Flexi Season Tickets: As an experiment for a few weeks until 2 April Southeastern is offering what it described as flexi season tickets from a small number of stations. These are effectively carnets allowing eight travel days in a period of 28 days. These gave a saving of typically 40% compared with eight Anytime returns.

STRIKES

Further industrial action by Network Rail RMT staff, who include signallers, was called off after a new pay offer was made. Following a ballot of members, the offer was accepted.

RMT members from most train operators, who include guards and platform staff, were on strike on 16 and 18 March and will be striking again on 30 March and 1 April. This resulted in operators affected running a reduced service, starting later and finishing earlier than usual.

Southeastern operated half-hourly, calling at all stations (unless shown otherwise)

- London Bridge to Dartford via Greenwich, not calling at Woolwich Dockyard
- London Bridge to Dartford via Bexleyheath
- London Bridge to Dartford via Lewisham and Sidcup
- London Bridge to Orpington via Lewisham
- London Bridge to Sevenoaks via Lewisham
- Grove Park to Bromley North
- Victoria to Bromley South, quarter-hourly calling at Herne Hill and all stations from Penge East
- St Pancras to Ebbsfleet International, quarter hourly, alternate trains continuing to Ashford

Thameslink operated half-hourly south of the river:

- All stations Blackfriars to Sevenoaks via Catford and Bat & Ball
- London Bridge to Norwood Junction, East Croydon, Purley, Redhill and all stations to Gatwick Airport
- London Bridge to East Croydon, Coulsdon South, Merstham, Redhill, Horley, Gatwick Airport and Three Bridges
- London Bridge to East Croydon, Gatwick Airport and all stations to Brighton

Gatwick Express ran half-hourly between Victoria and Gatwick Airport, but not on 18 March.

On 16 March **Southern** operated half-hourly (unless shown otherwise):

- Victoria to Epsom Downs, all stations via Selhurst
- Victoria to West Croydon, all stations via Crystal Palace except Wandsworth Common
- Victoria to Clapham Junction, Balham and all stations to Sutton via Mitcham Junction
- London Bridge to East Croydon and all stations to Tattenham Corner
- Purley to Caterham, all stations hourly
- Victoria to Clapham Junction, Selhurst, East Croydon, Sanderstead and all stations to East Grinstead
- Oxted to Uckfield, hourly
- Victoria to Clapham Junction, East Croydon, Gatwick Airport, Haywards Heath and Brighton
- Three Bridges to Barnham, all stations via Horsham
- Brighton to Seaford (with usual non-stops at Southease and Newhaven Harbour)
- Brighton to Falmer, Lewes and all stations to Eastbourne, hourly
- Brighton to Hove
- Brighton to Barnham, all stations via Littlehampton, hourly

There was a modified service on 18 March, because of engineering work. East Grinstead and Brighton trains were diverted to London Bridge and suburban services from Victoria were cancelled.

On 16 March **South Western Railway** operated:

- Waterloo to Windsor & Eton Riverside, all stations via Hounslow except Queenstown Road, quarter-hourly
- Waterloo to Clapham Junction, Wimbledon, Surbiton and all stations to Woking, quarter-hourly
- Waterloo to Clapham Junction, Surbiton, Woking and all stations to Basingstoke, half-hourly
- Waterloo to Clapham Junction, Woking, Basingstoke, Winchester, Eastleigh, Southampton Airport Parkway and Southampton Central, half-hourly
- Woking to Worplesdon and Guildford, hourly
- Basingstoke to Salisbury, all stations, hourly; a few trains ran through to and from Waterloo

Engineering work resulted in there being no trains between Hounslow and Windsor & Eton Riverside or between Basingstoke and Woking on 18 March.

Great Western ran trains between Reading and Basingstoke, but not between Westbury and Portsmouth or to Redhill, Gatwick Airport or Weymouth. **CrossCountry** operated a limited service between Southampton and Manchester. **London Overground** was unaffected and ran its normal service.

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.

	5 February to 4 March	MAA to 4 March
All TOCs	69.1%	68.0%
SWR	69.5% (10 th)	68.6% (10 th)
GTR	68.9% (11 th)	68.3% (11 th)
SE	66.3% (13 th)	65.6% (12 th)

Friday 24 February: The 08:22 Waterloo to Weybridge terminated at Feltham, because a wartime bomb had been found near to the railway. The line was closed, but it was quickly established that the bomb was safe and trains were on the move again after just 25 minutes. The up line at Eynsford was blocked during the afternoon, because of a track defect. Thameslink services from Sevenoaks were diverted via Orpington. Southeastern up trains were diverted via Tonbridge or cancelled. A points failure at Fratton late afternoon required the service to be thinned. Trains from Victoria were diverted to Bognor Regis and those from Brighton were cut back to Chichester.

Saturday 25 February: There was a further failure of the signalling in the Rochester area that was a repeat of the incident on 17 February. Trains were unable to run through the area for about two hours from 06:30. The 12:33 Waterloo to Guildford was delayed for 1½ hours because a tree had fallen onto the line at Cobham & Stoke d’Abernon. Other trains were cancelled or diverted via Epsom. The 19:47 Waterloo to Chessington terminated at Vauxhall, because of a problem with the doors.

Sunday 26 February: The 07:53 Margate to Canterbury West hit a road sign on the track at Broadstairs. Trains between Fratton and Havant were cancelled or delayed for two hours from 09:00, because of a points failure.

Monday 27 February: Signalling failed between St Denys and Brockenhurst during the night and was not fully restored until 07:45. Consequent delays and cancellations continued into the afternoon. The 07:06 Brighton to Victoria terminated at Haywards Heath, because of a fault on the train. A track circuit failure prevented trains running between Tulse Hill and West Norwood during the afternoon. The 15:20 Victoria to London Bridge failed at Streatham Hill, but was able to continue after a delay of half an hour. The 15:36 Victoria to West Croydon via Crystal Palace was held at Balham and then diverted via Selhurst. An infrastructure train from Hoo Junction to Eastleigh, hauled by 66750 was stopped at Brookwood about 17:00, because of a fire on a wagon. Current had to be discharged on both down lines for about 50 minutes to allow the fire to be tackled. There was also a problem with the brakes, so the train was not on the move again until after 20:30. Other trains were significantly delayed and the 18:02 Waterloo to Aldershot was diverted via Ascot.

Tuesday 28 February: A track circuit failure resulted in trains from Selhurst Depot being cancelled or delayed. Trains were delayed or cancelled throughout the morning, because of a broken rail on the up slow line at Hither Green. A points failure at Borough Market Junction about 16:45 prevented use of platforms 1 to 3 at Cannon Street until 20:30. The consequent disruption caused significant crowding at London Bridge.

Thursday 2 March: The 06:44 Dartford to Charing Cross failed at Kidbrooke and terminated there. The 07:11 Orpington to Cannon Street failed near St Johns. After some delay it was able to continue to New Cross, where it terminated. The 10:24 Cambridge to Brighton was involved in a fatality at Earlswood, resulting in all lines being closed for over three hours. A few trains operated between Gatwick Airport or Three Bridges and the coast until the line re-opened. The service was disrupted until late evening.

Friday 3 March: The 06:15 Margate to St Pancras hit a chalk fall near Broadstairs. It was able to continue after quarter of an hour, but terminated at Ramsgate. Following trains were able to proceed at caution. A points failure at Fratton caused delays during the morning peak. Some Southern services were curtailed to Chichester or diverted to Bognor Regis. The 12:22 Charing Cross to Hayes lost power at Catford Bridge and another unit had to be summoned to haul the train to Grove Park Depot. That resulting in a two hours gap in the service and consequent cancellations into the evening peak. All lines at Ascot were blocked for an hour during the middle of the afternoon following the loss of power to all signals in the area.

Saturday 4 March: A track circuit failure on the up line between Haywards Heath and Balcombe caused considerable disruption throughout the day. Gatwick Express did not operate to and from Brighton and some Littlehampton trains were diverted via Horsham. There were significant delays to other trains. It was difficult to identify the cause of the failure, but eventually thermal imaging revealed a defective signal cable, which was replaced overnight. There was a similar problem on the down slow line at Selhurst from 08:40 for the rest of the day. It did not help that Thameslink services were diverted via Tulse Hill and Selhurst, because of engineering work. Significant delays developed and services to Caterham and Epsom Downs were subject to cancellation.

Sunday 5 March: There were no trains between Surrey Quays and Clapham Junction for most of the morning because of a track circuit failure at Clapham High Street. There were no trains between Folkestone Central and Ramsgate after 20:00 because the signaller at Folkestone East box (which controls the Dover area) was taken ill. Trains via Canterbury East terminated and started at Shepherds Well.

Wednesday 8 March: Unit 395027 failed at Teynham while working the 05:00 Faversham to St Pancras. It was coaxed to Sittingbourne, where it failed again and was taken out of service. A tree fell onto the line between Tonbridge and High Brooms, resulting in the line being closed from 06:40 until 08:00. Both incidents and service recovery were made more difficult by heavy snow.

Friday 10 March: A power failure at Clapham Junction about 06:40 disrupted signalling on the Bournemouth, Windsor and West London Lines. There were delays and some cancellations until mid-morning. A points failure resulted in there being no trains at Caterham between the 09:25 departure and the 11:54 arrival. All signalling at Littlehampton failed shortly before midday, because of cable theft. No trains could run until repairs were completed about 19:30. A tree fell onto the line at Ash about midday, blocking the line for about an hour. Some trains between Farnham and Guildford were diverted via Woking and others were cancelled. The 18:31 Charing Cross to Maidstone East failed at Waterloo east, because of a fault on the train.

Saturday 11 March: The 09:17 Luton to Rainham was involved in a fatality at Belvedere. Trains were diverted via Bexleyheath for the rest of the morning and Cannon Street roundabout trains ran via Sidcup.

Sunday 12 March: A person survived being hit by the 17:29 Charing Cross to Canterbury West at Headcorn. Trains were diverted via Maidstone East until late evening.

Monday 13 March: A track circuit failure at Newhaven resulted in there being no morning peak trains. A track circuit failure at Nine Elms prevented use of the down Windsor slow line, resulting in the evening peak Hounslow loop trains being cancelled. Trees fell onto the line at Tunbridge Wells and Chilham during the afternoon. The 14:50 Margate to St Pancras and 15:10 Ramsgate to Charing Cross were diverted via Deal.

Tuesday 14 March: A points failure at Gravesend caused delays and cancellations during the middle of the day. The points giving access to the up East London line at New Cross Gate failed repeatedly from mid-morning. Initially, East London trains were cancelled or terminated short. The points were secured towards the East London line from mid-afternoon for the rest of the day. Southern trains from Victoria to London Bridge were diverted to the up fast, running non-stop from Crystal Palace. The 18:24 Cannon Street to Slade Green was delayed at Abbey Wood, because of a problem with the doors, and terminated at Belvedere.

Wednesday 15 March: An empty train from Ramsgate to Faversham failed at Herne Bay about 06:50, blocking the line until after 09:00. Many trains were cancelled, but the 07:16 Ramsgate to Victoria was diverted via Canterbury West and Bat & Ball and 07:40 ran via Dover and Canterbury East.

Thursday 16 March: The 13:20 Waterloo to Southampton was involved in a fatality at the foot crossing south of Worting Junction, resulting in the line being closed for over two hours.

Monday 20 March: A track circuit failure resulted in there being no trains between Newhaven Harbour and Seaford for several hours after the 07:23 to Brighton. A few trains ran from late morning, but normal service did not resume until the 15:11 from Brighton.

Tuesday 21 March: A signalling failure disrupted services to and from Charing Cross for about four hours from 10:30. Trains were delayed, cancelled or diverted to other termini.

AROUND THE REGION

Hook: Repairs to the embankment that was subject to the landslide in January involved construction of a steel piled retaining wall 60 metres long at the foot of the slope.

Isle of Wight: The line between Ryde Esplanade and Ryde St Johns Road was closed from 13 to 19 March for engineering work. It was originally planned that the closure would last until 2 April, but track renewals and work at Ryde Esplanade station have been deferred.

LOST PROPERTY

Adding to the catalogue of weird things left behind by passengers, Southeastern staff found an abandoned live duck on a train at Herne Hill on 24 February.

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