

## REGIONAL REVIEW: JUNE 2023

### STOCK NOTES

**Eastleigh Works:** Southern Electric vehicles noted at Eastleigh Works on 24 June were units Gatwick Express 8210, 313201/04/06-09/12/15-17/20, 319011, 319377, 319380, 450095, the London Transport 4TC unit and loose vehicles 62594 (313202), 77382 (2401), 71822/46 (2405), 71824/48 & 77388 (2407), all except the motor coach of 2412 and 71841/65 (2424). Locomotives 73002, 73101, E6016 (73110), 73139 and 73201 were also present.

**Class 73:** GBRf has signed a new seven years contract for continued operation of the Caledonian Sleeper trains. Use of class 73 and 92 locomotives will continue, but they may be replaced by new class 99 bimodes.

**Class 313:** Units 313204+220 ran from Brighton to Eastleigh Works on 6 June. 313207+216 ran from Hove to Eastleigh Works on 13 June, followed by 313209+215 on 21 June and 313213+219 on 27 June. That just leaves 313203/05/10/11 to be moved to Eastleigh. 313214 and the motor coaches of 313202 have already been cut up.

**Class 375:** Unit 375829 was named *Verena Holmes (1889 – 1964) Women in Engineering* at Cannon Street on 23 June. The unit also carries the wording in much smaller type *Women's Engineering Society*. Verena Holmes was born in Ashford and was the first woman to be elected a member of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers. 23 June is her birthday and also International Women in Engineering Day.

**Class 701:** Further units moved to store at Long Marston are 701033/41. Unit 701053 was moved from Derby to Eastleigh on 5 June and 701054 on 22 June. 701043 was returned to Eastleigh from Marchwood on 7 June. Units are now being stored at Bicester MoD, as well as Long Marston, Marchwood and Worksop. 701040 was moved there on 19 June. 701510 was moved from Wembley to Eastleigh on 14 June, as was 701508 next day. Over forty units have been accepted from Alstom by SWR and driver training has started.

### TIMETABLES and DIAGRAMS

**Freight:** A new traffic flow is steel rails from Scunthorpe via the Channel Tunnel to Muizen in Belgium for Infrabel, the Belgian rail infrastructure authority. Trains are operated by DB Cargo. The initial working ran overnight on 9/10 June from Scunthorpe to Dollands Moor via Kensington, Catford and Bat & Ball. Trains are expected to operate approximately monthly. The Winfrith to Sellafield radioactive waste train on 1 June may have been the last.

### INTERESTING WORKINGS

**Class 37:** Class 455 units regularly visit Bournemouth Depot for attention and normally do so under their own power. Exceptionally, unit 5863 was hauled from Wimbledon to Bournemouth on 26 June by 37884.

**Class 73:** On 10 June 73963+73965 worked a GBRf staff special from Ashford International to Weston-super-Mare via Orpington, Herne Hill, Kensington and Bath Spa. The train stabled at Exeter. Next day the same train was used for a one-way railtour from Tonbridge to Nottingham via Ashford, Maidstone East, Herne Hill, Wembley Reception Sidings and the East Coast Main Line, with 73963+73965 leading from Ashford to Wembley and returning light to Tonbridge. There was a further class 73 working to Exeter on 17 June when 73962+73964 hauled a railtour from Waterloo, out via Andover and return via Southampton and Winchester. 66768 was on the rear of the train throughout. Class 73s continue to appear on infrastructure trains between Hoo Junction and Eastleigh.

**Class 201:** DEMU 1001 made a test trip from St Leonards to Brighton and back on 27 June.

**Freight:** 66796 hauled a Grain to Prestwick aviation fuel train overnight on 21/22 June. Workings from Grain are normally to Colnbrook, for Heathrow.

**Royal Ascot:** SWR ran additional trains between 20 and 24 June for the Royal Ascot race meeting. Taking advantage of the new signalling, some of these turned back at Bracknell instead of Reading. 57313 and 57314 worked the Northern Belle from Manchester Victoria to Ascot on 22 June.

## **RAIL BUSINESS**

**Kent Route:** David Davidson has succeeded Fiona Taylor as Route Director of Kent Route. He joined the railway as a graduate in 2006 and moves to Kent from Western Route.

**Flexi Season Ticket:** Southeastern is continuing its experimental flexi season ticket offer until 14 October. This gives travel for eight days within a period of four weeks. It is available for use from stations east of Rainham and Lenham (inclusive) and between Battle and Hastings, but can be to stations outside these areas. The ticket is only available by using Southeastern's 'The Key' smartcard.

**Southampton:** The Port of Southampton is encouraging use of rail for movement of containers. From 1 September until 31 December 2023 there will be a £10 modal shift fee on each container imported through Southampton. This will be refunded if the container is moved by rail to a terminal more than 140 miles from the port. If a container goes by rail to a terminal within 140 miles of Southampton there will be an incentive payment of £70. This is to encourage use of rail for transport of containers to terminals in the West Midlands. The levels of payment to apply in 2024 will be reviewed.

## **STRIKES**

Southeastern, Govia Thameslink Railway and CrossCountry did not operate any trains on 31 May and 3 June, because of a strike by train drivers. The only trains at Redhill were four round trips from Reading by Great Western. Coming between two strike days, there were numerous cancellations on 1 June.

There were limited services on 2 June, because of a strike by staff who are RMT members. The following ran half-hourly, unless shown otherwise.

### **Southeastern:**

- London Bridge and Dartford via Greenwich
- London Bridge and Dartford via Bexleyheath
- London Bridge and Dartford via Sidcup
- London Bridge and Orpington
- London Bridge and Sevenoaks
- Grove Park and Bromley North
- Victoria and Bromley South via Herne Hill
- St Pancras and Ebbsfleet International
- St Pancras and Ashford International (alternate trains to/from Ramsgate via Canterbury West)

### **Thameslink:**

- Blackfriars and Sevenoaks via Catford and Swanley
- London Bridge and Rainham via Greenwich, hourly
- London Bridge, Norwood Junction, East Croydon, Purley, Redhill and all stations to Gatwick Airport
- London Bridge, East Croydon, Coulsdon South, Merstham, Redhill, Horley, Gatwick Airport and Three Bridges
- London Bridge, East Croydon, Gatwick Airport and all stations to Brighton

## Southern:

- London Bridge and Beckenham Junction (some morning journeys only to/from Crystal Palace)
- London Bridge, East Croydon and all stations to Coulsdon Town
- Victoria and West Croydon via Crystal Palace
- Victoria and Sutton via Selhurst
- Victoria and Sutton via Mitcham Junction
- Victoria and East Grinstead
- Victoria, Clapham Junction, East Croydon and Gatwick Airport
- Victoria, Clapham Junction, East Croydon, Gatwick Airport, Haywards Heath and Brighton
- Purley and Caterham
- Oxted and Uckfield, hourly
- Redhill and Reigate
- Brighton and Seaford
- Brighton and Eastbourne
- Brighton and Barnham via Littlehampton
- Three Bridges and Barnham via Horsham

## South Western Railway:

- Waterloo and Windsor via Hounslow
- Waterloo, Clapham Junction, Wimbledon, Surbiton and all stations to Woking, quarter-hourly
- Waterloo, Clapham Junction, Surbiton, Woking and all stations to Basingstoke
- Waterloo, Clapham Junction, Woking, Basingstoke, Winchester, Eastleigh, Southampton Airport Parkway and Southampton Central
- Basingstoke and Salisbury, hourly

**CrossCountry** ran every two hours between Southampton Central and Didcot. **London Overground** ran largely as normal on both 2 and 3 June.

RMT staff at affected train companies will be striking on 20, 22 and 29 July, when a similar service is likely to operate. ASLEF has announced an overtime ban between 3 and 8 July inclusive.

## 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 28 May	MAA to 28 May
All TOCs	71.7%	67.6%
SWR	74.3% (9 <sup>th</sup> )	67.5% (10 <sup>th</sup> )
GTR	74.5% (8 <sup>th</sup> )	68.4% (9 <sup>th</sup> )
SE	72.5% (11 <sup>th</sup> )	65.0% (12 <sup>th</sup> )

Platform 4 at Charing Cross was not restored to use until 29 May, after the points damaged a week earlier were replaced. Until then some peak trains were diverted to Cannon Street.

**Wednesday 24 May:** A signalling failure between Bentley and Alton resulted in there being no trains between Farnham and Alton from 12:30 until after 23:00.

**Thursday 25 May:** A points failure about 10:30 disrupted services to and from Portsmouth for the rest of the morning. As usual, Southern was worst affected, with trains terminating at Havant or diverted to Bognor Regis. A track defect between Clandon and Guildford caused down trains to be diverted via Woking or cut back to Effingham Junction for about three hours from 16:20.

**Friday 26 May:** A signalling fault at South Croydon caused delays and cancellations throughout the day. The 15:55 Horsham to Peterborough failed at Littlehaven, but was able to proceed empty to Three Bridges Depot after about half an hour.

**Saturday 27 May:** The 10:00 Dover Priory to Charing Cross was involved in a fatality at Chelsfield, resulting in trains being diverted via Bat & Ball until 13:30. A track circuit failure between Romsey and Eastleigh caused afternoon trains to be delayed or cancelled. The 14:45 from Guildford failed at Epsom and terminated there.

**Monday 29 May:** The 13:45 and 14:15 Portsmouth Harbour to Waterloo were diverted via Winchester, because of a tree on line between Havant and Petersfield. The 19:22 Ore to Victoria terminated at Lewes to allow medical attention to a passenger who had been stabbed and for police investigations.

**Tuesday 30 May:** The train to form the 05:22 to Blackfriars failed at Sevenoaks, blocking platform 4 for three hours and causing several other Thameslink services to be cancelled. A trailer became detached from the tractor that was towing it on Berwick level crossing about 10:40. There was difficulty moving it, so the line was closed until 14:00. The 15:30 Paddock Wood to Strood, unit 375301, hit a tree on the line near East Farleigh, resulting in the line being closed until 20:00. A signalling failure at London Bridge delayed northbound Thameslink services during the evening peak. The 17:28, 17:44 and 17:58 from Brighton were diverted via Tulse Hill.

**Wednesday 31 May:** Engineering work at Norwood Junction over-ran. Only London Overground was operating, because of an ASLEF strike, and trains were diverted to Crystal Palace. The 14:05 Hoo Junction to Eastleigh infrastructure train came to a halt short of Dartford, because the hand brake on one of the wagons had been left on. There was damage to the wheelset and sparks had caused a lineside fire, which led to a signalling failure. The line was blocked for the rest of the day.

**Thursday 1 June:** There were significant delays to high-speed services from mid-morning until late afternoon, because of damaged points at Stratford International. All trains had to run via the down line between Wennington and St Pancras while repairs were carried out during the afternoon, resulting in some services being cancelled between Ashford and St Pancras. Delays while trespassers are removed from the railway are all too common, but there was a particularly disruptive incident at London Bridge during the afternoon, when all lines were blocked for up to an hour.

**Saturday 3 June:** Trains were delayed by a signalling failure between Moreton and Dorchester South about 10:45, resulting in long delays and cancellations. Pilot working over the single line section was introduced at midday and continued until normal signalling resumed about 17:30. Matters were made worse when a Crewe to Southampton Maritime Freightliner train failed near Micheldever about midday. It was able to continue an hour later. The Weymouth service, in particular, was badly disrupted for the rest of the day.

**Sunday 4 June:** The 08:40 Victoria to Dorking became stranded south of Mitcham Junction after it lost several collector shoes, causing the traction current to short circuit. After a temporary repair, the train was able to return to Mitcham Junction about 10:20, where it was taken out of service. Trains in both directions were diverted via West Croydon until after 11:00. The 17:50 from Guildford terminated at Effingham Jn with a brake problem.

**Monday 5 June:** The 19:43 Beckenham Junction to London Bridge became immobilised at North Dulwich, because of a problem with the doors, blocking the line for about 1½ hours.

**Tuesday 6 June:** A tumble drier was thrown onto the railway at New Milton late morning, blocking the down line for about an hour. A fire on the up loop at Gillingham resulted in traction current being discharged on all lines about 16:00. The down line was re-opened quickly, but it was over an hour before trains could run via the up main line. The up loop remained closed until 20:30.

**Wednesday 7 June:** The 14:05 Hoo Junction to Eastleigh infrastructure train suffered repeated brake faults on locomotives 73136 and 73202, bringing the train to a halt at Hounslow Junction, between Ashford and Staines, approaching Woking and between Hook and Basingstoke. Each time the driver was able to overcome the problem, but the train was three hours late at Eastleigh, having caused delays to numerous following trains. Victoria station was evacuated for about half an hour from 20:00, as a result of the fire alarm being activated.

**Thursday 8 June:** Most services between Tonbridge and Redhill were cancelled until 09:00, because of a failed freight train at Edenbridge. There was a reduced service between Brighton and Worthing from 16:30, because Lancing signal

box was a signaller short, due to illness. The large number of CCTV level crossings could only be operated safely by running fewer trains.

**Friday 9 June:** Unit 700042 derailed when entering Plumstead Sidings in the early hours. The Woolwich line was closed until 10:15 to allow rerailing and track repairs. Trains were cancelled or diverted via Bexleyheath. A shuttle service operated between Charlton and Cannon Street. A large tree fell onto the line between Portchester and Fareham about 19:45, blocking the line for 2½ hours.

**Saturday 10 June:** The domestic electricity supply at Gatwick Airport failed at 11:15, putting the lighting, lifts, escalators and other services out of use. Initially trains did not stop at all, but a limited number did so from 13:00. Normal service, with power restored, did not resume until 15:45. Hot weather caused a number of problems during the afternoon, including track circuit failures at Beaulieu Road and Earlswood that required trains to be cautioned past signals at danger. A points failure at Woking just after 16:00 meant that no trains could arrive from Brookwood for over an hour, and then had to be cautioned past danger signals. Normal service did not resume until 21:30, but cancellations and extensive delays continued for the rest of the day. Damaged points at Ludgate Junction prevented trains running between Wandsworth Road and Clapham Junction from 18.00 until Tuesday morning. London Overground trains ran to Battersea Park and freight services had to be diverted via Kensington. A track circuit failure between Staines and Egham caused both lines to be closed for about two hours from 19:45. Damaged overhead line at Ashford West Junction caused power to trip, stranding the 19:37 St Pancras to Margate between Lenham Loops at Ashford for 2½ hours.

**Sunday 11 June:** A damaged set of points prevented use of the up fast line through East Croydon from early morning. Gatwick Express services were cancelled. More extensive changes were required on Monday, when Gatwick Express remained cancelled and trains from Bognor Regis, Portsmouth and Southampton terminated at Gatwick Airport. Single line working was in operation on HS1, to allow repairs to the damaged overhead line at Ashford. A points failure at Crismill early in the afternoon prevented trains running between Ebbsfleet and Ashford for almost four hours. Trains were delayed by over an hour after a bicycle was thrown onto the line at Christchurch, short circuiting the conductor rail. A points failure during the afternoon prevented trains between Oxted and Uckfield crossing at Ashurst, so the service was cut back to two-hourly for the rest of the day.

**Monday 12 June:** The 11:20 Weymouth to Waterloo was involved in a fatality at Branksome, resulting in the line being closed until 15:00. A road vehicle hit a barrier at Cray Lane automatic half-barrier level crossing, north of Pulborough. The barrier fell onto the track and was hit by the 17:29 from Bognor, fortunately without serious consequences. Trains had to be cautioned over the crossing until the barrier could be replaced during the evening.

**Tuesday 13 June:** Over-running engineering work at Norwood Junction resulted in trains being cancelled or diverted via Selhurst until after 06:00, with consequent disruption continuing through the morning peak. A track circuit failure at Lee about 12:30 caused up trains to be diverted via Bexleyheath for two hours. London Overground services between Surrey Quays and Clapham Junction were suspended from 17:20 until 19:00, because of a points failure at Voltaire Road Jn. The 17:12 Victoria to Gillingham, running via the Chatham reversible line, had to return to Victoria and depart again via the down Chatham line.

**Wednesday 14 June:** A man being pursued by police was electrocuted when he fled onto the railway at Streatham during the night. There was a difficult day on the Hastings line. Trains were unable to run south of Tunbridge Wells from 06:00, because of a points failure. The 05:43 from Hastings was held at Wadhurst for 80 minutes and following trains were cancelled. The next up train was the 07:44 from Hastings, which ran half an hour late and terminated at Orpington. The 07:08 from Charing Cross was the first train from Tunbridge Wells to Hastings. The 14:44 from Hastings hit a baulk of wood that had been thrown onto the line north of Battle. The leading unit, 375715, suffered damage to its brake and suspension system and terminated at Etchingham. The 15:20 from Hastings was delayed at Battle for almost four hours and terminated at Tonbridge. Delays and cancellations continued for the rest of the day. An infrastructure train from Eastleigh to Hoo Junction, hauled by 73128+73141, failed at Virginia Water about 10:30. It was able to continue its journey about 11:45. Meantime, trains between Waterloo and Weybridge via Chertsey terminated at Virginia Water or were cancelled entirely. The 15:32 Highbury to West Croydon failed at Sydenham and terminated there.

**Thursday 15 June:** Light locomotive 66083 failed at Winchester about 10:30, blocking the up line. Following trains were diverted via Havant or Laverstock until the miscreant was assisted forward by another locomotive about 11:50. The 14:52 from Ramsgate was involved in a fatality at Penge East, resulting in trains being diverted via Catford until 19:00.

**Saturday 17 June:** The 04:42 from Ramsgate was involved in a fatality at Farningham Road, which resulted in damage to the train. Passengers had to be evacuated to a train on the down line, but the failed train could not be moved until after midday. Other services were cancelled or diverted via Dartford meantime.

**Sunday 18 June:** Lines between London Bridge and Cannon Street were blocked from about 11:20 to 14:40, because of a lineside fire, and trains were diverted to Charing Cross. This was unfortunate timing, because Victoria (Eastern) was closed for engineering work, with main line trains diverted to Cannon Street.

**Monday 19 June:** The Hayes line was closed for 1½ hours after a person was hit by the 09:22 from Charing Cross at Ladywell. There was a short-circuit and electrical fire on the 11:42 from Cannon Street, formed of units 376035+001 as it approached Gravesend. One of the coaches was quite badly damaged. All lines were blocked for the rest of the day, because of damage to cables and a set of points. Gravesend platform 0 did not return to use until Tuesday afternoon.

**Tuesday 20 June:** The line was closed for two hours after the 10:17 Luton to Rainham was involved in a fatality at Belvedere. Trains were diverted via Sidcup or Bexleyheath.

**Thursday 22 June:** A track circuit failure on the Quarry Line caused Gatwick Express and some Thameslink services to be cancelled during the morning.

**Saturday 24 June:** The line between St Denys and Southampton Central was closed for over an hour from 12:45 after a person was hit by the 08:45 from Manchester on Mount Pleasant level crossing. There was repeated disruption to services between Margate and Ramsgate from mid-afternoon, because of trespassers attempting to gain access from the railway line to a pop concert at Dreamland.

**Sunday 25 June:** A Greggs delivery lorry came off the road adjacent to Bognor signal box during the night. It overturned, hitting the lineside fence, signalling equipment and a telephone pole. There were no trains to and from Bognor until 18:30, after the lorry had been recovered and equipment checked. A gas leak in the area complicated operations. Morning services were disrupted by a signalling failure at Byfleet & New Haw. A tree fell onto the line between Charlton and Woolwich during the afternoon.

## AROUND THE REGION

**Rochester:** Rochester Bridge Junction was relaid over the late May holiday weekend.

**Denmark Hill** station made it to the final round of the Rail Delivery Group's annual online competition to find Britain's best-loved railway station, but came second to Wemyss Bay.

**Belmont:** Sutton Council has agreed to fund the £3M cost of drawing up plans for redoubling the Epsom Downs branch to Belmont, including a reversing siding there. This will allow the station to be served by four trains an hour, instead of two. The Council has been allocated £14.1M from the Government's Levelling Up Fund for the project.

**Upper Warlingham:** East Surrey Arts Society has adopted Upper Warlingham station and displays artworks there.

**Worthing:** Worthing Council has remodelled the forecourt at Worthing station and Southern has redecorated the front of the building.

**Access for All:** Work has started on a footbridge with lifts at Barnes. Similar work begins at Teddington in July.

**Chessington Branch:** The third annual Community Rail Week was launched at Tolworth station on 22 May, with the Chief Executive of the Community Rail Network, the local MP and representatives from Kingston Council, South Western Railway and the Department for Transport meeting members of the station adoption group. Malden Manor station has been completely redecorated, including painting all the concrete.

**Southampton:** There was no rail access to Southampton Western Docks from 5 to 19 June, to allow rail sidings to be extended to 775 metres. Freightliner was able to accept GBRf intermodal services at Southampton Maritime, but the gypsum trains were cancelled as were all DB Cargo services to and from Western Docks.

**Ryde:** After a further delay, Ryde Pier is now expected to reopen to trains on 10 July.

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