

REGIONAL REVIEW: JULY 2023

STOCK NOTES

Class 66: GBRf locomotive 66787 was named *Three Bridges ASC* at Three Bridges on 30 June, marking the Area Signalling Centre's 40 years of operation.

Class 73: GBRf locomotive 73119 has been repainted in BR infrastructure grey and yellow livery. It has been named *Paul Taylor*, remembering an employee who died of prostate cancer.

Class 313: The final moves of units from Hove to Eastleigh for scrapping were 313203+210 on 4 July and 313205+313211 on 11 July. 313205, one of the last two, was among the units in use on 16 August 1976, the first day of class 313 passenger service.

Class 458: Reconfigured units revert to four-coach formation, without the class 460 vehicle, and are renumbered as 4584xx, with the last two digits unchanged. Units are finished in South Western Railway livery and have first class accommodation adjacent to the cab in both driving coaches. After eleven months at Alstom's Widnes plant, the first unit back was 458417, which was hauled from Wembley to Bournemouth Depot on 18 July. It was followed by 458407 on 21 July. The surplus class 460 carriages are stripped of useful spare parts and then scrapped. There still remains the possibility of the conversion programme being scrapped, with only a few units having been dealt with.

Class 701: Over forty units have now been accepted from Alstom by South Western Railway. So far, driver training has been confined to depot drivers, but it is hoped units will enter service on the Windsor line by the end of this year. Unit 701043 was at Waterloo platform 19 during the morning on 11 July as part of events to mark the station's 175th anniversary. A special roundel to mark the anniversary has been applied to the bodyside. Recent moves have included:

30 June	701009	Worksop to Wembley
4 July	701049	Marchwood to Wimbledon
5 July	701024	Wembley to Eastleigh
11 July	701015	Eastleigh to Bicester MoD
13 July	701019	Marchwood to Wimbledon
14 July	701009	Wembley to Eastleigh
18 July	701024	Eastleigh to Bicester MoD
20 July	701056	Derby to Eastleigh
24 July	701020	Worksop to Wembley

TIMETABLES and DIAGRAMS

Southern to Southampton: Southern is consulting about possible changes to the West Coastway timetable, because its services to Southampton are under-utilised. Trains from Victoria may terminate at Fareham.

Freight: GBRf started operating a Southampton to Ditton intermodal service on 18 July. The train is scheduled to run on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

INTERESTING WORKINGS

Class 68: 68034 moved wagons to and from Eastleigh Works for attention, running from Crewe on 14 July and returning next day. There was a further working from Winfrith to Crewe, for Sellafeld, on 29 June worked by 68002 and 68003.

Class 142: Withdrawn Pacer 142003 ran under its own power from Eastleigh to Crewe via Basingstoke and Oxford on 18 July.

Class 201: Unit 1001 substituted for London Transport's 4TC unit on a railtour on 1 July, but locomotive-hauled. 73119 was on one end and 66794 on the other. The route was Waterloo, Kensington Olympia (reverse), Selhurst, Tattenham Corner, Purley, Caterham, Crystal Palace, Herne Hill, Longhedge Junction, Balham, Tooting, Kingston, Twickenham (reverse), Windsor, Staines (reverse), Wokingham (reverse), Guildford (reverse), Woking, Waterloo, Chessington South, Wimbledon (reverse), Sutton, Mitcham Junction, Blackfriars, Herne Hill (reverse), Linford Street and back to Waterloo. The unit worked an excursion from Hastings to Weymouth via Tonbridge, Redhill and Reading on 8 July. It operated as a seven-coach formation, with newly-restored motor coach 60119 (which carries unit number 1013) coupled on front of motor coach 60118.

Classes 377 & 387: There was an unusual 10:09 Selhurst to Stewarts Lane working on 12 July, formed of units 387224+377310. Class 387 and 377 rarely work in multiple and may not do so in passenger service, because their door control mechanisms are incompatible. A few Southern services between Brighton and Southampton are routed via Eastleigh, to maintain drivers' route knowledge and an occasional train to Southampton is formed of a class 377/2. The two together are very rare, so 377209 was a noteworthy visitor to Eastleigh on 18 July, with the 09:26 Southampton Central to Brighton.

Class 455: Disruption caused by the previous day's RMT strike resulted in the 07:50, 11:50, 15:20 & 18:50 Waterloo to Reading and the 09:39, 13:39, 17:09 & 20:39 return, together with the 22:50 Waterloo to Bracknell, being worked by units 5717+5867.

Class 491 (4TC): London Transport's 4TC unit visited the Mid Hants Railway, being hauled there from Eastleigh Works by 33012 on 12 July and returning on 24 July. The outward journey was via Havant and Guildford, but with the line closed north of Petersfield, the return was via Chertsey, reversal at Staines, Chertsey and Winchester.

Excursions: 57601 and 47804 worked a trip from Saltburn to Bournemouth via Kew East and Chertsey on 30 June, returning on 3 July. The homeward journey was meant to be via Weymouth and Yeovil Pen Mill, but was diverted from Weymouth via Basingstoke and Oxford after a tree fell onto the line north of Dorchester West. On 1 July 47813 and 47826 topped and tailed a Victoria to Bournemouth trip and the Locomotive Services HST worked a Basingstoke to Llandudno excursion via Reading. The HST worked Southampton Airport to Carlisle via Southampton Central and Salisbury on 5 July. 57313 and 57601 topped and tailed a Cardiff to Windsor excursion on 7 July. The train ran via Willesden South West Sidings, where it reversed, and Kew East. The same locomotives worked a Hull to Winchester excursion via Oxford and Basingstoke on 22 July.

RAIL BUSINESS

Booking Office Closures: Train Operators contracted with the Department for Transport have launched consultations on plans to close most station booking offices. South Western Railway and Govia Thameslink Railway propose to close all of their booking offices. Initially, Southeastern is consulting only on stations in the London suburban area, but it intends to retain only 14 booking offices across its network, these being Ashford International, Bromley South, Canterbury West, Charing Cross, Dartford, Dover Priory, Hastings, London Bridge, Margate, Rochester, St Pancras, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Victoria. The companies say that stations would remain staffed and that 'ticket assistance' would be provided by personnel on the concourse. They would help passengers use the ticket machines and advise on best value fares.

London Overground: Arriva Rail London's concession to operate London Overground has been extended by two years, to expire on 3 May 2026.

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

An overtime ban by drivers belonging to ASLEF between 17 and 22 July resulted in Gatwick Express being cancelled and a reduced service being operated by Southern, Thameslink and South Western Railway. There were strikes by RMT members, such as guards and station staff, on 20, 22 and 29 July. A further ASLEF overtime ban is scheduled for 7 to 12 August.

Southern suburban services were little altered on 17, 18, 19 and 21 July. Trains between London Bridge and Beckenham Junction ran only at peak times. Tattenham Corner was served by a shuttle from Purley, half-hourly at peak times and hourly off-peak. Main line services from Victoria were half hourly to Brighton, calling at Clapham Junction, East Croydon, Gatwick Airport and Haywards Heath; there were hourly trains to Portsmouth, Littlehampton and Ore. Uckfield was served by an hourly shuttle from Oxted and trains ran hourly between Reigate and Tonbridge. East Coastway services to Ashford and Seaford ran as usual, but otherwise there were just hourly trains between Brighton and Eastbourne and the London ones. West Coastway had a half hourly service between Brighton and Littlehampton, with alternate trains continuing to and from Southampton. There was the regular service between Littlehampton and Portsmouth and two trains an hour from Bognor, alternately to Barnham and to Littlehampton.

Thameslink ran hourly Luton and Rainham, London Bridge and Three Bridges, Cambridge and Three Bridges and Peterborough and Horsham. There were two trains per hour between Bedford and Brighton, St Albans and the Wimbledon loop and Blackfriars and Sevenoaks. Alternate Sevenoaks trains ran to and from Welwyn Garden City at peak times. There was also an hourly peak service between Luton or Kentish Town and Orpington.

South Western Railway largely maintained its usual service pattern, but with trains hourly instead of half-hourly off peak on most routes. Peak hour cuts included the Hounslow loop trains. The Ascot to Aldershot and Guildford to Farnham shuttles operated with three trains every two hours and alternate 30 and 60 minute gaps between them.

The strike service on **Thursday 20 July** was as follows, with trains starting later and finishing much earlier than usual.

Southeastern: The following trains ran half-hourly:

- London Bridge and Dartford via Greenwich, not calling at Woolwich Dockyard
- London Bridge and Dartford via Bexleyheath
- London Bridge and Dartford via Lewisham and Sidcup
- London Bridge and Orpington via Lewisham
- London Bridge and Sevenoaks via Lewisham
- Grove Park and Bromley North
- Victoria and Bromley South via Herne Hill
- London St Pancras and Ebbsfleet International
- London St Pancras and Ashford International, alternate trains continuing to Canterbury West and Ramsgate

Southern: The following trains ran half-hourly unless shown otherwise

- Victoria and West Croydon via Crystal Palace
- Victoria and Epsom Downs via Selhurst
- Victoria and Sutton via Mitcham Junction
- London Bridge and Beckenham Junction via Crystal Palace
- London Bridge and Tattenham Corner (fast to East Croydon)
- Purley and Caterham
- Victoria and East Grinstead
- Oxted and Uckfield (hourly)
- Victoria and Gatwick Airport, calling at Clapham Junction and East Croydon
- Victoria and Brighton, calling at Clapham Junction, East Croydon and Gatwick Airport

- Redhill and Reigate
- Brighton and Seaford
- Brighton and Eastbourne
- Brighton and Hove
- Brighton and Barnham via Littlehampton
- Three Bridges and Barnham via Horsham

Thameslink: The following trains ran half-hourly from London Bridge unless shown otherwise

- Gatwick Airport, calling at London Bridge, Norwood Junction, East Croydon, Redhill, Earlswood, Salfords, Horley and Gatwick Airport
- Three Bridges, calling at London Bridge, Norwood Junction, East Croydon, Coulsdon South, Merstham, Redhill, Horley, Gatwick Airport and Three Bridges
- Three Bridges, calling at London Bridge, East Croydon and Gatwick Airport, with alternate trains continuing to Balcombe, Haywards Heath, Wivelsfield, Burgess Hill, Hassocks, Preston Park and Brighton
- Rainham via Woolwich Arsenal, with usual stops (hourly)

In addition trains ran half-hourly between Blackfriars and Sevenoaks.

South Western Railway: The following trains ran half-hourly unless shown otherwise

- Waterloo and all stations to Ascot except Queenstown Road, out via Richmond, return via Hounslow
- Waterloo and all stations to Windsor except Queenstown Road, out via Hounslow, return via Richmond
- 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
- Woking and Guildford (hourly)
- Basingstoke and Salisbury (hourly)
- Ryde Pier Head and Shanklin (hourly)

Cross Country ran every two hours between Southampton Central and Manchester. Great Western operated hourly from Reading to Basingstoke and every two hours to Redhill. **London Overground** operated a normal service, though finishing earlier than usual.

The **Southeastern** service on **Saturday 22 July** was the same as on 20 July, but **Southern** was significantly different. The following trains ran half-hourly, unless shown otherwise.

- Victoria and London Bridge via Crystal Palace
- Victoria and Epsom Downs via Selhurst
- Victoria, Clapham Junction, Balham and all stations to Dorking, with alternate trains continuing to Horsham
- London Bridge and East Croydon via Streatham
- London Bridge, Norwood Junction and all stations to Caterham (hourly)
- Purley and Tattenham Corner (hourly)
- Victoria and usual stops plus Selhurst to East Grinstead (hourly)
- Oxted and Uckfield (hourly)
- Victoria, Clapham Junction, East Croydon, Purley and all stations to Reigate (hourly)
- Horsham and Bognor Regis (engineering work between Three Bridges and Horsham)
- Victoria, Clapham Junction, East Croydon, Gatwick Airport, Three Bridges, Haywards Heath and Brighton
- Brighton and Seaford (hourly)
- Brighton and Eastbourne

- Haywards Heath and Ore (hourly)
- Brighton and all stations to Littlehampton, then Barnham, Chichester, Southbourne, Emsworth, Havant, Fratton and Portsmouth & Southsea (hourly)
- Brighton and all stations except Fishergate to Worthing, then Angmering, Littlehampton and all stations to Portsmouth & Southsea (hourly)
- Littlehampton and Bognor Regis (hourly)

An unplanned service cut was no passenger trains to or from Littlehampton after the 15:09 to Bognor, because the station was unstaffed. Trains ran direct between Angmering and Ford, with the Bognor shuttle cut back to Barnham.

The **Thameslink** service was reduced from that on 20 July. Trains terminating at Gatwick Airport did not run, Sevenoaks trains were hourly and the Horsham service did not run at all because of engineering work.

The **South Western Railway** service on 22 July was the same as on 20th, except that the Windsor line service was half hourly to Hounslow via Kew Bridge and to Twickenham via Richmond.

CrossCountry and **Great Western** services to Southampton, Basingstoke and Redhill were similar to those on 20 July.

London Overground operated as usual, but with significant disruption on 22nd. The fire alarm was activated at the Signalling Control Centre at New Cross Gate, bringing services via the East London line to a halt from 10:45 until 13:20. Displaced staff and rolling stock resulted in numerous cancellations throughout the afternoon.

The strike service on **29 July** is expected to be the same as on 22nd, but with Thameslink running between London Bridge and Horsham and Southern between Victoria and Bognor Regis via Horsham.

On the days following strike days trains started later than usual.

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.

	29 May to 24 June	MAA to 24 June
All TOCs	68.1%	67.4%
SWR	70.4% (10 th)	67.6% (10 th)
GTR	68.4% (11 th)	67.9% (9 th)
SE	67.8% (12 th)	64.8% (12 th)

It can be seen that the three principal Southern operators turn in an average performance and are middle of the table. Most of the companies achieving better punctuality are ones with much smaller and simpler networks. Two companies with extensive and complex networks who are performing better than the Southern trio are ScotRail and Greater Anglia. ScotRail is only marginally better (MAA = 69.4%), but Greater Anglia has an MAA of 81.7% and is bettered only by the Elizabeth line. Greater Anglia has the benefit of an entirely new train fleet, has lost its inner suburban services to London Overground and the Elizabeth line, and has most of its network signalled from just three locations.

Wednesday 28 June: The 05:58 from Three Bridges to Southampton terminated at Arundel, because of a points failure at Arundel Jn. Trains via Angmering were unaffected. Trains via the Arun Valley line continued to turn back at Arundel or Horsham, with the first to run through being the 08:35 Victoria to Bognor Regis. The 07:20 Poole to Waterloo, unit 450012, was brought to a stand at a signal between Redbridge and Millbrook and was unable to restart. The train was

not in contact with the conductor rail. It was assisted forward by unit 444007, off the 06:55 from Weymouth, which was terminated at Redbridge. The train was able to continue from Southampton about 1½ hours late without further problems. Checks showed that the conductor rail was too low. There was loss of power to signals between Chatham and Gillingham for about five hours from 11:20. A track circuit failure resulted in there being no trains between Leatherhead and Effingham Junction for most of the evening. Trains were diverted via Cobham.

Thursday 29 June: Sadly, there were three fatalities during the course of the day, at Bracknell involving the 09:39 from Reading, south of Worting Junction involving the 12:09 Waterloo to Portsmouth Harbour and at Ford, involving the 16:15 Portsmouth & Southsea to Victoria. In all such cases the BT Police obtain a statement from the train driver, which usually enables them to determine quickly that the death was not suspicious. The train operator has regard to the welfare of the driver. The body is removed from the line and any necessary cleaning of the train carried out. This is often achieved in less than two hours.

Friday 30 June: The 07:35 Victoria to Southampton terminated at Three Bridges, because of a severe wheel flat on unit 377436. The 08:26 Brighton to Bedford terminated at Preston Park, because of a brake fault. The 16:20 Waterloo to Reading also suffered a brake fault and terminated at Staines. A track circuit failure at Sevenoaks caused numerous cancellations and severe delays during the evening peak. The 17:29 Charing Cross to Ramsgate was diverted via Maidstone East.

Saturday 1 July: A signalling failure shortly after 06:00 prevented use of the up line from Kingston to New Malden until after 13:00. Trains from Shepperton were diverted via Richmond and 'anticlockwise' Kingston Loop services terminated at Kingston. Gatwick Express services were suspended because of a speed restriction at Earlswood, the last service from Victoria being the 09:29. The 20:28 Brighton to Bedford was involved in a fatality south of Purley.

Sunday 2 July: London Overground services to Crystal Palace were cut back to Surrey Quays during the afternoon, because of a track circuit failure at Sydenham.

Tuesday 4 July: Overnight a JCB was used by raiders in an attempt to remove the cash machine from Barnham Co-op. This is in the same building as Southern's train crew depot, which had to remain closed until 09:00 while it was checked for safety. Train crew reported for work elsewhere as far as possible, but only a reduced service could be operated. Hardly any trains ran through Barnham until after 07:00, there were numerous cancellations for the rest of the morning and the service was not fully recovered until the middle of the afternoon.

Wednesday 5 July: A broken rail in points on the up line at Gravesend resulted in a speed restriction being imposed during the afternoon and evening. A replacement component had to be made specially, so the points were plain-lined overnight, putting platform 0 out of use at least until the end of July. Meantime, trains from Charing Cross to Gravesend turned back at Northfleet. Cannon Street trains terminated at Dartford. A points failure between Waterloo East and Charing Cross caused disruption during the afternoon and through the evening peak. Some trains were cancelled or diverted to Cannon Street. Evening peak services were delayed by a signalling failure on the down lines at Newington. The 18:45 from Tattenham Corner was delayed for an hour, because of a lineside fire and the following two services were cancelled.

Thursday 6 July: There were no trains to Lymington between the 18:56 and 20:56 departures from Brockenhurst after the branch unit, 450098, failed.

Friday 7 July: The 08:24 Waterloo to Dorking terminated at Stoneleigh, because of a tree on the line. The down line was blocked, with trains cancelled or diverted via Cobham. Normal service resumed with the 10:54 from Waterloo. The 14:23 Portsmouth Harbour to Cardiff Central terminated at Sholing, because of an electrical fire on the train. Services between Fareham and Southampton were badly delayed or diverted via Eastleigh until after 16:00. There were no trains from Caterham between 15:55 and 18:25, because of a fire next to line. The 20:22 Waterloo to Weybridge terminated at Hounslow after the guard and the driver, who came to assist, were assaulted by a passenger. The 21:22 to Weybridge was diverted via Richmond.

Saturday 8 July: The line was closed for about 1½ hours early in the evening after a trespasser was electrocuted at Broadstairs.

Sunday 9 July: There was loss of power to signalling in the Hever area for about 2½ hours during the afternoon, resulting in trains being cancelled.

Tuesday 11 July: The 08:40 from Victoria was delayed 1½ hours at Herne Bay and the 09:52 from Ramsgate was over an hour at Birchington-on-Sea, because of a signalling failure. Following trains were cancelled or diverted via Dover. Points failures late morning at Three Bridges caused delays and cancellations. Some trains to Brighton and Horsham terminated at Gatwick Airport. The line was closed after the 10:35 Victoria to Southampton hit a cow near Amberley.

The line did not reopen until late afternoon, with trains cancelled or diverted via Hove meantime. A track circuit failure at Longhedge Junction resulted in London Overground services being diverted to Battersea Park from 15:30 until 22:00.

Wednesday 12 July: A track circuit failure at Balcombe about 08:00 required trains to run at reduced speed for the rest of the morning, so services were thinned out. Gatwick Express was cancelled, as were various other trains. The 09:39 from Reading was involved in a fatality at Putney. Late evening trains from Victoria to London Bridge were diverted via the Leigham Spur and Tulse Hill, because of a signalling problem at Crystal Palace.

Friday 14 July: There were no trains to or from Bognor Regis all day, because of damage to a set of points. A signalling failure shortly before 18:00 put platforms 1 to 8 at Victoria out of use. Some trains were diverted to Blackfriars, with others terminating short or being cancelled. A few Southeastern trains were able to depart Victoria from 18:40, but normal working did not resume until 21:30, when arrivals were possible.

Saturday 15 July: High winds during the late afternoon and evening brought trees down onto lines between Petersfield and Rowlands Castle, between Ascot and Camberley, between Weybridge and Walton-on-Thames and at Martins Heron, Honor Oak Park, Sanderstead, Maidstone Barracks and Broadstairs. A points failure meant that there were no trains via Canterbury East after 17:00, apart from one late evening working from and to Faversham. Late evening services were disrupted because a signalling problem put platforms 4 to 6 at Charing Cross out of use.

Sunday 16 July: The line was closed between Fratton and Portsmouth Harbour from 08:00, following the discovery of a suspicious object at Portsmouth & Southsea. Following the deployment of a bomb disposal robot the object was found to be harmless. Services resumed at 14:50.

Monday 17 July: A signalling problem resulted in there being no trains between Crowborough and Uckfield until the 16:36 from Oxted.

Tuesday 18 July: A person survived relatively unscathed after being hit by an empty train at Woking shortly before 09:00. Consequent diversions included the 08:53 Waterloo to Farnham being routed via Cobham and reversal at Guildford. A tree fell onto the line between Claygate and Oxshott during the middle of the afternoon, resulting in a three hours gap in the service while trains were diverted via Woking.

Wednesday 19 July: Numerous services through Southampton were cancelled until 09:00, because of damage to a set of points at Northam.

Friday 21 July: A track defect on the up line at Sidcup resulted in trains towards London being diverted via Bexleyheath for three hours from 08:00. A points failure resulted in there being no trains from Twickenham towards Teddington until after 10:30. An electrical fire at a conductor rail joint at Whitstable station about 10:30 caused significant damage to the track and resulted in the line being closed until about 22:00. Trains were diverted via Dover, cut back to Faversham or cancelled entirely. A shuttle service between Ramsgate and Herne Bay operated from late afternoon.

Sunday 23 July: A power failure at Lewes resulted in numerous cancellations throughout the morning.

Monday 24 July: A signalling problem at Purley prevented trains running on the Caterham and Tattenham Corner branches for two hours during the afternoon. The 20:13 Littlehampton to Victoria was diverted via Crawley, because disruptive passengers were delaying a train at Lancing. A power failure between Hither Green and Sidcup resulted in up trains being diverted via Bexleyheath after 22:30.

AROUND THE REGION

Thanet Parkway: The new station between Ramsgate and Minster is at 83 miles 63 chains from Charing Cross. The two platforms are 250 metres long, so able to accommodate twelve-coach trains. Stairs and lifts to access the platforms are at the Ramsgate end. The station is due to open on 31 July. Cliffsend level crossing, east of the station, has been converted from automatic half-barriers to manually-operated full barriers, supervised by CCTV from East Kent signalling centre.

Footbridges: Whitehall Lane footbridge, a steel, ramped structure at the Dartford end of Slade Green station, has been reinstated following renovation. The bridge dates from closure of the level crossing in 1970. Crabtree Manorway footbridge, which replaced a level crossing between Erith and Belvedere, has been similarly removed for renovation.

Victoria: The tile maps showing the LBSCR network are to be renovated, with grant aid from the Railway Heritage Trust.

Littlehaven: The down platform has been extended to take twelve-coach trains.

Waterloo: An exhibition was mounted on the concourse at Waterloo in July, to mark the station's 175th anniversary. Unfortunately, it was present for little over a week.

Portsmouth Direct Line: The line between Shalford Junction and Petersfield is closed from 24 to 28 July, principally to allow resignalling work. Other work being undertaken includes:

- fencing at Farncombe
- stabilising cuttings between Witley and Haslemere
- replacing points and repainting the footbridge and canopies at Haslemere
- track renewal at Liss
- upgrading Sheet level crossing, between Liss and Petersfield
- vegetation management and routine track maintenance.

Ryde: The railway along the pier re-opened on 10 July. A new route along the pier has been provided for pedestrians and cyclists. It is supported by the structure that originally carried the pier tramway. Trains between Ryde and Shanklin were replaced by buses between 3 and 7 July. It was explained that this was because drivers were having to route learn Ryde Esplanade to Ryde Pier Head again, following its extended closure, but does it really take a week to remind oneself how to drive a train 700 yards?

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