

## REGIONAL REVIEW: AUGUST 2023

### STOCK NOTES

**Class 395:** The first unit to have been refurbished is 395012. The work includes replacing the seats and carpets, internal repainting, upgrading the passenger information and CCTV systems, and fitting LED lighting and USB sockets. An energy meter will monitor electricity consumption. The interior colour scheme is much the same, apart from the bright teal green grab rails and seatback hand holds.

**Class 450:** Unit 450100 has been named *Transport Benevolent Fund CIO*, to mark the Fund's centenary.

**Class 458:** Unit 458523 was hauled from Bournemouth to Widnes for conversion to 458/4 on 31 July, arriving next day.

**Class 701:** Further moves have included:

26 July	701019 Eastleigh to Marchwood and 701016 Marchwood to Wimbledon
31 July	701021 Worksop to Wembley
1 August	701020 Wembley to Eastleigh
7 August	701036 Worksop to Wembley and 701021 Wembley to Eastleigh
8 August	701053 Eastleigh to Bicester MoD
10 August	701055 Derby to Eastleigh
14 August	701039 Worksop to Wembley
15 August	701036 Wembley to Eastleigh
21 August	701039 Wembley to Eastleigh
22 August	701027 Eastleigh to Bicester MoD

**Class 707:** Units 707014+023 transferred from SWR to Southeastern on 19 August, running 00:09 Waterloo to Grove Park Depot.

### TIMETABLES and DIAGRAMS

**Class 458:** From 8 August a pair of units were booked to work 07:01 Dorking to Waterloo, 08:06 Waterloo to Hampton Court and 08:53 return.

**Southern to Southampton:** Southern's proposed West Coastway timetable to be introduced next year consists of the following services half-hourly Mondays to Saturdays:

- Brighton and Chichester, all stations via Littlehampton
- Brighton and Southampton Central, calling at Hove, Portslade, Southwick, Shoreham-by-Sea, Lancing, Worthing, Angmering, Ford, Barnham, Chichester, Southbourne, Emsworth, Havant, Cosham, Portchester, Fareham, Swanwick and Woolston
- Victoria and Littlehampton, calling at Clapham Junction, East Croydon, Gatwick Airport, Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill, Hassocks, Preston Park, Hove, Portslade, Shoreham-by-Sea, Lancing and all stations from Worthing
- Victoria and Portsmouth Harbour, calling at Clapham Junction, East Croydon, Gatwick Airport, Crawley, Horsham, Barnham, Chichester, Southbourne, Emsworth, Havant and all stations from Hilsea; one train an hour also calls at Fishbourne, Nutbourne and Warblington and the other calls at Bosham and Bedhampton
- Horsham and Bognor Regis, all stations, being a portion of the Portsmouth train
- Barnham and Bognor Regis

Changes of note include no through trains between Brighton and Portsmouth or Victoria and Southampton. The stopping service between Brighton and Chichester via Littlehampton is an innovation, but Littlehampton loses its

through trains to Bognor Regis and Portsmouth. Very few Southern trains currently call at Woolston, but stopping there will provide interchange with buses to Southampton, giving a quicker journey to the city centre than going via Southampton Central station. Some local journeys between smaller stations west of Chichester will no longer be possible, but all will have regular through trains to and from London, which is not the case at present.

Withdrawal of through trains between Victoria and Southampton has come in for criticism, including by both of Southampton's MPs. Few people are likely to want to travel the long way round to London, but the current service provides through trains between Southampton and Gatwick Airport. Southern says the new timetable would provide Portsmouth and Southampton with regular interval, half-hourly services, which is not the case at the moment. There will be convenient interchange between Portsmouth and Southampton trains at Chichester or Barnham and the service will be more reliable.

Southern is conducting a public consultation of the proposals, with comments required by 27 September.

## INTERESTING WORKINGS

**Class 33:** 33025+33029 worked a railtour from Salisbury to Pembroke Dock via Westbury on 6 August, working top and tail with 47813.

**Class 43:** A Locomotive Services mini-HST ran from Crewe to Eastleigh Works via Reading on 2 August. This comprised power car 43047 and trailer 41162 in Midland Pullman blue livery, trailer 41208 in East Midlands livery and power car 43049 in InterCity livery, so this may be work for the paint shop.

**Class 201:** On 12 August unit 1001 worked a railtour thus: Victoria, Lewisham, Bromley North, Lee Spur, Crayford Spur, Greenwich, Cannon Street, Greenwich, Maidstone West, Paddock Wood, Ashford, Eastbourne, Lewes, Newhaven Marine, Quarry Line, Streatham, Herne Hill, Linford Street Junction and Waterloo. The tour was scheduled to return from Newhaven via Brighton, but a trespasser on the line there caused the train to be delayed and diverted via Plumpton. Empty stock ran from St Leonards to Victoria via Rye, Maidstone East and Herne Hill and returned from Waterloo via Catford, Orpington and Rye.

**Thanet Parkway:** The first passenger train to call at Thanet Parkway was the 04:54 Ramsgate to St Pancras International on 31 July, worked by 395029. The station will normally be unstaffed, but there will be staff present for its first six weeks. The service has been designated as 'experimental', so the station could be closed within the next five years without having to go through the usual legal procedures.

**Excursions:** 47593 and 47805 double-headed a Shrewsbury to Weymouth excursion via Didcot and Basingstoke on 29 July. On 12 August the same locomotives worked a Poole to Kingswear trip as far as Taunton, via Chandlers Ford and Westbury. 57313 and 57601 topped and tailed a Coventry to Weymouth via Yeovil Pen Mill excursion on 17 August.

## INDUSTRIAL ACTION

There was another overtime ban by ASLEF drivers from 31 July until 5 August. That resulted in Govia Thameslink Railway and South Western Railway running a reduced service, as on 17, 18, 19 and 21 July. A major difference was that there were no trains to or from Brighton on Saturday 5 August, the weekend of Brighton Pride. Southern said that it normally runs extra trains in connection with the event and relied on drivers working overtime to do so. It described the decision not to run any trains as an "unbelievably difficult decision", but added "After exploring all possible options, and following discussions with the police, emergency services and local council, we simply cannot run a safe service with enough capacity for the extraordinary number of passengers that travel to Brighton for Pride. We can't in good faith bring people into Brighton that cannot get home again, potentially leaving thousands of people stranded – safety must come first." There were no trains south of Three Bridges and no Coastway services, not even between Hastings and Ashford. Shuttles operated between Three Bridges and Barnham via Horsham and between Oxted and Uckfield.

Further strikes by staff belonging to the RMT and employed by train operators including South Eastern Govia Thameslink Railway, South Western Railway, Great Western and CrossCountry have been announced for Saturdays 26 August and 2 September. Limited services similar to those on previous RMT strike days are expected.

## 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.

	25 June to 22 July	MAA to 22 July
All TOCs	69.8%	67.5%
SWR	69.7% (12 <sup>th</sup> )	67.8% (11 <sup>th</sup> )
GTR	70.3% (=10 <sup>th</sup> )	67.9% (10 <sup>th</sup> )
SE	70.3% (=10 <sup>th</sup> )	65.1% (12 <sup>th</sup> )

**Fatality at Eastleigh:** Network Rail has been fined £1.2M following the death of man at the long welded rail depot at Eastleigh on 30 November 2020. Kevin Mauger was crushed by a length of rail while cleaning the interior of a butt-welding machine. The machine had not been correctly isolated before Mr Mauger started his cleaning work, allowing the rail to be drawn into it. The Health & Safety Executive found that there was no safe system of work for maintaining the machine. There was no written procedure for isolating it, nor was there an adequate risk assessment for its maintenance.

**Wednesday 26 July:** The 05:10 Tonbridge to Mountfield gypsum train, hauled by 66751, failed between Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells, blocking the down line. It eventually returned to Tonbridge three hours later. A points failure at Preston Park mid-morning caused delays and cancellations until early afternoon. There were no trains from East Grinstead between 16:05 and 19:05, because of a tree blocking the line.

**Thursday 27 July:** A track circuit failure on the down line within Clayton Tunnel caused disruption throughout the morning. Some Littlehampton trains were diverted via Crawley and some others cancelled. A signalling failure on the Hayes line caused trains to be delayed or cut back to Clock House from 08:00 until 11:00. A track defect caused Island Line services to be suspended during the afternoon. A track defect at Clandon and a signalling failure between Guildford and London Road caused trains to be cancelled or diverted via Woking for most of the afternoon. Unit 450063 failed at Ashurst New Forest while working the 12:56 Southampton Central to Bournemouth. Unit 450017, scheduled to work the 13:56 from Southampton, ran empty to Ashurst New Forest to assist the failure. Other trains terminated at Southampton Central until services could resume at 16:00.

**Friday 28 July:** A traction power supply problem overnight put the slow lines out of use between New Cross Gate and Forest Hill. London Overground trains to West Croydon and Crystal Palace terminated at New Cross Gate until 08:00. The 15:55 Victoria to Ashford terminated at Lenham, because of a tree on the line at Charing. The 16:25 from Victoria and the 16:55 and 17:27 from Ashford were diverted via Bat & Ball. The 18:10 Victoria to Dover was disabled after hitting a fire extinguisher that had been thrown onto the line between Teynham and Faversham. Passengers had to be evacuated to a train on the up line. Trains terminated and Sittingbourne or were cancelled until after 22:00. A defective conductor rail at Chichester caused delays and cancellations during the evening.

**Sunday 30 July:** A cable fault put signalling out of use between Slade Green and Belvedere from 14:00. Trains were cancelled or diverted via Bexleyheath for the rest of the day. A very limited service operated between Cannon Street and Plumstead.

**Monday 31 July:** There was a difficult day on the Hastings line. A points failure about 08:00 prevented trains running south of Tunbridge Wells for two hours. Then just as the service had recovered, a tree fell onto the line between Wadhurst and Stonegate during the afternoon.

**Tuesday 1 August:** The 07:21 Ashford to Eastbourne was delayed by two hours after a tree fell onto the line between Rye and Three Oaks. The 17:23 Gatwick to Bedford was involved in a fatality at East Croydon. Trains were able to run via the slow lines without calling at the station, which was fully open by 20:00. Trains were cancelled from 18:00 because of a power failure between Polegate and Lewes. Only a few late evening trains ran through.

**Wednesday 2 August:** Trains were delayed or cancelled until late morning, because of a signal failure at Hilsea. As usual, it was Southern that suffered most, with some trains cut back to Chichester. The 06:49 Sandwich to St Pancras terminated at Dover, because the power supply on the up line to Folkestone had failed. Arcing caused significant damage to a rail in Shakespeare Tunnel. Repairs took much of the day, with the first train from Dover to Folkestone being the 18:22 from Ramsgate. Meantime, trains between St Pancras and Dover terminated and started at Folkestone Central and other up trains were diverted via Canterbury West. There were no trains from Brockenhurst to Lymington between 15:12 and 17:44, because of a track defect. A tree fell onto the line between Brighton and Lewes about 15:00. Trains terminated and started at Lewes or were diverted via Wivelsfield for three hours.

**Thursday 3 August:** The 11:34 Gravesend to Cannon Street failed at Belvedere, because of a problem with the brakes. The line was blocked for about an hour, resulting in following trains being cancelled or diverted via Bexleyheath. It also resulted in cancellations on the Bromley North branch, because the driver of the failed train was to continue his shift working on the branch.

**Friday 4 August:** The 08:09 Charing Cross to Hastings was involved in a fatality at a foot crossing between Stonegate and Etchingam, resulting in the line being closed for the rest of the morning.

**Saturday 5 August:** The 08:32 Exeter to Waterloo was brought to a halt near Farnborough after smoke entered some of the carriages. It was able to continue to Woking, where it terminated. The line was blocked from late afternoon following a landslip in a cutting near Whitchurch. Most trains between Basingstoke and Salisbury were cancelled, but a few were diverted via Southampton.

**Monday 7 August:** A points failure at South Bermondsey resulted in trains between London Bridge and East Croydon via Streatham being diverted via Forest Hill for most of the afternoon.

**Tuesday 8 August:** There were no trains to or from Bognor Regis for about two hours from 09:30, because of a points failure. A signalling failure between Poole and Wareham caused the 11:55 from Weymouth to be delayed by over an hour and terminate at Bournemouth. Other trains terminated and started at Poole until 15:00.

**Wednesday 9 August:** A points failure at St Leonards West Marina meant that there were no Southern services to and from Hastings until after 08:00. Trains terminated and started at Bexhill or Eastbourne until then. Some Southeastern trains from Hastings were cancelled or delayed, because empty stock was unable to leave St Leonards Depot.

**Thursday 10 August:** The 09:20 Victoria to East Grinstead terminated at Lingfield, because of a power failure. Services resumed with the 11:50 from Victoria.

**Monday 14 August:** A track circuit failure put platforms 1 to 3 at Guildford out of use during the morning peak. The 19:48 Bedford to Brighton failed between Brockley and Honor Oak Park. It was eventually able to proceed at caution to East Croydon, where it terminated 1 ½ hours late.

**Tuesday 15 August:** A signal failure at Horsham caused significant delays and numerous cancellations throughout the day. An insulated block joint had to be replaced, but by the time the fault was discovered the rails were too hot to allow an immediate repair. The work had to be done overnight after the rails had cooled down. Thameslink services terminated and started at Three Bridges and there were no trains between Dorking and Horsham. A few Southern services were diverted via Hove. The 15:18 Ramsgate to Charing Cross failed at Walmer, blocking the line for four hours. Following trains were cancelled or diverted via Canterbury West. The failed train was able to run empty to Ramsgate after a dead pigeon was removed from the coupling between two of the units.

**Wednesday 16 August:** Further signalling problems at Horsham were not rectified until 10:00. Thameslink services were again cut back to Three Bridges and there were no trains between Dorking and Horsham. A points failure prevented use of platforms 1 to 3 at Cannon Street for about an hour from 16:20. Trains were subject to delays and cancellation, with diversions to Charing Cross, Blackfriars and Victoria. A point failure prevented trains running between Littlehampton and Angmering for over three hours from 10:00. Trains between Victoria and Littlehampton were diverted to Barnham or Bognor Regis meantime. The 21:33 Waterloo to Windsor terminated at Clapham Junction, having left Waterloo without the guard.

**Thursday 17 August:** The 11:47 from Sheerness terminated at Queenborough, because a boat had collided with Kings Ferry Bridge, and the 12:23 from Sittingbourne was cancelled. It was quickly established that the bridge was undamaged and services resumed with the 12:47 from Sheerness.

**Saturday 19 August:** Platforms 1 and 2 at Horsham were out of use for about two hours from 16:00, because of a points failure. The service between Dorking and Horsham was suspended and there were numerous other cancellations. Some trains between Victoria and Barnham were diverted via Hove.

**Sunday 20 August:** A points failure at Victoria put platforms 2, 3 and 4 out of use for two hours from 16:45. The service was disrupted well into the evening and some trains were diverted to Cannon Street.

**Monday 21 August:** A points failure at Billingshurst caused severe delays and cancellations during the evening. A few trains were diverted via Hove.

**Tuesday 22 August:** The 06:55 Cannon Street loop service failed at St Johns on its inward journey and terminated there.

## **AROUND THE REGION**

**Margate:** The coffee shop at Margate station has been renovated. The false ceiling has been removed, revealing previously hidden features, and new period lighting has been installed. Architectural drawings of the station building are on display.

**Solar Power:** Solar panels are being installed on the roofs at Selhurst and Three Bridges Depots.

**Teddington:** Work has commenced on the installation of lifts. This has required the purchase of a small area of land which was contested by the owner and the removal of some of the extensive and under-used cycle parking.

**Feltham Area Resignalling:** Further resignalling work results in the Windsor branch being closed from 21 August until 1 September. Twickenham to Virginia Water and the Hounslow loop are closed from 27 August until 1 September. This will result in closure of Feltham signal box, but the project will not be completed until early in 2024, when Wokingham signal box is abolished.

**Longcross:** A new waiting room has been provided on the up platform.

**Romsey:** The station café reopened on 30 May, following refurbishment. It had been closed since the Covid pandemic. Half of the £10,000 cost of the work was met by a grant from South Western Railway. The café is run by the same businessman who operates the successful café at Shawford station.

**CREDITS:** Colin Duff, John Goodrich, Stuart Hicks, Simon Jeffs, Rick Squirrel