

REGIONAL REVIEW: JANUARY 2024

STOCK NOTES

4Vep: Unit 3417 was reinstated to the National Rolling Stock Library, as 423417, on 16 January. Southern Electric Traction Group has announced plans to equip the unit for main line operation. This includes fitting controlled emission toilets, GSM radio, on-train monitoring and recording equipment and anti-override components to the couplers. Preparations will be made for fitting central door locking.

Class 444: The last class 444 unit in South West Trains livery was 444045.

Class 458: Although there is a contract with Alstom to refurbish the class 458 units, South Western Railway has no current plans to use them in passenger service. They may be used if traffic develops. Meantime, the entry of class 701 into service will release class 450 units for main line services.

Class 701: 1,309 days after delivery of the first unit from Derby, class 701 finally entered passenger service on 9 January, when unit 701037 made a single round trip to Windsor at 10:25 from Waterloo and 11:30 return. From 16 to 19 January class 701 units were scheduled to work 10:25 and 12:53 Waterloo to Windsor and 11:30 and 14:00 return. Units used, in date order, were 701043, 701039, 701037 again and 701043 again. The same workings were scheduled to be 701-operated Monday to Friday the following week. It is intended that the units will work initially on Windsor line services, and to Shepperton.

An innovation for SWR is that drivers open and close the doors, 41 years after driver-only operation was introduced on trains between St Pancras and Bedford. However, there is a second member of staff on the train for revenue protection and to assist passengers.

Further moves have included:

4 January	701518+701524 Eastleigh to Long Marston
9 January	701527 Derby to Eastleigh
10 January	701523+701525 Eastleigh to Bicester

Southeastern: In contrast with South Western Railway receiving more trains than it can use at the moment, the Department for Transport is not expecting to let a contract for trains to replace Southeastern's Networkers until 2025. However, Southeastern may withdraw all remaining class 465/9 units this year.

INTERESTING WORKINGS

Class 88: The Winfrith nuclear waste train ran on 9 January, topped and tailed by 68003 and 88002. This is the first time that a class 88 has appeared on the working and possibly the first appearance on Southern Region. A class 88 is rated at 950 horsepower when on diesel, so 88002 was on the rear of the train to and from Winfrith.

Southampton: A railtour from Peterborough to Southampton on 30 Dec arrived via Kew East, Ascot and Reading. It was hauled by 66028 with 66185, which had failed on the empty stock working, dead in tow. Despite starting an hour late from Peterborough, the train was only 13 minutes behind time at the Queen Elizabeth Terminal in Eastern Docks, where 66158 was added to allow top and tail operation. The train reversed in Southampton Up Yard and continued to the Western Docks, reaching the end of the line at Berth 105. The return to Peterborough was via Chertsey and Kew East, dropping off 66158 at Eastleigh.

Class 201: Unit 1001 worked a railtour on 6 January thus: Hastings, Tunbridge Wells, New Cross (reverse in platform B), Lewisham, Hayes, Lewisham, Denmark Hill, Blackfriars, Herne Hill, Streatham, Selhurst, Redhill, Guildford, Redhill, Tunbridge Wells, Hastings. It was again running as a seven-coach train with three motor coaches.

English Electric: On 11 January 20107+20096 hauled four carriages from Crewe to Eastleigh for attention. They were hauled back next day by 37409, freshly outshopped from Eastleigh.

Engineering Work: Work including track relaying and renewal of points resulted in there being no trains between Purley and Gatwick Airport over the weekend of 20 & 21 January. There was a half-hourly service between Victoria and Gatwick Airport, calling at Clapham Junction, Epsom, Horsham and Three Bridges, taking 77 minutes. That required local services between Dorking and Horsham to be replaced by buses. Buses ran between Gatwick Airport and East Grinstead, connecting with four trains an hour to London Bridge, with alternate ones calling only at Oxted and East Croydon. Overnight Saturday/Sunday there was an hourly service between Victoria and East Grinstead, calling only at Clapham Junction, Selhurst and East Croydon. Brighton, Littlehampton and Ore trains terminated and started at Three Bridges. Thameslink ran shuttles from Gatwick Airport to Horsham and Three Bridges. Unfortunately, work finished late, with no trains from Redhill until 06:30 on Monday morning.

RAIL BUSINESS

Parking charges: Southern is experimenting with part-day charges at station car parks at Eastbourne and Lewes. Previously, there was a single all-day charge, but reduced one-hour, two-hour and evening rates apply until mid-February. There already are different rates at Brighton station car park, depending on the length of stay, but an evening rate is also being trialled there. A separate trial with short-term parking rates is taking place at Kenley, where there is a lack of parking spaces other than at the station.

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

ASLEF: Further strikes by train drivers will take place on Southeastern, Southern, Thameslink, Gatwick Express and South Western Railway on 30 January. Drivers at CrossCountry and Great Western will be striking on 5 February. There will also be an overtime ban by drivers from 29 January until 6 February. London Overground is among the operators not affected, because they are not sponsored by the Department for Transport.

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.

P10	10 December to 6 January	MAA to 6 January
All TOCs	64.6%	67.5%
SWR	62.9% (11 th)	66.8% (12 th)
GTR	65.1% (9 th)	69.0% (10 th)
SE	61.6% (12 th)	67.0% (11 th)

Wednesday 27 December: Over-running engineering work meant that both the Chatham and South Eastern main lines and the Catford Loop were blocked. There were no trains via Chislehurst until after 09:00 and none at Bromley South until after 10:00. SWR fast services were delayed through Clapham Junction during the morning, because of a track circuit failure. Some stopping trains from Basingstoke were diverted via East Putney. A displaced conductor rail between Portcreek Junction and Bedhampton caused the 04:25 Portsmouth Harbour to Waterloo and the 04:52 Portsmouth and Southsea to Haywards Heath to lose collector shoes. The Waterloo train was able to continue to Havant, where it terminated, but the Haywards Heath one was stranded. The 05:00 from Barnham was terminated at Havant and used to evacuate its passengers. Following fitters' attention the damaged train was able to depart empty by

11:00, by which time the conductor rail had been repaired. Services were severely disrupted, with many cancellations and some SWR trains diverted via Winchester. Normal working did not resume until late afternoon.

Friday 29 December: There were track circuit failures in the HS1 Thames Tunnels during the morning, which were found to be caused by flooding. Single line working via the down line was implemented late morning, but switched to the up line during the afternoon, as staff carried out inspections and brought in pumps. Both lines were blocked from late evening. There were extensive delays to trains and numerous cancellations during the afternoon and evening.

Saturday 30 December: The HS1 Thames Tunnels were closed all day as pumping and investigation of the cause of the flooding continued. Shuttle services ran from Ramsgate to Ashford via Dover and via Canterbury West and to Faversham. Eurostar services were entirely cancelled. The 07:10 Highbury to Crystal Palace terminated at Forest Hill with a brake problem. The 22:55 from Highbury hit a tree between Sydenham and Crystal Palace.

Sunday 31 December: Normal service resumed on HS1, but with speed restrictions through the Thames Tunnel during the morning. The 10:13 Ascot to Guildford hit a large tree on the line near Bagshot, resulting in services being suspended for the rest of the morning. A points failure at Portcreek Jn about 16:00 caused delays and cancellations for over two hours. There were no trains on the Lymington branch after the 19:13 from Lymington Pier, because of lack of train crew.

Tuesday 2 January: An electrical fire during the night at Hinton Admiral caused significant damage to the track, so the line was closed all morning while repairs were carried out. There were no trains between Southampton and Bournemouth, though the Lymington branch was operating. A signalling problem at Dartford caused early morning trains via Sidcup to be delayed, diverted or cancelled. The 11:26 Three Bridges to Bedford was involved in a fatality at Coulsdon South, so trains were cancelled or diverted via the Quarry Line until shortly before 15:00. The 14:58 Dover Priory to Charing Cross terminated at Ashford, because of a bad wheel flat on unit 375818. A severe storm caused major disruption during the afternoon and evening. Part of the station roof was blown off at Grove Park and scaffolding fell onto the line at Old Kent Road Junction. Trains hit trees on the line at Upwey, Bournemouth, Shawford, Chandlers Ford, Worting Junction, Bentley, Farnham, Crowthorne, Chichester, Kenley, Maze Hill, Petts Wood and Wadhurst. There were also trees on the line at Wallers Ash, Basingstoke, Farnborough North, Aldershot, Brookwood, Bracknell, Sunningdale, North Camp, Ewell East, West Sutton, Reigate, East Dulwich, Crofton Park, Slade Green, Chelsfield, St Mary Cray, East Farleigh, Tonbridge and Robertsbridge.

Wednesday 3 January: A signalling fault caused Southern services to Portsmouth and Southampton to be subject to delays and cancellation throughout the day. There were no trains between Uckfield and Crowborough until the 14:07 from London Bridge, because of a signal cable fault. A signalling failure on the Sole Street line about 09:40 resulted in up trains being diverted via Dartford until early afternoon. Unit 450005 failed at Brockenhurst prior to working the 11:42 to Lymington. Branch trains were cancelled until 450093 substituted on the 13:42. A points failure at East Grinstead caused late afternoon trains to terminate at Hurst Green.

Thursday 4 January: Morning peak trains to and from Eastbourne were delayed or cancelled, because of a points failure at Willingdon Jn. Lines were flooded for varying periods during the afternoon and evening at Sway, Romsey, Hamble, Hedge End, Wallers Ash, Bagshot, Falmer and on the Isle of Wight. There was also flooding at various locations on the West of England line and a landslide at Crewkerne, where the line was closed until Saturday.

Friday 5 January: A landslide at Robertsbridge caused the line to be blocked for most of the day. The first trains were 19:44 from Hastings and 20:22 from Tonbridge. There were very few trains via Maidstone East, because of a landslide there during the night. The up line was opened mid-morning, but the down line was closed all day. A few trains were cancelled, but most were diverted via Bat & Ball. There were no trains on the Lymington branch until the 09:42 from Brockenhurst, because of staff shortage. The 06:15 from Horsham hit a tree at Holmwood, resulting in the line being closed until late morning. A railhead treatment train was detained on the down slow line at Anerley for about an hour during the afternoon, because of a dragging brake, so London Overground trains to West Croydon were diverted to Crystal Palace. A signalling failure between Slade Green and Barrnehurst about 17:00, resulted in Cannon Street roundabout services being diverted via Sidcup for the rest of the day. There was flooding during the evening between Romsey and Redbridge and at Hedge End, Wallers Ash and Bagshot.

Saturday 6 January: A landslide at Buriton caused the line to be closed from about 11:00 and trains did not resume until after 15:00. This was particularly unfortunate, because Weymouth services were diverted via Havant, because of engineering work. Many trains were cancelled entirely and the service was disrupted into the evening. Unit 450057 failed at Brockenhurst before working the 17:42 to Lymington, but only two round trips were lost before 450093 again came to the rescue on the 18:42.

Sunday 7 January: A small fire in a shop unit caused Victoria station to be evacuated shortly before 22:00, re-opening an hour later.

Monday 8 January: A youth was fatally stabbed at Strawberry Hill station about midnight. The station and track were closed for police investigations. Services resumed after 15:00 on Tuesday. Trains were diverted via Parks Bridge Junction during the middle of the day, because of urgent track repairs at Lewisham. The line was closed for about 1½ hours after the 14:56 Brighton to Eastbourne hit a person on the track at Polegate. The 12:20 from Weymouth, units 444010+007 terminated at Basingstoke with a traction fault, having taken almost an hour to get from Winchester. The 20:50 from Eastbourne terminated at Rye and the 21:24 from Ashford was delayed there by 35 minutes, because of a points failure. Later trains were cancelled between Hastings and Ashford.

Tuesday 9 January: A signal failure at Charing Cross put platforms 5 and 6 out of use until 10:00. Some trains were diverted to Cannon Street or Victoria, or were cancelled. The power supply to the up lines at Paddock Wood failed, stranding the 06:28 Dover Priory to Cannon Street in the station. Current was restored by 10:30, with up trains diverted via Maidstone or using the down line from Headcorn meantime. Some services were delayed by over an hour.

Thursday 11 January: The 04:54 Basingstoke to Waterloo hit a tree near Hook. All lines were closed for about half an hour for removal of debris from the down lines and up fast, with a further hour to clear the tree from the up slow. The train had to be inspected by fitters before it could proceed about 09:30. A signalling failure between Haywards Heath and Three Bridges caused delays all morning. Gatwick Express did not operate south of Gatwick and Cambridge trains terminated and started at Three Bridges.

Friday 12 January: A points failure at Windmill Bridge Junction prevented use of the down slow line from Norwood Junction until late morning. Trains had to be diverted to the down fast, requiring numerous platform alterations at East Croydon and some delays, particularly during the morning peak.

Sunday 14 January: Loughborough Junction station was closed until the middle of the afternoon while police investigated a serious assault in the street outside. Trains ran through without stopping.

Monday 15 January: The line was closed between Hamworthy and Poole for over two hours from about 09:30 while urgent track repairs were carried out. The 09:03 from Weymouth was delayed by almost two hours and terminated at Poole. The 09:20 from Weymouth was detained at Wareham and terminated at Bournemouth 130 minutes late. There were no further South Western Railway services from Weymouth until a short-notice special to Bournemouth which departed at 11:48. Down trains turned back at Poole. Trains to Weymouth resumed with the 10:05 from Waterloo, which made a punctual departure from Poole at 12:15. That was not the end of problems at Poole. A points failure about 17:00 caused significant delays, with some trains terminating short at Bournemouth. One of the worst affected was the 15:35 from Waterloo to Weymouth, which departed 20 minutes late because of the earlier disruption, was half an hour late by Southampton through being out of path and was then detained by half an hour at Bournemouth. It terminated at Dorchester South 65 minutes late.

Tuesday 16 January: Platforms 8 to 11 at Victoria were out of use all day, because of defective points. All Gatwick Express services were cancelled and there were some cancellations of peak hour suburban trains. There were no Southern services after 23:00, to allow repairs to get under way. The Lymington branch train failed after the first round trip and there no further trains until the 16:12 from Brockenhurst. Services through Woking were disrupted until 10:00, because of a points failure. Trains were delayed, with some from Portsmouth being diverted via Cobham.

Wednesday 17 January: A track fault at Waterloo East put the up slow line out of use from shortly after 06:00 until 11:00. Some trains had to be cancelled or diverted to Cannon Street. In order to carry out further work, Charing Cross closed at midnight and the last trains worked to and from Cannon Street. A power failure on the down main slow line at Vauxhall resulted in the 08:57 Kingston Loop train terminating there and the 09:03 to Guildford and the 09:06 to Hampton Court becoming stranded. Initial efforts to recharge the line were unsuccessful, so passengers on the Guildford and Hampton Court trains had to be evacuated to a train on the up main slow and returned to Waterloo. Some suburban trains were diverted to the down main fast line and were subject to delay, but many were cancelled. The down main slow line re-opened about 13:00. The 09:30 Victoria to Epsom Downs failed at Sutton. Epsom Downs trains were diverted to Epsom until services were able to resume with the 11:30 from Victoria.

Friday 19 January: Trains were unable to call at Sturry during the afternoon, because the station was within a police cordon following a fatal road accident involving an elderly pedestrian and a lorry.

Sunday 21 January: Forecast very strong winds resulted in a 50 mph speed restriction being imposed on Wessex Route from 19:00 and on Sussex and Kent Routes from 20:00. Wind speeds up to 70 mph were recorded. Trains hit trees at Haslemere, Carshalton Beeches, Norbury, Forest Hill, Bickley, Gravesend, St Mary Cray, Shoreham (Kent), Borough Green

& Wrotham and Margate. There were also trees on the line at Syon Lane and Hayes, with steel sheet on the track at Maidstone East.

Monday 22 January: As the night progressed more trees came down at Dean, Chandlers Ford, Liphook, Brookwood, Frimley, Nutfield, Aylesford, Paddock Wood, Teynham, Faversham and Kearsney. An early morning train hit a tree between Crystal Palace and Sydenham. A greenhouse was blown onto the line at Westgate-on-Sea and a trampoline at Rainham. An aggregate train from Hanwell to Newhaven, operated by Freightliner, failed between Herne Hill and Tulse Hill, shortly after 05:00, blocking the line for two hours.

AROUND THE REGION

Tunbridge Wells: Network Rail has renovated the canopy on the street frontage of the down side building at Tunbridge Wells station.

Shortlands: Work has started on an Access for All scheme at Shortlands that involves provision of a new footbridge and three lifts, one to each platform and one from the station building.

Balham: There is much relief at Balham following provision of toilets in former staff accommodation on the slow lines platform. Previously the station just had a single accessible cubicle.

Waterloo: Work is under way to renovate the roofs over the concourse and the cab road. Glass will be replaced by polycarbonate, which has the advantage of being lighter and therefore reducing the stress on the structure. Steelwork is being repainted and the lighting and wiring are being replaced.

Wokingham: All lines through Wokingham are blocked between 10 and 19 February when the signal box is abolished and Basingstoke ROC takes control of new signalling. The busy level crossing at Wokingham is closed to road traffic from 22:00 on 26 January until 04:00 on 19 February.

Fareham: All lines through Fareham plus Portsmouth Harbour station are closed between 12 and 16 February for track and signal cable renewals. Southern trains to and from Southampton terminate and start at Fratton. Other trains to and from Portsmouth via Havant terminate and start at Portsmouth & Southsea.

Southampton: The forecourt on the south side of the station re-opened in December following work to upgrade the taxi rank, provide additional bus stops and improve the public realm.

Salisbury: A Pluvo Column has been installed on platform 4 at Salisbury. This is a device that draws in contaminated air, filters out pollutants and emits clean air. South Western Railway says that if this is successful more may be provided at other stations.

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