

REGIONAL REVIEW: FEBRUARY 2024

STOCK NOTES

Class 455: It is reported that unit 455868, which is being overhauled at Bournemouth, is to be outshopped in a heritage livery.

Class 458: Further moves:

23 January 458404 to Bournemouth Depot and 458520 to Widnes
13 February 458416 to Bournemouth Depot and 458515 to Widnes

Class 701: Further moves:

26 January	701528 Derby to Eastleigh	9 February	701529 Derby to Eastleigh
1 February	701526 Eastleigh to Bicester MoD	14 February	701521+701527 Eastleigh to Bicester MoD
2 February	701002 Derby to Eastleigh	16 February	701530 Derby to Eastleigh
7 February	701010 Worksop to Eastleigh	19 February	701057 Marchwood to Eastleigh

Unit 701043 has bodyside circular images reading *Celebrating 175 Years of Waterloo*.

TIMETABLES and DIAGRAMS

Winfrith: The last train carrying nuclear waste from Winfrith to Drigg ran on 23 January, with 68002 and 68016.

Southern Timetable Changes: Southern has confirmed changes to West Coastway services from June, which are broadly as proposed in the previous consultation. There will be two trains an hour between Brighton and Southampton, but through trains between Southampton and Victoria are withdrawn. Both of the Arun Valley fast trains each hour run to Portsmouth Harbour. The trains between Littlehampton and Portsmouth are withdrawn, but there will be an hourly service between Brighton and Chichester via Littlehampton, as well as the existing hourly trains between Brighton and Portsmouth.

Swanage: There will be no passenger trains between the Swanage Railway and Wareham in 2024, other than any visiting railtours. Previous years' operations have run at a significant loss and the railway has now discharged its contractual obligation to Dorset Council to provide the service.

INTERESTING WORKINGS

4Vep: Unit 3417 was at Waterloo from 11:10 until 12:13 on 27 January for an event marking the 88th birthday of former SR General Manager Gordon Pettit. The unit was worked to and from Waterloo via Richmond, topped and tailed by 73109 and 73119.

London Overground to London Bridge: As a result of engineering work, London Overground services from West Croydon will be diverted to London Bridge on 31 March (Easter Day). In preparation for this, route learning trips to London Bridge are scheduled on 25 February.

Freight: On 1 Feb the 18:31 Crawley New Yard to Merehead empties, running about an hour early and hauled by 59104, was diverted via Pulborough instead of Hove. Freight, other than infrastructure trains, is exceedingly unusual on the Arun Valley line.

RAIL BUSINESS

South Western Railway: Stuart Meek, SWR's Chief Operating Officer, has been appointed as Interim Managing Director, with effect from 19 March when outgoing MD, Claire Mann, joins Transport for London.

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

ASLEF: On 30 January there was a strike by ASLEF drivers working for Southeastern, Southern, Thameslink, Gatwick Express and South Western Railway. Southeastern, Thameslink and Gatwick Express did not operate at all. Southern just ran a non-stop service between Victoria and Gatwick Airport. This was every 15 minutes for most of the day, but half-hourly early in the morning and during the evening. SWR operated the following services:

- Waterloo and all stations to Feltham via Richmond except Queenstown Road, half-hourly
- Waterloo, Clapham Junction, Wimbledon and all stations from Surbiton to Woking, half hourly
- Waterloo, Clapham Junction, Surbiton, Woking, Worplesdon and Guildford, hourly
- Waterloo, Clapham Junction, Surbiton, Woking and all stations to Basingstoke, hourly
- Basingstoke and all stations to Salisbury, hourly

The first departure from Waterloo was at 07:15 and the last at 18:20. The Woking stopping service had four trains per hour at peak times.

CrossCountry ran no trains on 5 February, when their drivers were on strike. There was also a strike by Great Western drivers that day, but there were four round trips from Reading to Redhill and an hourly service between Reading and Basingstoke. There were no GWR trains via Salisbury or to Weymouth.

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.

	7 January to 3 February	MAA to 3 February
All TOCs	66.7%	67.7%
SWR	68.0% (9 th)	67.4% (11 th)
GTR	65.4% (11 th)	69.1% (10 th)
SE	64.2% (13 th)	67.2% (12 th)

Tuesday 23 January: A track circuit failure on the up slow line at Waterloo East caused some trains to be diverted to Cannon Street during the morning.

Wednesday 24 January: A track fault in Blackheath Tunnel required down trains to be diverted via Greenwich until after 14:00. Up trains were also diverted from late morning, while repairs were carried out. Unit 395009 failed west of the former Archcliffe Junction, Dover while working the 10:07 Ramsgate to St Pancras. Passengers had to be evacuated onto a train on the down line. Normal working between Dover and Folkestone did not resume until 15:00, with some trains diverted via Canterbury West meantime. A points failure at Arundel Junction shortly before 20:00 prevented trains running on all routes for about 2½ hours.

Thursday 25 January: A signalling failure between Cosham and Havant caused delays from 08:00 until 13:00. Services were suspended between Southampton and Bournemouth for almost six hours shortly after 09:00, following discovery of a broken rail between Christchurch and Hinton Admiral.

Saturday 27 January: A points failure resulted in cancellation of early morning trains via Cosham. A cable defect put signalling out of use at New Malden, requiring main line trains to be diverted via Chertsey and Shepperton services via Richmond. The signalling was restored on the up lines by 06:00, but it was a further 1½ hours before the down lines could be used. A points failure between London Bridge and Waterloo East caused Tunbridge Wells, Hastings and Maidstone trains to be diverted to Cannon Street throughout the day.

Monday 29 January: A points failure at Winchester caused significant disruption throughout the morning, with many delays and some cancellations. The 06:20 Waterloo to Woking failed at Vauxhall, requiring following trains to be diverted via the down main fast line until 08:00. An overhead line fault caused the 09:07 St Pancras to Ramsgate to become stranded east of Singlewell, requiring single line working over the 12 km between Southfleet and Nashenden crossovers. That resulted in extensive delays and many Southeastern services being cancelled. As usual when there are problems on HS1, priority is given to Eurostar. There were repeated problems later in the day with the power tripping out.

Wednesday 31 January: The 1706 Sevenoaks to Charing Cross terminated at Dunton Green after the emergency alarm was activated and the driver was unable to reset it. Evening services were seriously disrupted after a trespasser was reported on the line in the Burgess Hill area and it took significant time to locate the person and remove them from the track.

Thursday 1 February: The 08:53 from Windsor was involved in a fatality at a foot crossing between Wraysbury and Staines. The train was able to go forward two hours later and terminated at Staines. Branch services resumed after midday.

Friday 2 February: A signalling equipment failure at Dorchester about 07:30 prevented trains running to or from Moreton. Pilot working was established soon after 09:00, but normal operation did not resume until late morning.

Saturday 3 February: The 09:27 Cardiff to Portsmouth was delayed for 45 minutes at Romsey, because of a door fault, and terminated at Southampton Central.

Sunday 4 February: There were no trains to Seaford between the 16:17 and 21:17 from Brighton, because of a track circuit failure. Trains terminated and started at Newhaven Harbour.

Monday 5 February: The 08:50 Eastbourne to Ashford was involved in a fatality near Rye, resulting in the line being closed. Services resumed with the 13:50 from Eastbourne.

Tuesday 6 February: The 07:01 Dorking to Waterloo terminated at Clapham Junction, because of a problem with the doors. The CCTV system at Datchet level crossing failed, causing most afternoon and all evening trains between Staines and Windsor to be cancelled.

Wednesday 7 February: A signal failure resulted in there being no trains between Ashford and Dover until late morning. The first trains were 10:07 from Ramsgate and 20:07 from St Pancras. Unit 465040 failed between Cambria Junction and Denmark Hill while working the 14:37 Victoria to Dartford. Another unit was summoned from Victoria to assist. Passengers were set down at Denmark Hill an hour late and the train then ran empty to Slade Green depot.

Thursday 8 February: The 06:08 Southampton to Victoria was delayed by about an hour after hitting a tree on the line between Fareham and Swanwick. The train terminated at Barnham. The 07:57 from Sandwich terminated at Paddock Wood because of a fire on a motor bogie of unit 375815. The Fire Brigade had the blaze extinguished by 10:20 and the train was shunted clear of the main line by midday. The 09:02 from Canterbury West was diverted via Maidstone East. The bi-directional signalling allowed the 09:11 from Ramsgate and 10:00 from Dover Priory to run from Headcorn to Paddock Wood via the down line, but at the cost of delays to down trains. There were delays and cancellations to services through Portchester from late afternoon and for the rest of the day, because of a signalling failure.

Saturday 10 February: Early morning trains to Tattenham Corner were cancelled because of a points failure. Signalling problems on the Shepperton branch caused mid-morning trains to terminate at Fulwell.

Monday 12 February: A points failure at Denmark Hill caused disruption until after 08:00. All London Overground services were cancelled and northbound Thameslink trains were diverted via Herne Hill. Victoria station was closed for about 40 minutes early in the afternoon, because the fire alarm was activated. A few trains were diverted to London Bridge. There were no Southern services through Tulse Hill from 14:15 until after 17:00, because of a points failure. There were many cancellations, but some trains between London Bridge and East Croydon were diverted via Forest Hill.

Tuesday 13 February: The 09:12 Waterloo to Basingstoke was involved in a fatality at Hersham. The up lines reopened soon after 11:00 and the down lines about midday. There were numerous cancellations, but a few trains were diverted via Chertsey. There were no trains for about two hours after a person was hit by the 10:58 Southampton to

Bournemouth at Pokesdown. A points failure on the Atlantic Line resulted in cancellation of London Overground services for most of the afternoon.

Wednesday 14 February: A track circuit failure at North Kent East Junction caused afternoon trains to be delayed and some Greenwich services were diverted via Lewisham.

Thursday 15 February: A signalling failure at Bellingham caused morning peak trains to be diverted via Herne Hill.

Friday 16 February: An engineer's train was involved in a fatality between Gatwick Airport and Three Bridges about 05:30, resulting in all lines being closed for over two hours.

Monday 19 February: Over-running engineering work and damaged points at Copyhold Junction, Haywards Heath, caused numerous cancellations and extensive delays throughout the morning and some consequential disruption into the afternoon. The 05:53 Cannon Street roundabout service was delayed for half an hour at Erith, because of a technical fault. It failed again at Slade Green and was taken out of service.

AROUND THE REGION

London Overground lines are being given individual identities. These include services via the East London Line to West Croydon, Crystal Palace and Clapham Junction being known as the Windrush Line, given that it runs through areas where many people from the West Indies settled. The North London Line services to Clapham Junction and Richmond will be the Mildmay Line. It runs through Mildmay Park, where the station closed in 1934, but is named after a local hospital.

Victoria Area Resignalling: The planned commissioning of new signalling in the Tulse Hill and Crystal Palace area in February has been delayed until later in the year. This followed an internal review of the project.

Ashurst: A road rail vehicle hit and displaced the station footbridge at Ashurst during the evening on 27 January, preventing access to the up platform. Passengers travelling to London were permitted to do so via Uckfield, avoiding a long wait at Eridge. The footbridge, which is a listed building, has been removed for repairs. A temporary scaffolding bridge came into use on 5 February, enabling up trains to call at the station.

Leatherhead: Work has started on construction of a footbridge with lifts at Leatherhead station.

Bracknell: The booking office is closed following flooding from the offices above. This appears to be an extended problem, because SWR intends to provide a temporary booking office.

Wokingham: New signalling, using axle counters and controlled from Basingstoke ROC, came into use between Bracknell, Farnborough North and Reading Spur Junction on 19 February. Wokingham signal box has been abolished, but will be retained as staff accommodation. The trailing crossover at Blackwater is now operated from Basingstoke ROC, rather than by ground frame as previously.

Fareham: In addition to the planned closure of all lines via Fareham between 12 and 16 February for engineering work, there was a short-notice closure between Eastleigh and Fareham from 29 January to 2 February to stabilise a cutting slope. Trains between Waterloo and Portsmouth via Winchester were diverted via St Denys. This is nothing new. The railway from Eastleigh to Gosport opened on 29 November 1841, but had to close four days later because a cutting slope was unstable and there were problems with Fareham Tunnel. The line re-opened on 7 February 1842.

Bitterne: Hampshire Community Rail Partnership have been awarded a grant of £25,466 by the Railway Heritage Trust towards renovation of Bitterne station building.

CREDITS: Jeremy Chapter, Colin Duff, John Goodrich, Stuart Hicks